

INSPECTION REPORT

ADDERLANE FIRST SCHOOL

Prudhoe

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122230

Headteacher: Mr. John Lambert

Reporting inspector: David Figures
10269

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd March 2000

Inspection number: 189242

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Broomhill Road Prudhoe Northumberland
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. David Soulsby
Date of previous inspection:	16 th September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Figures	Registered inspector	English	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		History	Teaching and learning
		Music	Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Ann Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Brenda Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
Michael Shaw	Team inspector	Science	
		Geography	
		Religious education	
		Equality of opportunity	
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a community first school catering for boys and girls between four and nine years of age. Thirty nine children were under the age of five at the time of the inspection.

Number of full time pupils:	158		Below average in size
Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds	0		
Pupils with English as an additional language:	0		
Pupils entitled to free school meals	42	32%	About the national average
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	19	13%	About average
Pupils with statements of special educational needs	0		

The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is below average; when pupils start the National Curriculum, their attainment is about average. A significant proportion of pupils join the school late in the key stage, some bringing learning and behavioural difficulties with them. Although the proportion of free school meals is average, many pupils come from an unsettled home background and the school faces significant challenges.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Adderlane First School is an effective school undergoing much change, with considerable strengths in the new leadership and management which give it the potential soon to be a good school. Work with children under five is a strength and standards are rising in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, although they remain unchanged in mathematics at this key stage and have yet to show improvement in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Provision for children under five is very good and they make good progress as a result.
- Standards are rising in reading and writing in Key Stage 1.
- The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, provides strong leadership for the school arising from a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils' behaviour is good: it is well supported by staff who promote their general welfare well.
- The school makes good use of its community and local environment to enrich pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 are not high enough. They are not high enough in information technology and design and technology in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. Some lessons are not sufficiently well planned to match work to pupils' level of understanding and their capability. Consequently some higher-attaining pupils under-achieve and the behaviour of some pupils becomes unsatisfactory.
- Curriculum balance is unsatisfactory so that some pupils do not receive their full entitlement in information technology, design and technology and religious education.
- Curriculum co-ordination is unsatisfactory. Co-ordinators do not have a strategic view of their subjects, and do not fully recognise the role's responsibility for standards and achievement in their areas.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in September 1996. Standards in reading and writing have improved at Key Stage 1 but there has been insufficient improvement in mathematics nor in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Since the appointment of the new headteacher in 1998 there has been a new rigour in leadership and the governors' strategic role is developing well. From that time, the issues have been vigorously tackled and substantial changes have been initiated, although it is too early for their effectiveness to be fully evaluated. The quality of teaching has improved, although it remains inconsistent and does not always encourage independent learning. The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning remains to be established. The school is committed to improvement and well placed to make further progress.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
reading	D	C	C	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	C	D	A	A	
mathematics	B	D	D	C	

Children under five make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave Reception.

Key Stage 1 pupils' results are close to national averages in reading and above in writing, but are well above the average of schools with a similar intake. In mathematics, results are below the national average but are in line with the average for similar schools. In science, the 1999 teacher assessment placed pupils' attainment above the national average. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with average results at Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science.

At Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics are below the national expectation for pupils the same age. In science they are in line with expectation.

Standards in both key stages are as expected for pupils the same age in religious education, art, geography, history, music and physical education, but below in design and technology and information technology. Handwriting, spelling and presentation are unsatisfactory in both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils come willingly to school and are interested in what the school has to offer. The youngest pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, particularly with the under fives and in Year 1. Sometimes, when lessons are not well presented, behaviour deteriorates.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils carry out the responsibilities they are given sensibly. Relationships are satisfactory, cordial and constructive. Boys and girls get on well together and with school staff.
Attendance	Attendance has improved and is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	satisfactory	satisfactory

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 satisfactory overall and represents an improvement from the time of the last inspection but continues to be inconsistent. In 88 per cent of the lessons seen it was at least satisfactory and in half of these lessons it was good or better. It was less than satisfactory in 11 per cent. As a result of the very good teaching the children under five learn very effectively and achieve well. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory but opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy in other subjects are often missed. The strengths lie in good relationships, especially with children under five, good planning, clear learning objectives and high expectations of pupils' attention, diligence and commitment. Work is very well matched to pupils' needs: this challenges them, and maintains their interest. Pupils' behaviour is well managed. Weaknesses are apparent when the management of pupils' behaviour is occasionally unsatisfactory; this adversely affects learning. Insufficiently demanding expectations result in unsatisfactory work and poor presentation. Some lessons are too teacher-directed and as a result pupils do not become independent learners. Work is not planned sufficiently to meet the different needs of pupils of different ability. Marking is weak.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children under five is good, varied and relevant. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the organisation and content of the curriculum are hindered by insufficient allocation of time to some subjects. This results in curriculum imbalance and unsatisfactory provision overall. There is insufficient extra-curricular activity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual education plans set targets which are suitable and attainable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The daily act of worship makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and pupils are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong. The school does not do enough to address the issue of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school takes good care of the pupils and is appropriately concerned for their health and safety. Assessment arrangements are good for the children under five, and satisfactory overall.

The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents. The quality of the information available is satisfactory and for those with pupils with special educational needs it is good. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory but there is only one formal consultation for parents to discuss their children's progress, held towards the end of the summer term so that the National Curriculum results can be discussed as required, but too late for action to be taken if needed to remedy weaknesses.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The contribution of the headteacher is good. He has a clear view of the direction the school needs to take. Curriculum co-ordination is weak. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory; outside play areas are very good. Principles of best value are applied informally at present, and spending decisions are not evaluated in terms of the impact they have on pupils' attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are committed and involved, and their role in curriculum development and as a critical friend is developing well. Their strategic role is as yet insufficiently developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. However, there is not enough systematic scrutiny of the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The computers are under-used in some situations, however.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like coming to school.• The children are well taught and teachers are approachable.• High standards in the Nursery.• Children learn to behave responsibly.• Children are expected to achieve their best.• The school is improving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication with parents about pupils' progress.• The school should work more closely with parents.• Poor range of activities outside lessons

The inspectors endorse parents' positive comments. They agree that the range of extra-curricular activity is unsatisfactory. The introduction of a formal consultation with parents on pupils' progress in the middle of the school year would enable parents to be reassured, or agree the steps to be taken if there is cause for concern. The school is now making considerable efforts to work with parents, and expects to have overcome this criticism very shortly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Many children enter the nursery with poor literacy, speaking and listening and personal and social skills. They make good progress, however, and by the time they are five, their standards of attainment are in line with the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical and creative development. Children listen attentively and speak appropriately. Most children recognise familiar words and can correctly identify initial letter sounds. Higher-attaining children spell simple three-letter words with confidence and some can write a short sentence. Most children can count to ten by the time they are five and many go beyond. They learn the concepts of 'one more' and 'one less', and the highest attainers add numbers to ten. They discover interesting information about the world, confidently work with the computer and become physically confident. Children use a variety of materials to achieve effective results in creative activities: for example Reception children painted very effective pictures of water lilies in the style of Monet.

2. In the National Curriculum assessments for 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' results in reading were average, and in writing above the national average, a significant improvement on earlier years. When the school is compared with others with a similar intake, the results in English were well above the average for such schools. Results in the mathematics National Curriculum assessments for 1999 were below the national average. Taking the last four years together, the trend in pupils' performance in mathematics has been slightly below average. In the 1999 tests, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels was well above the national average, but over thirty per cent of pupils failed to reach the expected levels for seven-year-olds. However, pupils' mathematics results are in line with the average for similar schools.

3. The 1999 teacher assessments in science indicated that pupils' standards of attainment were above average, with strengths in investigative science and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of materials and physical processes.

4. The inspection judgement is that in English, mathematics and science the attainment of the present generation of Year 2 pupils is in line with national expectations. Pupils listen carefully and their speaking skills are satisfactory. Reading standards are similar to those expected nationally and writing skills are satisfactory, the highest-attaining pupils presenting effective narrative. Others write with good ideas but poor skills. In mathematics, most pupils have sound number and measuring skills but their ability to carry out problem-solving calculations is unsatisfactory. In science, pupils make an electrical circuit and learn about life and living things by studying pigeons in a local pigeon loft.

5. In Key Stage 2, however, standards in English and mathematics are below expectation. This is, in part, because a significant number of pupils in the present Year 4 joined the class in the last year, and because a comparatively high proportion of the pupils in the class have special educational needs; but it is also because the level of challenge is not high enough, especially for the higher attainers. Pupils listen carefully and talk freely about matters of current interest. The highest-attaining pupils read at an average level, reading with confidence, but not always accurately. Others are not so skilled, and the lower attainers are without adequate word-attack skills. In mathematics, pupils' mental agility skills

and their ability to use and apply mathematics in a range of situations are not developed to the levels expected in pupils the same age. In science, however, standards of attainment, for example pupils' knowledge of the bones of the body and their understanding of a fair test – where in an experiment only one variable is changed at a time - are in line with expectation.

