

INSPECTION REPORT

CHEVIOT FIRST SCHOOL

Newcastle Upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle Upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 108452

Headteacher: Mrs E Youngs

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: March 13 – 17th 2000

Inspection number: 190064

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years of age
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Yetholm Place Newbiggin Hall Estate Newcastle Upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE5 4EB
Telephone number:	0191 286 9324
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. R Robson
Date of previous inspection:	28 th – 31 st October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
A C Davies	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The Characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Design and Technology	Teaching and Learning
		Areas of learning for children aged under five	Leadership and Management
J Garland	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
S Flood		English	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		History	
		Geography	
		Physical Education	
		Religious Education	
M Hemmings		Science	
		Information and Communication Technology	
		Music	
		Special Education Needs	
		Equal Opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Focus inspection Services
The Court
8 Bar Meadow
Dobcross
Oldham
OL3 5 QW

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cheviot First School has 226 children on roll, which includes 38 in the nursery. All children attend full time and start in the September before they are 4 and leave at the age of 9 years. There are two special units attached to the school. The first is for 10 children aged 5 and 6 who are being assessed for specialist language support and the second is for 6 children aged 7 to 9 who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Only two children, both attending the early years assessment unit, have English as an additional language. The percentage of children on the special educational needs register is very high by national comparisons. The school serves a very large estate in Newcastle, which has a high level of social disadvantage. A very large proportion of children are entitled to school meals free of charge. When they start school the majority of children's attainment is very low by comparison to other children of their age. The school is part of the Newcastle Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school where the very many positive strengths far outweigh the few minor weaknesses. Outstanding leadership has ensured that the staff work to a common aim, of ensuring that the academic as well as pastoral needs of children are well looked after. When compared to schools admitting children from similar backgrounds standards in English and mathematics for 7 year olds are well above average. This is due to the good quality of teaching with emphasis being put on improving children's basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Outstanding leadership has led to every member of staff, teaching and non-teaching, pulling together to ensure that the academic and pastoral needs of children are given high priority.
- The school analyses its performance very carefully and has put in place very effective measures to check on the progress of all children.
- Teachers plan carefully for the needs of all children of different abilities and the emphasis given to the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that children achieve their full potential.
- Staff manage children, especially those who have the potential to be disruptive, very effectively. They successfully channel all children's enthusiasm purposefully, resulting in the children being inspired and highly motivated.
- The very good provision for children under five begins the process of improving children's skills and sets a high standard that is built upon as they move through the school.
- There is good use made of children's literacy skills in other subjects. Children use their writing and reading purposefully to support work in science and history, in particular.
- The provision in both the early years assessment unit and the emotional and behaviour development unit are excellent and the specialist skills of the staff in these two units benefit the rest of the school.

What could be improved

- The information provided for parents on annual reports about their children's progress does not meet statutory requirements because they do not contain a comment on each subject of the National Curriculum or give a clear indication as to what their child needs to do next to improve.
- The way children are withdrawn for additional support sometimes causes unsettling times in lessons, especially when the class is already settled and the children to be withdrawn have already started work.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1996. The main issues identified in the previous report have been dealt with very well, resulting in very good progress being made in the past three and a half years.

Checking on how well the school is performing, the first issue identified in the previous report, is now one of the school's strengths. Results from national and other standardised tests give the school valued information, which it uses to identify strengths and weaknesses in its provision. Alongside this, there is an excellent programme of checking on the quality of teaching and all staff are provided with very good information and support to address any issue raised. Teacher planning is also an area that has been improved recently with good use made of national guidance to improve the overall effectiveness of the curriculum. The school has very successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has had a very positive impact on standards, especially in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is much better with far more teaching of a very good standard now occurring. Similarly, the leadership and management have improved. The initiatives that were beginning to be put in place by the headteacher, who was new in post during the previous inspection, are now paying dividends. Her direction and insistence that raising standards has to be a priority has been a very important reason why the school is so effective. The school's involvement with the Education Action Zone has enabled it to use additional resources to help deal with the needs of young children who have limited communication when they start school. This has helped the school improve the provision for very young children.

STANDARDS

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

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

The 1999 results for 7-year-olds show that the school's performance, when compared to similar schools, is very high for reading - being in the top 5 per cent. It is also well above average for writing and mathematics. In English, there has been an improving trend for the past few years with the school benefiting from being involved earlier than other schools in the National Literacy Strategy. In mathematics, the results show that there has been improvement over time. The present Year 2 is attaining results that match those of the previous year. Girls are performing better than boys more than is found nationally.

The school's good performance is being maintained as children move into Years 3 and 4. The indications from other standardised tests for 9-year-olds show that they are maintaining the standards that have been

attained in English and mathematics and that other subjects are benefiting from the improved basic skills that children possess in these areas. The standards attained by the present Year 4 children are in line with those anticipated for their age. Standards in information technology are also in line with those anticipated for their age. Similarly, in religious education, children's performance is in line with that outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes to their work are good throughout the school. Children are proud of their work, show much interest, concentrate well and are very enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Children behave very well in assembly where the whole school, including the members of the two special units, show respect. The good behaviour of children in class makes a positive contribution to their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Children take responsibility well. Older children work with younger children and carry out many responsible tasks at lunchtimes. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Their personal development is very good and helps them to be open, and friendly. Those with special educational needs develop good social skills and are well motivated.
Attendance	Attendance levels are unsatisfactory and well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good for English and mathematics. There are particular strengths in the way teachers give much attention to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In the majority of classes there is good effort made to ensure that the prior attainment of children is considered carefully when planning and that work of a challenging nature is prepared for each group. The staff are exceptionally talented at channelling the energies of these lively children into their work. To do this they use good methods to motivate and inspire them

The good teaching starts in the nursery and reception classes. Early years staff welcome and benefit from the specialist expertise of the teacher in charge of the early years assessment unit. The ability of all teachers to manage the children so effectively and to be able to track the progress they make are two of the major strengths of the teaching. There is particular expertise in the teaching that occurs in both the early assessment unit and the behaviour and emotional unit. Children are able to develop their academic skills

appropriately because of the careful consideration that is given to their individual needs. Learning is therefore good with children having good knowledge about what they need to do next to improve their work. They work hard and concentrate well during lessons.

Teaching is good overall with all teaching being at least satisfactory. Teaching is very good in 28 per cent of lessons and good in 52 per cent. All other teaching is satisfactory with no unsatisfactory teaching evident.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught appropriately. The school has given a high priority to developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy but uses literacy skills, in particular, to improve the provision in many other subjects. The curriculum for children aged under five is very good. There is also a good range of extra-curricular activities provided for older children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The children in both the special units are provided with excellent support. Other children who have learning or emotional difficulties are equally well assisted with appropriate small steps identified, and targets set, to help them improve.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The two children with English as an additional language are both in the early years assessment unit. The provision for them takes full account of their language needs and they are well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Teachers are keen to use opportunities to discuss with children issues about right and wrong. Children also take on additional responsibilities and represent their school in many ways. They are able to celebrate and appreciate being part of a large city like Newcastle but there are fewer opportunities for them to appreciate the cultures of other people from different backgrounds.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The academic progress the children make is carefully checked and targets set to help them improve. They know that they are expected to behave in a certain way and they know they will have to face consequences if they do not.

The staff have a good working relationship with its parents. They appreciate the support they receive from the few dedicated volunteers and have ensured that parents who work in school are well trained. However, the children's annual reports sent to parents are not comprehensive enough. The vast majority of parents support the school's efforts and appreciate what staff do for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Outstanding leadership is one of the main features of this school. The headteacher has built a strong team around her with all being clear about the need to focus on keeping standards high as well as caring for the personal needs of the children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. This relatively new Governing Body shows enthusiasm and dedication. It is developing its role appropriately to check on the effectiveness of the school. However, the children's annual reports do not meet statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very Good. The school has very good systems in place to check test results and to help it understand more about its performance. Effective use is made of this information to help the school to improve still further.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its staffing to ensure that children's basic skills are as high as they can be. The additional resources provided through the Education Action Zone funding and the good expertise of staff working in the two specialist units are used to good effect in ensuring children are provided with as much support as possible. The finance committee of the governors pay good attention to the need to ensure that the school gets the best possible value from the money it is allocated.

Staffing levels are good. All staff who work in the school contribute to the positive position that it finds itself in. The specialist expertise of the staff who work in the two units is helping all staff to deepen their knowledge of dealing with children requiring additional support. The school has recently established a computer suite to help children develop information technology skills. However, this facility is under-used at the moment. Resourcing for literacy and numeracy is good. There is spacious accommodation that is well used to provide additional areas for withdrawing children for specialist work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school and do well. • Behaviour in school is good. • Teachers are approachable. They teach well. • The school is well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents said they would like to know more about how their children are progressing. • Some said that not much homework is set.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive points made by parents. The school makes sure that parents have ready access to teachers and classrooms at the beginning and the end of the day. Apart from their children's annual report, parents have good information about how well their children are progressing and they are kept informed if there are any problems. The school tries to involve parents in their children's education but only limited numbers have responded to courses and talks so far. The school's homework

