

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SPRINGWELL SCHOOL**

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111785

Headteacher: Mr Allan Lacey

Reporting inspector: Mrs Rosemary Eaton  
15173

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> January - 4<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 190069

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2.5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wiltshire Way Hartlepool
Postcode:	TS26 0TB
Telephone number:	01429 280600
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C. Rowntree
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rosemary Eaton	Registered inspector	English Art	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Anthony Fowler	Team inspector	Under-fives History Geography Religious education	Learning opportunities Personal development
John Pearson	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education Personal and social education	Assessment Special educational needs
Alan Tattersall	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communications technology	How well is the school led and managed?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Springwell is a school for pupils aged under five to eleven, with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, or autistic spectrum disorders. Currently, there are 87 pupils on roll. 21 children attend the nursery, including ten who attend on a part-time basis. Nine of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and fifteen have autistic spectrum disorders. It is not appropriate to compare the attainment of the pupils with national expectations or averages. One pupil is from a minority ethnic background. Many of the pupils are from families with low incomes, reflecting the high level of unemployment in the area. 43 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Springwell is a good school, with many very good features. Pupils make good progress, because the quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and governors use the available resources very efficiently, and the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Children under five make very good progress. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good – it is very good in a significant number of lessons.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, because the school's curriculum is very relevant to their needs. They make very good progress in their personal development.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
- Pupils' health and safety are looked after very well.
- The school works in close partnership with parents and carers.

#### **What could be improved**

- Not every class benefits from the same high quality teaching.
- There are insufficient teachers and auxiliaries for the number of pupils in a school of this type.
- Teachers with management responsibilities do not have enough time to fulfil their roles.
- The school's development plan covers too short a period.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in September 1996. Since then it has made very good progress. Pupils now make better progress, particularly the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 with severe learning difficulties. Most improvement has taken place in literacy and numeracy. The quality of teaching has improved greatly: there is now very little unsatisfactory teaching and a greater proportion of high quality teaching. The headteacher's leadership is now more established and has a significant impact on the quality of education provided. Teaching and the curriculum are now monitored, mainly by the headteacher.

The curriculum has improved: it now has breadth and balance and the provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. Assessment procedures are good and annual review reports are now of better quality. The governing body is more aware of what pupils are learning, and statutory policies are in place. The school's strategies for managing and monitoring challenging behaviour are now very good. Attendance procedures have improved and now comply with requirements. In 1996, the school did not provide satisfactory value for money: it now provides good value for money.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by age 5</b>	<b>by age 11</b>	<b>Key</b>
speaking and listening	A	B	very good A
reading	B	B	good B
writing	B	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	

The targets set at annual reviews are challenging but realistic. The under-fives and the pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make significant progress and achieve very well in their ability to communicate.

Progress in personal, social and health education is a strength of the school, because pupils are consistently encouraged to be independent, both in lessons and around the school.

Although it was not possible to judge progress in music and in religious education, pupils make good progress in all the other subjects of the curriculum. By the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, their achievement is good.

Pupils' good progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy are enhanced by the school's use of the National Strategies and by the many opportunities that are provided for them to practise their skills in other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very keen to start their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well, both in school and when on visits in the community.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Their confidence and their enjoyment in learning are supported by the very good relationships within the school.
Attendance	Good, even though many pupils have some absences due to ill-health.

Older pupils take an increasingly independent attitude to their learning.

Because pupils throughout the school behave so well, lessons are rarely disrupted, which means that everyone can concentrate on their work.

Pupils help with the day-to-day running of the school – for example, by tidying up or returning the register to the school office.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.*

In the nursery, all the areas of learning are very well taught. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching is good – in fact, often very good. This applies to all the subjects in which inspectors were able to see enough lessons to be able to make judgements. The good quality teaching of personal, social and health education is enhanced by the school's ethos, which successfully promotes pupils' independence and social skills.

A particular strength of the teaching is the effective partnership between teachers and auxiliaries, which means that pupils are handled consistently. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, particularly literacy and numeracy, so these skills are taught well. Communication skills are very well taught to pupils with additional special educational needs. The needs of all pupils are well met, despite staffing shortages in some classes.

Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, but where teaching is unsatisfactory the teacher fails to control challenging behaviour.

During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons. It was very good or excellent in 44 per cent, and unsatisfactory in only three per cent.

As a result of the high standards of teaching, pupils remain busy and interested throughout lessons and make good progress. They are confident learners, who try to be as independent as possible.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The good quality curriculum is broad and balanced. A particular strength is its relevance to the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to become independent and this has a positive impact on their learning and progress.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for caring for the pupils' wellbeing and their health and safety.

The school has very effective links with parents. Parents support the school and their children's learning very well and the school maintains regular contact with parents – for example, through the use of home-school books.

The curriculum for the under-fives is especially well designed. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good overall, and very good for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

Very effective links with the community and with other schools enrich the curriculum and provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development.

There are effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The school recognises and celebrates pupils' successes. There are very successful procedures for encouraging pupils to behave well.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very strong leadership and a clear vision for providing higher standards. Other staff are supportive but do not have sufficient time to carry out their management roles.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its role well and has a strong commitment to creating an effective school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully evaluates its progress towards the targets in the school development plan. Strategies to evaluate pupils' progress are developing well.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans very well to use its limited funding to promote higher standards – for example, in literacy and numeracy.

The school's accommodation is very good, although when pupils are grouped according to their ability, in mathematics lessons, there are not enough suitable classrooms. The school is well resourced with good quality books and equipment. There are not enough teachers and auxiliaries for the number of pupils and type of school. This is because there is not a sufficiently close match between the school's funds and the number of pupils who attend.

The headteacher, governors and all staff share a commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve well. The school is very keen to seek best value and takes carefully considered steps to achieve this.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• They make good progress.</li> <li>• The school cares for and values the children.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small minority is concerned about the provision of staff in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views about the school. The inspection confirms the worries about staffing. There are not enough teachers or auxiliaries, particularly in the class for pupils with the most severe problems.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