6. Handwriting and presentation are unsatisfactory. A significant number of pupils do not hold their pencils properly and too many pupils in Key Stage 2 still do not use joined up writing. Opportunities are missed to reinforce literacy in other subjects, where the excessive use of worksheets depresses the pupils' ability to write. Opportunities are not taken to reinforce numeracy skills in other subjects such as geography, science and design and technology.

7. Overall, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 when viewed in relation to their starting point, particularly in language development. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics. The school has set targets which are reasonable in the present circumstances and is working industriously to help the pupils achieve them. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Such differences as are apparent, for example where girls read better than boys, are within national norms. However, the more able pupils should be achieving more, particularly in Key Stage 2. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

8. Standards of attainment in information technology are below the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Year 4. Pupils assemble text accurately but do not know how to save their work. Their use of computers to store and manipulate data in Key Stage 1 and, in Key Stage 2, to generate and store a sequence of instructions, and for manipulating sound, is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not use information technology enough in support of other subjects. In religious education, attainment is likely to reach the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4. Pupils recall facts about Christianity and churches and can re-tell some Bible stories. They cannot, however, demonstrate knowledge of other religions.

9. In the remaining subjects, pupils are attaining as expected for their age in art, in geography and history, in music and in physical education. In design and technology standards of attainment are unsatisfactory at both key stages, largely because pupils do not generate and evaluate their own ideas or make a finished product.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The majority of pupils have a sensible attitude towards their work and behave well.

11. The children under five are eager to come to school, are enthusiastic and listen well to their teachers' instructions. They work industriously and conscientiously. This was seen to good effect, for example, when the children in Reception made a plan of the school grounds and when they gave 45 minutes unflagging concentration to their literacy period.

12. The older pupils have a satisfactory attitude towards their work and to school generally. When they are motivated they are capable of sustained concentration. This was seen in a Year 3 music lesson and when the pupils in Year 1 worked industriously in their literacy hour. Their attitudes are not so positive when they lose interest and become bored. This was apparent in a science lesson which was too teacher-directed, when there was insufficient opportunity for pupils to work independently and set up their own experiments.

13. The behaviour in the school is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils move round the school in a sensible manner. Where there are instances of unsatisfactory behaviour it usually relates to teachers' unsatisfactory behaviour management skills or insufficiently demanding work. When pupils are fully engaged, for example when Year 2 were studying pigeons, then behaviour is exemplary. Pupils look after equipment, such as the computers, well and the building and grounds are well cared for: there is no graffiti or litter. Parents, staff and pupils acknowledge that there are occasional incidents and some playground arguments which are quickly dealt with, but pupils generally work and play well together. Relationships are satisfactory, cordial and constructive. Boys and girls get on well together and with school staff. There have been no recent exclusions.

14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils are willing to accept responsibility when the opportunity is given, and quietly carry out duties in class and around the school. Many pupils are not used to taking responsibility for their own learning. This is partly because pupils are not always given opportunities to find things out for themselves or select their own resources.

15. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, has improved since the time of the last report, and is in line with that found nationally in similar schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Most pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly as a result, so that little time is wasted at the start of school sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning although it is not consistent across the school. In 88 per cent of the lessons seen it was at least satisfactory and in half of these lessons it was good or better. It was less than satisfactory in 11 per cent, a slightly higher proportion than is usually found. The best teaching was seen in the classes with the youngest pupils and with children under the age of five. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is less than half that recorded in the last inspection report and the proportion of very good teaching is much greater: 21 per cent compared with three per cent reported at that time. This indicates a significant improvement since then. Some of the improvement is due to the newly implemented teaching and learning policy which places appropriate emphasis on the importance of clearly defined learning objectives, and the careful timing and structure required by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy.

17. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. It is very good for pupils in the nursery, and is good in the reception class. Teachers pay close attention to children's needs and good progress is the result. Teachers are well prepared and very well organised, and the carefully planned activities develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. A particular strength of the nursery is the way in which the teacher and nursery nurse work together as a cohesive team. The teacher devises the long-term plan, and they interpret this week by week as a team. This shared vision enables nursery staff to work co-operatively and to give quality time to the children, as a result of which they make good progress.

18. The management of pupils is excellent in both classes, and a secure environment is created in which children can learn. All staff are very good role models for the children. The nursery staff carry out their own entry assessment and effectively use this information to plan suitable work for the children. There are very good procedures for assessing and monitoring children's progress over time, and for tracking their progress daily.

19. The quality of teaching is good in the lower part of Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in the upper part. It is satisfactory across the key stage overall. In Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory overall. Teaching quality is good in physical education; it is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, music and religious education. No judgement is made of the quality of the teaching of art, design and technology, geography, history or information technology as insufficient direct teaching of these subjects was observed during the inspection.

20. The good and very good lessons are characterised by good planning supported by the teacher's clear view of the pupils' learning needs and the needs of the subject. For example, in a very good literacy hour in Year 1, work was planned to present at least four levels of difficulty and the variety of materials provided pupils with opportunities to learn independently. Teachers establish a calm atmosphere which promotes good work. Well-established routines give pupils confidence. Skilful questioning values pupils' contributions, checks their understanding, challenges those of different ability and obliges pupils to think carefully about the topic of the lesson. Clear instructions, expressed in suitable language, enable pupils to start work promptly, knowing exactly what they have to do and able to get on at their own level. Good management of the pupils creates a productive atmosphere which supports good learning. As a result, pupils listen carefully and respond quickly. This was seen working well, for example, in a very good physical education lesson. Supporting adults are used well to lead groups and to encourage pupils to learn. Lessons move forward purposefully and carry the pupils along without wasting time. As a result, pupils of all levels of ability behave very well, they are involved, eager to contribute and remain engaged in the lesson for significant periods of time. The assessment of pupils' work during the successful lessons is good. Comment is offered which is supportive, and challenges pupils to progress at their own pace.

21. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, for example in Key Stage 2, planning is thorough; teachers' explanations and instructions are clear so that pupils know what they have to do; there is good classroom management and lessons move at a suitable pace. In the upper part of the Key Stage, however, expectations are not ambitious enough, particularly for the higher attainers, and the work set does not sufficiently take account of different levels of ability. For example, the worksheets used in science do not require pupils to undertake any investigative learning. Sometimes in Key Stage 2 there is a tendency for lessons to be too teacher-directed and the pace of the lesson is slow, with too little time being given for discussion.

22. On the occasions when the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, for example, in the upper part of Key Stage 1, it is often because ineffective pupil management strategies result in unsatisfactory behaviour. As a result, noise levels rise, pupils do not listen properly and their work-rate is adversely affected. Time is not used well. Sections of the lesson are relatively unplanned. In other situations, the teacher's knowledge of the subject is insecure, and pupils are given incorrect information. Consequently, pupils are confused about what is expected and they are restless and misbehave. Pupils, particularly the higher attainers, do not learn at an appropriate pace when this happens.

23. Marking is a weakness, and is often not carried out in accordance with the policy. It is often limited to a tick and praise, with no suggestions for improvement. It is sometimes inaccurate, for example where a correct spelling is marked wrong and an incorrect spelling substituted or when mistaken information is confirmed by the teacher. Homework is

satisfactorily used to encourage reading in English and in science the homework set is used to support the practical work undertaken in class.

24. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory: individual education plans are carefully prepared, they are based on suitable and attainable targets and work is well supported by the classroom assistants. However, not all teachers provide separate work for these pupils and do not always monitor the progress they are making.

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

25. The curriculum is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses but is unsatisfactory overall because, although it is broad and relevant, it lacks balance. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education is taught according to the Northumberland Local Agreed Syllabus. There is suitable provision for sex education and drugs misuse awareness through the science curriculum. The progress made by pupils in their personal, social and health awareness is satisfactory. There is a comprehensive and progressive health education scheme of work. The school places great emphasis on the personal care of pupils.

26. The curricular provision for children under five in the nursery and reception class is good, and successfully covers all the required areas of learning. There is a suitable emphasis on language, literacy and personal development. The curriculum is carefully planned and delivered in order to ensure that skills are developed which lead successfully to the nationally prescribed desirable learning outcomes. The under-fives curriculum provides a good range of relevant activities and promotes positive attitudes in pupils' learning.

27. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school appropriately places strong emphasis on the development of skills in numeracy and literacy. Extra time has been allocated to these subjects to improve standards. This is resulting in satisfactory progress for all pupils and a steady rise in national test scores, particularly in reading and writing. The Literacy and Numeracy hours are well established and are effective. A suitable amount of curriculum time is allocated to information technology, but in practice too little time is given to the subject. This results in pupils under-achieving in computer studies and affects their ability to use information technology to support their work in other subjects. The emphasis placed on English and mathematics also results in a reduced allocation of curriculum time for design and technology and religious education. Consequently, the balance of these subjects is affected, and pupils do not receive their full curriculum entitlement. Some schemes of work have been revised to enable pupils to acquire and develop a range of skills in a systematic way. The school is currently evaluating the national model documentation for information technology, history, geography and design technology and the development of the curriculum for these subjects is in abeyance till the evaluation is complete. The head teacher has rightly highlighted this as a key target in the school development plan.

