

INSPECTION REPORT

LINHOPE FIRST SCHOOL

LEA area: Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Unique reference number: 108441

Headteacher: Mrs J Wardill

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Huard
27290

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 June 2000

Inspection number: 189077

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Linhope Road Westerhope Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE5 2LW
Telephone number:	0191 2678113
Fax number:	0191 2641240
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Cook
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Christine Huard	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Art	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements.
		Music	How well are pupils taught?
Peter Oldfield	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How high are standards? b) 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?
Mary Farman	Team inspector	English	How well is the school led and managed?
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
Tess Galvin	Team inspector	Under fives	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical education	
Jean Morley	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Information technology	
		Design & technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Linhope First School is of average size when compared to other first schools and has 215 girls and boys between the ages of five and nine organised into ten classes. The school is part of an education action zone in Newcastle upon Tyne. There is a nursery which a further 35 children attend on a full or part time basis. There were six children under the age of five in the reception classes at the time of the inspection. Attainment on entry to the school is generally well below that which would be expected of pupils of this age. There are 23 percent of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is about average. No pupils have statements of special educational need which is below the national average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. English is a second language for only two pupils, one of whom is very fluent and the other has only just entered the nursery class. The school is in an area of high unemployment. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 51 percent; this is well above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Linhope First School is an effective school and is providing its pupils with a good education. Standards in 1999 were well below those achieved nationally in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average in mathematics. However when compared to similar schools, standards are average. Further inspection evidence shows that standards achieved by pupils now in Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics are below what is expected nationally. Standards by the end of Year 4 are in line with what is expected nationally in English and science and below average in mathematics. Standards overall are improving because teaching is good overall and appropriate action is taken to provide support where teaching is weaker. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is highly effective and gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection and continues to provide good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is well supported by the staff and committed and knowledgeable governors.
- Provision for children under 5 is good and these children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes.
- The school has good procedures for pupils' support and guidance which result in pupils having good attitudes towards work, behaving well and forming good relationships.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The school has formed strong links with parents and the local community.

What could be improved

- Standards of teaching in Year 3.
- Standards which are below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, and in mathematics at the end of Year 4.
- The consistency of assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics, information technology and religious education, to ensure that future planning effectively builds on previous steps of learning.
- Attendance, which is below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1996. Since then it has made good progress on the issues which were identified concerning the leadership and management of the school and in other areas. It is well placed to continue to improve. Standards achieved by pupils at that time were good. Standards at the last inspection were found to be good although test results for 1996 were very different from what inspectors found. However, when measured against their attainment on entry and their abilities, the progress made by the pupils and their achievements are good. The quality of education provided by the school continues to be good. The school has maintained the very good climate for learning. The leadership and management of the school are still very good and have competently addressed the issues from the previous inspection. Teaching is monitored on a regular basis as are the responses and attainment of the pupils; the information gathered is used effectively to improve standards of teaching and learning. Management decisions, such as that to maintain staffing levels, are carefully considered to take into account the impact they will have on the standards of learning in the school.

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	E	E	E	C	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	D	E	C	
Mathematics	E	B	D	C	

The results show that pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1 tests in 1999 in reading and writing was well below the national average. Results were average when compared to schools in similar circumstances. In mathematics they were below the national average but were average when compared to similar schools.

Currently, pupils make good progress in English, although at the end of Key Stage 1 standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are below average. By the end of Year 4 pupils are achieving standards which are in line with what is expected. Standards in mathematics are below average at both key stages because pupils have too few opportunities to apply the skills they have been taught in practical situations. However, pupils make satisfactory progress overall when prior attainment is taken into account. Progress in science, information technology, geography, history and physical education is good at both key stages and pupils achieve standards which are in line with what is expected at the end of Years 2 and 4. Progress in religious education and art is good at Key Stage 1 and very good in Years 3 and 4 and pupils achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school. The trend of improvement at Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with that shown nationally, although at a lower level. Overall achievement is good and pupils achieve standards by the time they leave the school in Year 4 in excess of what might be expected given their attainment on entry. The school is well placed to achieve the appropriately challenging targets it has set for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work and enjoy attending school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall both in class and around the school. Where there are lapses they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respect and listen to one another's views and collaborate well in class and when playing together. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory and below the national average. Levels of unauthorised attendance are also high. This is because some parents do not appreciate that regular school attendance is important for pupils to learn effectively

The school is a friendly and welcoming community. The oldest pupils fulfil the school's aim of developing responsible individuals and the attitude of most pupils towards their work is mature and sensible.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons. In 79 per cent it is good or better and in 12 per cent it is very good. The skills of literacy are well planned for and taught well and this enables pupils to learn effectively. Numeracy skill are generally well planned and taught and result in sound improvements being made in most classes. However pupils have too few opportunities to apply the skills they learn in problem solving situations. Strengths in teaching include the high expectations of pupils in work and behaviour, the sharing of learning objectives so pupils are clear about what they are to learn and good quality concluding sessions which enable teachers and pupils to see how successful they have been. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers' planning provides appropriate, individual tasks and learning assistants are well briefed and provide highly effective support. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for and learn very effectively. Three quarters of the unsatisfactory teaching was in one class in Year 3. Here, although planning was clear, it was not adhered to. Tasks set were not clearly explained and pupils often did not understand what was required of them which resulted in their behaviour deteriorating.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall quality and range of the curriculum is good. It has improved since the last inspection with the greater involvement of the local community and the implementation of a drugs awareness policy. There are very good cross curricular links.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision enables these pupils to make good progress because work is well matched to their individual needs,
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision in these areas is very good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is very good and that for their spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a secure, caring and supportive environment in which its pupils can grow and develop.

The school works well with parents and provides workshops for them in areas such as literacy and numeracy, in order that they can effectively support their children. The lack of consistent assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics, information technology and religious education means that tasks are not always matched accurately to pupils' needs. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and a sense of direction for the school. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the strong senior management team. There is a shared commitment to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities efficiently. They are effectively involved in the school and support its development. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors and analyses its results, teaching and the curriculum effectively. It has secure knowledge about which areas require specific improvement and is making sound progress towards targets set.
The strategic use of resources	The school's financial planning is good. Funds are directed to high priority areas. There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is good and provides many additional areas that enhance the curriculum and learning by pupils. Resources are used effectively to raise achievement and to ensure best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents are happy with the standards of work their children achieve. • The school gives parents good support and ideas for helping their children. • Parents are encouraged to help in school. • Problems are promptly and effectively dealt with. • Pupils' behaviour is very good and there is a good behaviour policy. • Children are very happy to attend school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents think there is not enough homework. • A few parents say they do not receive enough information about their children's progress. • Some parents feel the school does not work closely enough with them. • A few parents think there are too few extra curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. The inspectors disagree with the negative views. All of these came from the parents' questionnaire of which only a very small proportion – about 10 per cent - were returned. The inspectors found that homework was given regularly and was appropriate in quantity. Parents are offered several opportunities to discuss their children's progress and the school has an open door policy if any problems or concerns arise. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which a significant minority of pupils attend.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery class is well below average overall. This is borne out by the assessments made when children first join the class. Children make good progress in all the areas of learning but when they reach the age of five, attainment is still below average overall. Attainment is below average in language and literacy and mathematics. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development are in line with what would be expected. Very good progress is made in developing pupils' personal and social skills and many children reach standards in line with those expected. These findings are broadly in line with those from the previous inspection and the school has continued to provide children with a rich learning experience in which they thrive and develop.
2. The national assessment tests undertaken in reading and writing by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the proportion achieving the national expectation was well below average. These standards are not as high as those at the last inspection; however attainment of pupils on entry, as shown by the school's assessments, is now lower than at that time. When the 1999 results are compared to those of pupils from similar schools the performance of pupils at the school is broadly in line with the average for reading and writing. Results in both areas have fluctuated over the last four years although the trend of improvement is broadly in line with that nationally. In teacher assessments pupils attained well below average levels in speaking and listening. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 are performing at a level below the national average in reading and writing and in line with requirements in speaking and listening. Improvements have been made in English as a result of careful monitoring of teaching and learning and analysis of the information gathered. The school has focused on developing and improving boys' reading. However, pupils do not always understand fully what they are reading although they can read the text accurately. Pupils' writing skills are insufficiently developed and although they can successfully complete exercises using correct punctuation and grammar, they are unable to extend the use of these conventions into their story and other independent writing.
3. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make generally good progress overall in English as a result of good teaching and appropriate implementation of the literacy strategy. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 most are achieving standards in line with what is expected in English in all areas. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Pupils can express themselves appropriately and confidently and can present logical reasons for their opinions. They are sometimes hampered by a lack of suitable vocabulary. In order to improve this they are given opportunities for discussion in other subject areas such as history and science. They generally listen carefully and interpret instructions accurately. Most pupils read a range of texts with understanding although reading aloud is sometimes hesitant. They compare styles of writing other than fiction and most can use alphabetical order to search an index. They use dictionaries and thesauri with increasing confidence. Pupils write and draft stories using satisfactory punctuation and grammar and they are beginning to write in a wide range of styles. They write for a greater variety of purposes; for example, when carrying out independent research they develop their note taking skills.
4. When compared with all schools the attainment of seven year olds in the 1999 National curriculum tests was well below average in mathematics. When compared with pupils from similar schools attainment was average. Results over the last four years show fluctuations but the trend of improvement is slightly below that shown nationally. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 make sound progress overall in mathematics although the standards reached by pupils in Year 2 are below those expected. This is because although standards in numeracy are improving and pupils are developing good mental skills, they have insufficient opportunities to apply the skills they have learned in problem solving situations, which hinders their understanding. The school has focused on numeracy skills although pupils cover the whole curriculum adequately and achieve satisfactory standards in data handling and shape

and space.

5. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards are still below expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make satisfactory progress and although many pupils attain standards that are in line with what is expected by the end of Year 4 a significant minority do not. Pupils again have insufficient opportunities to apply the mathematical skills that they learn. This, combined with evidence of unsatisfactory teaching over two terms early in the year in one Year 4 class and less than satisfactory teaching in a Year 3 class, has had a negative impact on some pupils' progress.
6. The 1999 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments in science show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was well below average. Overall standards were average when compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. The pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving standards in line with those expected. This is a considerable improvement and has come about because pupils have covered the curriculum required more effectively, and a greater emphasis has been placed on pupils investigating and experimenting for themselves. Pupils have a sound knowledge of life and living things, materials and physical processes.
7. By the end of Year 4 pupils are achieving overall standards in line with those expected. There is some variation in standards of work during this year with evidence of some unsatisfactory teaching during the first two terms in one class. There is no uniform method of assessment in science and because work was not assessed and monitored over this period the progress of some pupils was hampered. A few pupils are achieving standards in excess of what is expected. Pupils' experimental skills are sound overall. Their knowledge of living things, life and physical processes is good whilst their knowledge of materials is average.
8. The school has made sound progress overall towards the targets it has set for improvement. Pupils make good progress in the development of literacy, information technology and numeracy skills. The school is making a determined effort to eliminate the difference in attainment between boys and girls, and, although it is still evident in some classes, the gap is not so wide. This is particularly so in reading where the school has placed a particular focus on improving the attainment of boys.
9. Standards in information technology, design and technology, geography and history are in line with those expected at both key stages and pupils make good progress in achieving these from a comparatively low level of prior achievement. Progress in religious education and art is good at Key Stage 1 and very good in Years 3 and 4 and pupils achieve standards in excess of those expected. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in music and physical education. Standards overall are above what might be expected given the well below average level of attainment when pupils enter the school.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning, particularly in their writing and number skills. Standards, however, are well below those expected for the pupils' ages. They are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' identified needs and specific targets. The targets in pupils' individual education plans are clear, specific, achievable and suitably challenging. The assessments are careful and thorough. Teachers use them well to assess progress and plan future work and targets. The school works hard to achieve success within the constraints of the limited support and provision from the local authority. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress with their learning, they are carefully monitored and work is generally appropriately challenging for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school and their personal development are very good. The interest that they show in lessons and in the many activities available to them is good. Behaviour is good. Relationships are very good. This represents some improvement since the previous inspection. Attendance is below the national average and too many pupils take unauthorised absences from school.

12. Most pupils are keen to come to school. Pupils in all classes have very good attitudes to learning. Almost all parents say that their children like coming to school. Pupils clearly appreciate what is being provided for them both in classrooms and in the extra-curricular clubs. Their interest in learning and in other activities is good. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to instructions, work well independently or in co-operation with others and show an enthusiasm to do well. They respond eagerly to questions and accept that others may have a different point of view. Most pupils confidently explain what they are doing and are keen to show their work. They concentrate on their tasks, enjoy being challenged and persevere when they find things difficult, learning from their mistakes. The fun of learning is frequently evident.
13. Parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour and inspection judgements support these views. Pupils are well behaved; this illustrates the effectiveness of the application of the school policies on behaviour and social development. This generally good behaviour makes a major contribution to effective learning and to the quality of school life in general. For most of the time there is a pleasant air of orderliness without the suppression of natural exuberance. Pupils know what is expected of them and they behave appropriately, not for any reward, but because they know it is the right thing to do. They are polite and considerate to one another, to staff and to visitors – doors are held open for others and “please” and “thank you” are regularly heard. They take good care of equipment and furniture. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils are aware of what to do if they encounter it. However, there is some evidence of over exuberant behaviour in the playground and on the field at lunchtime. When instances of unacceptable behaviour occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff and this helps to diffuse any difficult situations swiftly so that any disruption has a minimal effect on pupils' progress. More stringent sanctions are applied only when absolutely necessary. There have been five exclusions, involving a small number of pupils, for a fixed period in the last year.
14. The personal development of pupils is very good. A large majority of parents say that the school is successful in encouraging pupils to become mature and responsible. Pupils participate very well in the daily routines of the school, acting as lunchtime monitors and helping teachers in classes. Pupils are willing to accept monitorial duties, evidenced by Year 3 pupils clearing chairs at the end of lunch; they were happily supervised by a Year 4 pupil described as ‘The Manager’. This reflected the positive ethos of the school. There is a School Council and this has a positive impact on the personal development of pupils. Eight Year 4 pupils selected by classmates discuss topics of interest to pupils and suggest improvements such as the Millennium Planting and the painting of games on the playground. Pupils in Year 3 are initially selected and act for one term of that year before acting as council members for two terms in Year 4.
15. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils have strong relationships with teachers and throughout the school there is a feeling of ‘team’ and ‘family’ spirit. Pupils with special educational needs are valued, and settle well into the pattern of school life. All the staff teaching and non-teaching and other adults who help in the school, are very good role models. Pupils of different ages relate well to each other, and there is a friendly atmosphere with older pupils being successfully encouraged to be aware of the needs of younger ones. Pupils co-operate in pairs when working in classes and collaborate effectively when required to engage in group or whole class activities. They show an interest in what other pupils are achieving and appreciate the efforts of those less able than themselves.
16. Attendance, whilst slightly improved from last year, is still below the national average. Some parents appear not to appreciate the importance of regular school attendance and the impact absence has on children's learning. Constant liaison with the education welfare service and regular letters sent by the school have not been as effective as the school would wish. There are a few pupils whose parents regularly bring them late for school and they lose a positive start to the school day.
17. The school has a policy of indicating that parents may have up to ten days holiday during the course of a school year. Some parents do not follow the requirement of requesting such absence and this affects the levels of unauthorised attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of the lessons observed. In 79 percent it was good or better and in 12 percent it was very good. Teaching was less than satisfactory in 7 per cent of lessons. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when only 87 percent of teaching was satisfactory or better and the percentage of good teaching observed was much lower. The great majority of unsatisfactory teaching was in one class.
19. The teaching of the children under five is good overall and leads to them making good progress in the six areas of learning for children under five. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good overall. As a result of this, pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress in their learning in all areas of the curriculum. At Key Stage 2 there was a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in one class in Year 3. This is having a negative impact on pupils' progress in this class. The school is aware of this and has taken steps to provide appropriate support. In the other classes in Key Stage 2 teaching was satisfactory or better with three quarters of it being good or better.
20. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school. Work is well matched to the differing needs of pupils within the class and by clearly defined learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. The teaching of reading is good and leads to pupils making good progress in their learning by providing a widening range of literature and by the teaching of specific skills which enables pupils to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary confidently. However pupils do not always fully understand what they read and too little emphasis is placed on pupils' comprehension of the text. Teaching of writing skills is thorough and pupils practise their skills in written exercises. However, pupils have too few opportunities to write independently and use and apply the skills they have learned. This results in the extended writing they do often being poorly spelled and punctuated. Regular mental mathematics at the start of each numeracy session has helped improve the pupils' recall of number facts. Pupils show an enthusiasm for the subject which is fostered by the provision of challenging tasks which stimulate and interest them; however pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to apply what they have learned by investigating and solving problems independently. This leads to pupils' making slower progress in the understanding of mathematical processes.
21. Teaching in information technology and religious education were good. Teaching in geography was good but only one lesson was observed. In art, design and technology, music and physical education teaching was good overall, with some very good teaching observed in history. Teachers of physical education pay due regard to pupils' safety. Examples of very good teaching were seen in all year groups.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also good. All teachers and support staff provide a good level of support for these pupils, and consequently the pupils make a good rate of progress in their learning. The targets set are appropriately challenging and teachers can work towards them within a normal classroom setting. The targets are practical, clear and easy for staff, parents and pupils to understand. Gifted and talented pupils learn effectively because work is provided for them which meets their needs and is appropriately challenging.
23. At the time of the last inspection gaps in the knowledge and expertise of some teachers were identified in information technology, music and religious education. The evidence of this inspection suggests that this issue has been addressed and teachers are generally confident and competent at teaching the full range of the curriculum. Because of the team spirit engendered in the school subject co-ordinators support colleagues very effectively and are always willing to provide additional help when it is required. This has enabled pupils' learning to improve and standards to rise.
24. There are a number of contributory factors to the good quality teaching and learning:
 - Lesson planning is clear with learning objectives set out very clearly and shared with all

pupils at the start of each lesson. These are revised at the end of the lesson when outcomes are assessed.

- The teachers know their pupils extremely well and have very good knowledge of their attainment levels because of the highly effective assessment systems in the school for English and mathematics. This means that for most of the time tasks, particularly in these subjects, are planned which are really challenging and individualised to meet the needs of each child within the overall context of the lesson.
- Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. When pupils are working there is a business like atmosphere where they are attuned to producing the best work they can.
- Teachers' questioning is of high quality and sharply focused so that they can effectively assess whether pupils have understood new learning or not. For example in science, Year 4 pupils could not only say what a complete circuit was; they could describe a range of ways of testing for one, and recognise from diagrams which circuits would work and which would not. The information from informal assessment of this kind is carefully recorded and used to plan future work that will enable pupils to move on to the next step of learning.
- Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high. Many pupils have behavioural problems but these are well controlled by the consistent application of the school's discipline policy, and the mutual respect that is evident for the great majority of the time between teachers and pupils.
- Teachers move around the room and ensure that they work with as many pupils as possible. This high quality individual attention ensures that all pupils receive the maximum benefit from the lesson.

25. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was in one class in Year 3. There are a number of reasons for the teaching being unsatisfactory :

- Although planning was sound, it was often not adhered to. For example, a science lesson became silent reading. This disrupted pupils who were settled on the carpet and suddenly had to find their reading books. As classroom management was also unsatisfactory this led to a prolonged period when little progress or learning took place for any pupil.
- Tasks were poorly explained to pupils. This led to pupils being unsure of what they had to do.
- The teacher's help was not effectively focused on helping pupils to learn and raising standards. In mathematics one pupil who failed to understand a problem received help; the fact that several other pupils were having the same difficulties was ignored until the plenary at the end of the lesson, resulting in many pupils having made little or no progress during the session.
- Classroom management and discipline were poor. An additional support teacher was invaluable in aiding the control of pupils' behaviour in the classroom.

26. Learning support assistants and nursery nurses work in close association with the class teachers and are fully informed and involved in the process of support. This helps to maintain a consistent and effective approach which makes an important contribution to the provision for all pupils particularly those with special needs.