arrangements are appropriate and the majority of parents support the school's approach.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 There are no national comparisons available for 9-year-old children but the school does use standardised tests to keep track of the progress made by children in Years 3 and 4. These test and the analysis of work show that children's attainment is in line with that expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. In each of these three subjects the standards attained by children is very good when compared to similar schools.
- 2 There are comparative test results available for 7-year-olds. In 1999, these tests show that 7-year-olds attain close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and teacher assessments show a similar picture for science. However, when compared to similar schools the attainment is very high for reading and well above average for writing, mathematics and science. The percentage of children attaining higher levels in national tests is close to the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. This gives a very good picture of standards when considering that children start school with very low personal and academic skills. This is an improvement when compared to the position when the school was last inspected. At that time standards were more variable and, when compared to national results, children's attainment was below average.
- 3 In reading, the national tests for 7-year-olds show that there has been steady improvement in standards over the past four years. One of the strong features of this improvement has been the ability of children to extend their reading diet to include more non-fiction materials. The National Literacy Strategy has also had a positive impact, mainly because children are able to hear texts being read aloud by adults in a lively and interesting way. This has helped to improve their own expression in reading. Year 3 and 4 children talk enthusiastically about a range of authors that are familiar to them. Girls perform better than boys by a margin greater than that noted nationally. The school has tried to address this by buying more books that are aimed at boys. However, this has only partially helped to close the gap between the reading standards of boys and girls.
- 4 In writing, the 1999 national test results for 7-year-olds show that children's attainment is in line with the national average. This represents steady improvement in performance over the past four years. When compared to similar schools, children's attainment is well above average. The content of children's writing is of a higher standard than aspects of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Girls perform at a higher standard than boys do by more than is noted nationally. Year 3 and 4 children maintain standards that are in line with national expectations and their grammar and punctuation is much improved. The structure of the National Literacy Strategy is ensuring that children are taught basic skills and they respond positively to this. Standards in writing are held back to a certain extent by the fact that only a few children are able to speak at advanced levels. Whilst most children's speaking skills are in line with national expectations, there are very few able to use Standard English at a more advanced level and this is hindering their written work.
- 5 The national test results for 7-year-olds indicate that standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. The results in mathematics have fluctuated over the past four years but are on an upward trend. When compared to similar schools the 1999 results are well above average. Good use of mental and oral mathematics has ensured that the standards attained by Year 3 and 4 pupils are also in line with national averages and therefore very good compared to similar schools. More

- able children are performing well in relation to number work but are not as advanced in their understanding of shape and space. The trend of girls out-performing boys also continues in this subject. Girls at the age of 7 are performing at a very good level compared with boys. The school is aware of this and has developed an action plan to deal with it. It is too early to see if the plan is succeeding.
- 6 Teacher assessments for 7-year-olds in science indicate that results have been in line with the national average. However, very few children have attained at the higher levels for the past few years and no one did in 1999. Their ability to deal with technical language is the main problem. When compared to similar schools however, the children attain standards that are well above average. Year 3 and 4 maintain, and build on, this position and more children are moving beyond the levels expected for their age.
 - 7 For all other subjects, children's attainment at the end of Year 4 is inline with what is expected for their age. This represents good achievement in history, geography and religious education. The main reason for this is that children are able to use their literacy skills successfully to improve their written work in these subjects. In information and communication technology there is good work evident in word processing but children lack the necessary skills to develop fully their data handling and controlling.
 - 8 Children start in the nursery with very limited skills in personal and academic development. Due to the good work that occurs in the nursery and reception classes children quickly improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. They also make very good progress in their personal and social development, which because of the very good teaching builds a solid platform that allows the children to continue improving as they move on through the school. The early assessments made at the beginning and the end of the reception class confirms the very good progress that has been made in the children's early years experience.
 - 9 As children continue through the school the impact of the good teaching of basic skills enables the children to improve further their literacy and numeracy skills. Good progress in using punctuation, grammar and spelling are particular features of the improvements made. In writing, children also learn to write for a range of purposes and the content of their work is improved by the careful consideration given to the sequence of stories and to descriptive passages. The use of writing in subjects such as history adds to this progress. More confident and able children are able to write successfully from the point of view of various characters from history, for example, writing about the experiences of the Viking raiders in Lindisfarne. In mathematics the concentration on mental arithmetic at the beginning of the numeracy lessons has helped children improve their number work in general. All children eagerly participate in these sessions and are keen to explain to others how they reached their answers. There is less evidence of children's numeracy skills being used in other subjects although it does occur in science and design and technology.
 - 10 Children with special educational needs in mainstream classes make good progress with good quality support being available to them. This starts in the reception class with a classroom support assistant working with children who need to improve their communication skills. The support is funded through the Education Action Zone and is evidence of the zone's positive impact on standards. The lower attaining children throughout the school respond well to the encouragement they receive and achieve as well as they can. The improvements made by lower attaining children have been one of the main reasons why the school's results have improved significantly over the past few years. It is difficult to assess the overall achievement of the children in the early years

assessment unit because they are there for a short period mainly for the purpose of assessing their needs more comprehensively. It is clear, however, that the provision they are receiving is making a positive impact on their personal and communication skills. The children in the emotional and behavioural development unit are also making good progress because they are working in a small group with much more individual attention to help them concentrate on academic tasks.

- 11 Children with the potential for high attainment are achieving better results now than a few years ago. The impact of the National Literacy Strategy and to a lesser extent the National Numeracy Strategy has had the effect on raising teachers' expectations of what children are capable of achieving, which in turn has resulted in better performance by the higher attainers. There are still some issues regarding the under-achievement of higher attainers at the end of Year 2 in science but the problems, mainly related to scientific vocabulary, have been identified and there are already signs of improvement with the present Year 2.
- 12 The use of information and communication technology to support work in some subjects, for example, mathematics and science is limited. The school has recently improved its provision for this work but still requires more software before an impact can be made in all subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 Children have good attitudes to school and have great enthusiasm for their work. This is displayed by their keen attitudes towards answering questions and being asked to demonstrate their ideas in front of the class. There are many children in school who have the potential to be difficult but they respond very well to the lead given by adults who work with them. The careful channelling of their energies into academic work is one of the major features of the success of the school.
- 14 This enthusiasm starts in the nursery, where excitement is harnessed to good effect. For example, when exploring the jungle the children are lost in 'make-believe' world that helps to develop their creativity and imagination. These young children learn how to tidy up after themselves after careful help provided by the staff. Many children start in the nursery lacking the necessary skills to share and co-operate. However, in a very short period they display co-operative skills and share equipment most readily. However, when something does go wrong a few children still have the potential to react in an anti-social manner. These rare occurrences are far outweighed by the many positive features relating to the very good attitudes that pre-dominate in the nursery and reception classes.
- 15 Children are proud of their school and know that they are there to learn. The early years assessment unit and emotional and behavioural development unit attached to the school also maximise the children's attitudes and enthusiasms. Despite some of these children having difficulties in adapting to a structured environment there remains a sense of children wanting to achieve well and trying hard to please the adults who work with them.
- 16 There have been four fixed-term exclusions in the past year. These have been situations where the behaviour of the individual has posed a threat to others. This does not take away from the careful management of children by the staff. There is good management of any issue relating to bullying. Staff and children are clear about what to do if an issue arises. This has resulted in very few incidents of bullying occurring in school.

- 17 In nearly all the lessons the behaviour of children is good. The only exception occurs in one Year 1/2 class where a minority of children display challenging behaviour that sometimes results in time been wasted to deal with their attitudes. In other classes, even when movement of children in and out for additional support interrupts lessons, there is very little change to the pattern of the behaviour of children. Outside classrooms, on the playground and in the dining room the children behave very well. Very good behaviour is prominent during assemblies where all children, including the nursery and two special units, gather together in a positive way. The assemblies are often the focus for rewarding good behaviour and there is a strong sense of pride felt by those receiving awards and appropriate acknowledgement given by the others.
- 18 Children respond in a satisfactory way when the impact of their actions on others is pointed out. They are good at taking the many responsibilities which are offered to them. Older children show a high degree of commitment to the organisational tasks, which they have applied for and which they are trusted to carry out.
- 19 Relationships in school are very good, and this is a positive contribution to the educational standards, which they achieve. There is much mutual respect shown by the children and the adults. This extends itself to the dinner 'nannies' (lunchtime supervisors) as well as the volunteer parents.
- 20 Attendance is well below average, being regularly at under 90 per cent. Despite the school's efforts there is a lack of punctuality across all the year groups.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

- 21 Teaching is good overall. It is particularly effective for children aged under five, where it is very good. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was noted and teaching was at least good in just over 80 per cent of lessons. It was very good in 26 per cent and outstanding in 2 per cent. This represents a good picture and confirms that the teaching is having a positive impact on the standards that are being achieved throughout the school. When compared to the previous inspection this is a much-improved situation with the amount of good teaching being more than double that noted previously.
- 22 The most prominent feature of the very good teaching is the way the basic skills are being taught. This is apparent in the special assessment unit, the nursery and for literacy and numeracy lessons in the rest of the school. The management of children is also a positive feature. Children, including those who could quite easily be a handful to deal with and adults have developed a mutual respect. This has resulted in most teachers controlling their class sensitively and channelling the energies of individuals, who might otherwise be difficult to handle, into their academic work. The children respond by working hard and being very keen to answer questions. The management of the children in the emotional and behavioural development unit is particularly impressive.
- 23 The only issue that adversely affects the teaching and learning is that occasionally children are withdrawn for additional support or return having received additional report in the middle of lessons. When these situations arise, the children's learning and the teachers' explanations are disrupted. In one example a group arriving in a lesson at the end of the teacher's initial introduction to mental and oral mathematics work caused a minor disruption to the lesson and caused the teacher to backtrack over the work already covered.