28. Insufficient use is made of cross-curricular opportunities, although pupils' artwork is used to illustrate work in other subjects. A good example of cross-curricular work was observed in the reception class, when pupils made a model of the school and its grounds and used this to develop their understanding of maps and plans in geography.

29. The provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory and is limited to a football club for boys and girls. The school provides a curriculum which is appropriately inclusive for all pupils and meets the requirements of the pupils on the special educational needs register. The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is well established. Good curricular links have been formed within the Prudhoe partnership of schools, and this initiative is giving helpful support to teachers and pupils through effective training initiatives and technical assistance.

30. The curriculum is enriched through good links made in the community. Pupils visit the town and write about their findings. For instance, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have conducted a local history study of Prudhoe, have visited a coalmine and Prudhoe Castle. Pupils visit a good range of museums and areas of local interest such as *St. Mary's Lighthouse*, and *Tynedale Park* at Hexham. Visitors to the school also enrich the curriculum by contributing their skills and knowledge. These include a storyteller, members of sporting organisations, and other members of the local community such as a mother and her baby, and the community constable.

31. The last inspection identified two key curricular issues requiring action. These were the need to identify the learning objectives in teachers' planning, and to monitor more effectively the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and attainment. Also in the report was a judgement concerning the lack of challenge in the form of planned opportunities for investigative work and problem solving. The school has successfully addressed the issue of planning. Teachers now all plan to the same format, include specific learning objectives, effectively sharing these with pupils at the beginning of lessons. The head teacher monitors teachers' short-term planning, but the quality of the taught curriculum is not monitored. Notwithstanding these improvements, however, the curriculum continues to lack challenge in the form of investigative work and is not always planned to encourage pupils to make independent choices. At Key Stage 2, there continue to be too few opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended activities, or to generate and investigate ideas for themselves.

32. The school's provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. The daily acts of collective worship are well planned and support both spiritual and moral development. Members of the local clergy attend special assemblies, although visitors from other community faiths are not represented. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on day-to-day experiences, values and concerns. Pupils think of others less fortunate by collecting money for Children in Need, and a good range of similar charitable causes. There are however, few planned opportunities that provide a spiritual dimension in the curriculum. One example was seen in Year 2 when children were intrigued to see newly hatched pigeons, and another in the Nursery, when the pupils smelled fresh ginger for the first time, but in general this aspect of the curriculum is insufficiently developed.

33. The provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. The school is an orderly community and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. For instance, pupils were shown a stolen purse and considered the implications of keeping it. Pupils are taught to consider other people. They play well together and care for each other. The adults working in the school provide good role models for pupils. The majority of parents agree that the school promotes good behaviour and that pupils are taught to be responsible members of the school community.

34. The school's provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. The school has developed good links with West Wylam chapel where the Christmas Carol Concert is held. Members of the local community are invited to the school's fund raising activities, and gifts are distributed by the children to elderly people in the locality. A residential field trip to

Bamburgh is organised for pupils in Years 3 and 4. This provides good opportunities to promote pupils' social development in a different setting and to encourage independence. Each class has class monitors, but the school does relatively little to enable older pupils to take responsibility for aspects of school life.

35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Whilst pupils experience a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn about their own culture, the school does relatively little to redress its relative geographical isolation by providing a range of experiences which promote the customs and beliefs of other cultures. Pupils visit the local library and shops. Their education is enriched by class visits to interesting places such as Prudhoe Castle, the river and mill at Whittle Dene, and Hexham Abbey. A theatre company performed a pantomime at Christmas, and older pupils enjoyed working with a dance company. There is, however, insufficient multicultural perspective within subjects such as religious education, art and music and not enough books and artefacts portraying the lifestyles of others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school's procedures for child protection and for promoting well-being, health and safety of all pupils are good, and continue the good practice recorded in the last report.

37. The head teacher takes the lead in setting an ethos of care, order and structure. The standard of care provided by teaching and non-teaching staff is good. The school has a suitable policy for child protection and all teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities. Members of staff are kept up-to-date with child protection issues. Required health and safety measures and procedures are in place and regular risk-assessment inspections are undertaken. Effective use is made of visits from fire officers and the police in conjunction with relevant issues including those related to 'Stranger Danger'.

38. Procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are good. Registers are carefully monitored and the school works closely in partnership with the education welfare officer to contact families when any pupil's attendance gives cause for concern, and attendance has improved as a result.

39. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Classroom assistants work well with teachers to provide appropriate support and individual education plans are helpful and regularly revised.

40. The school satisfactorily promotes good behaviour. Pupils know the rules and parents know what is expected of the children, and the sanctions to be applied when necessary. However, the behaviour policy is expressed in terms of sanctions only and does not also extend to a graduated system of rewards.

41. The procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The school is developing a range of tests and assessments to provide information for the records kept in English and mathematics, and for raising achievement through target-setting initiatives. At present, this information is not used consistently to support higher-attaining pupils. Pupils' attainment in other subjects is assessed against specific learning objectives, and satisfactory records are maintained and passed on to the next teacher. The monitoring arrangements for children under five are good. Initial assessments of their attainment are appropriately analysed and used to inform future teaching and learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents of pupils at the school, through the questionnaire and at the meeting for parents, express broad satisfaction with the school and believe that it has improved over the past year. The school continues to work satisfactorily in partnership with the parents, maintaining the position described in the last report.

43. The quality of the information about the school provided for parents is satisfactory. The school brochure contains all the statutory information, presented in a straightforward manner, and is clear about necessary domestic arrangements, such as procedures for lateness, going swimming and it adequately describes the curriculum. Regular and informative newsletters go home and give an account of the varied activities of the school and the parent body. Parents are invited to meetings to discuss developments to the curriculum, such as the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. Twenty parents attended a course on how children learn to read. The school is clearly making considerable efforts in this area, although a substantial minority of parents, to judge from the questionnaire responses, have yet to recognise the benefit.

44. Further, a substantial minority of parents' questionnaire replies were critical of the quality and timing of information about their children's progress. Parents at the meeting commented that, in their experience, teachers were always available and ready to talk to parents about their children's progress. The pupils' annual progress reports meet statutory requirements although they do not set any specific targets for the pupils. Yet there is only one formal consultation for them to discuss their children's progress which is held towards the end of the summer term. This, parents say with some justification, is too late to take action to remedy any shortcomings that are revealed.

45. The parents of children with special educational needs are kept closely in touch with their children's targets and progress towards them. They are invited to the meetings which review the pupils' individual education plans although this is not an obligation on the school for these pupils.

46. There is an active Parents' Association which organises social and fund raising events for the children and their parents. The funds raised have contributed towards providing a television, a video and netball posts for the school. A small number of parents regularly help in the classrooms, escort pupils to swimming and help on educational trips.

47. The school has recently introduced the Home-School Agreement in common with the other schools in the area but it is too early to evaluate its impact on pupils' learning. Parents support their children by listening to them read at home and by supervising the homework set for them.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The quality of leadership and management provided by the governors, headteacher, and key staff is satisfactory. The contribution made by the headteacher is good: his strong and effective leadership provides clear educational direction, designed to raise pupils' attainment, particularly in the core subjects. He has quickly and accurately identified the strengths of the school and the areas which need development. His programme for development, supported by a suitable statement of aims, and a suite of newly prepared relevant policy statements, has already made significant improvements in the quality of teaching and consequently in the standards attained in the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessments. The aims reflect the school's good ethos as a caring community

and their effect is to contribute significantly to the pupils' positive attitudes to work.

49. The headteacher provides good professional support to staff and pupils. There are clearly defined roles for staff with arrangements for regular review, leading to annually negotiated job descriptions. This clarity contributes to a growing sense of team-work. Results of assessments in English and mathematics are now analysed and appropriate action taken to remedy weaknesses, but there is no school programme to scrutinise pupils' work systematically as a means of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Further, the role of the senior management team is not clear enough. It is too large for the circumstances of the school, its proceedings are too informal and they are not recorded.

50. Curriculum co-ordination remains a weakness as identified in the last inspection report. Co-ordinators do not, by and large, have a strategic view of the development of their subjects. They have not yet fully recognised the implications of the role's responsibility for standards and quality. They do not monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects through classroom observation or by looking closely at pupils' work.

51. The day-to-day administration of the school is satisfactory and ensures it runs smoothly, leaving teachers free to concentrate on the pupils.

52. The governing body has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and, working through a suitable committee structure, is beginning to devise suitable strategies for school improvement. Governors are very supportive of the school and committed to helping it to achieve high standards. The literacy governor, for example, has observed literacy lessons in all classes. Nevertheless, their role in some key areas of the school's life, such as overseeing the curriculum and in development planning, is not adequately established. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils with special educational needs. Governors' annual reports meet statutory requirements.

53. The school development plan is good and indicates clearly the main lines of development for the next three years. The headteacher is clear about what needs to be done to improve standards, and the document has a clear order of priorities specifically designed for this purpose, with suitable timescales. With the exception of information technology, however, there are no fully worked-out development plans for subjects. Subject plans do not contain sufficient detail and are not projected far enough into the future. A satisfactory start has been made to relate the assessment of pupils' performance to spending in English and mathematics; but there are no arrangements for financial decisions to be reviewed in the light of their effect on pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, grants to the school earmarked for particular purposes are identified and effectively used.