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

27. The quality and range of curricular opportunities is good for the children under five in the nursery, for pupils in reception and at both key stages. In accordance with national guidance the school has reduced the amount of time allocated to some subjects, such as art, design and technology, history and geography. However, the school still provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is relevant to the needs of the pupils at both key stages. Good preparations are in hand for implementing changes to the curriculum in line with the new Curriculum 2000 due to be introduced in September. The requirements for the National Curriculum and teaching religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus are met.
28. Pupils are offered a good variety of additional opportunities. The family learning initiative has been funded through the Education Action Zone and is proving to be very effective. There are recorder and computer clubs as well as sporting activities, and a significant minority of pupils takes part in them. Resources from within and outside the school are used effectively to enrich the curriculum. For instance, theatre groups, an artist and the vicar visit frequently. Visits such as those to the library, Beamish museum and Vindolanda are linked well to pupils' work in the classroom.
29. The areas of learning for children under five in the nursery are covered in an interesting and structured way and this allows children to achieve well. When children transfer to the reception class they begin the National Curriculum and the teaching approach changes. A stronger emphasis is placed on formal work and pupils have fewer opportunities to discuss their ideas and experiences at length or make choices in their work. Although this is often appropriate it does not sufficiently promote children's decision making, problem solving and speaking skills with the result that pupils make slower progress in the understanding of what they are learning.
30. The school meets the requirements of the code of practice for pupils with special educational needs. Careful planning and organisation for pupils with special needs ensures they have equality of access to the full curriculum. Pupils are mainly taught alongside their classmates in the classroom. This has a positive impact on their self-esteem. When the special needs support teacher visits the school he takes pupils for focused work directly related to their specific targets. The teachers make sure this does not affect the pupils' curriculum entitlement by providing time for them to catch up. All members of staff are fully aware of the targets in pupils' individual education plans and implement them fully. The school provides a suitably challenging curriculum for the gifted and talented pupils it identifies. They too have individual education plans and specific learning targets to achieve.
31. A strong yet appropriate emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy. All aspects of the strategies are implemented soundly and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards by the end of Year 4. The school piloted the literacy strategy before it was recommended for use by all schools and this enabled the school to prepare detailed planning with clear targets for what pupils are to learn. However the plans currently provide too few opportunities for pupils to practise the skills they learn in extended writing and insufficient attention is given to ensuring that all pupils understand the texts they read. The school has introduced a number of innovations to the curriculum in its efforts to raise standards, for instance, additional support is provided for lower attaining pupils, which raises their attainment and accelerates progress. In numeracy the plans are thorough and cover all aspects of the curriculum. However, pupils do not spend enough time on applying the skills they learn by solving problems and this is slowing their understanding of the processes they need to use.
32. There are sound arrangements to ensure equality of access for all pupils. Planning for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they can take advantage of curriculum opportunities. Boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum. Detailed planning and the good match of work to pupils' capabilities ensures access to the full curriculum for all pupils and enables most of them to work with sufficient independence. However too few pupils, clearly in need of more support, are enabled to progress beyond the very basic stages of the special needs procedures because of local policy.

33. There are good arrangements for personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness. Separate lessons are provided in personal and social education and pupils' very good progress demonstrates that staff are consistent in their promotion of the essential skills of this programme.
34. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school makes very effective use of these aspects to develop, broaden and deepen pupils' social skills, understanding, values and experiences. The school makes very good provision for the moral and social development of its pupils. There is direct teaching of the principles that distinguish right from wrong. The provision of clearly defined school rules in each classroom reflects this. The emphasis on belonging to a supportive community develops pupils' awareness of social responsibility very well.
35. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The youngest children in the school experience a range of activities that give them many opportunities to reflect on feelings. An example of this is when children say, spontaneously, "Their mammy'll be crying" during the number rhyme 'Five little seagulls'. The school provides a good range of opportunities for reflection in the daily act of collective worship; for example, they consider the feelings of someone who is a victim of bullying. The school incorporates spiritual opportunities naturally into religious education lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 listened to the story of 'The Good Shepherd'. They considered and reflected on feelings and emotions around the concept of loss. Older pupils in Year 4 relate their own feelings to those of Boudicca very well as they construct play scripts. There is a strong spiritual ethos in assemblies and many lessons. This provides a firm base for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness.
36. The school's provision for the moral development of its pupils is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is a strong code of conduct. This is on display in all classrooms and is implicit in all actions. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff provide good and effective role models. They ensure that their dealings with issues are firm but fair. Teachers talk through any transgression of the school's code of conduct with pupils and, when necessary, with parents. They ensure that the pupils understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The pupils have many opportunities to explore and develop moral issues within the curriculum and assemblies. For example, in one assembly pupils recognised the moral issues of thinking before speaking and realise that there is no way to 'unsay' words. Pupils learn to tidy away and look after equipment carefully. They take much care of the work and artefacts on display around the school. This enables them to begin to appreciate moral issues concerning other people's property. Skilful teaching enables pupils to develop a good understanding of the effects of their actions on other people and on themselves.
37. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Children who are under five have many opportunities to develop independent attitudes to learning and to relate well to each other and adults. As the pupils progress through the school the teachers build on and increase these opportunities. Pupils develop their ability to work co-operatively and collaboratively in lessons very well; for example, when planning a play script. This makes a positive contribution to the effective development of social skills. The work of the School Council makes a valuable contribution to the development of social awareness and responsibility. Pupils are eager to show visitors the results of their ideas for example, the wild life garden. The school makes very effective use of visits and performances to enable pupils to develop a sense of group identity and acceptable group behaviour. Most pupils play together well and develop their social skills further during lunchtime. The older pupils help the younger ones and put tables and chairs away. The pupils have a very good level of involvement in the wider community. An example of this is the link with the youth forum. They give concerts for families and friends and take part in a variety of outings and visits that support their work in lessons very well.
38. The school makes good provision for the cultural development of its pupils. This is a

significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to develop awareness of their own local culture by visiting local places of interest such as Hadrian's Wall as part of their work in history and geography. They learn about the Roman invasion of Britain and develop a good awareness of their mixed cultural heritage. The school provides pupils with a rich artistic background and has an artist in residence. This enhances the pupils' awareness of the effect art has on different cultures. The school teaches pupils well about other cultures and beliefs mainly through religious education but also through history and geography lessons. Representatives of different beliefs and denominations visit the school to talk to the pupils. An example of this is the links the school has with the local Methodist church. The school celebrates festivals from different cultures and beliefs such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali as well as the major Christian festivals. It prepares pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society.

39. The school is very well integrated into the local community and good use is made of local facilities to enhance pupils' learning. There are, for example, regular opportunities to explore the surrounding area such as walks, and visits to the shops and library near the school to increase pupils' knowledge of geography and literacy. Good links with local schools also enhance the curriculum. For example, high school students visited the nursery and designed the costumes for their Christmas production. There are frequent visitors to the school, a local artist, a former miner, and members of the emergency services. Visits to a mosque and visitors to the school enhance the multi-cultural aspect of the school's curriculum. The smooth transition of children into the nursery is promoted through the school's provision of a mother and toddler group. There are good links with the local middle school which helps pupils effect a smooth transfer into the next stages of education. Pupils visit their school, there is a meeting for parents, meetings take place between the staff of both schools and a good range of information is provided when pupils move to middle school.
40. The improvement since the last inspection is good. The contribution of the community to the pupils' learning has improved from good to very good. A drugs awareness policy has been implemented. There are now clearer learning objectives for most lessons and group work is organised well. The good quality planning and curriculum identified in the last inspection has been maintained.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The safe, supportive and caring environment provided for pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are well known by staff and there is evident concern for their welfare and development. During lunchtime and the morning and afternoon breaks, as well as in the classrooms, pupils are supervised sensitively and effectively. This makes a significant contribution towards the pupils' feeling of security and their enjoyment of school life. The very good care provided by the school has a substantial effect on pupils' attainment and progress.
42. The procedures for child protection are very effective. The school has an effective health and safety policy. Risk assessments have been undertaken and appropriate checks have been carried out. The school has appropriately trained first aiders and minor accidents are dealt with in an effective way.
43. The educational and personal support to pupils is good. Where necessary, appropriate outside agencies are consulted and involved. These include the special needs support service, social workers and educational psychologist. Local leisure services support swimming lessons and the educational welfare services retain close contact with the school.

44. The pupils' personal development is a high priority in the school. The teachers have a good knowledge of pupils in their care, and they keep records of incidents observed. Pupils' behaviour and responses are noted and comments on pupils' personal and social development are maintained as appropriate. Teachers know the pupils well and are frequently seen giving informal advice and friendly support.
45. The school records attendance on a computer based system; this allows satisfactory control of attendance procedures. Registers are marked appropriately at the beginning of each session and a weekly list of absences is carefully monitored and followed up by contacting the homes where necessary. Certificates reward good attendance each term, and class awards are also made weekly for the best attendance. These encourage good responses.
46. There is a very effective behaviour policy. Pupils know the requirements of good behaviour, sanctions are appropriate and involve a coloured card system as a means of control. Most classes have agreed class rules displayed. Due to the very strong relationships between pupils and adults in the school, incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are rare in the classrooms, but when they occur consistency in the application of the behaviour policy is good in most classes.
47. All the members of staff have information about any medical problems that pupils have. This ensures pupils receive the necessary care and attention they may need. They encourage pupils with special educational needs to become independent in their learning and social skills. The teachers and support staff take all available steps to promote self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers use assessment very effectively to identify needs at an early stage. This involves all members of staff. They chart and track pupils' achievements and progress systematically. Pupils move up and down the register as their needs change. The teachers track the progress gifted and talented pupils make towards their targets. They keep careful records of the pupils' success and plan future steps carefully.
48. The procedures for assessing children's achievements in the under fives in the nursery are good and they are used well to plan the next steps in children's learning. An initial assessment, carried out shortly after entry, is used to group children for literacy and numeracy. At the end of the year the test is repeated so that pupils' progress can be tracked and future academic performance predicted.
49. At both key stages procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are satisfactory. There are good procedures in English and mathematics. Pupils are given annual reading tests in addition to taking national tests in Year 2. Regular assessments are made during the year. Assessment is good in religious education and is being developed well in information technology. In all other subjects the consistency of assessment procedures varies between classes. This is particularly significant in science because it is a core subject and the lack of consistent assessments in science led to pupils in one Year 4 class making unsatisfactory progress earlier in the year. In both key stages some staff keep notes on pupils' achievements in lessons but there is no uniform system across the school. This means that there are insufficient records available when pupils change classes at the end of each year and makes it difficult when planning the next stages of learning.
50. There are sound procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. Teaching and learning are monitored in subjects, which are a priority in the school improvement plan. Teachers point out to pupils ways in which they can improve their work informally in lessons, and in written comments on pupils' work, particularly in Key Stage 2. Annual progress reports to parents contain targets for pupils to work towards in the future. Samples of pupils' work are monitored and evaluated by subject co-ordinators annually in order to assess the provision across the school. This provides a useful overview but is not carried out frequently enough for it to be of maximum benefit, as weaknesses in standards are not necessarily identified soon enough for any action to be taken. For example, weaknesses in a Year 4 class were not identified until the teacher left the school.