- 1 Pupils enter the nursery with very low levels of ability, particularly in their language and literacy and personal and social skills. As a result of very good quality teaching and a very highly relevant curriculum, they make very good progress, which prepares them well for lessons in National Curriculum subjects in Key Stage 1. They achieve well, particularly in their ability to communicate and in their personal development.
- 2 Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make very good progress for similar reasons – very high quality, specialist teaching and a curriculum very well modified to meet their particular needs. Again, the skills of communication are emphasised appropriately, and pupils achieve very well. Because they learn to interact with others and to focus on particular aspects of their environment, pupils are able to make progress in the other subjects of the curriculum. A minority of higher attaining pupils achieve so well that they are able to integrate with mainstream pupils.
- 3 Throughout the school, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress and achieve well. In many ways, the provision for them is very good – they have access to a carefully structured curriculum and have very caring and consistent handling, together with very good teaching. However, due to staffing difficulties, their progress is interrupted by periods without a teacher, and there are insufficient auxiliaries. This means that they sometimes have to spend time without adequate stimulation and so achieve less well than they should. The school is naturally very aware of these deficiencies.
- 4 In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils with severe learning difficulties make good progress. By the end of each key stage, their achievement is good. In two subjects (music and religious education), it was not possible to judge progress or achievement during the inspection. Pupils' good progress is particularly significant in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Two, interrelated factors have led to the improvements since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved, and so has the curriculum. The school has enthusiastically adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, modifying them suitably to meet the needs of its pupils. Accordingly, the curriculum for each class includes daily, intensive literacy and numeracy sessions. The guidance provided by the Strategies has developed teachers' knowledge and skills most effectively. Consequently, pupils are now making noticeably more rapid progress. For example, after spending considerable periods of time copying from adults, some pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are now writing short sentences independently and their achievement is good. Teachers plan well for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects. This gives them opportunities to practise and to improve further. It also helps them to make equally good progress and to achieve well across the curriculum – for example, because Key Stage 2 pupils can use books to find information about their work in history.
- 5 Changes to the way the curriculum is taught have led to improvements in pupils' progress and achievements in other subjects – for example, art, history and geography. Previously, these subjects were taught as part of integrated topics, but pupils now have discrete lessons in all subjects. This means that teachers can focus more easily on what they want pupils to learn in each, and the school can check what pupils are being taught. Teachers set challenging but realistic targets for each pupil to achieve.
- 6 Pupils make less progress when there are insufficient staff to support their learning – for example, in some information and communications technology lessons, and in the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 7 Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Once in school in the morning, they move as swiftly as they can to their classrooms for the start of the school day. They are keen to share their experiences with staff and friends, as they talk or sign or show their home-school books, during their pastoral time. Staff value these times and pupils delight and relax in the pleasure of sharing their feelings. All of the pupils appear secure in the school and this underpins their positive attitudes to the school and learning. They are excited as they make their daily choice of activity for the lunchtime period, stimulated by the variety of possibilities. Older pupils take an increasingly independent attitude to their learning. For example, one lunchtime, three pupils were seen persuading the headteacher to assist them in creating a graph from traffic statistics they had collected. In the nursery, children's attitudes to learning are also very good. They are quickly drawn to interesting activities, such as the very spirited account of the tale of Jack and the Beanstalk. This started with only four children involved, and ended with most of the nursery being thoroughly engrossed.
- 8 Overall, pupils' behaviour is very good, both in lessons and when out on visits - for example, to another school or to a local cafe. Pupils behave very well around the school. Many of the classes display their own sets of class rules, which have been drawn up with the help of the pupils, and these reflect the ethos of good order and kindness in the school. Staff are very skilled at managing the behaviour of pupils, often anticipating when a situation might arise that could precipitate an incident, and forestalling it. The low incidence of disruption in lessons from behavioural incidents has a very positive impact on learning: pupils can get on with their work. There have been no exclusions. Pupils expect a high standard of behaviour from themselves and adults. For example, on a trip to a shopping centre, a member of the public jumped the queue and took drinks that a pupil had helped to order. He was visibly disconcerted by such discourteous behaviour.
- 9 Pupils' personal and social skills develop very well. The very good relationships between pupils and staff, based upon mutual respect and trust, are the result of well thought-out teaching strategies that are incorporated into all lessons and activities. During the inspection, older pupils discussed and explored the feelings and emotions aroused by various social situations, from their own perspective and that of others. They are able to do this because teachers provide a learning environment where pupils are given the confidence to speak, by sensitive questioning, good use of encouragement and praise, and by managing pupils' behaviour effectively. Pupils show a great commitment to the day-to-day running of the school and, frequently without request, assume the responsibility for tidying away pencils at the end of a lesson, tucking chairs under tables and collecting up plates after a snack. In each class, pupils take responsibility for returning registers to the school secretary, and this is carried out with great solemnity by even the very youngest children, occasionally under the watchful eye, and guiding hand, of older pupils. Frequently, the personal development of pupils and the very good relationships they enjoy with staff have a very positive impact on their learning. For example, pupils co-operate with staff when being changed into their costumes at a public swimming pool, so increasing the length of time that they can spend in the water.
- 10 The trust that pupils build up with staff is especially important for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This was demonstrated by their willingness to take part in a simulated 'rooftop sleep-over at a friend's house' during which the pupils were able to relax and respond as fully as possible. Pupils throughout the school become involved in supporting charities. For example, children in the nursery created their own poppies, which they sold to support the British Legion on Remembrance Day.

- 11 Overall, pupils' attendance is good and is above average for a school of this type. Most pupils' absences are due to illness or the necessity for medical treatment. As virtually all pupils come to school in transport arranged by the local education authority, their punctuality is directly linked to the time of arrival of these minibuses and taxis. Pupils are punctual to lessons. The school now registers pupils' attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions, which complies with statutory requirements and represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

- 12 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is very good or excellent in a significant proportion of lessons. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in seven per cent of lessons, very good in 37 per cent, and good in a further 37 per cent. Only three per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was less than satisfactory in 20 per cent of lessons. At the time of the current inspection, two teachers were temporary, including the teacher in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- 13 The improvement in the quality of teaching has been brought about by several factors. There have been helpful changes to the curriculum, and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been introduced, so that teachers are more knowledgeable about what pupils need to learn. The skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught. Agreed strategies for managing pupils' behaviour have been developed; and the headteacher has taken firm action to raise standards of teaching in some classes, following his monitoring activities. Particular strengths of the teaching are the partnership between teachers and auxiliaries, teachers' skills in managing pupils, and their very good subject knowledge. All subjects are taught equally well, in both key stages. As a result, pupils remain busy and interested throughout most lessons, and so make good progress.
- 14 Teaching is very good in the nursery and the classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. It is often very good in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, but staffing shortages sometimes lead to the teacher's effectiveness being reduced. Almost all classes receive high quality teaching. When the teaching is less than satisfactory, this is linked to weaknesses in the teacher's planning and the management of pupils' behaviour. A minor weakness is that, although teachers promote literacy and numeracy very well across the curriculum, they sometimes miss opportunities to develop information and communications technology skills.
- 15 The partnership between teachers and auxiliaries is a particular strength of the teaching. The support staff are always fully aware of the role they are to play in lessons, and what the pupils are intended to learn. This means that they are able to lead small groups of pupils or to ask questions during discussions. One reason why an English lesson for older Key Stage 2 pupils was very successful was because the teacher divided the class into two groups, one led by an auxiliary, for part of the lesson. Each pupil was given very good support, matched to their needs, and the change of organisation helped the pupils to maintain their concentration throughout the hour-long lesson. Most lessons include time, set aside at the end, for pupils to explain to the whole class what they have been doing, enabling the teacher to check on their progress. Auxiliaries appreciate the teachers' high expectations and are alert for significant achievements, contributing well to the assessments of pupils' progress. For example, in an art lesson for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, the teacher and auxiliary made continuous evaluations of the pupils' performance, commenting on their observations and adjusting the goals for each pupil.
- 16 Nearly all teachers manage pupils' behaviour very successfully. This occurs unobtrusively and involves a number of elements. Behaviour is not a problem in lessons which are well planned so as to interest pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 English lesson, exciting resources and a

variety of activities resulted in pupils so keen to learn and participate that they needed little correction. Throughout the school, pupils respond best and make most progress when they are actively involved in lessons. Lower attaining pupils were becoming restless and bored after spending too long listening to adults and each other. Their interest was revived quickly when they were invited to join in a lively version of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Relationships between adults and pupils are almost always very good or excellent. Pupils are treated with consideration, which provides them with good models for their own behaviour. This means that they trust their teachers and are confident to ask questions or to attempt tasks which might be difficult – they know that their contributions will be valued. For example, the under-fives, working in the soft play area, were happy to explore the resources and enjoyed learning because of the praise and encouragement they received. Most teachers are skilled at dispelling quickly any tendency to argue or be disruptive. For example, at the end of an English lesson, a young Key Stage 1 pupil was tired and showed signs of becoming uncooperative. He was offered the chance to hold Bertie Bee (playing a supporting role in the lesson), was charmed, and thus restored to good humour. Teachers will usually act firmly when necessary. A higher attaining pupil with autistic spectrum disorders, keen to be involved in a physical education lesson, got over-excited. When given the choice to behave or not take part, he calmed down and so was able to join in and make good progress. A weakness in the lessons that are less than satisfactory is that the pupils' attention is not engaged: there is not enough stimulation to interest them, they misbehave and the teacher is unable to control them. In these circumstances, pupils make insufficient progress.

- 17 In the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the teacher and auxiliaries handle the pupils very sensitively. They treat the pupils with great respect, explaining what is happening and paying close attention to their physical comfort. Because pupils are made to feel secure and confident, they cooperate in activities – for example, putting their hands into bowls of warm or cold water. This means that the teacher can very gradually increase the demands made of each pupil, challenging them to respond more positively and leading them to make good progress in their ability to communicate with others. However, because the school is under-staffed, there are times when, unavoidably, pupils have to remain for too long without individual attention, and so their learning takes place at a slower rate.
- 18 Overall, teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, particularly in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy; of the needs of children under five; and of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and profound and multiple learning difficulties. This results in teachers who are confident and very aware of what pupils need to learn next, in order to make progress. They use the information they collect from assessments in order to plan work which is closely matched to pupils' needs and which provides the right amount of challenge to help them to move forward. For example, in a Key Stage 1 science lesson, pupils used different methods to record the results of their investigations, in line with their varying literacy needs. This meant that they were able to work as independently as possible, making very good progress in science and consolidating their writing skills. In the classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, the teachers' very good knowledge of special educational needs enables them to anticipate potential problems and adapt lessons quickly and smoothly, so that pupils' progress is interrupted as little as possible. Teachers and auxiliaries are also very aware of these pupils' individual needs, as seen in the way that they work to extend each pupil's ability to interact with others, every time a suitable opportunity arises. For example, when playing in the ball pool, pupils were encouraged to initiate interactions, because the adults skilfully built up an exchange of communications by responding immediately to their voices or gestures.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