54. The number, qualifications and experience of the current teaching and support staff are sufficient to meet the needs of the school and the curriculum. They are suitably deployed and function satisfactorily as a team. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory: there are sufficient classrooms for the current number of pupils and the outside play areas are very good. The accommodation for children under the age of five is good and the fenced off outdoor play area is used well by the nursery children. The library stock is dispersed to classrooms and contains an adequate selection of suitable reference books, although some of them are out of date and do not relate to the National Curriculum. The hall is a good resource for whole-school assemblies; its value for physical education is reduced by the presence of the dining furniture which is stored there. The school is satisfactorily

maintained and relevant and colourful displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms enhance the learning environment.

55. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, with literacy and numeracy benefiting from recent additions. Recent spending on information technology has improved the availability of computers but they are under-used and not all pupils have equal access to them. For example, 29 pupils in Year 3 work with a single laptop computer, and have no access to network services. The school makes good use of its immediate environment and other local resources in support of studies in, for example, history and geography.

56. The best value principles are informally applied, through, for example, careful discussion by the governors of proposed items of expenditure. Support services bought from the local education authority, such as the central school library loans, are effectively used to encourage improved standards.

57. When account is taken of the standards achieved by the pupils in relation to their attainment on entry and by comparison with similar schools; the improvement in reading and writing at Key Stage 1; the rising proportion of good and very good teaching; the recent and rapid improvements initiated by the headteacher, supported by governors; and the relatively low cost per pupil; the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to improve further the quality of provision, and raise standards, the governors headteacher and teachers should:

- (1)
 - a. Raise standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, by:
 - improving pupils' fluency and accuracy in reading;
 - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting;
 - providing writing tasks which are closely matched to pupils' needs;
 - improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills;
 - improving pupils' ability to apply mathematics to solving problems.
 - b. Raise standards in information technology, by:
 - improving pupils' basic computer skills;
 - extending the range of applications of information technology accessible to the pupils.

(Paragraphs: 5, 8, 71-92, 123-129)
- (2) Improve the quality of teaching across the school to ensure greater consistency between classes, by:
 - providing more work which takes account of pupils' different levels of ability;
 - raising the levels of expectation, especially for the higher attainers;
 - providing more opportunities for independent learning;
 - improving classroom management skills where pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory;
 - improving the quality of marking pupils' work.

(Paragraphs: 16-24)

- (3) Review the balance between subjects of the curriculum to ensure all pupils receive their entitlement.
(Paragraphs: 25, 27)
- (4) Develop the role of curriculum co-ordinator, by:
 - Ensuring co-ordinators fulfil their responsibility for the strategic development of the subject, through establishing subject development plans;
 - Ensuring co-ordinators monitor standards and achievement in their areas of responsibility.(Paragraph: 50)

The following minor issues for improvement should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Improve standards in design and technology, by
 - ensuring pupils have opportunities to investigate, disassemble, clarify, modify and evaluate their products.
 - Improve the range of extra-curricular activities.
 - Address the issue of the pupils' multicultural experience.
- (Paragraphs: 108-112, 29, 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	17	50	11	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 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	144
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	48

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	19

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	13	11
	Girls	13	15	9
	Total	24	28	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (74)	97 (79)	69 (80)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	13
	Girls	14	9	15
	Total	26	20	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (80)	69 (80)	97 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	144
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	0	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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	251 234
Total expenditure	253 128
Expenditure per pupil	1 439
Balance brought forward from previous year	10 591
Balance carried forward to next year	8 697

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	168
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	30	12	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	60	10	4	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	54	14	8	0
The teaching is good.	36	50	6	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	36	26	10	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	34	14	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	40	8	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	20	46	30	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	24	52	14	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	56	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	34	32	10	18

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

59. Pupils are admitted into the afternoon nursery session in the term after their third birthday, and to the morning session as a place becomes available. They transfer to the reception class in the school year in which they are five. Although there is a spread of attainment, many children on entry to nursery are below average attainment and a significant number have poor literacy, speaking and listening, numeracy and personal and social skills. The children make very good progress in the nursery and assessment results indicate that the majority of them enter the reception class with attainment in line with local education authority averages in most areas of their learning. Progress in the reception class is good; in phonics work and reading it is very good. The majority of pupils are likely to achieve the national Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they leave the reception class.

60. At the time of the inspection all the twenty-seven children in the nursery and twelve out of twenty six pupils in the reception class were under five. The nursery and the reception class are very well organised and provide a comprehensive range of activities which are effectively planned to the nationally prescribed areas of learning for the under fives.

61. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. It is very good for pupils in the nursery, and good in the reception class. Children make good progress because of the close attention given to their needs, and the carefully planned activities which develop their knowledge and understanding. A particular strength of the teaching in the nursery is the way in which the teacher and nursery nurse work together as a cohesive team. The teacher devises the long-term plan, and together they interpret this weekly. This shared vision enables nursery staff to work co-operatively and effectively to give quality time to the children. The management of pupils is excellent. All staff are very good role models to the children. The nursery staff carry out their own entry assessment and effectively use this information to plan suitable work for the children. There are very good procedures for monitoring children's progress over time, and for tracking pupils' daily progress.

62. The curricular provision for the under fives is good. The curriculum is clearly structured and progressive so that children are given a range of relevant experiences appropriate to their age. For instance, pupils in the nursery have short sessions in which they learn to recognise and write their names, look at books and read together. By the time they reach the reception class, pupils have a more sustained daily literacy lesson in which they learn letter sounds, read a range of big books together, and practise writing skills. The quality of outdoor play provision in the nursery is very good. The reception class has occasional access to this facility, and has structured opportunities for physical education which provide a satisfactory range of practical activities.

63. The co-ordination of the under-fives provision is very good. Reduced numbers in the nursery enable small groups of reception children to be taught in the nursery every day. This makes best use of personnel, and contributes effectively to the overall progress of reception pupils by ensuring that the teaching is closely geared to their needs. Its success derives from the very good liaison between the teachers concerned. Joint planning initiatives ensure that, as pupils transfer from nursery to reception, the detailed assessment records begun in the nursery and continued in reception class provide a good basis for planning the children's activities to provide what they need.

Personal and social development

64. Progress in personal and social development is very good, and most children are likely to achieve national expectations by the age of five. Nursery pupils show a high degree of independence in their work in relation to their age. For instance, before painting, pupils attempt to write their name on a clean piece of paper. When they have finished, they get fresh water and ensure that brushes are clean for the next person. They organise their clothes well, and show an impressive degree of independence when undressing for the weekly physical education lesson. The reception and nursery teacher have devised effective systems which enable pupils to have independent access to equipment from well-labelled trays, and to make suitable choices of activity. All help to tidy away at the end of a session. There is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and child-chosen activities. Pupils work purposefully on a range of activities. They work well in groups, listening respectfully to adults and other children. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and manage them well. No unsatisfactory behaviour was seen during the inspection. Pupils in the reception class appropriately spend more of their time on structured literacy and numeracy lessons. There are good opportunities to make independent choices when they are not working on a focused task with their teacher. Positive relationships prevail. For example, nursery pupils enjoyed working together on the *ABC* computer programme: they took turns, and helped each other. Pupils in the reception class have learnt to sit still and concentrate for a significant period of time.

Language and literacy

65. Many children enter the nursery with below-average language skills. Staff place a very strong emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening in all the structured tasks undertaken and this results in the children making good progress. Children listen attentively in a variety of situations. For instance, when hearing the story about *Scary Things* they remained entirely focused on the story, and eagerly anticipated the next page. Pupils receive very good adult support each day as they work at small-group activities. This is effective: it enables them to listen carefully and to focus more clearly on their learning. Good use is made of listening centres, whereby pupils independently have access to the tape recorder and carry out a range of activities in response to the tape. By the time they leave nursery many pupils can write their first name with correctly formed letters, demonstrate good pencil control, and are making good progress in naming letter sounds. In the reception class there are effective, relevant opportunities for children to read, write and listen. The class book corner contains storybooks illustrated by the children and including text which has been devised with their teacher. Pupils know these stories well, and enjoy reading them. Most pupils can recognise familiar words such as *and* and *she*, and many can correctly identify initial letter sounds. High achievers spell simple three-letter words with confidence and some are now able to write a recognisable short sentence. The reception class teacher places good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills. The daily literacy lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate listening and speaking skills. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy these lessons. As a result of the very good teaching they receive, the majority of pupils will have achieved the desirable learning outcomes for reading, writing, phonics, speaking and listening by the end of the reception year.