- 24 In the nursery and reception classes very young children are well provided for. The teaching is very good with excellent teacher understanding of the needs of the children and the outstanding way they deal with basic skills being prominent features. This is an improved position, which builds on the good teaching reported in the previous inspection. In the nursery the need to ensure that there is much stimulation for children is a high priority. The example of the way that the small hall was set up to simulate a jungle is one of many ideas used to challenge children's creative thinking. Care had been taken about each part of the jungle's construction. The way the apparatus was set up to allow the children to move through, under and over equipment as well as the carefully selected music and sound effects are just two examples. In the reception class, the teacher uses the book that is the focus of the week's work, 'Rosie's Walk', to help develop prediction skills as well as consolidate children's understanding of phonics. She uses the same theme later in the week for a very creative physical education lesson, where the vocabulary prominent in the book is used to good effect to get children to move 'over', 'under' and 'through' different apparatus.
- 25 There is priority given to helping children become independent in the nursery and reception classes. One of the ways this is done is by ensuring that children know the apparatus and equipment they use and can move independently to different areas to experience a range of activities. These young children are learning new skills at a very good rate and show great enthusiasm and interest in their tasks.
- 26 For children aged 5 to 7, the same care is given to developing their basic skills. In mathematics, for example, care is taken during mental and oral work to check that they have understood how they can get to an answer using different methods and they are further encouraged to think of the most efficient way for them. In a literacy lesson, a teacher uses the story of 'Cinderella' to help children explore emotions beyond the story line. In this way their comprehension skills are being developed. There is a prominent amount of good teaching in this age group although there are a few occasions when teachers find it difficult to gain the desired classroom control that is prominent in the rest of the school. However, when compared to the previous inspection there is a vast improvement in the teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching is now evident compared with as much as 25 per cent in the previous inspection. Children in Years 1 and 2 continue to work hard and the majority concentrate well on their work.
- 27 Year 3 and 4 children benefit from good teaching, which frequently (20 per cent) is very good. This is again an improved position to that reported previously with far more good and very good teaching prominent. For this age group the teachers' ability to continue to develop children's basic skills and to manage the children expertly are two of the main reasons why the teaching is successful. There is also very good use made of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum with effective use made of the history topic during literacy hour to engage and motivate children. For example, in one lesson the children are successfully taught the skills of scanning and skimming for information from a book about Vikings. In another lesson, the clarity of the teacher's explanation enables children to know when to use apostrophes. In each lesson in Year 3 and 4 children work hard and want to do well. They take a great deal of pleasure in producing work of a high quality and respond positively to praise.
- 28 Since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies teachers have gained confidence in teaching basic skills, especially related to grammar and punctuation. In mathematics, there is good use of correct vocabulary related to operations related to number. One of the main benefits of the implementation of the two strategies is that teacher's short-term plans are better

with greater attention given to explaining to children what it is that they are going to learn in each lesson. The staff have also kept pace with the developments for information and communication technology and are confident in helping children develop their information technology skills.

- 29 Teaching at its very best was noted in the early years assessment unit. Here the teacher uses musical instruments very effectively to help with children's listening skills. She patiently takes time to involve all children in the lesson and uses expert strategies to help children to focus attention on what she is saying. The teacher's knowledge of each and every child's specific need is most impressive and she is flexible enough within her approach to allow for all children to make responses in their own time. Many of the same attributes are prominent in the emotional and behavioural development unit. The teacher and classroom assistant in this case work in tandem expertly to manage children, many of whom have already developed negative attitudes in their previous schools.
- 30 Teachers benefit greatly from the additional staff expertise within the two units. This has helped the provision for children with special educational needs in other classes to be that much better. Teachers pay due attention to the individual plans for children requiring additional support and are very secure when it comes to assessing the nature of this support. The support available for lower attaining children in the reception benefits greatly from the additional support available from the classroom assistant who is funded through the Education Action Zone. Her work with these children helps them make rapid progress in their communication.
- 31 Teachers use assessment information well for all children. The planning shows that information gained from such assessments have been incorporated into the way different tasks for different groups of children have been arranged. The good use of assessment is another improved feature compared with the previous inspection. For older children there are good procedures in place for sharing with them what they need to do next. This is mainly managed through the marking. However, there is limited information shared with children in Years 1 and 2 about what they need to achieve next in order to improve.
- 32 Teachers use homework appropriately to support on-going work in school. For older children in particular the system is a good one and one that the majority of parents appreciate.

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

- 33 The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum. The Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education is fully implemented. The curriculum is broad and balanced with detailed planning ensuring appropriate time allocation to all subjects. There are particular strengths in English, mathematics, history and science. The National Literacy Strategy has made a significant contribution to the raising of standards in literacy across the school. In particular, higher standards of attainment in reading have been achieved through a structured programme of phonics, encouragement given to home readers and a well-developed system of monitoring individual progress. In the same way the National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant and positive impact on standards the school is achieving in numeracy. Mental arithmetic skills are particularly well developed. All teachers are enthusiastically developing children's mental strategies. Children are keen and confident to put forward their own suggestions when problem solving.

- 34 Discussions with children in Year 3 and 4 clearly indicated that the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education is being covered well. Children talked at length and with enthusiasm about a range of faiths and were very familiar with the key Christian festivals.
- 35 The curriculum for children aged under five is very good. In both the nursery and reception classes children have access to the wide range of stimulating activities identified within the six areas of learning. Strong emphasis is given to personal and social development, language and literacy and children in these classes are highly motivated. The additional support provided by a classroom assistant in the reception class and funded through the Education Action Zone adds to the quality of the provision. Firm foundations are laid for future years to build on. Very detailed records of children's personal and social development are kept in the early years.
- 36 All children, including those with special educational needs have an equal entitlement to the whole curriculum. The curriculum provided in the two special unit classes make an excellent contribution to the progress and development of the children placed in those classes. The staff of the two units have created environments in which the children feel secure, welcome and valued. The school gives children within these units many opportunities to be a part of the wider school family. All children with special educational needs are supported with appropriate individual education plans that are reviewed regularly and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 37 The provision for extra curricular activities is good. Teachers and other volunteers work hard to provide a range of activities for children after school. These include football, cross-country, recorder, choir, art/craft, maths games and journalism. Many older children support these clubs. The curriculum is enriched by educational visits to museums, Hadrian's Wall, Beamish and the River Tyne.
- 38 The provision for health education is good. The school's sex education policy highlights animal life cycles and a decision was understandably taken by governors not to cover human reproduction because children leave the school at the end of Year 4. The school is closely linked with the local drugs awareness project "Choose Life". The school works hard to raise awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. School assemblies make a strong contribution to personal and social development with direct references to tolerance and fair treatment.
- 39 Links with the local community are one of the strengths of the school. There are education/business partnerships with the police, as well as various local businesses. These make a positive impact on the children's opportunities for learning. The local library provides story sessions and school displays. There is a very close relationship with the local Church and Reverend Tetley is a governor and a regular visitor to the school. Children visit the Church to illuminate and support religious projects. The local Parish Council provides grants for visits and the Newcastle Education Action Zone also provides funds and staff to support school visits. There are appropriate links with the neighbouring middle school to help smooth the transition from Year 4 to Year 5.
- 40 The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Spirituality is satisfactory and mainly nurtured in school assemblies and children display respectful attitudes during moments of prayer. Singing in assemblies is a strength and is certainly making a positive contribution to children's spirituality. The daily act of worship is Christian in character and there are moments of reflection encouraged.

- 41 Provision for children's moral development is very good. Children do know the difference between right and wrong and these principles are reinforced by a suitable rewards and sanctions system. Classrooms contain achievement boards and there are many examples of photographs of stars of the week. There are teams of the week, merit sheets and achievement certificates given out at a weekly assembly. Year 1 and 2 children have formulated a set of class rules with the help of "Busy Bees" (Be a friend, Be helpful, Be honest, Be kind).
- 42 Social development is very good. There are many examples of children taking responsibility for tasks around the school. Children set up the hall for morning assembly, assist the school cooks at lunchtime, tidy the school library on a daily basis, support younger children in paired reading and there are 'good conduct' helpers. Children with special educational needs are fully integrated into school life and benefit from the socially supportive and tolerant nature of the children.
- 43 The provision for children's cultural development is satisfactory. Children gain awareness of their own culture and, through religious education, a limited knowledge of other cultures and faiths. A vibrant display in the school hall featuring a large three-dimensional dragon delivered a range of information about the Chinese New Year festival. Children's written work indicated that this project had been studied in depth. The children are able to do work associated with their own city and are proud of their heritage. However, there are limited opportunities for them to be involved in multi-cultural issues, to help them understand about the lives and beliefs of others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

- 44 Monitoring of children's academic progress is very good. The school has good assessment procedures in place to track the progress that children are making. Staff have good awareness of how well their children are learning. The marking of work of older children indicates to them what they need to do next to improve their work. Frequent discussions take place between staff and children which helps to focus on how the children can improve. Staff in the early years assessment unit and emotional and behavioural development unit have detailed knowledge of their children and use it very well to help them improve their academic and personal skills.
- 45 The behaviour management throughout the school is very good. There are many messages for children to think about the way they behave and the way they respond to each other. Good reward systems help children take particular pride in their own behaviour. There are good systems in place to check on children's personal development. This is at its best in the early years. All children are helped to maximise their talents in their time in school and to be ambitious for themselves. There are good procedures to make sure that children treat each other and their teachers with respect and all staff in the school implement these consistently well.
- 46 Child protection procedures are good. They are well known to all staff and the school nurse and other professionals are a valuable source of advice on health matters. The staff are positive about the support they receive and are quick to act on the advice provided. The school makes good use of services such as speech therapy and music tuition to good effect.
- 47 Dinner 'nannies' (lunchtime supervisors) and staff at lunchtimes ensure that the experience is a social one, with all children involved in eating healthy and tasty meals. Children are well supervised at lunchtimes, although concerns expressed by some parents at potential dangers of the gate, left open for children of a nearby school, are justified.