51. The school is starting to use the information gained from its assessment procedures to set targets for groups of pupils to achieve in their work and to track pupils' achievements across the school. It has identified and taken steps to rectify the lower standards achieved by boys in reading by purchasing appropriate books, which interest and motivate them. It compares the pupils' results with those in similar schools. However it is too soon for this to be having a noticeable impact on the standards achieved in English and mathematics.
52. The school has made sound improvements since the last inspection. It has implemented procedures for analysing pupils' performance in initial assessments in reception and in national tests. This information is used well to provide targeted support for pupils. Procedures for tracking pupils' achievements have been put into place. Assessment procedures are effective only in English, mathematics, information technology and religious education. This is an element of the previous action plan that has not been fully addressed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The strong links with parents, their good involvement in the life of the school and the very good quality of information contribute very effectively to pupils' progress.
54. The great majority of parents are very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. A few parents expressed concerns about homework, but inspection evidence showed that this is regularly set and is appropriate to the abilities and ages of the pupils concerned. Some stated that they did not feel well informed, but the school has regular communication with parents through newsletters which contain very good information about events at the school. The school brochure is comprehensive and the governors' annual report to parents carefully outlines the work of the school. In addition, the teachers are freely available for parents to see at the end of the school day. Letters are sent home frequently, for example, to parents of children in the Reception class and talks were given to explain literacy and numeracy teaching.
55. Pupils' annual reports of progress are very comprehensive and give good explanations of what pupils know, understand and can do. Statutory requirements are met and additional information is provided giving targets for the future. Many parents expressed satisfaction with this information. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are held termly and are generally well attended by parents.
56. Some parents regularly help in classes. The formation of clubs for community use, for example the computer club and parental skills, have increased parents' awareness of school life. The school also plans to hold workshops for parents so that they can support their children more effectively with their homework. Many parents encourage their children with the educational games from the resources library which is supplied through the Education Action Zone initiative and very well supervised by parents. The efforts of the Parent Teacher Association are much appreciated by the school. They give valuable financial support to the school by providing resources to enhance pupils' learning.
57. The school has a well developed community room and the artist-in-residence painted murals on the wall creating a serene and pleasant environment. During the inspection a group of parents worked with the artist to provide a canvas for the wall of the dining hall. Its strong and vibrant motif can only enhance the atmosphere for the pupils. A parent and toddler group meets in the community room on two mornings each week. The parents enjoy the strong relationship they have with the school and feel the group provides a valuable link for children between home and school.
58. The school values its links and partnership with parents. Early in the new year a comprehensive questionnaire was sent out to parents and replies were carefully analysed and acted upon. Many parents were happy to sign the newly-introduced home-school agreements and the high number of returns shows parents are supportive of the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and provides very strong leadership. The priorities for improvement are clear, specific and meet the identified needs of the school. There is a clear commitment across the school to improving standards in all subjects. This is apparent in the improvement in attainment at the end of Year 4 in English and for both key stages in science. The headteacher and all members of staff work closely with parents to promote, establish and develop positive attitudes to learning and behaviour. This has a very marked impact on pupils' values and standards. The headteacher has very good support from the deputy headteacher and the other member of the senior management team.
60. All teachers have responsibility for managing one or more areas of the curriculum. They discharge these duties effectively and are successful in identifying what is necessary in order to improve standards. They make a very positive contribution to the quality of education and the school's ethos. They monitor and evaluate provision and standards effectively through analysis of test results and monitoring of planning. They examine pupils' work annually and this gives a satisfactory overview of pupils' achievements.
61. The analysis of assessment results and the introduction of target setting are having a positive impact on standards. The monitoring of teaching is thorough and rigorous. The headteacher identifies strengths and weaknesses and gives teachers individual feedback on their performance. This forms part of their appraisal and the school's performance management procedures.
62. The school makes effective use of the special needs support service in the identification of pupils who need extra help. It provides support for higher attaining pupils as well as those with learning and behavioural difficulties. This has a beneficial effect on learning, progress and standards. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages this area very well. The governor responsible for special educational needs gives a good level of assistance. The school makes very effective use of the limited support from the special educational needs support service. The school analyses the effectiveness of its use of the budget for special educational needs very carefully.
63. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties. It is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has a strong determination to take the steps necessary to raise standards. The governors have clear strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The governors show a strong interest in the school's work and in its involvement with the local community. There are appropriate committees with clear terms of reference. The school has specific governors for key roles, such as literacy and numeracy, and they visit the school regularly. The headteacher gives the governors regular information about the school's curriculum and progress. They have regular reports and meet twice a term. The governor with oversight of special educational needs is well aware of the duties and legal responsibilities attached to the role. The school has a very good improvement plan. It has suitably high targets for raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics. It is in a good position to meet them because of its commitment to continuing improvement and the constant evaluation of the strategies adopted to achieve them.
64. The governors are fully aware of the restrictions of the school's budget. The school currently has large carry over in excess of recommended levels, however, this is in order to maintain staffing levels for single age group classes as far as possible. It has been the school's policy and priority to date to maintain single age group classes. There is a possibility of this arrangement not being financially viable in the future and discussions are already taking place as to the best possible alternatives which will still enable the pupils to make good progress. The efficiency of financial control and school administration is very good. The school's finances are managed very competently by the school's budget manager and the headteacher and on a day-to-day basis by the administration officer. The financial situation is monitored effectively by

the finance committee of the governing body. Resource options are discussed and carefully

monitored. The recent audit was very positive and the few recommendations made have been satisfactorily addressed.

65. Specific funding allocated to the school for provision for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately and funds allocated for the professional development of staff have been used wisely and according to areas defined in the school improvement plan. The careful administration of the standards fund by the headteacher has ensured it has been used effectively in the school's quest to improve standards. Most of the funding has been taken up in training for national initiatives such as the numeracy and literacy strategies but training for the school's information technology project has been appropriately provided.
66. Day-to-day administration is very good; office procedures are very efficient, run smoothly and support teaching and learning effectively. Effective use is being made of information technology and both the administrator and headteacher attend courses in order that they may utilise this to maximum benefit. The school office is very welcoming and gives a very good and lasting first impression. Parents invariably receive the help they need and have no concerns about approaching the staff for help and advice.
67. The school consistently uses the principles of best value. The monitoring systems introduced, together with the tracking of pupils' progress and comparison of results with similar schools, enable the school to identify its priorities effectively. It consults parents and other outside bodies to seek their views and provides appropriate courses and workshops for parents in order that they can help their own children more effectively. The school compares its performance with that of other schools to enable it to set targets. The school and governing body select the best quotations locally for projects it undertakes, taking into account quality as well as price. They receive considerable support from the local community and businesses.
68. There is a good number of teaching staff. As a result, class sizes through Key Stages 1 and 2 are, on average, below 22. Teachers are deployed effectively and their particular curriculum responsibilities in school are generally well-matched to their qualifications or expertise.
69. Support staff are adequate in number and offer good levels of skill. When working with groups of pupils, their contribution is good. When 'listening in' on a full class session led by the teacher, they are effective in ensuring that the pupils with whom they are seated are well behaved and attentive. However, they do not always make maximum use of sessions such as these to help pupils contribute more actively to the lesson.
70. New staff are well supported. There are effective, annual professional development interviews that follow the observation of teachers at work in their classrooms. If these interviews highlight the need for training, either to benefit the school or the individual, this is provided. In all training, the school makes judicious choices between using the expertise of members of staff, attending specific courses and inviting expertise into the school to provide training that addresses its needs specifically.
71. The accommodation is good. The school is housed in two adjacent buildings, one housing the Early Years and the other Years 1 to 4. The daily standard of maintenance is high and a good learning environment is maintained. Careful management of the two areas means that inconvenience is kept to a minimum. The school library is based in the Early Years building and is very attractive and used effectively by pupils.
72. The attractive grounds have a good hard play area and playing fields. The secure play area for children under five years of age has a good quality safety surface and provides a wide range of activities. All these areas are used effectively to enrich the curriculum and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
73. The school is generally well resourced and appropriate equipment and books are available. The range and quality of books and materials for teaching literacy and numeracy are appropriate to the age group. There is an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library. Information technology is well resourced as a result of funding through the Education Action Zone initiative. This has led to the school purchasing an excellent suite of

lap-top computers which provide versatility and can be used in classrooms. As a result, standards in information technology have risen, particularly pupils' word processing skills. Learning resources for the under-fives are good and include good quality outdoor play equipment. The school's good level of resources overall is having a significant and positive impact on pupils' progress and the levels of attainment in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to raise standards and enhance the quality of pupils' learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should :
- (1) Take steps to improve the teaching in Year 3 by providing appropriate support and training. (Paras. 25,97,110.)
 - (2) Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2 by :
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss and interpret reading material. (Paras.2,20,92,99.)
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write independently in order effectively to apply the punctuation, spelling and grammar skills they have learned. (Paras.2,20,94,99.)
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have learned in mathematics to solving mathematical problems.(Paras.4,5,20,103,105.)
 - (3) Set up consistent assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics, information technology and religious education in order that pupils' learning can be planned progressively.(Paras.7,49,50,109,111,114,117,121,127,139,144.)

In addition to the above the governors, headteacher and staff should consider adding the following minor issue to the action plan.