Mathematics

66. The teaching of mathematics to the children under five is good. The daily numeracy lesson in the reception class, together with the many structured opportunities to count and develop number language in the nursery, enables the children to make good progress. In the nursery, children spend time each day counting a variety of things, such as the number of items in a shopping bag, or daffodils in a vase. By the time they leave nursery, many

children can count objects one at a time up to 10 and can recognise numbers to 5. In one lesson seen they learnt the words *full* and *empty* as they described the contents of a bottle. Teachers ensure that lessons are fun so that children are motivated. They effectively use songs such as *Five Currant Buns* to re-enforce subtraction and terms such as *one more* and *one less*. Most of the children in the reception class count to 10 and many go beyond. High-achieving pupils correctly add numbers to 10. The majority of children will achieve the desirable learning outcome for mathematics by the end of the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The good teaching in this area of learning enables children to make good progress and achieve the desirable learning outcomes for their age by the time they are five. They learn more about their world through carefully planned learning opportunities. For instance, nursery children named the ingredients required for baking gingerbread men, and then took turns to make the biscuits. They observed the growth of a variety of bulbs and showed appropriate wonder as they examined yellow daffodils which had previously been green buds. They make simple comparisons as they observe bulbs grown in different conditions. They enjoy working on the computer and use the arrow keys with confidence to move a caterpillar around the screen. Reception children have an understanding of the passage of time. They can describe past and present experiences, and suggest ideas about the future. For example, "I am going to be a princess when I grow up"! Reception pupils confidently click and drag with the mouse when using the computer. In a science lesson they made satisfactory progress as they investigated which materials were magnetic, and in religious education, they drew on their own experience to describe the main events in a Christian wedding ceremony.

Physical development

68. In the physical development areas of learning, children make good progress and achieve the desirable learning outcomes for their age by the time they are five. This is because provision for developing physical skills is good for all the under fives, and very good for pupils in the nursery. The hard surface play area and garden provide a safe area in which children confidently pedal and steer tricycles, push prams and propel scooters. They show a developing ability to balance as they walk along a beam. Nursery staff guide the children effectively as they play outdoors, encouraging them to change activities and to try new pieces of equipment. The good provision of outdoor equipment enables pupils to share and play co-operatively. In the Nursery physical education lesson observed, teaching quality was very good. Perceptive assessment of the children's abilities enabled the teacher to develop children's hopping and balancing skills so that they made good progress. In both classes there are good opportunities for pupils to develop fine motor skills through the use of pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and jigsaws; and a variety of construction toys to connect, twist or screw.

Creative development

69. Children make good progress and most are likely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five. The quality of teaching is good and results in children experiencing a very good range of activities which effectively develop this aspect. Teachers effectively combine creative activities with other areas of learning. For instance, Reception pupils examine a variety of interactive books, and then successfully design their own books with turn-up flaps. Children independently choose a variety of materials for cutting and sticking. They recently used corrugated card to print pictures which showed good control of media. Reception class children make good progress as they continue to use a range of materials. For instance, they painted very effective pictures of water lilies in the style of Claude Monet, and made recognisable, carefully observed and drawn sketches of catkins.

70. Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive appropriate information about the curriculum. There is an informative parents' notice board in the nursery. Each week, nursery children select suitable library books to read at home. This practice continues in the reception class as children take home books from the reading scheme. Homework sheets are sometimes provided. Whilst there are many opportunities for parents to ask informally about their child's progress as they accompany them to and from school, there is only one formal consultation held towards the end of the school year. Opportunities for parents to learn more about their children's progress are therefore less than they should be.

ENGLISH

71. Overall standards of attainment in English at Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations, but below at Key Stage 2. In the 1999 national standardised tests pupils' attainment, when compared with that expected of seven-year-olds, was average in reading and above average in writing. When the results are compared with those of schools with a similar intake, they were well above the average for such schools in both reading and writing. This represents an improvement over the years since 1996 when results were low. Girls have recorded generally better results than boys over the same period but by no more than the difference found nationally. There are no national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 4. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with average results at the end of Key Stage 1. They are likely to be below expectation at the end of Year 4. This is accounted for in part by the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present generation of pupils in Year 4.

72. Pupils generally have satisfactory listening and speaking skills. From the earliest age, they listen carefully to the teacher and each other and, by their responses, show they are listening and thinking about the subject of the lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 are keen to contribute ideas to class discussion, suggesting different ways of spelling new words. Sometimes, for example in Year 2, when pupils are not engaged by the lesson their listening is adversely affected. Nevertheless, by the end of the key stage, most pupils talk competently in an informal setting, giving an enthusiastic account of current interests. By the end of Year 4, pupils talk confidently about their reading and about the history and geography of the area, employing a suitable vocabulary for the purpose.

73. Reading standards are in line with those to be expected in a national context at Key Stage 1 but below at Key Stage 2. The youngest children handle books confidently, know that print conveys meaning, and recognise letters and words recently learned. In Year 1, pupils follow the text and offer relevant ideas about what might happen next. By the time they reach Year 2, the highest-attaining pupils are confident readers, attaining levels above those expected nationally. They read fluently and accurately and have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Others are reasonably confident and have satisfactory skills to decipher words. The lower attainers recognise some words from an early reader but have poor phonic skills and their comprehension is uncertain. By the end of Key Stage 2 the highest attainers read confidently, though not always accurately, at an average standard. Others, are not so skilled and the lower attainers are without adequate word-attack skills. Pupils have satisfactory library and reference skills.

74. Standards of writing are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but are unsatisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 the highest-attaining pupils write simple and effective narrative, such as *Mr & Mrs Pig's night out*, and there are lively descriptions of Fireworks Night. Pupils record events in sequence, selecting suitable vocabulary which is correctly spelled - or plausible - for the most part. Their handwriting is legible and satisfactorily formed. Others write less; they have good ideas for a story, but their handwriting, though

intelligible, is unconventional and their spelling is phonetic. The lower attainers write about recent experience, selecting suitable words. Their letters are poorly formed and although legible, largely uncontrolled.

75. By the end of Year 4, the highest-attaining pupils write interesting narrative, such as an account of *Alice and the magic garden*, and record accurately how they separated rice from flour. Their handwriting is still script, reasonably even in size, but immature. The writing of middle and lower-attaining pupils is below that expected of pupils the same age. They can describe events in sequence, and have good ideas, for example for a newspaper article about the rescue of a dog, but their skills are unsatisfactory. Their handwriting is immature, and there is no attempt at joining the letters, a skill which according to the National Curriculum should be well established by the age of nine.

76. The pupils' general literacy skills and the presentation of their work are unsatisfactory. The handwriting of many pupils is unsatisfactory; in many cases pupils do not hold their pencils properly. Spelling is satisfactory on the part of the highest attainers. Others tend to spell words as they hear them. Not enough work is presented with the help of information technology. The contribution of other subjects to pupils' literacy is unsatisfactory. Opportunities are missed, for example, in history and religious education, to give pupils practice in extended writing; and in science, to record the results of experiments as practice in this style of writing. The excessive use of worksheets depresses the pupils' ability to write and, as for example in science, pupils do not redraft their work to improve its presentation.

77. Pupils' achievements by the end of Key Stage 1, however, are satisfactory when viewed in relation to their language development at the start of their school career. Most pupils by the time they leave the Reception class have achieved the literacy standards expected of children the same age. They consolidate their skills in Year 1, where the highest attainers learn to write independently. Lower-attaining pupils begin to control their handwriting and lay the foundation of reading skills. In Year 2, the writing of the highest attainers improves, their handwriting gets better and their spelling more confident. For the average attainers, progress is slower, but letters become correctly orientated and more evenly formed. The writing of the lower attainers grows in confidence over time. Pupils are clearly industrious and show increased independence in their writing. In Key Stage 2 the achievement of the higher-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory, largely because there is insufficient challenge in the work they are asked to do. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in light of their individual starting points because of the good support that they receive from the special needs assistants.

78. The last inspection report recorded below-average attainment in reading and writing, with pupils in Key Stage 1 doing better for their age than those in Key Stage 2. Satisfactory progress has been made to improve the attainment at the end of Year 2 to national average standards. The attainment at the end of Year 4 remains below expectation.

79. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory and makes a satisfactory contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. It ranges from very good with under fives and in the lower part of Key Stage 1, to unsatisfactory in the upper part of the key stage. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

80. The good and very good lessons are characterised by good planning supported by the teacher's clear view of the pupils' learning needs and the needs of the subject. Teachers establish a calm atmosphere which promotes good work. Well-established routines give pupils confidence. Skilful questioning values pupils' contributions, checks their

understanding, challenges those of different ability and obliges pupils to think carefully about the text. Clear instructions, expressed in suitable language, enable pupils to start work promptly, knowing exactly what they have to do and able to get on at their own level. Good classroom management creates a productive atmosphere which supports good learning. Supporting adults are used well to lead groups and to encourage pupils to learn. The variety of materials prepared provides pupils with opportunities to learn independently. For example, in a very good literacy hour in Year 1, work was planned in at least four levels of difficulty, to which pupils responded by working industriously and successfully at their own tasks. Lessons move forward purposefully and carry the pupils along without wasting time. As a result, pupils behave very well, they are involved, eager to contribute and remain engaged in the lesson for significant periods of time. The assessment of pupils' work during the successful lessons is good: comment is offered which supports, and challenges pupils to progress at their own pace.

81. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, for example in Key Stage 2, planning is thorough; teachers' explanations and instructions are clear so that pupils know what they have to do; there is good classroom management and lessons move at a suitable pace. In the upper part of the key stage, however, expectations are not ambitious enough, particularly for the higher attainers, and the work set does not sufficiently take account of different levels of ability.