- 48 The school monitors attendance satisfactorily and provides incentives for each class to improve. However, there is not enough individual target setting for children with poor attendance or sporadic absences to make a difference to the frequent absence levels of some individuals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 49 The parents expressed overwhelming support for the school both at the pre-inspection meeting and in the responses to the questionnaires sent out before the inspection started. Only a very few negative points were raised.
- 50 Parents appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and commitment to high standards in school and are happy to come in and exchange informal information about their children's progress when they deliver or collect them. There is ample room for parents to meet in school and some courses, such as first aid, are held in the school. There is a group of very dedicated parents who work in school on a voluntary basis. Their contribution is valued and they are developing some expertise in listening to children read and in working with small groups of children on specific issues.
- 51 Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress. This is particularly the case for parents who have children with specific needs and are attached to the two units in the school.
- 52 Parents, although supportive of their children, have a limited part to play in their education. This is not due to a lack of effort on behalf of the school who have run workshops and other initiatives for parents. The response to these curriculum initiatives has been disappointing. Some parents are not vigilant enough about their children's attendance and as a result, a few children are habitually late.
- 53 The quality of information to parents is satisfactory in brochures and letters but reports do not fulfil statutory requirements. All subjects of the curriculum are not individually reported, and the reports do not outline clearly enough what children need to do next to improve. Some parents raised this as an issue before the inspection and their concerns are justified.
- 54 Parent governors are committed to the school and one has produced a detailed document in response to her role connected with art in the curriculum. Parents who have worked on a voluntary basis in school have found their new found skills being put to good use with their own children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 55 The quality of the headteacher's leadership is outstanding, with particular strengths in her ability to give staff a clear direction in relation to improving children's standards. She uses very effective systems to help identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision and to use this information for putting in place procedures aimed at improvement.
- 56 The structure of the senior management team is inclusive of key teachers for each of the two units that exist within the school. The senior management team is well directed and provides the school

with a strong lead. The effective teamwork is a feature of the school with strong groups like the 'early years' team' appreciating and supporting the work of other teams. The strength of the headteacher's direction is evident by the way each leader is given authority to develop teams but under the whole-school umbrella aiming at continual improvement in standards and provision. Each person working in the school is aware of his or her role and responsibility in improving the provision and standards.

- 57 Subject leaders have the appropriate skills to manage their area of responsibility. The literacy and numeracy leaders, in particular, have successfully led the implementation of the new national strategies and have ensured that all staff are fully briefed and able to work to the new arrangements. The management of children with special educational needs is also very good. There is outstanding support for children in both the special units with very comprehensive systems and procedures in place to check on their progress. Other children with learning and emotional difficulties are equally as well supported. Their needs are assessed quickly and appropriate small steps identified to help them improve. There are regular reviews of their progress and adjustments made accordingly.
- 58 All staff are provided with regular information about their performance and, when needed, there is appropriate support provided to help deal with any area identified as needing improvement. This is done within a supportive framework, which is appreciated by all staff. Most importantly strengths are recognised and each teacher is able to share aspects of good practice with colleagues. This adds to the strong pattern of teamwork that exists in the school. There is a very comprehensive overview of the school's performance, with national and standardised test results and assessments forming an important part of the school's self-analysis. Test results are carefully checked and evaluated and appropriate action is taken to deal with issues that arise.
- 59 The effectiveness of the school's performance management helps it to be secure in ensuring that new developments are carefully targeted. All staff have an opportunity to be involved in the creation of the School Development Plan. There are very good consultation procedures in place and the strong teamwork enables everyone to feel part of future developments.
- 60 This position reflects very good improvement since the previous inspection when the headteacher and deputy headteacher were new in post. Many of the embryonic procedures that were in place at that time have now been consolidated and built upon. There is little doubt that the effectiveness of the leadership has helped the school make considerable strides in the past few years.
- 61 The governors are a relatively inexperienced body with many having been in position for less than a year. Although there are a few who have long-term experience as governors at the school the majority are only just learning to come to terms with their role. However, they display much enthusiasm and are dedicated to the school. They are also fully aware of what makes the school successful and are open to new ideas and suggestions. They are at a stage of developing procedures to help them be more efficient in checking on the way the school is performing. The governors have successfully ensured that the National Curriculum is in place and that other statutory procedures are also being met. However, there is one important exception, that is, the reporting of children's progress to their parents. In this area, the governors have not ensured that relatively recent requirements about reporting each subject of the National Curriculum separately and focussing on what needs to be done next to improve is in place.

- 62 The school aims put appropriate weight on meeting the pastoral needs of all children but at the same time put much emphasis on high academic standards. These aims are exceptionally well met because there is a determination to help children improve in the basic skills from the moment they start in the nursery. In addition, the way in which the children in the two new units have been included in all of the school's life is further evidence of the school relating directly to its overall aims.
- 63 Financial decisions are taken giving due consideration to the impact spending will have on standards and provision for children. The specific funds available through the school's involvement with the Education Action Zone is a very good example of how the school has targeted its funds to achieve the greatest impact on children's achievements. The use of funds to make available the additional support to help children's communication skills in the reception class underlines this.
- 64 The school makes very good use of all the adults that work in the school. Teachers, classroom assistants and volunteer parents are all used to good effect in order to achieve good quality provision for children. Teachers are particularly constructive in sharing their skills and guiding other adults who work with them. The impact made by the teacher of the children in the special assessment unit on the rest of the staff is a good example of this effectiveness. She has been able to disseminate her skills amongst the rest of the staff most effectively. Staff new to the school are able to settle into their routines very quickly and benefit from the support of their colleagues as well as the positive system induction that operates in the school. In this way the children from the two special units, which started operating from the beginning of September 1999, are well integrated into the rest of the school.
- 65 There is effective use made of learning resources and this adds to the quality of work that is taking place in the school. The development of the information and communication technology suite, for example allows computer access to large groups of children at any one time. Similarly, there has been good consideration given to the needs of implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The resources used to support these strategies are effective in ensuring that lessons are stimulating and interesting for the children. There has been much thought put into the needs of children aged under five. The nursery and reception are very well resourced and this allows children to experience stimulating and imaginative activities using a range of appropriate materials when doing so.
- 66 The accommodation is spacious but in need of repair especially to the outside fabric. For example, the children in the first floor classrooms have to tolerate additional noise from rattling window frames on windy days. However, the school does make the most of the accommodation it has at its disposal. The establishment of the information and communication technology room and quiet areas for small group work are two examples of this. However, the school is not yet in apposition to take full advantage of the computer suite to develop children's information technology skills more fully.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 67 In order to continue the good work and strive for even higher standards the governors, headteacher and staff need to:

Improve the quality of children's annual reports to parents by providing:

- a separate comment on progress in each subject of the National Curriculum and religious education;
- clarity about what each child needs to do next to improve.

(Paragraphs 53 and 61)

Review the way children are withdrawn from classes for specialist support and ensure that:

- no disruption is caused to the lesson that is taking place when they return;
- the work that they are doing in the classroom is not interrupted unduly.

(Paragraphs 23, 112 and 122)

In addition to the main key issues identified above, the school needs to continue the work it is doing in relation to:

Addressing the difference in the attainment of boys and girls. (Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 105 and 116)

It also needs to deal with the following less pressing matters:

Levels of attendance; (Paragraphs 20, 48 and 52), and
Aspects related to multi-cultural education. (Paragraph 43)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

THE EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT UNIT

- 68 The early years assessment unit has only recently been established at the school. It serves the needs of up to 10 children who have a variety of difficulties in accessing mainstream education. The children who are admitted must be able to cope with some aspect of mainstream school life and curriculum. They are admitted after the September following the child's third birthday and no later than the beginning of Year 2. The minimum length of stay is two terms and the maximum is two years.
- 69 During their time at the early years assessment unit the staff's task is to gain more information about the child's strengths and difficulties. They should help to assess the particular needs of the each child and give detailed information about future placements. The analysis of future provision should include the type and amount of support required to enable the child to gain better access to the curriculum and mainstream school.
- 70 The unit has quickly established itself as a part of the school's early years' department. There is very close liaison between the staff of the assessment unit and those working in nursery and reception. The main reason is undoubtedly due to the sharing of expertise amongst the staff. This has resulted in all staff being more confident about their own work.
- 71 It is difficult to make an overall judgement about the levels of attainment of children in the unit because the levels of difficulty vary considerably across the group. However, the detailed recorded information about each child shows that they have made very good progress in the two terms they have been at the unit. This is due to the excellent teaching and level of care provided for the children.
- 72 The staff try to ensure that the children follow as many school routines as possible and this includes attendance at assemblies. For example, during one lesson on helping to develop children's listening skills, the teacher used musical instruments very effectively in helping the children to distinguish the different sounds. As children move on to have their daily snacks the teacher and classroom assistants pay particular attention to the use of language and ensure that children are listening attentively by looking at individuals as they talk to them. Children are expected to answer every question despite some being reluctant to do so. The expertise of all staff is at a high level. They have to put in a great deal of energy into their work and sustain patience as they work with the children.
- 73 There is continual praise for anything that each child achieves and there is very good use made of a range of equipment to help stimulate and motivate individuals. This results in children having a very positive attitude to learning with good understanding established about their expected behaviour. There is very sensitive intervention by staff, when children show frustration and anger at their own inability to complete tasks, for example, putting on socks after physical education,
- 74 The quality of the records and assessments made for individual children is outstanding. There is very careful analysis of their response to different situations and to different activities. These records give a clear picture of each child's academic and social needs. There is excellent liaison with other agencies, such as speech therapists, to give a very detailed picture about each child

before their next placement is agreed. The links with parents are very well established with regular meeting taking place with the nurse who makes home visits.