- 19 The curriculum for children under five is very good. All of the recommended areas of learning are taught, with an appropriate emphasis on personal and social development and on the development of children's communication skills. Curricular planning ensures that pupils make progress in small steps. This means that the curriculum is particularly relevant for the needs of these young children.
- 20 A good quality curriculum is provided for those pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 with severe learning difficulties. A long-term plan is in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. This is effective in ensuring that the curriculum is broad and, in the main, suitably balanced. There is some inconsistency in the balance of the curriculum between classes, because there is insufficient guidance to help teachers construct their timetables, other than for English and mathematics. However, the curriculum is very relevant, because it is clearly focused on developing pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy. Each class has a daily hour of both literacy and numeracy, and the school has sensibly modified the National Strategies for these areas, ensuring that the content is suitable for the needs of the pupils. The successful introduction of these strategies has had a positive impact on the curriculum throughout both key stages and pupils' progress in these vital areas.
- 21 The school makes very good provision for its pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils are grouped appropriately. Those who need an environment with a consistent structure of routines are taught separately from higher attaining, more socially able pupils. The curriculum for some pupils is sensibly based on the desirable outcomes for under-fives, with an appropriate emphasis on communication and social skills, creating small steps leading to the National Curriculum.
- 22 Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have very good access to a wide-ranging curriculum. This involves a very effective, two-stranded approach through which developmental skills are taught individually, while knowledge areas are taught through topics. The developmental curriculum is of a very good quality, with precise learning objectives, which are used effectively as pupils' targets.
- 23 The Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum is good. It has improved very well since the previous inspection, and it continues to be a focus for development. The statutory curriculum is now in place. Each subject is now taught separately, rather than through an integrated, 'topic' approach, although there remain strong and appropriate links between subjects.
- 24 The school provides a 'choices' session each lunchtime, which gives pupils opportunities to experience areas of the curriculum which are of particular interest to them, such as using computers, playing outdoors, and making masks. This provision is very effective. In addition to enriching the curriculum and allowing pupils to practise skills such as reading, the activities help to develop social and personal skills. For example, pupils have to make decisions and plan how they will use their time, and learn to work and play alongside children from other class groups.
- 25 The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. Very good links exist between the school and local primary schools. For example, a reciprocal arrangement for integration with a nursery provides valuable learning experiences for both groups of children. The school makes very good use of the historical and cultural features in the area and pupils make frequent visits - for example, to the historic quay area in Hartlepool and the Penshore Monument. Local supermarkets welcome pupils into their stores to shop for items for lessons, and new developments in Hartlepool, such as the indoor shopping centre, make very good venues to promote pupils' social development in shops and cafes. The school is highly regarded in the local community and often receives very generous support from local people. For example, there

is a very strong link with Hartlepool United football club, and playing and coaching staff come into school every week to work with some of the pupils. Links with the local community very effectively enhance pupils' understanding of the world and allow opportunities for pupils to learn to behave in a range of different situations.

- 26 The curriculum for personal and social development, including sex-education, based upon a published scheme, provides a good framework for teachers' planning. As a result, pupils learn about themselves, relationships and environmental issues, from different perspectives as they progress through the key stages. Additionally, their personal and social education is continuously developed as appropriate opportunities arise during daily school life - for example, at the end of the day, when discussing events and pupils' responses to their activities. Altogether, the provision is very good. Pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders use their personal and social education lessons to explore, through the sensitive interventions of their teaching team, early, tentative steps towards social interaction. For example, they take part in group activities such as their 'hello' song, and have opportunities for social contact arising from their use of the ball pool and soft play area.
- 27 The school has a positive ethos and provides a warm and caring environment for all its pupils, celebrating achievement at whatever level. Visitors are made to feel welcome, and all staff, including the secretary, caretaker and kitchen staff are friendly and support the school's aims. Acts of collective worship, in classrooms and in the whole school assemblies, are an important part of the school's provision for promoting and developing pupils' spiritual awareness and self esteem. Lessons contribute to pupils' spiritual development. For example, in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, an atmosphere of awe and wonder prevailed, as pupils experienced sights and sounds which recreated night-time changing to daylight.
- 28 Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and the school promotes these values very consistently, in lessons and throughout the day. Teachers encourage pupils to respect each other and to be sensitive to each other's feelings. For example, during a literacy lesson, Key Stage 2 pupils were asked to think about a story in which a black girl was experiencing discrimination. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and staff are very patient in explaining to pupils how they should behave and treat others. Rewards are used effectively to reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong: they are given for positive attitudes as well as for achievements in lessons.
- 29 The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' social development. This is largely because the staff are so adept and aware: opportunities to reinforce helping and sharing are exploited throughout the day – for example, during the breakfast sessions which start the school day for some pupils. When lunch is being eaten, staff help pupils and pupils help themselves whenever possible, chatting pleasantly. Parents appreciate this contribution to pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to choose, collect and use resources independently – for example, when older pupils are carrying out research – and to take on a range of jobs around the school.
- 30 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school allows pupils to appreciate the richness of the local culture through visits to local villages, castles and the Marina. There are some missed opportunities – for example, works of art by famous artists do not feature prominently enough in displays around the school. Pupils have developed a very good awareness and understanding of their own and other cultures, and displays, including writing and drawing by pupils, enhance their awareness of religion and life in other countries. Pupils have a number of very good opportunities to learn about their own and different cultures, through art, music and during literacy lessons. In literacy, pupils experience a wide variety of literature, including poetry and stories from many cultures. Some pupils recently benefited from working with a 'Writer in Residence' who helped them to create stories. 'Barnaby Bear' often accompanies pupils on visits, making an excellent contribution to pupils' awareness of the world around them. Pupils

take part in shopping trips, café visits, and walks around their local environment, getting to know local buildings and streets.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 31 The arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare and safety are very good. The school works in close liaison with a number of health specialists and therapists, to ensure the welfare of pupils. Pupils are all very well known to staff, and the school's practice and ethos of care is built around pupils' safety and well being. The school nurse and the staff encourage pupils to follow a healthy eating programme, and older pupils sell fruit and vegetables for pupils to eat at break times. The provision of a Breakfast Club ensures that any pupil who needs a breakfast has not only cereals, toast, milk and fruit juice, but also a warm welcome from the school cook and a cheerful start to the day. The overall health and safety provision in the school is very well monitored by the school caretaker, members of the governing body and the headteacher. Responsibilities are clearly designated and conscientiously carried out - for example, those for administering medicines and providing first aid, and testing the hygiene of the hydrotherapy pool. The arrangements for child protection are very good. Usefully, overall responsibility is shared not only by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, but also by the school nurse. The school follows the procedures of the local area child protection committee and all staff have shared training in these procedures, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 32 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The transport escorts play an important role in informing the school of any absences. The school works closely with families to ensure that pupils attend school whenever possible.
- 33 Very effective, whole-school strategies for monitoring and managing challenging behaviour are in place, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The very good practice in managing challenging behaviour, in the classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, has set a benchmark throughout the school. By applying the school's procedures, nearly all teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively.
- 34 Teachers have a good knowledge of each pupil, based upon their generally good assessment and recording methods, which enable them to plan, prepare and teach lessons that are matched to pupils' individual needs. The assessment arrangements vary between satisfactory in some classes and very good in others. They are at their best where teachers use a common framework for both setting targets and assessing the pupils' progress - for example, in the use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy objectives, and in the use of detailed developmental programmes for children with the most severe learning difficulties.
- 35 Assessment arrangements have improved significantly since the previous inspection, and the school is making a good effort to further improve its procedures. For example, teachers are being helped to set consistently precise targets for pupils, building upon models of good practice such as those used for the pupils who have the most severe learning difficulties. Some individual education plans do not draw attention to the current educational priorities for each pupil, because they contain too many objectives.
- 36 The school makes good use of assessment information to guide improvements to its curriculum - for example, by organising pupils into groups by ability in numeracy lessons. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils' attainments to provide tasks suited to the abilities of each pupil or group of pupils in their lessons. For pupils with more severe learning difficulties and those in the nursery class, good assessment information enables staff to respond at an individual level to, for example, pupils' attempts to communicate or make social contacts.
- 37 The school has a very clear commitment to recognising and celebrating achievement, which increases the confidence of pupils and motivates them to succeed further. Pupils are given