- (4) Introduce further measures to improve attendance and punctuality by:
 - Instigating a policy to ensure that holidays in term time are more closely regulated and monitored by the school. (Para.17)
 - Encouraging parents' to take more responsibility for the attendance and punctuality of their children. (Para.16)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	67	14	7	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

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	35	215
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	50

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	32	17	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	24
	Girls	16	17	16
	Total	36	40	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73	82	82
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	26	27
	Girls	17	16	17
	Total	38	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78	86	90
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	213
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	509,036
Total expenditure	520,743
Expenditure per pupil	2,108
Balance brought forward from previous year	74,267
Balance carried forward to next year	62,560

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	37	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	63	5	5	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	32	21	5	0
The teaching is good.	53	42	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	21	16	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	47	0	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	42	32	16	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	37	37	5	11	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	37	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	32	11	11	5

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents. Comments accompanying the returned questionnaires were almost all supportive of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

75. The provision for the under fives is good, and it has a significant effect on children's learning and progress. This is a strength of the school. Children enter the nursery with a range of social and early learning skills and for many children these are well below the level expected for this age. This is confirmed by an initial assessment of children's achievements which is approved by the local education authority. Through good provision they make good progress overall in all the areas of their work. On entry to the reception classes, whilst many children have achieved well they are not at the level expected for their age in language and literacy and mathematical skills. This is because a significant minority of children do not have the everyday vocabulary to describe their ideas and experiences. Children's achievements are in line with expectations for their age in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, and physical development. They make very good progress in personal and social development and their attainment is in line with expectations.
76. The good quality teaching is a significant strength in the nursery provision. The very good expertise of the nursery staff is shown in the teaching methods used and the good and often very good learning opportunities that are provided across the range of children's work. All the groups are organised and resourced well and this fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and very good behaviour of the children. Children show very good levels of concentration, initiative and independence for their age because this is encouraged by the staff. There are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress and these are used successfully to plan the next step in their learning. The nursery is effectively led and managed. The support staff have a significant input into planning and teaching, and staff work successfully together as a team.
77. There is very good provision in personal and social development. Teaching and support staff are caring, supportive and encouraging; for instance in praising children's achievements. Adults are very good role models; they listen with genuine interest to what children have to say and speak with courtesy and consideration. Children are polite in return; for instance, they say "please" and "thank you" at fruit time. This promotes children's self-esteem and confidence, and fosters the development of very good relationships with adults and each other. These underpin children's good behaviour; they co-operate very well with each other in pairs and groups and take care of and share equipment with one another. They are beginning to take responsibility for their own resources and are developing initiative and independence in their choice of activities. For instance, they make choices about the activities they undertake in group work, and tidy equipment away. They settle quickly and happily into daily routines, such as snack time. Children are developing a good awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong and are learning to care about the world around them.
78. The quality of teaching in language and literacy is good and this has a positive effect on children's learning. Children's responses show that they listen with very good attention to explanations and instructions. Most children know that words and pictures carry meaning and are beginning to enjoy books and stories. The teacher read the story of *The Bear and the Picnic Lunch* with good expression gaining children's interest and concentration. They made good progress in learning the sequence of the story and thoroughly enjoyed the activity. Children joined in well with familiar phrases and rhyming words. Some children recognise letters and words, such as their names. Many children develop competent early writing skills through mark making; for instance when they write their own stories or messages. Some children form letters correctly when writing their name but some have poor control when writing with a pencil.
79. Many children lack the confidence and competence to join in readily in discussions and this affects their achievement in all aspects of language and literacy. Staff focus clearly on extending children's vocabulary in their conversations and questioning of the children. Some children have a limited vocabulary for expressing their ideas and experiences and respond

with one word answers. Most children are beginning to speak in phrases and sentences. Their vocabulary is increasing, and they respond with simple answers when they are questioned by an adult.

80. Teaching in mathematics is good. Teachers show a good understanding of how young children learn and provide a range of interesting activities and use the correct vocabulary. They use many opportunities to promote children's understanding. For instance, when children sang a number rhyme about jelly fish, an attractive chart was provided so that they could attach the pictures. This successfully promoted their understanding of *more than* and *less than*. Children using the sand are encouraged to count the sandcastles they make and talk about *heavier* and *lighter* buckets of sand. They make sandwiches and count the ingredients and the number of knives they need. Children count up to five and recognise two-dimensional shapes such as *circle* and *triangle*. They describe some of the significant features, such as a triangle has three corners. Many children do not have the everyday vocabulary to express their ideas clearly and this affects their attainment.
81. In knowledge and understanding of the world teachers make good use of resources to promote children's interest and learning. Through good teaching children make good progress in choosing materials and making decisions about the objects they make. For example, they chose the materials to make a bag to carry sandwiches for a picnic and tested their design to see if it worked. Their understanding of the conditions plants need to grow is promoted well through growing cress, lettuce and tomatoes which they use to make sandwiches for a picnic. Children use the mouse with developing accuracy to work computer programs. Children's work is enhanced by visits into the community, such as to Hall Hill Farm and the library, and by visitors to the classroom. For instance, students from the local high school consulted the children about the designs for costumes for the Christmas production.
82. Children make good progress in creative development. They listen well to taped music and they are familiar with the words of simple songs, such as 'If you're happy and you know it'. Displays of children's work show that they are given many opportunities to create their own drawings and paintings. The drawings of a few children who are capable of high attainment are of a good standard; for instance their detailed drawings of people have precise features and fingers. Teaching in the subject is good and is enriched by very good links with a local artist who has worked with them regularly. In this work they successfully explore colour, shape and texture and this helps them to make very good progress in this aspect of their learning.
83. Children make good progress in their physical activities and their physical development overall is average for their age. They show increasing control and co-ordination when using a range of tools, such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors, for instance when they draw, write and paint. Children handle construction apparatus competently. They listen very carefully to instructions and join in enthusiastically in physical activities. Most children show suitable co-ordination and good awareness of space and each other when moving to music, walking, running and jumping.
84. The improvement since the last inspection is good. The good provision identified in the nursery has been maintained and assessment procedures have improved and now provide more information about what children know, understand and can do.

ENGLISH

85. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils achieved standards in reading and writing which were well below the national average. When compared with schools with similar intakes standards in reading and writing were average. Over the last four years there has been an improvement in reading and writing standards broadly in line with national trends although at a lower level. Boys perform less well than girls in reading

and writing. The school is taking active steps to redress this imbalance, particularly in reading.

The 'Born to Read' initiative, providing a good foundation in the early years, and the literacy strategy are having a positive impact on standards.

86. Inspection findings show that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving standards that are average in speaking and listening, and below average in reading and writing. Standards are only slightly higher than last year mainly because although the impact of the literacy strategy is beginning to permeate through the key stage, there is also a higher level of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 this year.
87. Inspection findings show that most pupils at the end of Year 4 achieve the levels expected for their age in speaking and listening, reading and writing. However, the range of attainment is wide. Many pupils who have special educational needs achieve levels which are above those that might be expected given their prior achievements, because of the high quality of teaching in these classes.
88. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards in speaking and listening that are in line with the national average and pupils make good progress. Most are beginning to speak confidently although they are sometimes limited by a poor vocabulary. They answer questions appropriately in class and assemblies and can describe what they are doing and what they have learned quite clearly.
89. By the age of nine pupils are more articulate. They are more confident and their speaking and listening skills are developing appropriately for their age. They are more analytical in discussion and can describe technical processes more fluently when working at other subjects. For example, pupils could describe clearly the difference between a parallel and series circuit in science. They can express opinions more confidently and give logical reasons for them. They listen carefully to their peers and extend ideas already expressed, for example when discussing the Romans' invasion in history.
90. Standards in reading are below average at the end of Year 2. Some pupils in Year 2 can read a simple text with accuracy and understanding but lower attaining pupils are more hesitant in their reading and do not have a broad sight vocabulary. Many pupils in Year 2 use the sounds made by letters to assist them when working out an unknown word and some use the pictures in books to give clues to the meaning of stories. However too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply the reading skills they are being taught. There are many instances when pupils do not fully understand the texts they are reading although they can work out the words correctly. Most have a sound knowledge of the alphabet but few can use simple dictionaries or use the index correctly in reference books.
91. Standards in reading by the time pupils leave the school at nine are average. They are beginning to read a wider range of texts. Most participate well in whole class reading at the start of the literacy hour, commenting on features such as plot and characterisation. They have opportunities to research different texts, and compare how these present different points of view about a similar event, for example the invasion of the Romans and the Iceni tribe. In their personal reading they recognise a wider range of words, read expressively and have appropriate strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. The highest attaining pupils use alphabetical order efficiently when using a dictionary or index. Some read non-fiction text for pleasure and many make good use of reference material particularly in history. However, not all pupils can competently use the classification system for the school library.
92. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 are below average. Pupils learn the skills of correct punctuation, grammar and spelling. They can write individual sentences in an exercise and use capital letters and full stops correctly. They can spell some common words correctly and some pupils show an awareness of sounds made by letters when attempting less familiar vocabulary. However pupils have too few opportunities to write freely and develop these skills in extended

writing. Consequently when pupils do write stories or accounts they are often poorly spelled and punctuated. Pupils take care over the presentation of their work and good progress is made in the development of handwriting with many pupils joining their writing correctly.