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT

- 75 The emotional and behavioural development unit has also only recently been established at the school. It serves the needs of children who have found mainstream school difficult to cope with. The majority of the children in the unit have previously had difficulties in other primary schools and have often been excluded before being assessed as needing additional specialist support. The majority of the children in the unit often lack basic skills because their inability to settle in mainstream classes has prevented them from learning. The range of their attainment is wide with a few having standards that are in line with those expected for their age. However, the majority have below average attainment. The majority of children make good academic progress as can be seen by the improvements in the work that they have completed throughout the year.
- 76 Children secure a place at the unit any time after the start of Year 2. Some remain for a prolonged time but the aim is to rehabilitate individuals so that they can at some stage return to mainstream education. The unit is staffed by a full-time teacher and classroom support. Both have a great deal of expertise in the areas of behaviour management.
- 77 The unit can understandably be a volatile classroom with individual children likely to behave in an unpredictable manner at any time. The class teacher and classroom support are expert in calming potential difficult situations before they erupt to a point of causing disruption to all children. The staff have established a very stimulating environment with different parts of the classroom being used for different purposes, for example, a gathering place or practical area.
- 78 The teacher and classroom assistant insist on certain standards of discipline and ignore, as far as is practicable, any attention-seeking behaviour. They continually reinforce what is and is not acceptable and each child has to take on different responsibilities. During a science lesson on planting seeds the children get very excited about the planting process and want to get started before they fully understand what they need to do. In this situation the teacher and classroom support use their expertise to good effect in diffusing potential difficulties and patiently restore order and quickly establish routines.
- 79 The majority of the children are able to make gains in their learning during each lesson. However, their behaviour seriously inhibits the amount of progress they are able to make. The main difficulties arise when they are expected to make decisions for themselves. At this stage, for the majority of the children, open-ended tasks seem to provide the opportunities for them to distract others. Their behaviour is exceptionally well managed however, with good involvement from the headteacher when deemed necessary.
- 80 The unit has quickly established itself as part of the school. The children from the unit are integrated into class lessons whenever possible. This was frequently seen during literacy and numeracy. During these times an adult supports them. However, too often they come into the lesson after it has started which has the potential to cause a slight unsettling time for them and the other children. All children are expected to attend assemblies and this works very well. The additional expertise provided by the unit's staff is valued by all members of staff and has helped the school to be in a better position for managing all children. This is one of the school's many strengths.
- 81 The resource level is very good with much of the equipment in the unit having been chosen with care and consideration for the children that they serve. There are very good links established with

very many outside agencies and frequent reviews of the needs of the children help to ensure that their work is very clearly directed and appropriate

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	27%	51%	20%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	38	174
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals		121

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs		11
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	1	63

English as an additional language	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8.70	School data	0.74
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	26	28	28
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	90 (80)	90 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	26	26	27
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	84 (83)	87 (85)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of children

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	134
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to children of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	4	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of children per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	22.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	150

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of children per qualified teacher	38

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Number of children per FTE adult	12.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	344067.00
Total expenditure	338640.00
Expenditure per pupil	1841.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	18764.00
Balance carried forward to next year	24191.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	215
Number of questionnaires returned	114

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	39	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	32	4	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	50	2	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	38	16	4	7
The teaching is good.	63	35	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	34	13	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	45	39	12	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	37	1	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	37	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	41	8	2	16

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

- 82 The provision for children aged under five is very good. This is due to the exceptional work of the staff in the nursery, reception and early years assessment unit. The strong sense of teamwork that exists within the three areas is exceptional and something that the school feels rightly proud of. The previous inspection reported that the provision for children aged under five was very good and a strength of the school. This position has now further improved with much excellent work now being a prominent feature of the early years unit.
- 83 The effect of this very good provision is not just seen in the way the children are able to settle quickly into the routines of school life but also in the progress that children make in their academic and personal skills. When they start in the nursery the majority of children have low level skills in communicating and social development. The school prioritises development in these two areas but also has put much effort into ensuring that children are required to use mathematical skills in many different activities. The tasks organised for the children are very imaginative allowing for maximum use of children's creative skills.
- 84 At present, 38 children attend the nursery on a full-time basis and most are expected to move on to the reception class. The early years assessment unit, which was placed in the school at the beginning of the academic year, contains 10 children and has quickly established itself as part of this effective early years unit. The physical organisation in the school has enabled the early years unit to be seen as one unit. An additional grant gained through the Education Action Zone has allowed a full time classroom assistant to be employed to help with reception aged children's communication skills.
- 85 The most impressive feature of the early unit is its ability to improve children's skills in key areas. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 the momentum has been established to allow them to progress to levels that are in line with national expectations by the time they are 7 years of age.

Personal and Social Development

- 86 When children start in the nursery the majority find it difficult to sit for any period of time and to share and play appropriately together. However, in a very short period there is a noticeable improvement. All staff are committed to helping children develop appropriate skills in this area. For example, all 'dinner nannies' (lunchtime supervisors) have been trained to help in this area and staffing levels on the playground are high to help children play together appropriately. There is a strong sense of children taking 'ownership' of their work and behaviour from early on. For example, a file of children's 'good work' is established where children choose to put in work that they are proud of. All children self-register when they start the day. In the nursery and reception classes there is much time spent on acknowledging children's achievements. A photograph album is used to help children focus on acceptable behaviour and attitudes. There is a system of 'helper of the day' and 'good behaviour awards' aimed at raising children's self-esteem. Circle time (when children all sit round quietly and discuss their work with the teacher) provides an important part of the classroom life and stories like 'Tell Tale Tellula' is used to reinforce social issues.

- 87 Despite this very positive input there are still occasions when children find it difficult to play and co-operate easily. For example, children play well together for long periods but when there is a problem the reaction is usually instant and very loud. However, these isolated cases are far outweighed by the many examples of co-operative play that is seen, for example when a group of six children play with the farm effectively and share the equipment well. Taking turns at different activities is well accepted with systems of colour bands used in the post office and sand areas to signify the number playing at any one time.
- 88 By the time they start Year 1 the majority of children are still not demonstrating the levels of co-operation expected for their age but there has been a vast improvement made compared to when they first started. Children achieve well in this area because of the very good teaching and support provided by all staff.

Language and Literacy Development

- 89 When they first start school there is a real issue about the children's ability to listen for prolonged periods. Consequently, much of the work in the nursery is aimed at helping children's speaking and listening skills. The use of circle time in this respect is very important because it provides an opportunity for children to sit and listen to each other, for example, children play a game of listening 'bingo' aimed at getting them to concentrate and listen to a tape of animal sounds. The majority of children have limited vocabulary and staff spend a great deal of their time introducing new words including the names of fruit and vegetables. Staff in the nursery are very careful about their own spoken language and take care to use appropriate Standard English. Reading is also an area that receives much attention in the nursery. Assessments made show that children are extremely unfamiliar with stories or with looking at print. The library is therefore an important place in the nursery and the staff try to ensure that there is always an adult available in this area to help the children with handling books and to begin the process of pre-reading skills. Books are taken home on a regular weekly basis. This increases to a daily level when they start in the reception class. Similarly, for writing as with reading the children start from a very low skill level. Many children are unfamiliar with handling writing tools and take time to make appropriate marks before moving on to tracing and making entries into diaries and other books provided as part of their play.
- 90 The reception children quickly move to a position of having a full 'Literacy Hour'. During one such session the teacher worked very effectively to encourage children to make predictions about what is likely to happen next. The book, 'Rosie's Walk' enabled links to be made with mathematical vocabulary, such as below, under, over and through. The lesson shows that there has been much progress made in children's ability to listen for prolonged periods and to offer appropriate contributions when required. By the time children start Year 1 their attainment is still well below average but they achieve very well in the two years they have been in the nursery and reception and make very good progress.

Mathematical Development

- 91 Children's skills in this area are particularly weak when they start in the nursery. Many do not know very common and familiar number rhymes and only a few can count to ten. Most have very limited knowledge of number or relate to an amount having a numerical value. During their time in the nursery children make very good progress and achieve very well. This remains the case in the reception class. The baseline assessment information confirms this with nearly half the class

making exceptional progress when comparing their position at the beginning of the year with that at the end.

- 92 One of the main features of the mathematical provision for children is the careful planning that occurs to ensure that children are able to develop their mathematical skills in many different activities. For example, within the jungle theme children are provided with opportunities to match animals to cards, sing number rhymes associated with different animals and to count the number of animals they are playing with. Singing number rhymes which involves children acting different parts is a major feature in the nursery.
- 93 When they start in the nursery the children begin to count 1p coins and make up amount to 10p. There is effective use of resources to reinforce the learning for the children. They are able to show good progress in their recognition of different shapes and they are much more proficient in matching amounts to a given number. This moves them to a position of still being well below average in their attainment at the end of the reception but having made very good progress.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 94 Teacher assessments show that many children lack a wide range of experience at the time they start school. Few can relate to their immediate environment and few can name common items like vegetables or fruit. During their time in the nursery they experience growing plants from seeds or bulbs and talk about animals growing and relate this to themselves. The effective choice of topics helps children to cover the many areas that would normally be familiar to them prior to starting school. The local environment plays an important part in the experiences provided for the children, for example, they begin to learn about the different shops around them and what they sell.
- 95 There are two computers in the nursery and one in the reception class. Children in the nursery are able to manoeuvre the 'mouse' successfully and 'click' on various 'icons' to bring the animal program to life. In the reception they are more proficient when using the 'mouse' and show greater independence when doing so. Construction materials are frequently in use with children showing much familiarity with a range of construction equipment. By the time they start Year 1 children have improved their knowledge and understanding of the world but their general knowledge holds back the amount of progress they make. Despite this children achieve well and make good progress but their attainment is still well below average when they start Key Stage 1.

Physical Development

- 96 Children's physical development is helped greatly by the excellent outside play facility and access to the indoor hall. During the inspection week one of the two school halls was transformed into a jungle for a morning. This provided the children with good opportunities to experience moving across a range of apparatus in a different way, which extended their physical skills. When outside, the nursery children use wheeled vehicles with some expertise and move across different surface showing good manoeuvrability.
- 97 Older reception aged children are able to follow instructions when carrying out a rigorous warm-up in the hall. During this warm-up they show that they can change pace and balance in line with the learning goals anticipated for 5-year-olds. They move on to work on apparatus and they respond well to the theme, which is linked with 'Rosie's Walk' the book, read to them during 'Literacy Hour'. They are able to follow instructions when moving through, across and over the variety of

apparatus set out. Good teaching helps children to learn from each other by getting them to pay attention and copy the ideas of others in the class. One girl who wears leg braces joins in all activities and is well supported by a specialist classroom assistant.

- 98 By the time children start Year 1 they are displaying physical skills, which are in line with that expected for their age. This is due to the very good progress they make in the nursery and reception, which allows children to achieve very well.