immediate praise and encouragement for their efforts and are awarded certificates to mark significant progress. Pupils are made aware of and keep track of their many successes through their records of achievement files which provide an excellent record of their school lives.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 38 Overall, the parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents express great satisfaction with the care that the school takes of their children and the progress their children are making. For example, one parent said that family life has been improved considerably by working with the school on ways of managing her child's behaviour. However, a small minority of parents is concerned about the provision of staff in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- 39 The school's links with parents are very effective. Parents know they have access to the school at any time during the day and that their concerns and suggestions are always welcome. They are regularly consulted about their views on issues, such as school uniform. The school maintains regular contact with parents and carers through the home-school books. Although these are not used on a daily basis by all parents, they are available and are a very useful means for teachers to pass on messages about pupils' behaviour, progress or homework.
- 40 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. Some parents come into school to help with reading, and this has helped pupils to make progress. A number of parents have also attended workshops to extend their signing skills. The school is keen to encourage parents of children under five with special needs to bring them along to enjoy the facilities of the school before they start school, in order to help them to settle in quickly.
- 41 The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about their child's progress is generally good. The school sends out a wide range of information and newsletters to parents. The governors' Annual Report now includes all the necessary information for parents and carers. However, although the pupils' annual reviews are very full and informative documents, the annual reports to parents on their children's progress do not include attendance statistics. The school is very pleased with the very good attendance and commitment that parents and carers show at annual review meetings, and this is a reflection of the effective partnership that exists.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 42 The headteacher provides very good quality leadership and a clear vision for the direction of the school, by promoting high standards and planning for further improvements. He leads by example, by undertaking a significant teaching commitment and demonstrating strong leadership of the development of numeracy and information technology. There is a good level of delegation to staff with management responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators have had a significant impact on raising standards in their curriculum areas. However, they have limited time to monitor teaching and learning, to help them to plan for further developments.
- 43 The governing body, head teacher and staff show a commitment to providing an effective school and working to raise standards further. Changes have been successfully managed, in difficult circumstances. In spite of staff shortages, absences and difficulties in recruitment, the school has welcomed a very large increase in the number of pupils since the previous inspection. The governing body provides effective support to the school. This is important in view of the limited time available for senior staff to manage the school. Governors have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They share the school's views of priorities for development in order to continue to promote higher standards in teaching and learning. Some governors, notably the chair and vice-chair, are frequent visitors to the school and are familiar

figures to pupils and staff. The governing body has increased in size recently, and governors are more knowledgeable about what pupils are learning, than at the time of the previous inspection.

- 44 The development priorities chosen by the school have had a significant impact on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The targets in the school development plan are well considered to raise standards further, particularly for literacy and numeracy and information and communications technology. They are linked to clear programmes of action, with procedures in place to monitor their outcomes. However, the headteacher lacks sufficient time to monitor the progress of developments. For example, he is currently unable to visit classrooms to observe literacy and numeracy lessons in order to evaluate teaching and learning, because of his own teaching commitment. The lack of secure funding, large fluctuations in pupil numbers, and staff shortages, have made it very difficult for the school to take a long term view of its development, and the school's plans do not extend beyond the current year, which is a weakness.
- 45 The implementation of the school's aims, values and policies is very good. Their outcomes are clearly visible in the day-to-day life of the school. The commitment to fostering very good relationships, and promoting equality of opportunity for pupils to achieve, enables them to take full advantage of lessons and activities. This is evident in the expectation that all pupils, including those who have additional special educational needs, will receive a high standard of education.
- 46 The headteacher provides the staff with strong support and good advice, to promote pupils' learning. This has a very positive impact in raising standards in teaching and learning. The school has a good knowledge of its performance and this has contributed to the developments to raise standards further in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology. For example, the progress of higher attaining pupils is monitored by using standardised tests in literacy. The school is now seeking ways to monitor numeracy more closely, to support its own evaluation of the effectiveness of its numeracy strategy.
- 47 There are insufficient teachers for the number of pupils in school. The shortage of teachers limits opportunities for staff with management responsibilities to undertake development tasks and monitoring. Effective temporary arrangements are in place to offset some of the difficulties caused by teachers' absence and an unfilled vacancy. However, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do not currently have a teacher for the whole week. Although the school endeavours to minimise the effect, the inspection findings confirm the concerns of a small number of parents that there is insufficient teaching staff for these pupils. The school's auxiliaries are very well qualified and committed to provide effective support. They have a significantly positive impact on promoting pupils' progress, but there are not enough auxiliaries to ensure that all classes have sufficient support. This means that some pupils make less progress than they should, in a minority of lessons.
- 48 Teachers and support staff receive very good support to promote their professional development. In spite of restricted time, they undertake significant training to raise their own standards and to contribute to whole school improvement. There is insufficient time to implement appraisal fully and to act on the findings. This is particularly the case for the deputy headteacher, who does not have a time allocation to implement his targets. The arrangements to induct new and temporary staff to the school are good. There is a commitment to recruit staff with a high level of classroom skills and for staff to undertake professional development. The success of the arrangements is evident in the high standards of teaching around the school. The school takes appropriate action to endeavour to raise standards in teaching where skills are insufficient. Senior managers are aware, and are supporting, where weaknesses still exist.
- 49 The accommodation is very good quality, and provides well for the agreed number of pupils. However, now numbers have risen, there are insufficient classrooms to provide appropriate accommodation for some groups of pupils, particularly when pupils work in sets according to

their prior attainment in numeracy. Where teaching takes place in a room that is too small, then this has an adverse effect on the progress that pupils make. Overall, the provision of learning resources is good. The school makes very good use of resources in the community, such as historic sites, the Marina and shops to promote pupils' learning.

- 50 There is not a sufficiently close match between the funding allocated to the school and the number of pupils who attend. This means that resources do not keep pace with the significant increase in pupil numbers. In spite of this, the headteacher and governors plan very well to use the limited funding to promote high standards. Expenditure closely matches the priorities for development. The school seeks best value in the work that it does and in the use of resources. A very good example is the way that the school's choice of information and communications technology resources stems from effective decisions to provide both value for money and resources that are best suited to pupils' needs.
- 51 Budget management and school administration, by the secretary, are very efficient. This support is unobtrusive, but it is very noticeable how well it leaves teachers free to concentrate on teaching. The headteacher and governors have very good access to accounts through information and communications technology, in partnership with the local education authority. They monitor expenditure effectively, acting to ensure that targets for expenditure remain within agreed limits.
- 52 The school has made very good progress in meeting those requirements of the previous inspection report that related to its leadership and management. Governors are more involved in pupils' learning and the subjects they study. The school development plan is effective in providing clear strategies for the school to improve pupils' progress. For instance, progress in literacy, numeracy and information technology has improved significantly. Coordinators are now having a positive impact on curriculum development. Monitoring and support of teaching by the headteacher have led to higher standards. The school meets all statutory requirements except for the full contents of the annual reports of pupils' progress.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to continue to improve the quality of education and pupils' progress, the headteacher, and governors should:

1. Continue taking steps to ensure that the quality of teaching in all classes reaches the same high standard that exists currently in the majority. This will involve providing support and sharing good practice, particularly in managing pupils' behaviour. (paragraphs 16, 88)
2. Seek ways to increase the number of teachers and auxiliaries. As a matter of urgency, there should be a qualified teacher with each class at all times.(paragraphs 3,17, 47)
3. Develop strategies to provide teachers with management responsibility time to fulfil their roles. In particular, the deputy headteacher requires time to achieve the targets set for him by the governors, and subject co-ordinators need to be able to develop the monitoring and supporting aspects of their roles.(paragraphs 42, 48)
4. Write a school development plan that takes a longer term view of priorities and targets, in order to help planning to promote pupils' progress. (paragraph 44)

The following less important weakness should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Some individual education plans contain too many targets, so that the priorities for each pupil are not clear and the plans are not manageable. (paragraph 35)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	37	37	16	3	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	87
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	37

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	8.19

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	0

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.7
Average class size	9

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	480

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	98-99
	£
Total income	466,321
Total expenditure	478,053
Expenditure per pupil	7,735
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,502
Balance carried forward to next year	-2,230

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	85
Number of questionnaires returned	73

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	11	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	82	15	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	22	3	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	12	8	1	7
The teaching is good.	92	7	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	90	5	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	5	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	7	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	81	18	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	93	5	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	14	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	75	12	4	0	7

### **Other issues raised by parents**

A small minority of parents expressed their concerns about the provision of staff in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

