

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mill Lane, Whitburn, Nr Sunderland

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108687

Headteacher: Mr M Byrne

Reporting inspector: Mrs Margaret Hulme
OIN: 3609

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th January 2000

Inspection number: 191317

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Lane Whitburn Nr Sunderland
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Edward Chandler
Date of previous inspection:	20 January 1997

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Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Margaret Hulme	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children under five	1.What sort of school is it?.
		Religious education History	7. How well is the school led and managed
		Co-ordination of under-fives	8. What should the school do to improve further
Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	Equality of opportunity	2.2 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		English as an additional language	5. How well does the school care for its pupils
			6.How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
James Barley	Team inspector	Science Information technology Music	2.1 The school's results and pupils' achievements
John Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education	4.How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Ann McAskie	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology	3.How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated at the edge of Whitburn village in the borough of South Tyneside. There is easy access to South Shields and Sunderland. It draws its children from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and a significant minority from a wider area than Whitburn and Marsden ward. The area is recognised as one that has its full share of socio-economic problems and more recently has been troubled with those associated with drug abuse. A population moving from the area to seek jobs has resulted in a falling roll. There is a demand for places from parents.

The school, with 204 pupils, is about the same size as the average sized primary school. The children are taught by 14 teachers, of whom one is the headteacher and four are part-time. The school is organised as eight classes for reception to Year 6 and in addition there is a nursery class. Nursery children enter school at the age of three years and usually spend a year until they move to the reception class at the age of 4 years. The majority of children's attainment on entry to the reception class is about the same as might be expected for their age and there is a small group of talented children as well as a significant minority of slower learners.

Most pupils are white and the school has no refugees or Traveller families. There are very few children who have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is 22 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average. There are 45 pupils (22 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals

The school's aims identify the emphasis they put on

- promoting high standards;
- valuing all individuals and their contributions;
- promoting honesty, trust and openness;
- working together with parents and the wider community;
- helping everyone to become life-long learners.

The school is concerned with developing pupils who can fit into society as useful citizens.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that promotes and sustains improvement in educational standards achieved and the quality of education provided. Action has been taken to improve standards, particularly mathematics and science. Generally, standards have been maintained in other subjects and there are already plans for further improvements to English and information technology. The teaching is much better than it was and is now good with a significant proportion of very good teaching. The leadership and management of the school are good: the headteacher and staff are very effectively supported by a governing body that has a strategic view of school developments. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- the teaching has improved and is now consistently good with over a third of very good teaching;
- the teaching of basic skills is very good and children learn to read well and learn about numbers;
- the very good and excellent teaching of mathematics has had a positive effect on the high standards;
- the provision for children under five is very good and there is good liaison between nursery and reception
- the very good relationships between teachers and pupils are a motivating factor in children's learning;
- curricular provision meets statutory requirements and additional activities at Key Stage 2 enhance subjects;
- children have very good attitudes to their work;
- pupils' behaviour is very good;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and work is well co-ordinated to ensure good progress;
- gifted and talented pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics;
- there are very good ways of promoting equality of access and opportunity for pupils;
- the school takes good care of its children;
- the links with parents contribute very effectively to the progress made by pupils;
- there is good leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff;
- the governing body fulfils its responsibilities very effectively;
- the children come willingly to school

What could be improved

- improve the standards in writing, as planned, particularly at Key Stage 2;
- extend the range of opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the teaching and learning at first-hand;
- make better use of new technology as already planned;
- extend current work for improving teacher performance by meeting the statutory requirements for appraisal when the Local Education Authority issues its policy and guidance;
- the marking of work needs greater consistency.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. In the last three years there have been many changes and considerable work has been undertaken to make good improvements and the school is now better than it was.

The senior management team has been extended and a greater range of expertise is being used in work parties that include governors and parents. This allows as much consultation as possible before any changes are made. There is now a wider understanding of the need for change and the expected benefits that should accrue from it.

The approach to school development planning has been changed and both staff and governors are now involved with the headteacher in determining priorities for future development. Teamwork is well established and everyone now has a good understanding of their management roles ensuring clear educational direction.