Creative Development

- 99 Creative development is a high priority in the nursery and reception classes. Children start school with very limited creative skills. The activities set out for them in the nursery allow them to develop their creative skills at a rapid rate. Whenever possible the staff plan to incorporate creativity into the tasks that are being performed, for example, by dramatising nursery rhymes and learning to sing from memory a good range of different songs. The imaginative way the tasks are organised also helps the children become more creative. The use of a hospital enables children to play different roles and develop their imaginations, for example, a doctor, nurse or receptionist.
- 100 In the reception class children are provided with opportunities to create collages of scenes from the book 'Rosie's Walk'. They use glue and paint successfully for this purpose. The visual effects they create are imaginative and show that they are learning to cope with representing things they are familiar with in different ways. Music has a very important part to play in the life of these young children. They handle and play with a range of instruments and know about the different types of music created by different ones.
- 101 By the time they start Year 1 the majority of children's creative skills are still below average but this does not take away from the good progress that has been made in the nursery and reception classes, leading to children achieving well.

Teaching and the Curriculum

- 102 The teaching is very good in each of the six areas of learning and results in children making very good gains in their learning and children achieving to their full potential. Staff work extremely well together to create this good position. All staff are determined to improve children's skills in all areas of learning and especially their skills of communication.
- 103 The outstanding quality of the leadership is central to the success of the unit. There is very effective checking of the progress made by the children and of the quality of teaching and support provided. The use made of the additional expertise provided by the teacher in charge of the early years unit is welcomed and utilised to the full in helping all children in the school. The early years unit has also gained from the involvement of the Education Action Zone with effective use made of the classroom support employed to improve the communication skills of lower attainers.
- 104 The curriculum is imaginatively planned with careful consideration given to keeping children's interest level high. This is seen at its best when the simulated jungle was created in the hall. Very effective records are kept of children's progress in all areas, especially in the area of personal and social development. There is a good level of resourcing, which is a deliberate ploy by the school to improve children's skill levels from as early as possible. The successful strategy has enabled the provision for children under five to be outstanding.

ENGLISH

- 105 The attainment of 9-year-old children is in line with national expectations. In reading, the regular use of standardised tests confirm that the majority of children are able to read a range of fiction showing good expression and using appropriate skills to read unknown words. The attainment of boys is below that of girls but many are beginning to improve because the school has now provided a wider range of non-fiction tests. Older children are successfully scanning texts for information as was seen by a group studying the Vikings.
- 106 In writing, standards for 9-year-olds are in line with national expectations. A significant minority of children are likely to achieve higher levels of attainment at the end of the key stage. Children plan and edit stories and have a secure knowledge of story structure. Higher attainers are using paragraphing techniques. Writing skills are being developed across the curriculum with particular good use being seen in history and science. Children's history work contains many examples of their writing at length and from a point of view of someone from past times. Year 4 children have imagined themselves to be monks on the island of Lindisfarne at the time of a ferocious Viking raid. This work indicates that they are able to use information gained from topic books appropriately to develop their own stories. English books contain a range of writing tasks that include recipes and instructions for making shadow puppets.
- 107 Standards in speaking and listening for 9-year-olds are in line with national expectations. Children are given many opportunities during lessons to express ideas and raise questions. Children dramatise a play scripted by a child for an assembly. Many children display a growing confidence with public speaking. However, a significant minority of children have a limited range of vocabulary. This is adversely affecting their written work as well as their standards in speaking and listening. The main problem relates to the fact that whilst most children's speaking skills are in line with that expected for their age only a few are able to use advanced speaking skills.
- 108 Standards of attainment for 7-year-olds are in line with national averages. 1999 National Curriculum test results in reading and writing were in line with national averages. This represents a steady improvement in standards of attainment since 1996 and since the last inspection. Similar standards are being attained by children aged 7 currently in the school. When compared with similar schools the reading results are well above average and the writing results are very high. More children than previously are achieving at the higher levels of attainment in writing. Teacher assessments show that attainment in speaking and listening for 7-year-olds is in line with the national average.
- 109 Children's achievement in reading is good and it is very good for writing throughout the school. Children move from a position of having well below attainment at the beginning of Year 1 to be in line with that expected for their age by the time they are in Year 4. This represents good progress. Between the ages of 5 and 7 they learn to appreciate books and listen to stories with interest. More able children develop good word recognition skills linked to the school's structured reading programme. Children become increasingly aware of letter sounds and blends and this improves their confidence and ability to read previously unknown words. Teachers take full advantage of and appreciate the solid foundations that are laid in the nursery and reception classes. Children learn to spell more accurately by using, for example, word banks and simple dictionaries.
- 110 In Years 3 and 4 this good achievement is developed further in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The majority of children read competently and they are better able to talk about the

content of their books. Many read with a good level of expression. They use dictionaries and other information books competently. They become more creative in their writing and more able children use imaginative vocabulary. Handwriting is satisfactory.

- 111 Throughout the school, children with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. They are well supported in this by both teaching and support staff. The two special needs units make a significant contribution to the educational development of children in their charge. Staff work hard to create a secure learning environment that stimulates children to want to learn.
- 112 Teaching is good and makes a positive contribution to children's learning enabling them to achieve as well as can be expected. All teachers display good questioning techniques and constantly strive to extend children's thinking and learning. This was seen at its best in one literacy lesson in Year 1/2 where the teacher uses the Cinderella story to help children to talk about how different characters in the story might be thinking and feeling. All staff teach the basic skills very well. This is evident in a Year 4 class where the teacher explains when to use apostrophes. Staff understand and make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to provide a secure framework for their medium and short-term planning. Work is well matched to children's needs and, since the previous inspection there has been a good improvement in addressing the needs of the more able children. In the best lessons, teachers are skilled at questioning children when they share texts at the beginning of the session, drawing on what children already know and challenging them with vocabulary such as suffix, synonym and prefix. Learning is good in those lessons where children are well supported during group activities and they are clear about what they are expected to do. Whole class sessions at the end of lessons are successfully used to share examples of good work and reinforce teaching points. The only minor issue regarding the provision is seen when children are withdrawn or return to lessons after being withdrawn. The teacher then needs to adjust the lesson to accommodate this. Teachers' planning shows clearly what they expect children to learn in a lesson. Assessment records are thorough and are analysed in detail for individual children to support learning targets.
- 113 Children' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good. They enjoy learning and the challenge of new language work and work hard to apply their learning to written tasks. When writing they generally concentrate well and their enthusiasm for learning is obvious. Teachers successfully channel the energies of individuals into their work and this results in them working hard.
- 114 The quality of the curriculum is good. The National Literacy Strategy is having a very positive effect on raising standards and the school has benefited from its early involvement in the strategy. The school is well placed to continue its improvement in this subject. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and supports colleagues effectively. There are effective systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and this has led to the improvements noted in provision. Teaching, teacher plans and children's work are monitored very effectively. Resources are good and well used by all staff.

MATHEMATICS

- 115 By the end of Year 4 the attainment of 9-year-old children is in line with national expectations. However, there are no national comparisons available. The school does use other measures to check on the progress made by children and these, together with classroom observations, show that children are performing in line with what is expected for their age. This is well above that expected

when compared with similar schools. This reflects an improved position compared with the previous inspection.

- 116 The 1999 national tests for 7-year-olds show that the school's results are in line with the national average with more than average percentage of children attaining the higher levels. More able children are performing well in relation to number work but are not as advanced in their understanding of shape and space. The trend of girls out-performing boys also continues in this subject. When compared to similar schools these results are well above the average. The results have fluctuated over the past four years but there has been a steady improvement. The rate of this improvement has been far greater than that noted nationally. Girls' performance has been better than that of boys. The majority of children currently aged 7 are attaining the levels expected for their age, as they are at the age of 9 as they prepare to leave the school.
- 117 Children achieve well when considering the very low starting points of most when they enter the nursery or reception classes. Very few are familiar with number rhymes or with basic counting when they start. However, very good work in the early stages followed by good achievement later in the school has enabled the majority of children to achieve in line with that expected by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. The main reasons for this good achievement is the very good teaching of basic number skills and the positive impact made since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. All teachers feel very confident about teaching the subject and are able to develop children's mental and oral skills well using a range of techniques to do so. Teaching is good in both key stages.
- 118 In both the mixed aged classes for Year 1 and 2, the children demonstrate effective mental agility when answering questions. They can handle two or three numbers comfortably and develop a good range of mathematical vocabulary. They respond quickly to any problem involving addition and subtraction and most of the children enjoy competitive situations when they can demonstrate their speed to respond to questions. The teachers are quick to seize upon the enthusiasm of the children and use a good range of apparatus to challenge them. In one lesson the effective use of children to hold up numbers, which have to be organised in different ways, keeps the interest levels high as well as involving all children.
- 119 There is careful consideration given to the needs of all abilities. The tasks that follow the initial mental and oral work are suitably organised to challenge children. Different tasks are arranged for the different groups and the teacher works directly with one group at a time, usually to deepen the challenge for them. During this part of the lesson the majority of children show good concentration and work independently. However, in one of the classes there is a significant minority who find it difficult to settle to their tasks. This is seen during the initial mental and oral sessions when they call out answers or do not give the necessary attention to the teacher. At its worst this results in time being lost while the teacher deals with their anti-social behaviour. However, the majority listen attentively and take pride in their achievements.
- 120 As a result of the good teaching, which puts appropriate emphasis on basic number skills and uses the structure outlined within the National Numeracy Strategy successfully, the children achieve well. The majority are able to attain the levels expected for their age by the time they are 7 years old.
- 121 Year 3 and 4 children are able to build on the solid start they make and continue to make good progress. More able children are already coping with the work that is at least six months in

advance of that expected to be completed by children of their age. These children work at a quick pace and have a good knowledge of the number process. For example, they can convert a problem that has been set out as a division into a multiplication by using the 'inverse' method. They use their mental skills to place numbers, which include decimals to two digits, in order. The system of setting children by ability for Years 3 and 4 works well in ensuring that the tasks set within each of the three classes are challenging and relevant. The lower attaining group, including those with special educational needs, have good support so that any difficulties they encounter can be dealt with at an early stage. The grouping has allowed the lower attainers to be confident enough to offer answers when the group are all together, even though they are sometimes unsure of their answers.