## **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**

- 53 The provision made for children under five is very good. Children with identified special educational needs are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis from the age of two and a half. By the time they reach statutory school age they are able to cope with attending school on a full time basis. This indicates the very good progress that children make overall. For example, in their personal and social development, children benefit greatly from opportunities to integrate with a mainstream nursery, both in their own environment and at the primary school. This progress is possible because the quality of teaching is very good, at times excellent, involving very good quality teamwork between the teacher and auxiliaries, and the curriculum is highly relevant to the children's needs. The nursery provision was described as good in the previous inspection report, and pupils made sound progress. The provision and progress have both improved and overall, children now achieve well in all the areas of learning.
- 54 Children make very good progress in their ability to form and sustain relationships. They are learning to play together co-operatively – for example, in pairs with sand or toy trains. In the mainstream nursery, some pupils were able to join in role play, to wash dishes or pretend to be a doctor or a nurse. Staff are very quick to encourage children to develop good social skills, such as taking turns and sharing. They challenge children to take responsibility – for example, for returning the register to the secretary, and this is good preparation for the transition to Key Stage 1. Gentle but firm control, with reminders of expected, acceptable behaviour are well used to help children learn how to behave appropriately. Through daily awards of certificates and the constant praise they receive from all staff, children learn to appreciate when they have done good work or tried hard. They show pleasure at their own success, and that of others, because the staff provide such good role models. Children are friendly and happy in the secure environment of the nursery.
- 55 In the area of language and literacy, children make very good progress and achieve very well. They listen and respond to stories, songs and nursery rhymes. The teacher prepares and organises work effectively and provides a structured, stimulating learning environment. Very good planning which takes account of individual needs is a feature of all lessons. Effective signing and clear explanations by all staff ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Children's language develops well because adults talk to them throughout the day, attracting and retaining their attention by using their voices to very good effect. Children learn to enjoy books, to appreciate that stories have a structure and to realise that print and illustrations carry meaning. They answer simple questions – for example, demonstrating some of Jack's actions, in the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk', becoming increasingly able to make themselves understood. Their high levels of interest and participation are due to the enthusiasm of the staff and because lessons are so relevant to their individual needs.
- 56 Children make good progress in the early stages of mathematics. They develop an awareness of number and sequence through counting rhymes and songs, and through the everyday routines in the classrooms. Children actively explore the objects and materials they are given. They make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they run their fingers through sand and use a plastic spade to dig. They demonstrate a growing awareness of cause and effect by pushing switches to make music play and they use the computer with confidence. Children demonstrate an understanding of the function of everyday objects such as mirrors. For instance, a child tried hard to talk to his reflection in the large classroom mirror. Children know the uses of a toothbrush and a comb and attempt to use them correctly. They learn about the resources in the nursery and soft play area, and in the mainstream nursery. By walking

to the primary school and going on outings in the minibus – for example, to horse riding lessons, children increase their awareness of the world outside school.

- 57 Children make very good progress in their creative development. The auxiliaries in the nursery assist them to dip a brush into a paint tray and brush the paper. They explore musical instruments and make interesting sounds. Children smile in response to popular music when they recognise it. Music is effectively used to create a calm, peaceful environment where all pupils can learn. All children enjoy singing time. Those who are able to join in do so with gusto, and most know the words to greeting and goodbye songs. Role play is especially effective in extending children's knowledge, and the story of Jack and the Beanstalk with actions and props was particularly popular and stimulating.
- 58 Children achieve well and make good progress in their physical development. They have easy and frequent access to outside play areas. Discrete movement lessons take place in the school hall, where children run, skip, walk and crawl using slow and fast movements. These movements are also used effectively at registration to consolidate understanding and the use of relevant vocabulary. Very good use is made of large-scale soft play equipment such as the ball pool, slides, and tunnels. Children develop confidence and independence, as well as their use of language, in a less structured environment. In the hydrotherapy pool, children are confident to relax in the water, because staff handle them so carefully and consistently. Ball skills are developing well, and some children joined other pupils in the lesson with the professional coaching staff from Hartlepool United football club. Most respond accurately to instructions and the beat of the tambour, some with good co-ordination and control. Children with more physical difficulties tolerate their arms and legs being moved in physiotherapy programmes and relax in response to music and people.
- 59 The teaching is very good and sometimes excellent across all the areas of development. The teacher prepares and organises work effectively and provides a structured, stimulating learning environment. Very good planning which takes account of individual needs and prior attainment is a feature of all lessons. The teacher has a very good knowledge of children's special needs and the needs of children under five. Auxiliaries also demonstrate a very good knowledge of the children. They share the teacher's high expectations of children's attention and involvement. They organise activities very well and use a good range of resources to support learning.

## **ENGLISH**

- 60 Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English. This is because the teaching is good – often very good or excellent – and the school ensures that each class is taught English for a significant amount of time each day. In addition to English lessons, the teachers take full advantage of any other opportunity to reinforce pupils' learning. This is especially noticeable in the skills of speaking and listening. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to listen carefully to questions posed by teachers and auxiliaries. They make good progress because staff direct their questions to particular pupils, saying their names clearly and making sure that they are paying attention before the question is asked. Because the questions are very well matched to each pupil's needs, the pupils are confident to respond. For example, in a design and technology lesson, pupils were able to answer questions about the materials they had used to make boxes, developing their ability to evaluate but also to listen well and answer clearly. Pupils learn to use a wider range of vocabulary because teachers introduce new words very effectively, giving clear explanations, repeating them often, and providing plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise using them – such as the terms 'author' and 'illustrator', or the word 'nectar' from a book about bees. Higher attaining pupils are making good progress as they learn to make longer responses – for example, using sentences rather than short phrases, because teachers have high expectations of them. Pupils who find it hard to communicate verbally also achieve well, because teachers encourage them to use signs as a way of taking part in lessons.



- 61 In Key Stage 2, pupils make best progress in classes where teachers manage their behaviour most successfully. For example, by the end of the key stage, pupils listen extremely well to tape recordings and the views of other children, when evaluating musical instruments they have made. In most classes, pupils are comfortable to ask questions and make observations, because teachers value and praise all contributions, waiting for pupils to make themselves understood. Higher attaining pupils are learning to speak at greater length and to sequence their ideas, so that they can give clearer explanations. However, most pupils speak in short phrases. In both key stages, staff also encourage pupils to develop their skills outside lessons. For instance, they must make choices about activities at lunchtime, and choose between toast and cereal for breakfast. All staff take time to talk with pupils - for example, when they meet them in the library.
- 62 Teachers use elements of the National Literacy Strategy, together with a commercial reading scheme, very effectively, helping pupils to make good progress in reading. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to recognise letters and the sounds they make. They become familiar with pictures of the characters in stories and get to know their names. Through a variety of games, pupils gradually learn to match name cards to the pictures, as they come to recognise the written words. Other, lower attaining pupils, are learning to link name cards to the children in their class. Different cards are shown – for example, with first and surname or first name and a symbol – matched to the needs of each child, so they are all able to join in and make progress. With support, higher attaining pupils are able to read simple books, with phrases such as ‘out of the...’ and ‘on the...’ because they remember these words. In addition, they use the illustrations to give them clues, so they read ‘out the *window*’. These pupils are beginning to use the sounds made by letters, to help them to read, and pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to develop this skill. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils read their books fluently, sometimes correcting themselves when they make a mistake. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy books and reading, and the school library is well used. In this, they take their cue from the teachers’ enthusiasm. Additionally, the books teachers select for the class to read are well chosen to interest pupils. Individual reading books are carefully matched to the pupils’ needs, providing just the right amount of challenge – pupils can read most of the words and they learn new ones. Pupils also learn how to collect information from books and CD ROM, so that they practise their reading skills in other subjects, such as history and geography. They regularly take reading books home, and parents support their progress by sharing books with them.
- 63 Pupils now make much better progress in writing than at the time of the previous inspection. The main reason for this is that teachers now encourage pupils to attempt to write independently, rather than copying what adults have written. During Key Stage 1, lower attaining pupils learn how to make purposeful marks on paper – for example, in a particular direction – and then to form letters. A minority of pupils go on to write captions for pictures or accounts of their news. Although they often make mistakes –for example, mixing lower and upper case letters – they make themselves understood and are able to spell simple words correctly. In an excellent lesson, pupils made very good progress when the teacher used a toy bee to help them learn about punctuation marks. Bertie Bee was first taught and then tested about full stops, commas and exclamation marks. The children were delighted, thoroughly involved, and tried very hard to meet the demands of the teacher’s high expectations.
- 64 Many Key Stage 2 pupils are still at the early stages of writing, but some of the oldest can tackle writing a description of work they have done – for example, in geography or science. Pupils learn to use their writing skills in many subjects, and this helps them to write more quickly and easily and to appreciate the importance of writing. Some pupils are learning to punctuate their work and to construct sentences correctly. Lower attaining pupils write less fluently and need more support, but many can use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them write short phrases or sentences that can be understood. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent by giving them time to try for themselves, judging accurately when to give encouragement by supplying clues, such as ‘What letters make the *sh* sound?’ In one very good lesson, based on the story of

'Goldilocks', pupils wrote a letter asking for some (real) porridge. As can be expected, this was a very motivating experience, causing pupils to use their imagination and to think carefully about the words they used, in order to be successful. In another class, pupils have written poems but, in general, opportunities for pupils to write creatively are limited and could be increased.