82. Where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, for example, in the upper part of Key Stage 1, it is because ineffective pupil management strategies result in unsatisfactory behaviour. As a result, noise levels rise and pupils' work-rate is adversely affected. Time is not used well. Sections of the lesson are relatively unplanned. Consequently, pupils are confused about what is expected and they are restless and misbehave. Pupils, particularly the higher attainers, do not learn at an appropriate pace when this happens.

83. Marking is a weakness, and is often not carried out in accordance with the policy. It is often limited to a tick and praise, with no suggestions for improvement. It is sometimes inaccurate, for example where a correct spelling is marked wrong and an incorrect spelling substituted. Homework is satisfactorily used to encourage reading.

84. The subject's co-ordination is unsatisfactory. There is no subject plan to give direction to its strategic development. Although the National Literacy Strategy has been conscientiously introduced and provides suitable material, there is no scheme of work which takes account of those parts of the National Curriculum outside the Strategy and is specifically related to the needs of the pupils in the school. A start has been made to analyse national test results and build up data which will provide material for further curriculum development, but there is no systematic evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Resources are good, however, and include a library stock with some suitable and attractive reference books.

MATHEMATICS

85. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments, pupils' test results at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average. Taking the last four years together, pupils' performance fell slightly below the national average. The results were about the national average in 1997, but have remained below since this time. In the 1999 tests, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels was well above the national average, but over thirty per

cent of pupils failed to reach the expected standard for seven-year-olds. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results were average.

86. The inspection judgement is that, overall, attainment in mathematics for the present generation of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with expectations, but below expectation for those at the end of Year 4. Standards are not as high as described in the previous inspection where they were judged to be average at both key stages.

87. The effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy two years ago is enabling Key Stage 1 pupils to build up mathematical knowledge and understanding systematically. Most of the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 recognise numbers to 100. They find one more or less than a given number, and count in tens. Their mental recall skills are developing well. Many quickly name pairs of numbers which make 10, and double numbers up to 20. By the end of Year 2, most pupils count on and back to 100, add totals of money to 50p, and are developing awareness of tens and units. High-achieving pupils calculate the amount of change required in a money sum, and can successfully add two 2-digit numbers together. Throughout the Key Stage, pupils develop understanding about measures such as grams and centimetres; they construct block graphs, and attempt simple problem solving activities. For instance, Year 2 pupils calculated how many different combinations of socks could be worn by a group of teddy bears. However, pupils have too few opportunities to carry out simple mathematical investigations and too few of them can carry out problem-solving calculations requiring more than one number operation.

88. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing a range of mental strategies when calculating addition sums. Pupils are taught multiplication tables relevant to their age, but few have instant mental recall of these. They successfully interpret data from simple graphs, identify lines of symmetry and correctly identify right angles within shapes. They understand half and quarter. High-achieving pupils identify fractional parts of a whole number, and have a firm understanding of tens and units. Year 4 pupils are able to extract information from graphs, as when examining the number of eggs produced on a farm in one week. In doing so, they could satisfactorily identify high and low days and the difference between them, but few could accurately calculate totals for the week. Their ability to solve whole-number problems involving addition is unsatisfactory. They are beginning to verbalise the mathematics they use to solve problems. Whilst they have been taught strategies such as adding to the largest number, making tens or doubling, they do not use these in their work. They lack practice in the use of multiplication and division when solving problems. Pupils can accurately measure a perimeter using centimetres, use grams and kilograms, and use standard notation when calculating money. They are able to multiply a number by 10 or 100. However, pupils' mental agility skills and their ability to use and apply mathematics in a range of situations are not developed to the levels expected for their age.

89. The progress made by most pupils throughout Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, and they achieve appropriately. Some good progress was seen in recognising numbers to 100, counting on and back, and in pupils' instant recall of number bonds to 10. In number and algebra at Key Stage 2, the progress made by pupils of average ability is satisfactory. Pupils with higher prior attainment are not sufficiently challenged and do not achieve as they should. Throughout the Key Stage pupils make satisfactory progress in data handling and shape, space and measures work, but have less secure ability to use a range of mental and written methods when working with number. They have very few opportunities to learn how to carry out investigations in practical ways or to use mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 are given different work related to their ability, but they lack the basic skills to complete it. Those in Year 4 receive little support either through carefully structured work or additional help, and their

progress is poor.

90. The presentation of pupils' work at Key Stage 1 is generally satisfactory, although there is a general lack of attention when setting out work, especially when using squared paper. By the end of Year 4, presentation is well below the standard expected.

91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy framework to plan lessons and provide a suitable mixture of teacher-led and individual activity. Pupils respond well to the structure of the Numeracy Hour, and most concentrate well in the class-teaching sessions: this enables them to make progress, especially in Key Stage 1. Most daily teaching plans are satisfactory and work is usually appropriate for pupils' age and ability. Learning objectives are shared with pupils, and this helps them to focus more clearly on the task. They listen carefully to their teacher and each other, and follow instructions well, so that they know what they have to do. When the work is interesting and planned time-scales are maintained, pupils settle quickly and maintain concentration. Behaviour is satisfactory; pupils have good relationships with their teacher and each other so that they can concentrate on the content of the lesson without distraction. Occasionally, too much time is spent on the class-teaching session. This results in pupils fidgeting and losing concentration. In Key Stage 2, high-achieving pupils make unsatisfactory progress because teachers do not plan suitable, challenging work at the right level. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not include constructive comments.

92. The National Numeracy Strategy has been smoothly implemented, and has contributed to the improvement in standards at Key Stage 1. There are consistent assessment and recording systems which chart pupils' progress against specific learning objectives, and these effectively inform end-of-year reports. A good start has been made in analysing annual test results, in ascertaining strengths and weaknesses, and in developing strategies to raise standards. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning does not take place. Although the co-ordinator collects a small sample of work for inclusion in a mathematics portfolio she does not monitor teaching plans, classroom practice, or the outcomes of pupils' work. In these areas, therefore, co-ordination is unsatisfactory. Learning resources are satisfactory and contribute to pupils' achievement, but teachers make insufficient use of computers in lessons.

SCIENCE

93. In the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments, pupils' standards of attainment in science were above average overall, with strengths in experimental and investigative science and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of materials and their properties and physical processes. The work seen during the inspection was consistent with an average performance for the present generation of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. It showed that steps have been taken to overcome the weaknesses identified at the time of the last report and that pupils' knowledge and understanding have improved. For example, pupils investigate and successfully construct circuits in Year 2 and investigate the action of heat and cold on a variety of materials. They consider the effect of friction on a range of fabrics but they do not predict the outcomes or show an understanding of the results of their experiment.

94. Standards of attainment in Year 4 accord with national expectations for pupils the same age. Pupils show an understanding of a fair test when they investigate the effect of mixing a variety of solids with water, and vary one factor at a time. However they are unable to draw any final conclusion from the experiment or predict outcomes. They are able to name accurately the main bones of the human body and show similarities with the animal skeleton.

95. These standards are similar to those reported for Key Stage 1 in the last inspection report and an improvement in those reported for Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in both key stages.

96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and in each key stage, but is not consistent across both key stages. It ranges from very good in parts of Key Stage 1 to unsatisfactory in parts of Key Stage 2, and the quality of pupils' understanding varies accordingly. This limits the pupils' potential to achieve high standards because they have not learned - and do not fully understand - the basic scientific principles.

97. In the most successful lessons, where the teaching is good or very good, teachers have a clear knowledge of the subject and of ways of presenting it to pupils so that their interest is captured. Well-focused learning objectives are presented at the start of the lesson and the pace is brisk. The expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high. In Year 1, for example, pupils studying the concept of pushing and pulling were expected to understand that in order to open a particular door they had to make use of both types of force. This leads to the pupils maintaining their interest and acquiring new knowledge. Instructions are clear, so that pupils know what is expected of them and questions are well used to challenge pupils and help them develop their understanding. On these occasions the lesson content involves the pupils and their behaviour is very good as, for example, in a very good lesson on pigeons in Year 2, which used the expertise of a non-teaching assistant very well. In all classes pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to give oral responses and are supported by well-organised special needs assistants to ensure they contribute to the lesson.

98. In some lessons where the quality of the teaching is judged satisfactory overall there are elements of weakness and in some the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils become confused by the content of the lesson, behaviour deteriorates and pupils do not learn as they should. Sometimes the teacher's knowledge of the subject is insecure, and pupils are given incorrect information. The intended outcomes for a lesson are unclear and planning lacks detail. Sometimes in Key Stage 2 there is a tendency for lessons to be too teacher-directed and the pace of the lesson is slow, with too little time being given for discussion.

99. There is little evidence in Key Stage 2 of work being planned to match the learning needs of different pupils. In particular, the more able pupils are not challenged by tasks designed to extend their individual learning. For example, in Year 4 the worksheets used do not require the pupils to undertake any investigative open-ended learning. Marking is not used as an aid to assessment or to aid lesson planning and work was seen that had not been corrected. The assessment of science is used to monitor the work being undertaken by the pupils but not to establish the extent of their knowledge.