A staffing review together with some staff changes has enabled better use to be made of specific expertise. The appointment of a nursery teacher who co-ordinates the work of under-fives has resulted in better assessment of children at entry to school and reception stage, improved organisation and provision, extended knowledge of children and particularly effective involvement of parents in their children's learning. Improvements to the quality of teaching have resulted in more very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching.

There are more formal ways of monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and improved ways of assessing what pupils know, understand and can do. Assessment work relating to the analysis of test results has led to better ways of identifying and improving weaknesses. The school has worked hard to improve staff performance, receiving an 'Investors in People' award which was recently renewed. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now established and working well for literacy and numeracy but now needs extending to other subjects.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	D	E	D
mathematics	E	D	B	A
science	E	D	C	A

Key	
well above average	A B
above average	
average	C D
below average	
well below average	E

The performance of eleven-year-olds in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics and science has steadily improved when compared with all schools. The comparison with similar schools is based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and since this has been calculated as 22 per cent of the 204 pupils on roll, the results appear even better for these two subjects. However, English results have improved only this year and are still below average even when compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils below the average level is still too high and there are few attaining a higher level. No significant differences emerge between the results of boys compared with those of girls in English. The findings of this inspection show that standards have improved this year but work is still needed to improve writing skills.

Trends over time show that pupils' attainment at age 11, in comparison with national averages in all core subjects, was broadly in line with the national trend. However, the school is determined to raise standards further and is setting about the process in the right way. The school has negotiated realistic targets for future improvement based on their own detailed analysis of pupil progress. Those recommended for mathematics have been set higher than those identified by the local education authority

In lessons, strengths in English are reading and spelling with pupils reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. In mathematics, strengths include pupils with more confidence at tackling oral work and mental calculations – they are accurate and quicker than they were. In science pupils have a good knowledge of animal classification and the properties of materials but need more opportunities to record investigations. Standards for 11-year-olds in information technology have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Pupils have well-developed skills in word-processing, data handling and spread sheets but they need more opportunities for control technology and sensing activities. They are still awaiting computers to use the new technology. Although pupils have well developed mapping skills in geography, their knowledge of the names of important places is a weakness. In history, pupils have a well-developed sense of chronology but are not so good at understanding the different ways in which history is interpreted. Work of high quality was produced by older pupils in art and design and technology such as observational drawing and puppet making. In religious education, pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and have a growing understanding of the influence that religion has on people, their families and communities.

Pupils are generally making good progress in their achievements, including those with special educational needs, who are well supported in the classroom.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Enthusiastic pupils are keen to succeed and work diligently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous and show respect for adults. The very good behaviour allows pupils to work well in class.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good at all levels. Pupils show good co-operation, take care of equipment and willingly take responsibility for a variety of tasks.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Gradual improvements in attendance levels and zero level for unauthorised absence

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English is at least satisfactory but mainly good. At Key Stage 2 it is sometimes very good. There is a weakness in the planning of suitable independent writing tasks. Writing tasks did not always match the special needs targets in pupils' individual, education plans. The quality of teaching in mathematics is mainly very good. In this subject the weakness relates to the use of information technology to support the subject.

Particular strengths in teaching include: good subject knowledge; very good teaching of basic skills; effective planning with clear lesson objectives; appropriate expectations with challenging tasks; very good management and discipline; very good relationships; good use of on-going assessment, good use of support staff; effective use of resources; effective teaching methods; mainly good pace to lessons and good use of homework. Weaknesses include an inconsistent approach to the marking of work and occasional lack of pace to lessons.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well as teachers have the appropriate technical skill to do so. Teachers put an emphasis on using basic skills in other subjects, such as writing in history. Teachers are also seeking different ways of using numeracy skills.

A high priority is given to the need to ensure that the needs of all children are met and provision for this is very good. Appropriate adult support in class is provided for those with special educational needs and generally care is taken to plan work that is appropriate to the stage of learning. Withdrawal sessions are provided for children for whom English is an additional language and work done in those sessions is then reinforced in class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Broad and balanced. Very good provision for under-fives. Effective ways of teaching literacy and numeracy. Very good equality of access and opportunity
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision. Co-ordination is good and all at stages 3-5 have support from outside agencies.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Very few pupils but supported in class and some withdrawal work each week to monitor progress and reinforce learning. This good support is resulting in good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good. Particular emphasis at under-five stage. Worship contributes well to all aspects. Good development of self-esteem. Provision for moral and social development is a strength of the school and is reflected in the high standard of behaviour, enthusiasm and effort shown in lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff promote a caring attitude and are very vigilant. Excellent care for under-fives. The good monitoring identifies any weaknesses and enables appropriate support to be provided.