- 65 Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make similarly good progress. In the class for pupils with the most extreme difficulties, the teacher makes very good use of a deliberately restricted vocabulary when speaking to pupils, so as not to bombard them with stimulation. Pointing is used successfully to help pupils to focus on particular aspects of their environment. Pupils achieve very well in communicating, because lessons are carefully controlled to provide opportunities, which encourage pupils – for example, to indicate that they need a door to be opened. Most pupils are interested in books and a few are learning to match name cards to people or colours. The teacher has produced books that successfully meet the needs of individual pupils, motivating them and enabling them to make progress. Pupils are developing control over pencils and crayons and learning to make deliberate marks. The higher attaining pupils are happy to act out scenes from a story, and some respond very well, in words or phrases, to the teacher's very good use of questions, modified to suit each one. These pupils are making good progress in learning to write independently and spell correctly. The teacher marks their work very well, writing encouraging comments and asking questions, which stimulate the pupils to write in reply. For example, after a description of an incident at home, 'Well done. Did you help your mum?', to which the pupil replied 'Yes I did help my mum'.
- 66 The pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are making good progress in their listening and communicating skills, because the teacher is very skilled at choosing highly motivating activities and resources. For example, during one lesson, loud music was used to attract pupils' attention and engage their interest. When the volume was reduced, pupils were obliged to listen more intently. They are developing their ability to communicate by looking and responding – for example, by smiling – because the staff know the pupils so well and have high expectations of what each can achieve.
- 67 The subject has developed very well since the previous inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced very successfully and has led to greater consistency in the teachers' approaches – for example, how to teach pupils to write. Additionally, teachers now have a clearer understanding of English and are fully aware of what they want each pupil to gain from their lessons. As a result, pupils now make much better progress, particularly in reading and writing. The curriculum is richer, and pupils have more opportunities to practise their skills in other subjects. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress has improved and is far more detailed and useful, although the day-to-day records of pupils' reading are of variable quality and usefulness.
- 68 The recently appointed co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has a clear vision for developing the subject, based on her limited observations of teachers' and pupils' work. However, she has other significant responsibilities and has not yet had time to put her ideas into practice. Appropriately, the headteacher has identified English as a focus for whole school development. After monitoring standards, he has taken firm and effective action to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, by supporting a Key Stage 2 class.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 69 Pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics and numeracy. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a significant impact on improving progress in the subject. The promotion of numeracy in lessons and in the life of the school is a strength. The quality of mathematics teaching is good, with a significant minority of teaching being very good or excellent. Teachers take care to create a setting and routine where pupils know that they will begin the lesson with challenging but realistic questions. The

introduction encourages pupils to think, with teachers and auxiliaries reminding pupils of the work that they have completed and supporting pupils to build on this. Throughout lessons, pupils show an enthusiasm to learn. They behave well because they are engrossed in their work and want to know more. Lessons are characterised by pupils working at a brisk pace, whilst knowing that they have sufficient time to answer questions. There is an air of healthy competition, but staff provide such effective role models that pupils spontaneously help each other, applauding success. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, with a minority of pupils making very good progress.

- 70 During Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress over the series of numeracy lessons, learning strategies to work more quickly, such as not needing to count remainders. Pupils increase their use of language, using terms such as 'more' and 'less' when describing quantities. By the end of the key stage, they use symbols with increased understanding, through daily practice in responding to written problems involving adding and taking away. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in beginning to match colours, through staff persistence and the effective use of resources. Pupils work diligently, arranging and counting groups of blocks, showing increasing understanding that they will always count the same number, no matter how they arrange them. Pupils are happy to try their best because they receive regular and effective praise and encouragement. Teachers encourage pupils to behave well by providing plenty of opportunities for success and praising effort. This promotes a greater understanding that there are correct answers and engenders a willingness to try again.
- 71 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 make very good progress in understanding the order of numbers and solving problems mentally during the numeracy lesson. By the end of the key stage, they count on from a given number, such as from fifty two to fifty nine. They respond with increasing speed, because the teacher asks questions that are challenging, but realistic. Higher attaining pupils show great pride in their ability to count backwards. Pupils have very good opportunities to handle resources in practical mathematics lessons, such as when they buy items from the class shop. They respond enthusiastically, showing a growing ability to choose coins for their value – for example, selecting the smallest number of coins to purchase their goods. Higher attaining pupils count in steps of twenty pence. Pupils make very good progress when there are opportunities to show initiative. They make gains in knowledge by discovering ways to count beyond the numbers on the number square, demonstrating growing skills in mental arithmetic. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics throughout the curriculum. They deepen their knowledge of number in physical education, passing the ball an odd or even number of times. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 gain practical experience when they take part in a traffic survey in geography. They consolidate their understanding by using information and communications technology to display their results in the form of a graph. Higher attaining pupils show increased understanding of how to find a place on a map by using co-ordinates. Teachers show their enthusiasm for numeracy and this has a positive effect upon promoting pupils' interest. Staff ask questions very effectively and seize opportunities to promote numeracy. This is evident when a supervised group of pupils sell fruit at break time. Both sellers and customers receive equal support. Teachers encourage pupils to remember prices and guide them to select coins in exchange. They ensure that pupils have sufficient time to solve the problem themselves and provide encouragement, promoting effort and success. Teachers plan effectively to promote the learning of mathematical language. They encourage an interest in mathematics in the world, astonishing pupils with the fact that the date of the second of February 2000 is a rare, even date.
- 72 Standards of teaching and learning for pupils who have additional special educational needs are very good. The quality of teaching is excellent for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, when there are sufficient staff to ensure that pupils receive the support that they require. This enables them to make very good progress against the targets set for them. They engage with the activities through effective support, to reach out, touch and observe objects.

They achieve less well than they should in some lessons where there are insufficient auxiliaries to provide effective support to match the high expectations for pupils to learn. Higher attaining pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders make very good progress against the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They increase their understanding of number and money through carefully designed and monitored activities.

- 73 Although temporary, the current arrangements for the coordination of mathematics are very effective, since the headteacher has taken on the role. Teachers receive clear guidance to help them plan consistently to promote numeracy. Although there are limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the subject, he has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. A strength of the provision for numeracy is the arrangements for pupils to learn in groups according to their need, making very effective use of the good quality information from assessments. There are insufficient classrooms for the number of groups. This means that a minority of classes use spaces that are too small, preventing effective group and individual work.
- 74 Standards in mathematics have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Progress is now much better, and overall standards of teaching and learning are good. A very significant reason for this is the improvement in the school's plans to promote numeracy. Teachers and auxiliaries have embraced the introduction of numeracy well and their enthusiasm and commitment has a very positive impact upon the success of strategies to improve standards.

## SCIENCE

- 75 Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress in science. They achieve very well by the end of Key Stage 1. This is because although the quality of teaching is generally good, it is very good in Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, pupils learn about a wide range of science topics in practical ways, such as growing plants, sorting materials into types, and making objects move. As a result, pupils behave well and make good efforts to learn - teachers captivate their interest and provide exciting and challenging tasks which keep them working through the lessons. The good progress pupils make is apparent from the high proportion of their own written work and drawings, including charts and tables recording results of experiments, rather than standardised work sheets. The standard of written work is good in relation to pupils' abilities, helping them to make progress in science and enabling them to practise and apply the skills they have learned in English lessons.
- 76 During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 1 sorted toys into groups according to the forces (pushing or pulling) required to make them work. Their success at this was related directly to the very high quality teaching. The resources chosen captivated pupils and held their interest, and the teacher gave very clear instructions, so they knew exactly what they needed to do. The teacher's questioning skills were particularly good, involving the pupils and enabling them to see how this lesson linked to their previous learning. The pupils were able to learn in easily attainable steps. The pupils' learning is reinforced by good use of praise and encouragement.
- 77 In Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils with autistic spectrum disorders considered whether changes to various materials, caused by squashing, bending, or stretching, are temporary or permanent. The lesson was introduced by very clear instructions from the teacher, who then suggested a range of tests that could be applied. Although the teacher initiated these tests, pupils were actively involved in trying to predict the results, which they recorded as independently as possible, making good progress in their ability to conduct investigations. The teacher's aims were very clear and the lesson was planned so that pupils had appropriate amounts of instruction and practical work.