100. The homework set is used to support the practical nature of the work in the classroom. Pupils in Year 1 studied the way they used forces in their homes and those in Year 3 were looking after plants they were growing at home. There was no recorded homework but pupils were encouraged to discuss their results.

101. In Key Stage 1 pupils are encouraged to discuss the lessons: this leads to increased enthusiasm and the development of oral skills. In other classes there are few opportunities given to link science with other subjects and information technology is not used sufficiently to assist with data handling. The overall standard of written work is poor, with little use being made of redrafting to improve its presentation.

102. The curriculum for science has been revised to make use of the national model scheme of work and the subject documentation is satisfactory. Assessment is based upon a record of work undertaken throughout the school, although there are as yet no portfolios of science to assist teachers to judge pupils' work. The enthusiastic science co-ordinator has developed a useful collection of resources. However, pupils are unable to have independent access to them because of lack of suitable storage space. The co-ordinator does not monitor learning and teaching within the classrooms in order to check that pupils are building systematically on what they know and understand; assessment information is not used to assist with curriculum planning: in these respects the co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory.

ART

103. Pupils' standards of attainment in art are as expected for pupils the same age and their achievement at all levels of ability is satisfactory. Pupils successfully use water colour to achieve different effects and varied moods. For example, the work in Reception after Monet required a good eye for design and the confident application of contrasting colours over a watercolour background. The pupils' observation of objects and their skills in recording ideas develop satisfactorily as they progress through Key Stage 1 and gain in maturity. The spring displays in the hall and in classrooms demonstrate careful observation, recorded in a suitable range of media including pencil, pen and ink, pastel and collage. Year 2 pupils show a confident and vivid use of paint to depict the great fire of London, and use different printing objects and computer-generated images to make interesting patterns.

104. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to work with pastels: some pastel pictures of bare trees in Year 4 provide a strong impression of sunset. They experiment with mirror symmetry, and continue with observational drawing. For example pencil drawings of Prudhoe Castle and other local buildings support their local history work. This work, while of an acceptable quality, appears to lack the energy and commitment evident in the work of younger pupils.

105. There is little evidence that the present generation of pupils has had experience of sculpture or textiles or opportunity to learn the techniques associated with these areas of the subject. Nor have they had sufficient experience of the work of established artists.

106. No art lessons were observed: it is therefore not possible to record a judgement on the quality of teaching nor the quality of pupils' learning in response to their art lessons.

107. There is a suitable subject policy. The scheme of work is in process of development, and does not yet refer sufficiently to the work of established artists. Suitable arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of the teaching and learning have yet to be established. The position of the subject is thus broadly that described in the last inspection report.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection. The range of pupils' work available for scrutiny did not provide enough evidence to make an informed judgement overall. However, a scrutiny of this work, of displays, and of teachers' planning enables some judgements to be made and indicates that the standards of attainment being achieved by pupils are unsatisfactory at both key stages. This is similar to the inspection findings recorded in the last report.

109. At Key Stage 1, pupils are taught to use a range of fixings and fastenings. For instance, Year 1 pupils draw round and cut out the shapes of a pre-cut teddy bear template. They attached the arms and legs using split pins to produce a teddy with moving parts. At the time of the inspection, Year 2 pupils were learning how to attach pieces by sewing, and were then using a pre-cut shirt template to make a garment. Nevertheless, although pupils had good opportunities to develop fixing techniques, the design element of the task was missing in both instances. Pupils have too few opportunities to disassemble items prior to designing, to generate their own ideas, or to evaluate the finished product. This is similar to the last inspection when it was reported that too few opportunities were planned for developing actual design capability and there was insufficient emphasis on evaluation.

110. Year 3 pupils designed a piece of clothing for a specific purpose, for example, a garden party. Pupils were able to select suitable materials, and to include them in their drawings. However, the work lacked detailed labelling, reasons for the choice of material and an overall evaluation of the finished product. Presentation of the work was unsatisfactory and was without detailed labelling. Year 4 pupils constructed effective examples of ways in which moving parts could be incorporated into a book. They successfully made flaps and moving circles. However, the process lacked the opportunity for pupils to generate and investigate their own ideas, or to make a finished product.

111. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching or of the pupils' response to the subject. However, in the single lesson seen, the teacher clearly stated the learning objectives, thus giving pupils a clear understanding of the task. The lesson involved a suitable degree of challenge because pupils developed the idea of making eyes that could move in a pre-cut face. They successfully used cutting and fixing techniques. All the materials required were made available by the teacher, which resulted in pupils having limited choices of their own to make. The pupils worked well in their groups, helping each other and sharing materials. They were enthusiastic and behaved well and this contributed to the quality of what they learned.

112. Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, and pupils' work over time is not monitored. The quality and quantity of resources for design and technology have not been evaluated, and assessment opportunities and systems of reporting are not developed. Teachers are beginning to use a national model scheme of work, but due to the limited amount of time available to the subject, they are not likely to complete the prescribed work, and pupils are unlikely to have received their entitlement in the subject by the end of the year.

GEOGRAPHY

113. During the inspection only one taught lesson was observed and no overall judgement of the quality of teaching in the subject is possible. Scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' past work and interviews with pupils, have enabled a judgement on standards of attainment to be made.

114. Standards in geography at Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 meet national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory at all levels of ability. As a result, pupils are aware of the wider world and use geographical terms correctly.

115. Younger pupils are able to describe their route to school and draw a simple plan. They describe places within walking distance of the school and give clear verbal instructions as to the position of their home. Older pupils are able to draw a plan of a room accurately. At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to impose a grid on an island map and use basic grid references to describe the location of pirate treasure. Weather records are kept but not linked to the national weather pattern nor was information technology being used to record and analyse the data collected. There was no further evidence of geographical investigations or of evaluating evidence and data.

116. Pupils talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the subject. Pupils in Year 2 can identify Northumberland on a blank map of the British Isles and identify the countries of the British Isles accurately. Using an atlas they show clear strategies for identifying the position of Newcastle by reference to other places they know. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are aware of climatic differences within the world and discuss the seasonal differences between England and Australia. They can identify the equator and know what life is like in very hot or cold countries. They understand the impact of local factories on the environment.

117. Marking of pupils' work is perfunctory and is not used to assess pupils' understanding. The emphasis is on map work, especially within the local area. This work is supported by clear displays throughout the school with good use being made in Year 4 of a map sequence showing the town in relation to the rest of the world. Planning is being developed with the aid of the national model scheme of work but there are shortcomings. The study of an alternative locality is being left to the summer term, which may deny pupils the opportunity to gain appropriate knowledge and understanding in depth. Resources for the subject are satisfactory but there is insufficient information about other countries. The role of the co-ordinator is insufficiently developed. She does not monitor teaching and learning within the classroom to ensure progressive development of pupils' learning and is not actively involved in the planning of the subject in terms of describing what the pupils are expected to learn in the twelve terms they are in the school. The position of the subject is thus unchanged from the time of the last inspection.

HISTORY

118. Pupils' standards of attainment in history are satisfactory and likely to reach the expectations for pupils the same age by the end of the respective key stage. Their achievement at all levels of ability is satisfactory.

119. In Year 1, pupils talk freely about 'the olden days' and with the help of photographs can describe – for example - how people used to bath in a tin bath in front of the fire. They know that old irons did not work by electricity and can describe in detail how to tell if an iron is hot enough by spitting on it. They are clear that the olden days were 'a long time ago'

and can describe some of the differences with contemporary life. Year 2 pupils give an account in suitable detail of the lives of famous people, such as Grace Darling, Florence Nightingale, and Louis Braille. They know about the great fire of London, where it started and why it spread so rapidly. They know that the source of much of their information is Samuel Pepys who was there and worked for the King, and wrote it down in a special language.

120. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good sense of the long history of the locality. They talk about Prudhoe Castle in its different phases, and have a satisfactory factual knowledge of the main events. They tell stories about particular events such as the Bog Disaster. Pupils are weak, however, on sources of historical information and the interpretation of evidence. For example, they believe that history is passed on by word of mouth and, although they had been on a history walk through the town, were not aware that the buildings they had been looking at were primary sources of historical information.

121. No history lessons were observed: it is therefore not possible to record a judgement on the quality of teaching nor the quality of pupils' learning in response to their history lessons. However, pupils' enthusiasm for the subject, particularly in Key Stage 1, is evident in their conversation about it and offers a good foundation for future development.

122. Subject co-ordination is unsatisfactory. There is a helpful history policy. The scheme of work, however, is a single page, undated. It sets out the topics to be studied but does not specify the knowledge and skills the pupils are expected to learn during the time they are in the school or how they will be helped to learn them. There is no reference to assessment or to arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This is the position reported at the time of the last inspection and little progress has been made in the subject's development since that time.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Pupils' standards of attainment in information technology are below national expectations and, because pupils of all levels of ability make unsatisfactory progress throughout the school, none are achieving as they should. Standards are not as high as reported in the last inspection, and although some weaknesses were identified then, progress was judged to be satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and slightly below at Key Stage 2. Due to the ways in which teachers organise their lesson timetables, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers and other information technology equipment. This restricts their output and contributes to their unsatisfactory progress. To address this issue, Year 4 pupils are expected to work on computers at lunch and break times. Not all children attend voluntarily. Apart from this and the one information technology lesson seen, pupils were observed using computers on very few occasions during the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows mainly the use of word processing and computer-generated art programmes.