The partnership with parents is very good. It begins extremely well at the nursery stage and continues to the other stages, where parents have opportunities to support their children at home and school. It is making a significant contribution to children's learning.

Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils include an improved range of extra-curricular activities to enhance subjects for older pupils but not yet at Year 2. Year 6 have 'booster' lessons in literacy and numeracy. A good range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school extends the statutory curriculum. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.

Effective care for children includes very good procedures for child protection and in ensuring pupils' welfare. Particularly good procedures are used for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Vigilant monitoring of attendance is carried out by the headteacher, with good support from the education welfare officer.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. An extended senior management team has brought a fuller range of expertise to the fore. Good team working and clear direction for the work of the school, with the right tasks identified for the future.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effective, as governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Good monitoring and identification of weaknesses is leading to improvements in children's performance
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Good match of teachers and support staff to demands of curriculum. Specific grants used effectively, particularly for special educational needs

Overall, staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are adequate. There is good provision of teaching and support staff with a range of expertise and appropriate support for children where needed. A particularly good strategy has been the use of additional part-time staff to provide specialist expertise for some groups of pupils. There is limited accommodation for specialist teaching given the demands of such subjects as information and communications technology but it is just sufficient at present. A rolling programme of resource purchasing provides adequate equipment and materials for the teaching of most subjects but shortages have been identified in such subjects as geography and history at Key Stage 1. All resources for learning are used well.

Particular strengths in leadership and management include: a whole-school approach to school development planning; improved systems of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning; aims and values mirrored in its work; contributions of management staff; very good governor involvement in shaping the direction of the school; good action taken to meet school targets; a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. There are two weaknesses: - a lapse in teacher appraisal as governors are acting on advice of the local authority and awaiting their new policy; the effectiveness of the school's use of new technology is not as good as it might be as the school is still awaiting delivery of hardware and systems to link them to the Internet.

Governors take a keen interest in the school's performance, show interest in how this is perceived locally, make good use of assessment analysis, including comparisons with other local schools, target spending to improve standards, and seek parents' views about possible changes to curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best; • children make good progress; • behaviour is good; • the teaching is good; • the school is approachable; • children like school; • the school helps children become mature and responsible; • the school works closely with parents; • parents are kept well informed about their children's progress; • the school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the range of activities outside lessons; • a few parents would like to see more work done at home.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. The range of activities outside lessons has increased since the previous inspection but this is limited to Key Stage 2 pupils and needs extending to include those at Year 2. The school has a homework policy that is currently under review as part of the school's improvements to communication. The amount of homework required is similar to that of other primary schools, is consistent with government guidelines and is judged to be appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The previous report judged attainment to be satisfactory. Children under five were reaching an acceptable level for their age. In the core areas of English, mathematics and science, pupils were reaching average levels. In all other subjects attainment was what might be expected for their age with the exception of music, which was better, and information technology, which was unsatisfactory at Years 3 to 6 as pupils were still doing lower level work. The findings of this inspection show that standards have been at least maintained and in some subjects, such as mathematics, science and information technology, have improved. Gradual improvements are also being seen in such subjects as religious education for older pupils.
2. The attainment on entry is generally what might be expected for three-year-olds. Most children are still working towards the desirable learning outcomes as they move into the reception class. By the time they are five, the majority will have achieved an appropriate foundation for the National Curriculum, although a significant group of the youngest pupils in the class will still be acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills they need. About a fifth of the class will be working at the early stages of the National Curriculum and these are the older pupils who are just five.
3. By the age of seven most pupils have become confident readers. They have developed sufficient fluency, accuracy and understanding to enable them to read aloud with expression and to use books and worksheets effectively for written assignments. They show great enthusiasm for reading and are able to write simple stories and poems. The National Curriculum test results for 1999 show that attainment was broadly in line with all schools in reading and writing but was above average when compared with similar schools. The inspection evidence confirms these results. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
4. The attainment of seven-year-olds in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for mathematics was above average when compared with all schools and well above when compared with similar schools. Of particular significance was the 35 per cent of pupils who attained a higher than expected level. The results were similar to those of 1998 and the inspection evidence confirms that these standards are being maintained. The emphasis on numeracy, particularly the regular oral and mental work, has significantly improved the pupils' confidence with number and the speed of their work.
5. In science, teachers' assessments of seven-year-olds indicates that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level is only just below average but the proportion achieving the higher level is below average. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards are improving and that pupils are achieving in line with expectation, owing in the main to the very good work done by the co-ordinator in analysing test results and identifying weaknesses in the teaching programme. Pupils have a good knowledge of animal classification and are beginning to understand the food chain and the role of predators in that chain. They are able to distinguish between what is alive, what has never been alive and what is dead. They know that materials have different properties, which can be used for different purposes. Less developed is the ability to record investigations and more opportunities need to be made for this to happen.
6. By the time they are eleven the percentage of pupils reaching the accepted levels in English are well below average, with far too few reaching the higher level. When compared with similar schools the results are improved but still below average. However, evidence from the inspection indicates that standards for Year 6 this year are better than those indicated by the 1999 test results. The results of the analysis done by the co-ordinator have identified writing as an area of weakness and has established a strategic plan for its development. The effects of the National Literacy Strategy are also beginning to have a positive effect on standards.
7. Pupils read a wide range of both fiction and information books. Most read accurately and their understanding is obvious from the confident way they talk about their books. They learn to write