93. By the age of nine pupils are achieving average standards in writing. Many pupils write independently, they organise their writing appropriately and their vocabulary is increasing because they are encouraged to use dictionaries and thesauri to find alternative words. Independent writing is completed to a satisfactory standard by planning and re-drafting stories appropriately. They are beginning to write in a wider range of styles and build on the skills they have learned. They develop appropriate skills in other subject areas. For example, in history they take notes when researching the Iceni tribe and Boudicca and develop these into their own accounts. Pupils are beginning to understand grammar and can define parts of speech such as nouns and verbs. Many are beginning to use punctuation well and some use conventions such as speech marks correctly in their extended writing. The spelling of common words is often accurate although few pupils can spell more complex words correctly. Most pupils have developed a fluent, joined style of handwriting and take pride in the neat presentation of their work. Pupils write in a wide range of styles, producing well-written imaginative work often divided into chapters and episodes. They write play scripts after carrying out research as to how characters might behave, and submit well presented topic work such as that produced after a visit to Vindolanda.
94. In Key Stage 2 pupils' developing literacy and oracy skills help them cope with the full range of the curriculum. Good examples of the use and practice of these skills were seen in many subjects during the inspection. Pupils record their work in science in an appropriate form and with the correct vocabulary. Writing skills are applied well in history and geography to provide factual accounts and extended pieces of writing. Good use is made of information technology to develop word processing skills and to achieve a good standard of presentation. In Key Stage 1 literacy and oracy skills are well utilised in history when pupils are learning about how homes have changed over time, and in science when correct terminology is used when discussing sound.
95. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. It is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. There is a marked improvement in the quality of pupils' speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate an improving ability to speak clearly and with expression when, for example, pupils at the end of Year 4 read their work to the rest of the class. There is a significant improvement in pupils' reading standards by the end of Year 4 and the difference in standards between boys and girls is less defined. This is a direct result of the impact of the literacy strategy and the improvement in the quality of teaching. As the pupils move through the school they experience a widening range of reading material and learn specific reading skills.
96. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their teachers give them specific tasks in reading and writing to help meet their educational needs. The work for higher attaining pupils throughout the school increases in the level of challenge. This enhances the quality of their learning and progress and increases their attainment.
97. The quality of teaching is good overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers show a secure knowledge of the subject and of the methodology of the literacy strategy. They plan well structured lessons which cover all aspects of English. Lessons have clear objectives and incorporate good levels of direct teaching, opportunities for individual and group work. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to develop the skills they have learned through free writing and not always sufficient mechanisms to check understanding of learning, particularly in relation to reading. At the end of Year 4 pupils are learning effectively because the teaching is very good. Teachers are confident. They inspire the pupils with an interest and love of literature, for example in the way they read stories. They make good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. There is a lively pace and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. For instance, in a Year 4 lesson pupils were expected to work responsibly together and collaborate effectively when sharing ideas and thoughts when writing a play script. Pupils are learning to concentrate for lengthy periods and take pride in completing work to a sound standard within a given time scale. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher's expectations of what the pupils could achieve was inappropriate and the management of pupils' behaviour was poor resulting in insufficient learning taking place.

98. The subject is managed effectively by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has introduced a range of effective assessment procedures in English which have been used to set individual targets and enable the school to track the progress of all pupils. These are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards as the needs of pupils are identified and planned for. The quality and use of assessment is consistent throughout the school. The school has a portfolio of annotated and levelled work in English. This makes a positive contribution to the accuracy of teacher's assessments of pupils' achievements. The library is well organised, has a good stock of fiction and reference books and pupils make effective use of it. Overall, pupils make good progress and by the time they leave in Year 4 they achieve standards in excess of what might be expected given their attainment on entry to the school.

MATHEMATICS

99. The results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests show that the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level, Level 2, was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level, Level 3, was close to the national average. In the current year, inspection findings indicate a greater proportion is working at Level 2 while a smaller proportion is working at Level 3. Standards now are below average, not well below as they were last year. National test results have fluctuated from year to year. Overall, there is a slight upward trend in results although not as high as that shown nationally. When compared with schools in which a similarly high proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals, standards are very similar. By the time pupils transfer to middle school, standards remain below those expected. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be sound, however the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is now much higher, and pupils enter the school with lower levels of attainment than previously.
100. The majority of pupils throughout the school have a sound understanding of number. By the end of the reception year, most pupils recognise numbers to 30 and can give the numbers before and after one within that range. In Year 1, pupils explain that $5+6$ is $5+5+1$ or that $4+7=11$ because $4+6=10$. In Year 2, pupils double 6 and halve 20. Only the most able can double 16 or find a half of £1.20. Year 3 pupils count in fives to 105, most can count back again. The most able in this class know about inverse operations. Year 4 pupils recognise multiples of two by looking at the last digit of a number. All recognise whole and a quarter of a simple shape. Most know that if a quarter of a shape is shaded, then three-quarters is unshaded. The most able make a fraction of two random digits, two and seven for example and draw a shape in which two-sevenths are shaded.
101. While skills in number work often progress well, pupils do not find it easy to apply these skills to solve simple problems. This applies throughout the school. A good example is the most able pupils in Year 2. They are good at halving and doubling simple numbers and know that double 40 is 80 and half of 80 is 40. However, when told that a toy is being sold at 'half price for 40p', they calculate that the 'real' price is 20p. Furthermore, they have difficulty in recognising their mistake when it is discussed with them.
102. The emphasis in mathematics is on number although there is appropriate coverage of other elements such as shape and space and data handling. Mathematics is often used effectively in other areas of the curriculum. In history, for example, pupils learn to understand chronology. They do 'active maths' in physical education, repeating patterns in art and work out the number of decades since 1930 by counting on in tens.
103. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are several significant strengths. Teachers' planning is very good and learning objectives are usually shared with pupils. This is a positive feature. Teachers usually have good skills when managing pupils, a significant number of whom present challenging behaviour. The pace of lessons is good and teachers use a range of skilful strategies to both interest and motivate their class. Teaching in mathematics has few weaknesses. Classroom support assistants are not always used as effectively as they might be to help pupils develop their problem solving skills. During the week of inspection, the work set for pupils ranged in difficulty and was well matched to the ability of the pupils for whom it was

intended. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work over the course of the full year indicated that, occasionally, all the pupils in the class were expected to do the same work. The quality of pupils' learning through both key stages varies but is sound overall. This is because pupils are having insufficient opportunities to apply the skills they are learning. Occasionally it is the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils which causes some disruption and in a few lessons, pupils' learning is affected as a result.

104. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her work in the subject and does a lot to monitor the progress pupils make. While both she and the Year 4 teachers have a very clear understanding of the mathematics that pupils in Year 4 can do, they do not have a sufficiently clear idea about how these standards relate to National Curriculum levels. A sound assessment system is in place but, until this year, the school has not used any of the nationally produced tests in Years 3 and 4; consequently they have been unable to track pupils' progress effectively.
105. The co-ordinator has tried to involve parents in helping their children with mathematics at home but this has met with little success. She rightly sees this as one rich source of help in raising standards, if parental support could be channelled productively.

SCIENCE

106. At the time of the last inspection attainment in relation to national expectations was average in science at the end of Key Stage 1 and when the pupils left the school at the end of Year 4. In the teacher assessments in 1999 pupils in Year 2 achieved standards which were below the national average overall although when compared with similar schools they were average. From the evidence of work seen most pupils in Year 2 are achieving average standards in line with what is expected although few pupils achieve higher levels. Pupils in Year 4 are also achieving average standards although some are also achieving standards well in excess of this. However, there is a similar proportion of pupils in one class of this year group who are not achieving the levels expected, and who have quite clearly suffered from a lack of challenge in their work in the early part of the school year. Standards in this class are rapidly improving although they were clearly too low. Standards overall in Years 3 and 4 have suffered from some unsatisfactory teaching although the school has taken positive steps to address this. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and now, in most classes, in Key Stage 2. They are developing their scientific skills and knowledge and understanding. Pupils have a good oral recall of work covered, particularly in Year 4 and show a sound understanding of their learning.
107. The youngest pupils in the reception class learn the principles of solutions and dissolving through practical tasks, such as washing clothes. They predict what will happen to the soap powder when it is mixed with hot, cold and warm water and then test these predictions. They can explain how that when mixed with hot water the soap powder dissolves very quickly, but in cold it is much slower and does not all 'disappear' in to the water. Pupils have also been investigating floating and sinking. Interactive displays in the classroom provide opportunities for pupils to experiment for themselves if a range of objects float or sink and extend their learning in a more informal manner. The pupils in Year 1 investigate sound and successfully combine this with work on the senses. They can identify a range of sounds both in and outside the school and through a series of practical experiments they learn that the senses often work best when two or three are combined; for example when trying to identify from which direction a sound emanates. Pupils in Year 2 can identify and label the parts of a plant. They have studied materials and sorted them by texture and whether they are manufactured or natural. Pupils in all classes learn through practical experimentation. By the time they are in Year 2 they investigate and carry out fair tests with confidence. They predict results from an early stage and record their findings appropriately. This policy of enabling pupils to learn through experimentation and investigation enhances the progress that pupils make.
108. In Key Stage 2 pupils achieve average standards. Year 3 pupils are studying healthy eating. Pupils understand that a balanced diet is essential for healthy growth and that too much fat or carbohydrate can be harmful. They discover for themselves the causes of tooth decay and carry out investigations into the effectiveness of toothpaste. In Year 4 pupils carry out detailed

investigations into electricity. They understand the difference between parallel and series circuits and recognise and use the appropriate symbols in diagrams. They organise and set up experiments to investigate the insulating properties of a range of materials. They confidently discuss fair testing and can explain how the introduction of more than one bulb into a series circuit would affect the brightness of a bulb.

109. Teaching is good overall. It is good at Key Stage 1 and sound at Key Stage 2. Standards of learning are generally good because pupils are active throughout the lessons and learn through investigating and testing hypotheses for themselves. Lessons are well prepared and take place at a lively pace. Teachers ensure that all the materials and apparatus that might be needed are readily available, so that pupils can select for themselves what is required for particular investigations. Lessons are generally well planned. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and have clear links to the National Curriculum programme of study. They begin with questions and a brief recap of what has been previously learned and then build on this prior knowledge. Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils in terms of understanding, the ability to get work done in the time, and of behaviour. This applies across both key stages. For example, pupils in Year 1 were expected to complete a series of tasks about sound, whilst those in Year 4 were expected to set up and complete an electrical investigation in the course of a lesson. Both sessions involved only minimal, but appropriate, teacher intervention after initial explanations. Sensitive guidance, often through pertinent questioning is always available, but pupils are expected to, and do, work independently. Their behaviour is managed in a positive and supportive way and relationships are secure. Pupils follow instructions carefully, concentrate well and persevere and this enhances their learning. The pace of lessons is brisk and appropriate extension work is provided for higher attaining pupils. Teachers make good use of information technology when teaching science and use it for recording results of investigations and for researching information. Whole-class teaching usually takes sufficient account of pupils' varying stages of development and teachers continually assess the level of pupils' knowledge in either a formal way, using specific criteria such as an assessment worksheet or informally throughout the lessons by discussions and questioning pupils. However methods of assessment are not consistent across the school, which inhibits planning the next steps in pupils' learning, particularly when teachers plan together for the next term's work.
110. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in science. In a Year 4 class there is evidence of work not being sufficiently challenging earlier in the year, and pupils frequently failed to finish tasks they had started. Work completed was of a far lower standard than in the other class. This situation has been resolved and the pupils in the class are now appropriately challenged, and complete work to much the same standards as the other group. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in a Year 3 class. Pupils studying healthy eating had to examine the labels on packets of food and determine whether the amounts of fat or carbohydrate contained in the product would be good or bad for them. Most pupils failed to understand the task as it was far too complex, and they had great difficulty in trying to interpret the amounts given. Consequently their enthusiasm was minimal and concentration levels were low. Because pupils were not fully involved in the activity they became disruptive. This combined with poor classroom management skills led to unsatisfactory behaviour. Very little learning took place except by the group of pupils receiving support from an additional teacher.
111. Numeracy and literacy skills are used and extended within science lessons. Pupils write up their findings using technical vocabulary. They record results in a variety of ways including graphs, pictograms and pie charts. They are encouraged to measure correctly, for example when carrying out investigations into friction. Cross-curricular links are promoted well. For example, pupils constructed an alarm in design and technology using the electrical circuits they had been learning about in science.
112. Resources in science are barely adequate. A large order has been submitted to augment the current supply which should have a positive impact on standards as it will mean, for example, that all magnets should work effectively. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The scheme of work for science has integrated nationally published guidelines into the school's

topic headings. This is satisfactory but assessment procedures are underdeveloped and inconsistent across the school. This is a weakness and affects the planning of pupils' work across classes and year groups as there are no set criteria for assessing pupils' current level of attainment. There has been no monitoring of the teaching and learning in classrooms and samples of work have only recently been collected. They have not been assessed against National Curriculum criteria and therefore have little value in assisting the teachers when they make their own assessments of pupils' work.