- 122 The teachers in each of these three Years 3 and 4 classes are very skilful and deal very well with the basic skills of number. They provide challenging tasks but also allow children the opportunity of explaining how they reached their solutions. This is seen when one group deals with halving and doubling numbers. In this way teachers are able to assess children's understanding and help them to deal with any wrong answers. One of the key features of the good teaching is the consistent good use of mathematical vocabulary. Children in the top ability group are confident in using words like product, difference, inverse and denominator. However, the withdrawal of children and return of children from withdrawal during the first part of mathematics lessons causes minor disruption to the teaching. The children's attitudes to learning for this age group are consistently good. The children are exceptionally enthusiastic and are very keen to be asked questions or to demonstrate a number operation on the board in front of the others. None of the anti-social tendencies noted with a minority of younger children is seen amongst this age group.
- 123 The school has been quick to respond to the requirements outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy and this has now been fully implemented throughout the school. This has helped to raise the level of staff confidence in teaching the subject and in ensuring that the short-term planning is very good and provides progression in children's learning. The setting arrangements for older children have also been effective in helping to provide different groups of children with challenging tasks.
- 124 The school has in place effective systems for keeping track of the progress that children make. There is good analysis of these records and the senior management team use this information effectively in helping to improve standards. The headteacher is the present co-ordinator and is able to check on the quality of the teaching and on the school's performance very regularly. Very effective use is made of test results to check on areas requiring improvement. This very good leadership has ensured that standards have improved since the previous inspection and that staff are confident in teaching the subject.
- 125 There is a good range of resources available for mathematics and the staff are using these resources effectively in lessons, especially during the mental and oral session at the beginning. A mathematics club has been established for older children. This is well attended and provides further evidence of the enthusiasm that exists for the subject.

SCIENCE

- 126 The standards achieved by the children currently in Year 4 are in line with the national expectations for children of that age. The 1999 test and assessment results for 7-year-olds indicate that attainment in science was in line with the national average at the age of 7. The percentage of

children achieving the higher grades in the tests was below the national average. The main reason for children not achieving the higher grades is that they find it difficult to cope with the specific language required in more advanced science work. In comparison with similar schools, children's performance was above the average. The attainment of the majority of children currently in Year 2 is in line with the national expectations.

- 127 The standards attained by children show significant improvement from those on entry to the nursery and are a direct result of the notable amount of good and very good teaching that they receive throughout the school. This results in children achieving well and making good progress in the way they develop their scientific skills.
- 128 Teaching is good overall. In Years 1 and 2 teachers ensure that there is a great deal of emphasis on the teaching of basic scientific skills. They encourage children to make close observations and predictions. Through practical tasks they develop the children's knowledge and understanding across all the attainment targets in the subject. This was seen in a lesson in which children were finding out about the difference between high and low sounds. They are able to confidently carry out the activities and then record their findings in an appropriate way. Within these practical activities the children effectively develop their skills in using correct scientific vocabulary to talk about their work because of the time that teachers devote to this aspect of their learning. The teachers emphasise the importance of making close observations to develop children's skills in identifying similarities and differences between living and non-living things. As children pass through Year 2 they learn how to handle simple scientific equipment carefully and safely and to record their findings in a variety of ways. There are many opportunities for children to work as members of a group and as a result they make good progress in learning how to work collaboratively and take some responsibility for their learning. By the end of Year 2 the majority of children know that that pushes and pulls are forces that can change the shape of an object. They can construct simple electrical circuits and show a suitable understanding about the need for exercise and a good diet to keep healthy. The progress of children with special educational needs is good as a direct result of the well-structured support that they are given. The teachers and support assistants work together very effectively to ensure that these children are fully involved in all aspects of the subject.
- 129 The children continue to develop their learning in an effective way as they pass through Years 3 and 4, because teachers continue to emphasise the teaching of basic skills and to take time during introductions to lessons to introduce new scientific words. For example, in lessons in which children are investigating if different materials dissolve in water; when the teachers very ably explained new vocabulary such as solution, dissolve, soluble and insoluble. The children achieve well and effectively develop their intellectual skills by beginning to use words that were previously unfamiliar to them. Teachers are confident with the subject and are able to use searching questions to challenge all children. As a result children's learning is aided by the thinking that they are required to do regarding the scientific principles that they are learning. The children know about setting up a fair test and recognise that they have to add the same amount of water to a given amount of material and allow the same amount of time to check if materials are soluble or insoluble. They are suitably able to represent their findings in the form of a diagram and know how to label their work.
- 130 There are good links with literacy in the writing up of experiments with children's writing showing good levels of handwriting and appropriate spelling. The high expectations that teachers have of children's behaviour and of what they can achieve and good classroom management skills ensure

that children concentrate well on their activities and produce a good amount of work. All children, including those with special educational needs are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills and as a result they are able to make effective contributions to class discussions during science lessons. In one lesson on growing seeds, for children with behavioural difficulties, the teacher and classroom assistant used their expertise well to ensure that the children made good progress in using a practical activity to further their learning. There is limited use of children's skills of using information technology to enhance their work in science and this is an area for further development. Children show that they are able to make suitable use of their numeracy skills in science in both key stages to take temperature readings and monitor changes in the weather over a period of time. The children have very positive attitudes to their learning and show much curiosity and interest when involved in practical activities. During these activities they sustain concentration, apply themselves willingly and show a great deal of enjoyment. The behaviour of children is good and they show good collaborative skills and are able to show initiative and take responsibility during investigations. As a result of these attitudes the children have a high work rate and produce good quality pieces of work.

- 131 The curriculum that is provided for the children is satisfactory, being broad and balanced with many opportunities for them to be involved in practical investigative activities. There is very good management of the subject. Very good procedures are in place to check and analyse children's performance in order to set targets for improvement. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. Another notable improvement is the way the revised scheme of work is now effective in detailing how ideas and skills can be developed. The teachers' short-term planning is taken from this to identify the key learning objectives and skills to be taught and the quality of planning has a positive effect on standards attained in science. Resources are adequate, well managed and readily accessible to staff and children. The accommodation is adequate for practical group work activities.

ART

- 132 It was not possible to see any art lessons being taught during the inspection week. However, the scrutiny of work and discussions with children reveal that children's attainment is in line with that expected for their age by the time they are at the end of Year 4. This is a similar position to that reported in the previous inspection. This time because of timetabling constraints it has not been possible to make an overall judgement on the teaching.
- 133 From the limited amount of work looked it is clear that children in both key stages achieve at a satisfactory level and are able to develop appropriate skills and techniques, as they get older. The expressive features that appear on the paintings created by Year 1 and 2 children show that children have looked at their subjects carefully and are able to mix colour to the desired level. Older children are able to observe landmarks in their immediate community and have created paintings of bridges in Newcastle. The older children's work shows the progression expected when comparing the work of the two different age groups. There is evidence of older children developing their drawing skills by putting emphasis on line, tone and texture when creating patterns.
- 134 Most of the children's art work is connected to the topic that they are studying. This has been a deliberate ploy by the school but is under review as consideration is given to the new curriculum requirements that have been recently announced. The school's scheme of work will be reviewed in the near future to take the new requirements into account. This is an appropriate way of responding

to the new proposals and the co-ordinator is well advanced in putting together the issues that she needs the staff to consider.

- 135 The school has benefited from an artist in residence and this experience is about to be repeated when a ceramics specialist will visit the school. The funding has been provided through the Education Action Zone. Photographic evidence for the first visit shows that the school benefited greatly from artist's input.
- 136 There is an art club available to older children, which is successfully broadening the range of their artistic experience and allows children to follow their own interests.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 137 The timetable did not allow for any design and technology lessons to be observed. However, from the evidence of the limited amount of work available to be scrutinised, by the age of 9 children's attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age. This reflects the position reported in the previous inspection.
- 138 Design and technology is an important part of the experiences provided for children. What the children learn is linked appropriately to the topics that they study, for example, older children had made Viking brooches. The brooches show that children have undertaken appropriate procedures to make these. They use planning sheets and sketch out their designs before gathering materials that they are likely to need. They also evaluate their work and write reports to support their judgements.
- 139 Year 1 and 2 children work at the levels expected for their age. For example, they can use a range of construction materials to build vehicles and other devices. Food technology forms an important part of their experiences. Year 3 and 4 children have recently worked with an outside expert to create a large dragon, which is displayed on the school stage. Although older children use evaluations forms a few are completed too generally. For example one child completing a form on musical instruments wrote, 'I liked my instrument and it works well.' Others write in more detail, for example, 'my musical instrument made a high and low sound. It did come out as I thought it would but I did find it hard.' This variation in evaluating their models is also noted in the quality of the models produced.
- 140 It was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching but discussions with the co-ordinator revealed that all staff are confident in teaching the subject. This is also borne out by looking at the planning, which outlines what they want the children to achieve and does give an impression on building on previous skills.
- 141 A comprehensive photographic record of work is kept, which shows that children have been able to use their own ideas in designing. The practical nature of the subject provides a necessary balance when set alongside the more academic demands of literacy and numeracy. Literacy skills are incorporated and used appropriately in design and technology through the written evaluations. Similarly, numeracy skills are used in the measuring and designing process.
- 142 There is a very enthusiastic co-ordinator who has an overview of the quality of the work through the scrutiny of models, plans and evaluations produced by the children. The school is now looking at the way they are going to review their scheme of work to take account of the new curriculum

proposals. They have already recognised that they will have to find ways of involving more information technology in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY / HISTORY