for an increasingly wide audience. Standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory and pupils listen well to stories and instructions.

8. The 1999 National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds in mathematics were well above average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. This is a marked improvement on the previous report where standards were adjudged to be broadly in line with national averages and on the results of the three previous years. The performance of girls in these tests was significantly better than boys but, evidence from lessons does not support this. However the school is addressing the evidence found during the analysis of the 1999 test which showed that boys made more careless mistakes than the girls. Another factor in the different achievements was the poor attendance of some boys at the voluntary booster lessons organised prior to the tests. The recent improvement in standards relates to better learning and recall of multiplication tables and number facts, understanding of place value and confidence in explaining how they have found an answer. These skills are being successfully applied to a wide range of mathematical problems.
9. Standards in science in Key Stage 2 have been rising for the last three years and are now broadly in line with national averages and are well above the average when compared with similar schools. The school is doing particularly well in helping more pupils achieve the higher levels. These results reflect closely the evidence from the inspection. The 1999 test results showed that boys are performing better than girls are but this is not a significant factor when the results over a period of years are analysed. The school is very vigilant about this in its own analysis.
10. The school has made a determined effort to ensure that pupils have good scientific knowledge and careful analysis of test results has guided them towards the weaknesses in pupils' knowledge. They now have very good knowledge of the human body and of the life cycle of humans. Many understand the need for reducing variables to produce a test fair but this is not always as evident as it should be. Pupils have good understanding of conductors and insulators of electricity.
11. Although it was not possible to observe any lessons for information technology (IT), evidence from talking to pupils, from planning and from scrutiny of work indicates that standards across the school are broadly in line with expected levels. This maintains the standards at seven seen in the last inspection and is an improvement in standards for eleven-year-olds. By the time they leave the school pupils have become proficient in a range of information technology skills including word-processing, data handling and spreadsheets. The use of IT for control technology and for sensing is less well developed. IT is used well throughout the school to support learning in other subjects, including mathematics, history, geography, science and art.
12. At both key stages attainment in religious education is in line with the local agreed syllabus. Although only one lesson were seen at Key Stage 1 there was sufficient evidence to indicate that attainment was satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 attainment is better than might be expected for eleven year olds.
13. Only a few lessons were seen in history but other evidence indicates that attainment is satisfactory. In geography standards are satisfactory at seven and eleven. Pupils have a sound understanding of mapping skills but knowledge, particularly of names of important places, is a weakness.
14. Standards in physical education are satisfactory at seven and eleven. A significant minority attains good levels in games skills and gymnastics. Most are able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
15. In art very few lessons were seen but other evidence indicates that young pupils have the opportunity to experiment with a range of materials and that they can mix colours appropriately in their paintings of animals and flowers. Older pupils produce high quality observational drawings and have learned how to use perspective in drawings of buildings and in street scenes.
16. In design and technology there is insufficient evidence to make any judgements about Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 learning opportunities were good and pupils produced work of high

quality. Other evidence of the work of older pupils included examples of well-made glove and spoon puppets and Tudor houses.