ART

113. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection. However, conversations held with staff and pupils, together with the displays of art work around the school, show that pupils make very good progress in the subject. They have experience in using a wide range of media and experimenting with a number of techniques. The school has successfully maintained the high standards reported at the time of the last inspection through good quality management by the co-ordinator and also the very good use of time and integration of art into cross curricular topics.
114. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are developing a range of techniques in experimenting with a variety of media. They have experimented with paper weaving to make delightful pictures of fish, sweets, fruit and toys. They are learning how different materials may be used in the creation of collage pictures; for example the treasure island and pirate ships of their role-play areas. They develop an awareness of colour and tone in their paintings, which are bright, incorporating a bold use of colour and are full of life. The use of computers is exploited to the full and pupils use a paint program to develop their own pictures of familiar nursery rhymes. Year 2 pupils have created their own simple printing blocks using card and string. They experiment with the technique of printing creating a repeated pattern through the use of different colours and rotating images.
115. Older pupils listen to 'La Mer' by Debussy and then create their own sea pictures. Some sensitive and delicate underwater scenes have been developed using pastels delicately blended to produce a hazy, translucent effect. The story of Grace Darling is used to create a different type of picture. Stark, dark pictures of lighthouses against a black background reminiscent of stormy days with the light flashing being successfully represented by the imaginative use of pastels and chalk. Year 4 pupils design and make their own mosaic to link in with the topic they are studying on the Romans. They make good progress in learning a range of techniques and skills. They studied the work of the illustrator David Kennet and emulated his distinctive style when creating their own black and white, pen and ink illustrations for the poem Voices, by Ed Wignall. Pupils study the work of other artists such as Rousseau and Gauguin. They have attempted to create their own paradise pictures after the style of Gauguin using the same garish, bright colours. More unusual works have been created using the school's digital camera. They have studied the work of professional photographers and tried to gain the same effects by experimenting with distance and position. Year 4 pupils have created some excellent photographs of objects taken from unusual angles, which are effective and demonstrate the perseverance of the pupils.
116. It is evident from the work seen that pupils have worked very hard and gained great enjoyment from creating their own art works. They have paid meticulous care to detail and shown great

sensitivity when creating their work. The expertise they have gained in their art work has carried over with benefit into other areas of the curriculum so that in history, for example, illustrations for their work show the same finesse and sureness of touch as in art.

117. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection but it was evident from the work seen around the school that teaching overall is good. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to experiment, using a variety of media to increase their creativity. Planning is thorough and the school has a wide range of appropriate resources. In the lessons seen the teachers thoroughly discussed the subject of their pictures with the pupils. The teachers asked

pertinent questions, such as, 'What do you need to consider when you are developing your print pattern' to help them plan their designs. This focused the pupils' attention on such issues as use of colour and pattern repeats. However there is no consistent method of assessing pupils' work in art throughout the school. It is evident that the teaching allows pupils' skills to develop progressively, and inspires pupils to work with enthusiasm and confidence at challenging tasks. The school has a good range of resources which are used very well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. At the time of the last inspection, standards in design and technology were judged sound and often good. Inspection evidence shows that standards are now satisfactory and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress.
119. Pupils have good opportunities to design, make and evaluate. The work they undertake is often cleverly linked to what they are doing in other lessons. In Year 1, for example, pupils work on playground equipment suitable for nursery children. With due attention to safety, they use a range of materials and equipment to construct their models. They recognise flaws in their own ideas and are able to suggest how these might be resolved. One pupil, for example, realised that the slide was 'too floppy' and proceeded to strengthen it with lolly sticks and glue. Year 1 pupils use construction kit materials to illustrate work on structures in science. Year 2 pupils use clay and twigs to replicate the framework of an African hut linked to geography. Year 3 pupils use corrugated plastic, hinged so that it will form the cover of a book and then, in literacy lessons, produce the contents. Year 4 pupils, following a visit to Vindolanda on the Roman Wall, design an alarm system that could be used to protect valuable Roman artefacts on display. This work also helps them to understand electric circuits, an important part of their work in science.
120. Although these close links are forged between design and technology and other subjects, the development of appropriate skills is not compromised. The curriculum also allows pupils to experience working with a range of different materials. Displays of work and photographs show, for example, that pupils have recently worked with food to make sandwiches, fabric to make puppets, card, paper and wood to make picture frames to surround a photograph and clay to make ceramic tiles.
121. The two lessons observed were both in Key Stage 1. On such limited evidence it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. Teachers plan their lessons well and resources are always to hand. The activities are challenging yet fun. Teachers ask pertinent questions and encourage pupils to explain their ideas. The weakness in one lesson was the inability of the class teacher fully to control all the pupils in the classroom. The result was a slowing of the pace of the lesson and the progress that pupils could make. As yet there are no consistent systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' work and the quality of teaching in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

122. Only one lesson was observed in each subject during the inspection week. Further evidence was gained from the work in pupils' books and on display, and discussions with pupils and teachers. Most pupils are making good progress in their learning and their work is similar to that expected for their age. The curriculum is made richer and more interesting by visits in the locality, such as the Year 2 visit to Beamish museum and the Year 4 visit to Vindolanda. In geography good use is made of visits into the local environment; for example walks near the school are used to promote pupils' understanding of routes. Strong links are made between the two subjects and these promote pupils' learning effectively; for example in the Year 4 work on settlements. In history, teachers make good use of artefacts to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, such as replicas of Roman coins and toys.
123. In history, Year 4 pupils show good recall of previous learning about the Romans and compare the way of life with that of today. In geography, average pupils, and those who are capable of high achievement, use four figure grid references accurately. In their work about an imaginary island, Year 3 pupils show a sound knowledge of weather symbols, and combine this well with their scientific knowledge of the conditions needed for plants to grow. Year 2 pupils use the computer competently to word process their writing about the way of life in coal mines in the past. In both key stages pupils with special educational needs are enabled to succeed through the effective support they receive from class teachers and support assistants. In the lessons seen pupils show enthusiasm and interest in both subjects.
124. In the lessons seen, teaching was very good in history and good in geography. In both lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is based upon clearly established classroom rules and routines, such as listening carefully to the contribution of others. Pupils are given frequent praise for their good behaviour and effort; they respond well and their behaviour is good. Their responses to teachers' questions show that pupils have listened well. Most pupils work co-operatively in pairs and groups, and take pride in their work which is neatly presented. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work carefully using the correct subject vocabulary and this promotes their understanding and good progress.
125. Interesting methods are used to motivate pupils and this fosters their enthusiasm and good concentration. Year 4 pupils baked oat cakes in preparation for a day in which they will re-enact life in Roman times. In the Year 2 geography lesson the teacher used an attractively decorated box and a damaged one to encourage pupils to discuss attractive and unattractive features. This theme was developed well through the good use of photographs in the group work when pupils identified attractive and unattractive features of the local environment. In the Year 4 history lesson there was very good organisation of group work, the work was matched well to pupils' differing capabilities and the pace was brisk. This meant that pupils covered a good amount of work and made very good progress in their learning. The work in pupils' books shows that they achieve a good standard in this class, and the teacher promotes pupils' literacy skills very well. They are given many opportunities to use their reading skills to find information, and to write independently and imaginatively. For instance, one pupil wrote about the character of Boudicca: 'Boudicca believed she could do anything if she put her mind to it. Her personality, mind and soul were powerful'.
126. Leadership and management are effective in both subjects. The co-ordinators give useful advice and support to staff and they have a clear view of how to develop the subjects further. In some classes pupils' achievements are assessed regularly at the end of a series of lessons but these procedures are not consistently carried out across the school.
127. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards in geography at both key stages, and in history in Key Stage 2, were deemed to be high and they are now judged to be satisfactory. In the past two years the school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the time given to geography and history has been reduced in accordance with national guidance. Additionally in Years 3 and 4 there has been some weak teaching during this year. These factors have had an adverse effect on the attainment of pupils. There has been good progress in the oral reporting of history, and in both

subjects the good quality of teachers' planning, and the experiences pupils are given, have been maintained. However, there are no formal systems in place for the monitoring of teaching or the assessment of pupils' work.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

128. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are sound overall but which exceed expectations in some areas. Progress has been good since the last inspection. Pupils have good keyboard skills and, through the skill with which information technology has been woven into the curriculum, pupils are also familiar with an extensive range of software. By the time pupils transfer to middle school at age nine, pupils continue to achieve average standards. The progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.
129. Most pupils are confident with word processing functions such as loading the program, altering font size and style, cutting, pasting and saving text and printing their work. Year 1 pupils make a desert island. Working independently of their teacher, they outline sea and sky, fill each section with colour, introduce an animal, tree and sun – adjusting the size of each – and finally, draw a pirate. Year 4 pupils produce a party invitation using a *word-art* headline and text of their choice and then combine these with graphics that complement the rest of their work. They work with great confidence, logging on, selecting the size of paper, moving text and pictures until they are satisfied, creating a border, checking printer connections and printing their work. They are clearly used to doing these things on a regular basis. Pupils from both key stages use simulations to explore real and imaginary situations and have some experience of using computers to control robotic toys.
130. A particular strength is the use of information technology in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils, having studied the work of some photographic artists, then use a digital camera to take some delightfully imaginative photographs of their own – a smile, an eye, an arrangement of rulers and a row of bare feet, for example. They write text which they cut and paste to make speech bubbles for literacy and, to contribute to their work in geography, they photograph areas locally where litter is a problem. Pupils write straight onto the computer in many lessons including history and English.
131. The quality of all the teaching observed was good. Teachers' own knowledge of the program or software in use is good and new skills are clearly explained to pupils. Planning is thorough with learning objectives clearly identified. Good use is made of additional funding; for example, it is currently being used to provide additional teaching time for groups of more able pupils in Key Stage 2. The school makes good use of pupils as 'teachers' too. For example, two or three pupils learn a new skill at computer club on Tuesday evening. They each teach the skill to two pupils who, in turn, do the same. Over the period of a week, their whole class has been shown the new skill and then, in the dedicated information technology lesson where the same skill is the particular focus, it is reinforced.
132. Pupils are keen to talk about what they know of computers and about the digital camera. They are interested in their work in the information technology suite and in using equipment elsewhere. They share computers well when it is necessary and treat them and other equipment with care and respect.
133. Teachers' planning is supported both by the national scheme and by that produced by the local education authority. Large laminated sheets taken from these provide teachers with a useful reference for each unit of work. Teachers are also well supported by the enthusiastic co-ordinator whose subject knowledge is considerable. She has been instrumental in helping staff to teach the subject by offering both training and encouragement. The school will very soon have greater internet access and will be able to make more use of its impressive web-site. The recently developed computer suite can cater for a full class with two pupils to each lap-top and each classroom also has a computer station. Software is sufficient, varied and well used.

MUSIC

134. Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection and these were both in Key Stage 2. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards. However from documentation examined, lessons observed and pupils' work seen it is clear that pupils follow a broad curriculum that allows them to cover the full range of the National Curriculum programme of study. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the pupils had too few opportunities for composing. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to listen to a variety of good quality music, for example, prior to assemblies. However, the choice of music is not always mentioned, and consequently, opportunities are missed to reinforce pupils' knowledge of various composers.
135. Pupils in Year 3 linked music and movement effectively when trying to understand how music is used to communicate different moods. They listened carefully to compositions by Tchaikowsky and Greig, discussed how the music made them feel and tried to convey these feelings through the movements they went on to make. Pupils persevered and although some displayed a degree of self consciousness behaviour was generally good.
136. In one lesson Year 4 pupils were composing their own music to accompany a fight scene in connection with their topic work. They were using a wide range of percussion instruments, and discussed maturely the effects they were trying to achieve. They experimented sensibly with the instruments. The results were appropriately noted in the form of graphic scores. Other pupils moved on to recording their compositions using conventional staves and recorded their rhythms using musical notation. In addition, there is a weekly recorder club and pupils have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments.
137. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They build effectively on what they already know and many develop a sensitivity to the range of moods that music is able to create. There is an appropriate emphasis on the enjoyment to be derived from music. The range of musical experiences offered to the pupils makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
138. Pupils' attitudes to their work in music are good. They are responsible, handle musical instruments with care and most show good levels of concentration. Behaviour in the music lessons observed was good. Most pupils are eager to join in, enthusiastic and settle quickly to work.
139. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching as too few lessons were observed. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good. Teachers are well supported by a good range of well-organised resources which back up the nationally approved guidelines which are the basis for music teaching in the school. Lessons are characterised by careful planning, good class control and a brisk pace of teaching. For example, in an effective lesson observed at Key Stage 2 the teacher had planned work to build carefully on musical skills that had been practised in an earlier lesson. Pupils were required to concentrate very hard to ensure that their performances on percussion instruments were accurate. The level of difficulty was increased further by fitting complex rhythms together to complete an entire composition. At both key stages teachers give pupils regular opportunities to listen and comment on patterns of sound and music from many cultures and the school's collection of taped music reflects this. There have been no opportunities for the subject manager to monitor the quality of teaching of music, and as yet there are no formal systems in place to assess pupils' attainment in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on physical education as only games lessons were observed during the inspection. At both key stages standards achieved were appropriate to their age and abilities. Staff support pupils with special educational needs effectively and this ensures that they participate fully in lessons and succeed in their learning. Year 4 pupils achieve high standards in swimming with most pupils swimming 25 metres and more. Their successes - collective and individual - are celebrated in assemblies.
141. Basic skills and techniques are taught carefully and help pupils to learn effectively. In a Year 4 lesson pupils were taught how to hold a hockey stick correctly and safely. The lesson was structured well so that they had many opportunities to practise control and dribbling the ball, individually, in pairs, and then in teams. Across both key stages pupils show a good awareness of space and of each other when travelling in different ways, such as walking, jogging and running. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the level of challenge in the activities was high. Pupils were expected to bounce and catch the ball whilst jogging round the room and moving on small apparatus such as benches. This motivated pupils and led them to concentrate very well and improve their skills in controlling and catching the ball.
142. In both lessons observed teachers gave very clear instructions and explanations so that pupils knew what they were to do and began work promptly. They placed a good emphasis on safety; for example, Year 1 pupils were shown how to lift and carry benches correctly. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they expected pupils to listen attentively and behave sensibly. They dealt in a firm but kind manner with the few pupils who occasionally did not respond appropriately. This approach encouraged pupils to behave well. Good use was made of pupils' demonstrations to show how expertise was developing and the range of pupils' ideas. Praise and encouragement was used well to reward pupils' efforts and achievements. This motivated pupils and encouraged them to improve their skills. Literacy skills were promoted well through the emphasis that teachers placed on the correct subject vocabulary, such as "chest pass". Personal development was promoted very well through direct teaching and the opportunities that pupils are given to make decisions about the way they work. In an effective Year 2 lesson, pupils invented their own games for small teams and the rules for playing them. This promoted their good understanding of the need for co-operation with one another and speaking and listening skills. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher reminded the pupils that everyone has differing talents and that they should show respect for the feelings of others by not criticising pupils who were less skilful than themselves. In one Year 2 lesson, the unsatisfactory organisation of the groups meant that pupils were insufficiently active during the lesson and this adversely affected their interest and learning.
143. In both key stages some pupils benefit from participating in the extra-curricular football club or from the coaching they receive from a local football club. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and behave sensibly, responsibly and with consideration for others. They listen carefully and show commitment to improving their skills through practice and perseverance. Teachers foster a positive attitude to equality of opportunity and this is reflected in the way pupils are organised for pairs and group work.
144. Leadership and management of the subject are effective. The co-ordinator is new to the role and she has brought about good improvements in the curriculum, such as a new scheme of work in reception. The assessment of pupils' achievements in lessons is informal and formal assessment systems are not in place. Progress since the last inspection is good because of the improvements in the subject policy, scheme of work and lesson planning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils achieve standards that meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils of seven years of age. At the end of Year 4 the pupils exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.

146. The pupils focus on Christianity and Judaism at Key Stage 1 and on Christianity and Hinduism at Key Stage 2. They explore a variety of beliefs within these religions. Pupils at both key stages have a good knowledge of people and stories from the Bible. By Year 4 pupils have increased their knowledge to include stories from the Hindu traditions. Pupils know about different religious symbols and festivals. For example, pupils at Key Stage 1 know that Easter and Passover are important festivals to Christians and Jews. They know and use the correct terms for artefacts in a church such as 'font', altar' and 'cross'. By Year 4 most pupils show a good level of understanding of why people pray. They show care and respect for religious artefacts and books. The pupils know that stories about Jesus are in the New Testament. They know that a church is a special building because it is the home for the Christian family. All the pupils understand that the Bible and other holy books teach people about how to lead a good life. The pupils recognise that many religions have a welcoming ceremony in which they give an infant a name. They know that the swastika is a symbol of peace for Hindus and effectively relate this to the Christian cross. Pupils explore the meaning of worship to different faiths and beliefs as well as concepts such as racism and life styles. They are developing a good understanding of the development of Christianity and relate this effectively to their understanding of what it means to belong to a family.
147. The pupils make good progress in their learning about religions at both key stages. They are developing a good understanding and awareness of the similarities between religions. For example, at Key Stage 1 they make significant gains in developing their understanding that all religions have similar festivals and celebrations. By the age of nine, the pupils show an increasingly good ability to use and apply ideas they learn from religious practices. This is evident in their ability to reason why they should treat each other kindly. All pupils understand the need to care for others as well as themselves. The pupils with special educational needs receive effective support in the classroom. This enables them to learn well and make good progress in their work.
148. Pupils have good attitudes to their work in religious education. They respond well and think carefully about issues. They show a good level of respect for the ideas and opinions of others and are confident in sharing their thoughts. The pupils are enthusiastic and eager to put forward their own ideas, although they have a limited range of vocabulary. They relate well to their teachers and to each other. Throughout the school the pupils are sensitive to the feelings of other pupils and value each other's thoughts and ideas. They have good levels of motivation to learn and enjoy the level of challenge in their work. All the pupils respond well to the opportunities for quiet contemplation they have during lessons.
149. The teaching of religious education is good. The teachers are confident in the subject and prepare their lessons thoroughly. This enables them to teach pupils about different religions and promote discussion to develop understanding. The teachers give careful thought to providing a calm and reflective atmosphere in the classroom for the teaching of religious education. Planning gives a good level of attention to the areas of learning in the agreed syllabus. The school provides a suitably wide range of opportunities to enable pupils to become aware of the religious element in life. This includes the provision of quiet areas around the school and a wild life garden in the school grounds. All teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their own experiences and relate them to those of other people. An example of this is in a Year 1 lesson when pupils explore the meaning of loss. The teachers and pupils are sensitive to sacred religious artefacts and treat them with respect and care.
150. The co-ordinator manages the subject very effectively. She has introduced a new scheme of work that closely follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This gives teachers clear guidance and suggestions to assist their teaching. She keeps a portfolio of work to define standards for different ability levels. This forms the basis for reporting to parents and for

assessing steps of progress. This is good practice. The school's resources are good. There is a suitably wide and relevant collection of artefacts and a plentiful supply of good quality books. This has a positive impact on standards.