124. At Key Stage 1 pupils assemble text using the mouse and cursor. They accurately use punctuation such as capital letters and full stops, and understand the use of the 'caps lock' key. They satisfactorily represent information graphically using a data-handling package. For instance, Year 2 pupils gathered information about favourite fruits, entered the information and produced pictograms. Throughout the Key Stage pupils develop their drawing skills on the computer. They draw lines of varying thickness with appropriate control, and use the relevant computer tools to fill, change colour and delete their drawings. By the end of the Key Stage, most pupils can generate and communicate their ideas using word processing and data handling programmes. They are able to insert a CD ROM and

use this to access an adventure simulation programme. A significant minority of pupils is able to save and retrieve information. The use of information technology to extract information or for writing simple procedures is not sufficiently developed, however.

125. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils are beginning to select different fonts and letter size and to insert graphics into the text. For instance, when designing leaflets about the attractions of Prudhoe, pupils were able to create and centre a title, and to alter the size of the pictures selected. High-achieving Year 4 pupils retrieve their saved work; others require assistance. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the keyboard, but are slow when typing. They can punctuate their work appropriately. Pupils are unable to cut and paste their text. They have limited experience of in-putting and accessing information or of presenting information in graphic form. The use of information technology to generate and store a sequence of instructions, and for manipulating sound is unsatisfactory.

126. In the single lesson seen the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. The teacher gave satisfactory support to eight pupils using four computers, as they were taught to insert pictures into text. However, the rest of the class were given a low-level task, receiving little support as they drew pictures depicting the attractions of Prudhoe. As a result, a significant number of pupils produced unsatisfactory drawings, with little attention to detail. There was no rigour or challenge for the majority of pupils.

127. The relatively small number of pupils observed during the inspection did enjoy using computers. Their behaviour and attitudes towards the subject were good and this helped them learn. They persevered for sustained periods of time. When working with a partner they shared ideas, and took turns. Many Year 4 pupils willingly attended the extra information technology sessions.

128. The curriculum for information technology is new. The teachers are presently evaluating the national model scheme of work. At present the curriculum does not provide a well-balanced programme of study for information technology either as a subject in its own right or as a support for other subjects.

129. The co-ordinator knows what needs to be done and is giving good support by providing colleagues with the documentation they require, and by giving additional guidance. There is an appropriate development plan to support this initiative. The school has benefited from the support it receives from the Prudhoe partnership of schools and, as a result of a successful corporate bid, now has a satisfactory range of computers. However, the use of these machines is inefficient as they are left unused for a significant part of each day. With the exception of the music strand, the range of programmes to support information technology is satisfactory overall, but resources to support information technology in other curriculum areas are insufficient and restrict pupils' opportunities to learn. The majority of teachers now have sufficient expertise to deliver the information technology curriculum. Nevertheless, standards remain below expectation because insufficient time is available for pupils to learn new skills and to practise and consolidate what they have learned.

MUSIC

130. Pupils' standards of attainment in music are in line with what would be expected of pupils the same age. By the end of Key Stage 1 they sing confidently, mostly in tune and with an accurate rhythm. Higher-attaining pupils play the percussion instruments accurately, playing rhythmically and keeping silent as the music demands. They are learning to listen, learning how to pitch notes accurately and how to reproduce rhythms. In Key Stage 2 pupils can sing in tune with an accurate rhythm. They are beginning to devise their own notation to record what they hear, and listen attentively to music by established composers, recognising different patterns in what they have heard. Achievement is satisfactory in both key stages and at all levels of ability.

131. The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1, the teacher has good qualities as a musician, and her planning is very full, with good ideas for well-sequenced activities linked to suitable learning objectives. However, there are weaknesses in practice, because the teacher does not successfully find a language which is suitable to the pupils concerned, with the result that the pupils, who are clearly ready to follow a strong lead, find the instructions difficult to understand, and concentration begins to ebb away. In Key Stage 2 the teacher is well prepared, clear about the purpose of the lessons, manages the material and the pupils well, with the result that pupils are interested and keen to join in, expressing suitable opinions on each other's work and learning effectively.

132. Pupils clearly enjoy music and want to do well, and this contributes to the progress they make and to the potential for the subject's further development. A satisfactory policy and scheme of work distributes topics, including the development of musical skills, over the years pupils are in the school, but learning outcomes are not clearly enough identified stage by stage. There are no arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning or to assess what pupils' have learned. This is broadly the position reported in the last inspection report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. In the aspect of physical education observed during the inspection, pupils achieve standards appropriate to their ages by the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection. The lessons seen during the inspection concentrated on teaching games skills. However, scrutiny of the scheme of work and teachers' planning shows that the physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements and satisfactorily covers gymnastics, dance, athletics and swimming. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and in line with their capabilities.

134. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the benefits of vigorous exercise and its effect on their bodies. They understand the need to warm up before lessons start and to cool down at the end. Pupils develop good hand-eye co-ordination when working with balls and beanbags, and bounce, catch and aim with confidence. They understand the conventions of simple team games, and gain an understanding about rules and fair play. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 satisfactorily use their skills in a range of games. They pass and receive a ball with accuracy and learn to attack and defend. They understand the importance of marking an opponent, of using space, and the need to pass the ball quickly. Pupils accordingly enjoy their physical education lessons. They are enthusiastic and persevere and so learn effectively. In a Year 3 lesson, for instance, pupils became very

involved as they played against an opposing team, but they collaborated well, played fairly, and quickly settled to listen to new instructions given by their teacher.

135. In the lessons seen, the quality of the teaching was good overall. In one lesson it was judged to be very good because the teacher's effective management of the pupils' behaviour enabled them to listen carefully and they responded quickly to directions. Pupils' work was evaluated during the lesson, expectations were high and a brisk pace was maintained. Good planning ensured that activities were progressive and skills were developed in small succinct stages. Where unsatisfactory teaching quality was seen, it was directly attributable to the teacher's unsatisfactory management of the pupils' behaviour. The teacher did not insist that pupils listened carefully, instructions were ignored by some pupils, resulting in little progress being made in the lesson.

136. The school provides an appropriate curriculum for physical education which includes swimming for Years 2, 3 and 4. Boys and girls participate in an after-school football club, and have the opportunity to compete in tournaments against local schools. The range of extra curricular sport is too narrow, however. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and effectively supports staff in their teaching, sometimes giving demonstration lessons. The impact of leadership on standards is insufficient as there is not enough monitoring of teaching and learning, and assessment opportunities are not planned. There is a comprehensive scheme of work that gives good guidance to the non-specialist. Whilst there are good strategies to store equipment until required, the dining chairs are stacked in the hall when not in use, and this limits the space available for physical education lessons. The large school field gives very good provision for athletics, games and orienteering during the summer months.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Pupils' standards of attainment in religious education are on course to meet the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1 and, in Key Stage 2, to meet the standards set out in the Agreed Syllabus for the end of Year 4. Progress is accordingly satisfactory and pupils are achieving appropriately.

138. Pupils know that a church is a sacred building for Christians and are able to recall the parables of Jesus, for example. Year 4 pupils could re-tell the story of Zaccheus in some detail. Pupils cannot demonstrate knowledge of other religions, however. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 show a satisfactory awareness of new beginnings linked to the recent birth of a brother to one of the pupils. Children in both key stages can identify personal likes and dislikes and those in Key Stage 2 have a clear understanding of the consequences of their actions.

139. The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory, although in some lessons where the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, there were examples of unsatisfactory practice. Teachers understand the subject matter and the purpose of the lesson. Lessons are introduced with clearly set out objectives and work relates to the pupils' experiences. In Year 1, pupils listen with great attention to a story and are able to complete sentences and join in with appropriate responses, enhancing work in literacy, and showing they had understood the lesson and concepts involved.

140. In some lessons, however, there is insufficient challenge and the focus is too much on teacher-directed learning. When this happens pupils lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates. These lessons also tend to rely on written responses to questions rather than the involvement of all pupils orally. Questions are used to check the content of the lesson but do not explore the concepts being developed.

141. Generally, written work in religious education is unsatisfactory, lacking challenge and the opportunity for creativity. Some work seen in Year 4 contained factual errors, which had not been corrected. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets, some of which are little more than colouring exercises.

142. The school appropriately relies upon the local authority's Agreed Syllabus to provide guidance as to the topics to be covered. There is no cohesive scheme of work which sets out the learning and understanding of the subject it is intended the pupils should develop. There are no arrangements for assessment. Suitable resources have been purchased to support the learning of world religions but some are out of date. The subject co-ordinator is unable to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning in the subject. There is no evidence that religions other than Christianity are being taught consistently during the year. By leaving this part of the syllabus to the summer term, pupils are being denied the opportunity to celebrate and begin to understand the diversity of culture and worship within contemporary society.