- 78 The teaching team gives confidence to the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, so that they can learn about their body's awareness of hot and cold stimuli, by placing their hands in warm then cold water. This requires very sensitive teaching skills and very careful planning based upon an understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- 79 Since the last inspection, the overall planning of the science curriculum has improved. Lessons are now planned and taught within the framework of a scheme of work that covers all areas of science. There has also been an improvement in teachers' subject knowledge and the methods they use, which has led to an improvement in the standard of pupils' work. In particular, the last report stated that pupils did not engage in experimental and investigative science. This issue has now been resolved and pupils are now being encouraged, by skilful questioning techniques, to turn their natural interest into more formal investigations, as independently as possible. The science coordinator has influenced this improvement, despite being severely restricted by the lack of time in which to fulfil the role.

## **ART**

- 80 Overall, pupils make good progress. By the end of each key stage, they achieve high standards. Although it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching, it is clear that pupils' progress is as a result of the good quality opportunities which are provided for them. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in skills such as painting and printing. Teachers are skilled at adapting the demands they make to meet the pupils' needs. For example, in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the pupils experienced, and responded to, the textures of dry icing sugar and runny icing. With help, some are able to move the mixture around on paper, using their hand or a brush, creating individual or group pictures. The activity was well chosen, to enable all pupils to respond, but some had to wait for attention, because of the shortage of staff, and so achieved less than they should.
- 81 Lower attaining pupils with autistic spectrum disorders can use brushes and scrapers to mix colours and apply paint to a large textured board, to create a group painting. They make good progress in sharing resources and space, and in concentrating on their work. The teacher has high expectations, insisting that pupils communicate their need for more paint, and giving out only small quantities, prompting them to repeat their requests. Higher attaining pupils understand the concept of a repeating pattern and can design a simple repeat. When deciding which pattern the class would use for a printed wallpaper, some pupils found it difficult to consider any but their own design. The teacher quickly prompted them by asking 'Yours and ...?' , enabling a decision to be reached, so that the pupils could make progress.
- 82 In Key Stage 1, pupils with severe learning difficulties make good progress in creating three-dimensional effects with paper, exploring methods of manipulating it, such as curling, twisting and folding. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on these experiences by making clay models, from drawings they make of images from ancient civilisations. Sculptures such as a Minoan bull and a hunter-gatherer show that pupils have observed closely and handled clay carefully, creating some fine detailing.
- 83 Teachers make good use of information and communications technology resources to support pupils' progress in art. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils use a graphics program to draw and paint self-portraits. In Key Stage 2, they create a picture in the style of Jackson Pollock, developing their knowledge of the work of famous artists as well as their own ability to use line and colour.

- 84 Curricular planning has improved since the previous inspection, when art was often used to illustrate the school's overall themes or topics. Pupils now learn art as a separate subject. The art room, referred to in the last report, is now used as a general classroom.
- 85 The new art co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further and has produced a well considered curricular plan, showing the aspects of art to be taught each year. This provides breadth and balance within art. Particularly useful are the suggestions for artists and styles of art for children to learn about, as this is an aspect currently in need of further development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 86 Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards of teaching and learning are good, although there is a very small minority of lessons where these are unsatisfactory. Pupils throughout the school create designs and, with help, evaluate their finished products. Pupils in Key Stage 1 talk about their completed boxes and say how they made them. They evaluate the strength of the paper and cardboard and decide which glue is the strongest. Through these activities they develop an understanding of design and modification that enables them to make suggestions for improvement. They develop a good vocabulary to use when discussing their work, because teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to use technical language and the correct names of tools and materials. Teachers usually provide motivating and relevant tasks and this gives further encouragement for pupils to develop a positive attitude to work, applying themselves well to complete a significant amount of work in lessons.
- 87 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show high levels of achievement in their designs for musical instruments. Higher attaining pupils tackle written evaluations well, reflecting the teachers' effective planning to promote literacy. Pupils are highly motivated and listen extremely well, examining musical instruments to see how they are constructed. They receive good support from staff to design and make good quality instruments, and to evaluate them well. Teachers and auxiliaries treat pupils with courtesy in an age appropriate manner and this promotes very good relationships between pupils. Pupils respond well to the high expectations for them to design, make and talk about their work. Teachers know pupils well and use this information to plan successful lessons. They use relevant artefacts and illustrations, making effective use of technology. For instance, pupils evaluate their musical instruments by listening to recordings of themselves playing them. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders achieve very well. They are making small but highly significant steps in learning. For example, they are beginning to understand the stages they must follow when making an instant dessert.
- 88 Pupils make less progress than they should in a minority of lessons. This is sometimes because there are insufficient teaching or auxiliary staff to support pupils with their work. The quality of teaching is good but there is a small minority of unsatisfactory teaching. Here, the teacher's planning and behaviour management strategies are not sufficiently effective to promote pupils' learning. The methods used to determine pupils' ideas are not stimulating enough, and pupils are not motivated. They lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates. Consequently, they do not make satisfactory progress. Teaching is most effective when teachers plan very thoroughly and lessons are stimulating, with changes of activity to add to pupils' knowledge and retain their interest. Pupils become absorbed in the work and this consolidates their very good behaviour.
- 89 The school has improved the provision for design and technology significantly since the previous inspection, and consequently pupils make much better progress. Planning documents now give useful guidance to teachers, and pupils' progress is reported effectively.
- 90 The recently appointed coordinator has already had a very positive impact in promoting improvements in the provision. The lack of sufficient teaching staff limits opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning, to raise standards further.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 91 Progress is good in both key stages and pupils achieve well. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to identify simple physical features in the school environment, locate them on plans, and recognise the symbol that goes with them. They explore their locality, choosing different routes to the shops and using symbols to show how they come to school. Pupils were delighted to see photographs of their own houses on the computer, and made good progress in their knowledge of different types of houses, using terms such as 'terrace' and 'semi-detached'. They were able to find the street they lived in on a town map and developed their appreciation of the functions and usefulness of maps.
- 92 During Key Stage 2, pupils build upon this early work, so that they can recognise the weather symbols for clouds, rain, sun and fog, and learn how the weather affects the clothes we wear. They experience the environment both in and out of school, developing their understanding and use of geographical language, such as 'hill' and 'road' and exploring natural materials found together such as sand and shells. During the inspection, the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 had carried out a detailed traffic survey and were plotting this on a graph. The teaching in this lesson was particularly good, in that the pupils were encouraged to use research skills to find out relevant data, to use the computer to record their results, and then to write letters - for example, to the police, sharing their findings.
- 93 Pupils' progress has improved, because the quality of teaching is now good, and there is a focus to the subject which was lacking at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning shows that they clearly identify the knowledge and skills they intend the pupils to learn. They organise suitable changes of activity which keep pupils' interest and reinforce their learning. Teachers and auxiliaries have realistic expectations of pupils and work well together supporting and praising them. The practical activities they plan help pupils to develop geographical understanding, particularly when they take place in the local environment. Pupils respond appropriately and enthusiastically to these activities, behaving well at all times.
- 94 Geography plays a significant role in the social development of pupils through the use of the local community. The co-ordinator is very new to the post, and has not yet been able to monitor the subject because of staffing constraints.

## **HISTORY**

- 95 Pupils make good progress and their achievement is good. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Often, the teacher's own enthusiasm motivates pupils to extend their knowledge and awareness. Because teachers are clear about developing pupils' understanding that history is 'time passing', most pupils acquire a sense of chronology. This enables them to sequence events in the school day, birthdays and past school events. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to use simple words and phrases relating to the passage of time - for example, the names of the days of the week. Pupils practise sequencing the events in their daily timetable, developing their appreciation of time in a practical way that they can readily understand.
- 96 During Key Stage 2, pupils learn about events in the more distant past. For example, they develop an awareness of the life and achievements of the ancient Greeks. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils can use a range of sources to investigate aspects of the period studied, such as photographs of ancient Greek buildings and vases, because the teacher encourages them to work independently. They can use appropriate terms relating to the passing of time - for example, 'ancient' and 'modern'. Pupils can accurately place some events on a time line. They know that the food of the ancient Greeks has some similarities and some differences to the food of today. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to take part in practical activities, such as making a collage of a Saxon warrior, using simulated fur for his costume. This helps pupils to understand and remember what they are learning about. Well chosen visits make

effective contributions to pupils' progress – for example, to the Saxon museum in Hartlepool. In one of the classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, pupils made good progress when they took part in role play, explaining about the Fire of London, and comparing the fire fighting techniques with those of today. They considered houses of 1666 and modern houses, and could explain why those in the past would burn more easily, because they were made out of wood.