- 143 Due to the school planning cycle no geography lessons were seen. It was only possible to see two history lessons. Judgements are based on lesson evidence, a scrutiny of past work, teacher plans and discussions with teachers and children. Children's attainment in both history and geography is in line with national expectations by the age of 9. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. These findings show an improved provision for geography since the previous inspection.
- 144 Children's achievement in both key stages is satisfactory. In geography, children in Years 1 and 2 are recording weather patterns and interpreting their results. From temperature records they are able to identify warmest days. World map displays help children to successfully locate countries. They can produce simple maps of the school and have carried out a detailed study of the locality around the school. They have prepared aerial plans of the school playground and have drawn up their own proposals for playground games. They are aware of the changing seasons and the physical evidence of those changes. Children in Years 3 and 4 can name and place accurately on a map the major cities of Great Britain and the countries of Europe. They can also name and place the continents of the world on a map. They have studied in detail the River Tyne and successfully combined art work with their geographical studies.
- 145 In history children in Years 1 and 2 show an increasing sense of chronology and are knowledgeable about a number of major historical characters that include Elizabeth 1, Florence Nightingale, Samuel Pepys and Guy Fawkes. They have an increasing understanding of the differences between the present time and the past. For instance, they know that there was once a time when books did not exist and people communicated information through story telling and memorising.
- 146 Children successfully build on this growing understanding in Years 3 and 4. They enthusiastically recall their invaders project and, in particular, the Roman and Viking invasions. Mapping skills are put to excellent use in these projects and there are also many examples of extended writing. Children's written work displays an understanding of the life of a Roman soldier, the Celtic tribes, life expectancy and diseases impacting on past lives.
- 147 Children are given many opportunities to develop their literacy skills in history and there are many examples of pupils writing at length, which sees them writing as if they were involved in some of the great historical moments of our history. Speaking and listening skills play an important part in developing the children's knowledge of both subjects. Children contribute well to lively whole class discussions in which they are able to express their own views and listen to those of others.
- 148 From the small amount of evidence available, teaching in both subjects is good. Teachers organise a wide range of visits and walks to provide children with first hand experiences. Visits have included Beamish, Ponteland, local Churches, Hadrian's Wall and a journey down the River Tyne. These experiences are making a significant contribution to the quality of learning in these subjects and the positive attitudes children display to their learning. Teachers are making good use of text resources and a growing range of artefacts. Teacher planning is thorough and closely follows a two-year cycle that ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Children's attitudes to learning are good in both subjects. Work produced indicates that children take a pride in their work and are enthusiastic towards learning.

- 149 Resources in geography and history are adequate and are being improved as funding permits. Education Action Zone funding has been used to support visits and Education Business Partnership staff have supported visits. This has a positive impact on the provision for both subjects
- 150 Co-ordinators have an effective overview of both subjects and they provide teachers with help to plan their work. There are plans to review both schemes of work in line with the requirements of the new curriculum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 151 The standards that children attain in Years 3 and 4 are in line with national expectations and the progress that they make in their learning is satisfactory. Children's attainment at the age of 7 is in line with the national expectations and they also make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school children achieve appropriately and develop their information technology skills at the rate expected for their age.
- 152 Since the last inspection the school has used Education Action Zone funding to create a computer suite that allows for whole class teaching of the basic skills in the subject. There has been significant improvement to the accommodation, which is now good, by the creation of the computer suite. Children when working on computers back in their own classroom use the skills taught. This is a recent improvement and the school has not yet worked out appropriate timetabling arrangements for its use. There are therefore lengthy periods of time when the suite is empty and not used as effectively as it might be. Good use is made of it, however with children in Years 3 and 4. Here the teacher's good expertise enables them to make good progress in learning how to use a spreadsheet to chart the heights of all the children in their class. The children show that they could use information and communication technology in a real life situation to organise and present their ideas.
- 153 Teaching is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 there is good attention given by teachers to developing skills in controlling the mouse and keyboard to use computer programmes to make words and pictures and to assemble text. As they pass through Year 2 children effectively learn how to change the type and size of text and to retrieve, process and display information. The children also learn how to control the movements of a programmable toy by inputting a set of instructions in an appropriate manner. In Years 3 and 4 children are able to use information and communication technology to enhance some of their work in subjects such as English, history and geography. This is evident when children were editing and redrafting work during the literacy hour activities and in word-processed reports of their visit to Vindolanda and the Roman Army Museum to support their work in history. During this work the children were able to change the font, style colour and position of their writing to make it more interesting. However, the use of information and communication technology in other subjects is limited and is an area for further development throughout the school. The school has improved the range of activities available to children in Years 3 and 4 but, despite statutory requirements being met, there are still not enough opportunities for them to be involved in work that involves data handling, monitoring and control. Children's attitudes to learning in information and communication technology in both key stages are positive and when working in pairs on the computer they collaborate very well. The children are well behaved, show a great deal of interest, are able to sustain their concentration for lengthy periods of time and as a result have a high work rate and produce good quality pieces of work.

- 154 There is good management of the subject by a recently appointed coordinator who is currently developing the scheme of work to support better progression in children's learning in the subject. The curriculum provided for the children is satisfactory, being broad and balanced with suitable opportunities for them to be involved in working on computers. There is now good resource provision in terms of computers but there is a lack of suitable software to allow information and communication technology to be used in all subjects in an effective way. Resources are well managed and maintained in a satisfactory condition.

MUSIC

- 155 Due to timetabling arrangements there was opportunity to observe only one lesson during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on the standards achieved in the subject or the quality of teaching overall. However, in whole school assemblies, children sing clearly and with enthusiasm and reach the standards expected for their ages. In the lesson that was seen the teacher had secure subject knowledge. Her effective questioning enables the children to make satisfactory progress in their ability to distinguish between different musical styles. There is a music club that includes a choir that has taken part in a performance of 'Song for Pleasure' in the City Hall with other schools from Newcastle. Children have opportunity to take part in musical performances for parents and local residents at Christmas and Harvest time and also to learn how to play the recorder. The school has made good use of Education Action Zone funding to hire a specialist who works with nursery and reception children to develop their speaking and listening skills through music. These activities enhance the musical opportunities available to children in an effective way. There is a lack of adequate resource provision for the subject that limits the range of musical activities that children can be involved in.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 156 Children's achievement in both key stages is satisfactory and children achieve standards commensurate with their age. Only work in gymnastics and games was observed during the inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning and the school's curriculum framework for this subject indicates that there is also satisfactory provision for the teaching of dance, swimming and outdoor activities. The majority of children achieve the minimum standard required for swimming by the age of 9.
- 157 During games, children in Years 1 and 2 are developing good eye/hand co-ordination skills and this is developed through the carefully structured teaching of progressively more challenging ball catching exercises. In Years 3 and 4 children are able to use a range of apparatus safely to develop balancing skills and self-confidence appropriate for their age.
- 158 During gymnastics, children use apparatus to experiment with different ways of performing a range of travelling actions and learn to climb, swing and jump with confidence.
- 159 Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers ensure that all lessons have an appropriate balance between vigorous and skill based exercise. Teachers stop lessons to praise individual performance and use exemplars to reinforce the lesson's objective. They ensure high levels of safety. Where teaching is very good in Year 1/2 the teacher move the lesson along at a challenging

pace and catching exercises become increasingly more difficult. However, her clear progression of skills ensure that most children enjoy success and have advanced their catching skills. She closes the lesson with a quiet moment of reflection with children sharing their feelings about exercise. Children attitudes to this subject are good in both key stages. They dress appropriately, are well behaved and respond well to the instructions of teachers. They use equipment safely and with due care. Children aged 5 to 9 clearly enjoy this subject and are very enthusiastic and energetic during lessons. All children co-operate very well with each other when working in small groups. They show high levels of concentration during difficult catching exercises.

- 160 The subject is well co-ordinated and full use has been made of the 'TOPS' scheme to provide both training and resources. Apparatus for the subject has been improved by the purchase of lighter equipment since the previous inspection. The use of a commercial scheme is ensuring consistency in the delivery of the subject. Extra-curricular clubs give the subject added value. Cross-country, skipping, football and short tennis feature in the subject's calendar. Children recently participated in a local swimming gala and are very proud of their medals and certificates. The subject is well resourced and accommodation is spacious.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 161 Only one lesson was observed during this inspection but all classes give appropriate time for the subject and class teachers plans appropriately for the subject. Children's work and interviews with children from Years 3 and 4 indicate that a broad range of topics is being covered and the school is meeting the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject.
- 162 By the age of 7 children's attainment is satisfactory. Children have a secure knowledge of the traditional Christian nativity story and some of the events of the life of Jesus. The majority know the Lord's Prayer and have studied some stories from the Old Testament including the dreams of Joseph.
- 163 Children aged 8 and 9 begin to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths. They talk with enthusiasm about previous projects. They are aware that they live in a multi-faith society and are able to discuss Hindu and Muslim festivals. They talk in detail about Diwali and Eid. They are aware of the significance and symbolism of the Easter festival for Christians and a range of Old Testament stories. They are able to discuss the moral lessons from the story of Cain and Abel and to talk about the dangers of jealous emotions in their own everyday life. They know how different cultures pray, and appreciate that prayers are offered to a God. During assemblies children display respectful attitudes during moments of prayer. Children undertake a wide-ranging and detailed study of the Chinese New Year and this project is vibrantly displayed in the school hall. The display features a three dimensional model of a dragon, art work and a significant amount of children's writing that conveys information. In a class assembly children show that they understand the consequences of holding strong religious beliefs as they dramatise a Viking raid on the Northumbria coast, the subsequent persecution of the monks at Lindisfarne and the eventual conversion of the raiders to Christianity.
- 164 Throughout the school children are developing good listening and speaking skills through religious education. 8 and 9 year olds express complex thoughts about religious issues. Teachers use videos to stimulate a variety of discussions. However, there are not enough opportunities given to children to develop their writing skills in this subject. As a result children's attitudes to learning are good

and they are keen to share their knowledge and opinions during interviews. They obviously enjoy the subject and show high levels of interest. During interviews they show good levels of maturity and an ability to relate lesson content to their own lives. A survey of children's work, interviews and a lesson observation indicate that teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Teachers are engendering positive attitudes to the subject and are successfully raising children's awareness of Christianity and other major world faiths. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

- 165 Co-ordination of the subject has been given to a new member of staff and therefore, because the management of the subject is under review a secure judgement as to its quality cannot be made. The new co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the subject. Statutory requirements are met.