- 97 Since the previous inspection, the provision has improved. This is largely because the subject is taught separately, rather than as part of an integrated topic, and so teachers are clearer about what they want pupils to learn. Resources for learning have improved, and there is now a variety of artefacts to support the history curriculum.
- 98 The history co-ordinator is relatively new to the post, but has already made a positive impact, by increasing the resources and artefacts available, and by offering advice and guidance to teachers. The co-ordinator does not yet have time to monitor history teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

- 99 Pupils throughout the school make good progress and they achieve well. This is because the quality of teaching is good and the school has high quality equipment in a room dedicated to teaching the subject.
- 100 During Key Stage 1, pupils develop their skills in using the mouse and the keyboard. They learn to select tools, to draw pictures, and colours, understanding that their choices determine the finished product. This encourages them to experiment with colours and to change fonts. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils demonstrate well developed skills in using the mouse to lift and drag icons, creating a picture. They insert text to write their name, showing increasing understanding that they can change the style of their writing. Pupils achieve less than they should in a minority of lessons, when there are insufficient teachers and support staff to support pupils' learning. Here, the pupils are keen to learn but have to wait too long for support.
- 101 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use computers to create work in the style of a famous artist. They are highly motivated by their success in guiding the mouse to draw shapes and very pleased when they select an icon to fill the shape with colour. They gain significantly in self-esteem when they compare their completed pictures with a Jackson Pollock painting. Pupils select and apply finishes, such as filling in shapes and backgrounds, demonstrating greater control in using the mouse and remembering the symbols on the screen. They concentrate hard on the screen, trying to discover why the background colour has penetrated their shapes. By talking together, they realise that they have left a gap in their shape and need to close it. In this lesson, the expertise of the teacher and support staff had a significantly positive effect upon promoting pupils' progress. The pupils learned very effectively because staff gave them responsibility for using controls and devices. This had the effect of raising pupils' awareness that they can make decisions and choices for themselves. One outcome observed was that pupils could choose original ways to colour the background of their computer pictures by providing a patterned or a spray effect. Teachers and auxiliaries provided very good role models for pupils by giving support and advice, yet encouraging independence. This encouraged the pupils to be alert to helping each other, giving each other ideas, promoting their interest and self esteem further. Lower attaining pupils make the same progress as others because they receive good support and tasks are matched to their needs. They show an increasing understanding that they can make changes to a character, such as a frog, on the computer screen by using the mouse or keyboard. They receive effective support to help them to make decisions – for example, choosing the action that the character will make.
- 102 Pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders make good progress during individual tuition. Their teachers plan tasks that are challenging but within their capabilities, allowing them to try for themselves and succeed, which provides further motivation. These pupils respond well to



opportunities to create pictures, showing creativity when they decide to add paint or change shapes. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties receive very good support, helping them to make their own responses using a switch. They begin to appreciate that a switch controls a light or sound. Pupils show interest in the source of sound, demonstrating an awareness of when the sound, such as music, starts and stops.

- 103 Teachers plan some very good examples of information and communications technology to support the curriculum. For example, pupils use computers to display graphs during a traffic survey, and to write their account of a visit for the class display. However, teachers do not plan consistently to use information communications technology to support other subjects and they sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce learning.
- 104 Although temporary, the current arrangements for leadership of the subject are good. The school has worked hard to improve standards in information and communications technology since the previous inspection and demonstrates a commitment to raise standards – for example, by improving further the quality of resources and staff expertise and, consequently, pupils’ progress. The school makes very good use of information and communications technology for management and administration, and this serves to raise staff awareness of the potential of new technology. Some classes have insufficient teaching and support staff and as a result the groups using the resources are too large for staff to provide sufficient support to meet the high expectations in the subject. The school uses the newly equipped computer room efficiently, and makes best use of its older equipment, although some of it is unreliable and restricts pupils’ opportunities when it fails to function.

## **MUSIC**

- 105 A limited number of music lessons were seen during the inspection, and it is not possible to judge pupils’ achievements and progress or the quality of teaching. However, teachers make good use of musical activities as part of learning experiences in a range of lessons and situations. Music plays an important part in motivating pupils to learn, especially in the development of their language and communication skills. Instrumental music or singing accompanies many literacy and numeracy activities and features prominently in personal and social education sessions, particularly in the nursery and in classes for pupils with the most severe learning difficulties. For example, in a class of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders, drums were used by pairs of pupils, to encourage their social interaction as well as to develop an appreciation of rhythm.
- 106 The music curriculum follows a published scheme of work, which, particularly through its accompanying recordings of appropriate music, enables non-specialist teachers to prepare and teach successful lessons. A good range of whole-school musical events and activities enriches the curriculum. A Christmas concert included opportunities for all pupils to perform - for example, songs by Abba and very spirited excerpts from the musical ‘Grease’. A Music Day, and visits from a variety of professional musicians and others from local schools contribute to pupils’ progress and their cultural development.
- 107 The appointment of a co-ordinator and the introduction of the scheme of work have led to improvements in the subject since the previous inspection. The resources for music are good, particularly the range of musical instruments, which the pupils enjoy playing. The role of the coordinator is restricted by the lack of time during the school day to monitor and support the work of other teachers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 108 Pupils make good progress. The good quality teaching in physical education enables pupils with a wide range of abilities are enabled to learn skills at their own pace within whole-group lessons

to achieve well in both key stages. This is because teachers plan and organise lessons very effectively.

- 109 At both key stages, most pupils show an improvement in their physical skills as a result of practise during the lessons. This is because the teachers give very clear instructions and demonstrations and plan their lessons to enable pupils to develop their skills through a series of fine steps. They sensitively assess and correct pupils' skills, and give immediate praise and encouragement. This means that pupils enjoy their physical education lessons, taking part with enthusiasm and excitement. A good learning environment is established through firm management of pupils in the gymnasium. Pupils behave well, because their interest in lessons is captivated and maintained by the interesting and challenging range of activities provided by their teachers.
- 110 Pupils are successful in a good range of skills, at their own level of ability. For example, during the inspection pupils improved their skills of throwing, catching, kicking and bouncing beanbags and balls. Pupils' progress is enhanced by their ability to work well together in pairs or small groups, and because they encourage each other to succeed. Lower attaining pupils improve their individual movement and agility skills. The teaching staff have very high expectations of all pupils and consistently motivate them to try their best to succeed. Pupils are learning to appreciate the benefits of exercise, because teachers remind them and check their understanding, through questions.
- 111 In swimming, pupils in both key stages make similarly good progress. For example, some progress from standing in the water, to moving around the pool wearing arm bands, and from floating with a buoyancy aid, to swimming independently. They are able to do this because staff work hard to develop pupils' confidence as well as their skills. Certificates of achievement are provided to acknowledge significant success, and these help to motivate pupils further.
- 112 Higher attaining pupils with autism are able to move around the hall in different ways, such as hopping and skipping. They make good progress in their ability to roll balls and to hit them with bats, because the teacher gives clear instructions and knows the pupils' individual needs very well.
- 113 The accommodation for physical education, which includes a hydrotherapy pool, ball pool and soft-play area, and an outside playing field, is very good for the age range of the pupils. The good range of resources for physical education lessons is supplemented by some helpful sponsorship. For example, a good relationship with the local professional football team involves members providing activities for some classes each week.
- 114 The high standard of pupil achievement in physical education reported at the previous inspection has been maintained. The overall planning of the subject has been improved by the provision of a detailed scheme of work. The leadership and management of the subject is restricted by the lack of time available outside of teaching commitments for the co-ordinator to properly monitor and support teaching.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 115 It is not possible to make firm judgements about pupils' progress and achievement, or the quality of teaching as it was only possible to observe one lesson. However, it is clear that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. During Key Stage 1, they begin to appreciate that there are different a number of religions in the world. They are able to understand this because teachers plan activities that are appropriate for the age of the pupils and their levels of understanding. For example, when learning about the Jewish festival of Hannukah, the pupils handled religious artefacts and prepared and tasted traditional foods.

- 116 Lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate enjoyment, particularly when they sing or listen to songs, and convey their feelings through their body movements and their facial expressions. They develop their ability to reflect on their day, making thoughtful responses to questions and respecting other children's views. Higher attaining pupils made good progress in a lesson during which they learned more about Jesus' miracles and teachings. They showed a well developed ability to reflect on their own lives and to identify how they could show their love for others – for example, by playing with younger brothers and sisters or caring for friends. The lesson was so successful because the teacher managed the group discussion so effectively, first by establishing an environment in which pupils felt comfortable to share their feelings, and then by reinforcing, valuing and praising their responses.
- 117 The school has made good improvements to the subject since the last inspection. The curriculum has developed and is based appropriately on the local education authority's agreed syllabus and materials. Subject leadership is good, and a suitable scheme of work has been implemented. However, effective procedures for monitoring subject teaching are not yet in place.