17. Pupils make good progress in singing, which was the only element of music seen during the week of the inspection. Pupils sing with controlled enthusiasm and clarity of diction. They sing very tunefully and use appropriate expression in their voices to reflect the mood of the song.
18. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress towards their identified targets. Similarly, the one pupil who is identified as having English as an additional language has been well provided for. The pupil is well integrated into the life of the school and has made good progress.
19. The school has negotiated realistic targets with the LEA for future improvement which are based on the school's own detailed analysis of pupil progress and in the case of mathematics set higher targets than those identified by the local education authority.
20. The general trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects is broadly in line with the national trend but the school is determined to raise standards even further and is setting about the process in the right way. The detailed analysis of test results, the targeting of particular groups and an improvement in the teaching will almost certainly bring further improvements in standards

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. The previous report judged that pupils had positive attitudes to work, behaviour was good and the school was a harmonious community. This continues to be the case.
22. At the under-five stage the personal and social area of learning is a priority as it forms the foundation for every other area of learning. Each day in the nursery there is a range of activities that make children interested, excited and motivated to learn. This continues in the reception class. Children form very good relationships with adults and one another. They confidently try new activities, initiate ideas and talk about what they are doing. They understand what is right, what is wrong and why. They are happy to work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly. Activities such as visiting the local church helps their understanding about people having different needs, views and beliefs which need to be treated with respect.
23. Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils' attitudes to work are very good and almost all pupils are enthusiastic and get on with their work diligently. They listen carefully to instructions and are keen to succeed. During lessons and in discussions they enjoy explaining about their work. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school and there is no unauthorised absence. Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average.
24. Most pupils behave very well in the classroom as well as around the school and the playground. They are courteous and show respect to adults and their surroundings. Only rarely are there minor lapses and these are dealt with effectively. The pupils themselves say that the school is a friendly place to be.
25. Pupils' personal development is very good. In the early years their social skills and confidence begin to grow; they can dress themselves and take personal responsibility for their books and equipment. As they progress through the school they are increasingly able to work co-operatively with their peers. They have the confidence to ask questions, explain their point of view and demonstrate in front of the class. A wide range of duties is willingly undertaken in the classroom, before school and during the lunch break. Older pupils are particularly helpful to teachers and take on wider responsibilities, such as assisting in the nursery and reception classes. The school frequently engages in fund-raising and this is both for the pupils' own benefit as well as for many charities. Older pupils are increasingly involved in agreeing their own personal targets for development and by the time they leave the school, they are suitably prepared for secondary education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. Teaching has shown considerable improvement since the last inspection. Confidence in teaching science and information and communication technology has grown, although staff development is still taking place to meet the increasing demands of the information technology curriculum. Co-ordinators are more actively involved in the monitoring of the curriculum through scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. Feedback from monitoring of lessons and improved use of assessment to inform planning have helped to improve teaching and raise standards .
27. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Inspection findings show that there are many strengths and few weaknesses. Over a third of the teaching was very good and none was unsatisfactory. Weaknesses are mainly related to planning suitable independent writing tasks, an area already identified by the school as its next priority for development. Minor weaknesses were found in the occasional pace of lessons and in the inconsistent marking of work.
28. In all classes teachers show good understanding of their subjects, through detailed planning which clearly identifies appropriate, precise learning objectives. These objectives are shared with pupils in the good quality introductions to lessons, which usually include a thorough revision of work done previously. Where teaching is particularly good the teachers' own enthusiasm makes pupils interested and excited, so that they are eager to learn. In a history lesson with Year 5 about Egyptian hieroglyphics, pupils were very attentive and asked interesting questions about writing, ink and the use of reeds. They then worked with concentration and produced work of high quality.
29. Teachers know their pupils well and carefully group them according to their needs. Instruction is clear and tasks are usually well matched to pupils' needs. Where possible, teachers mark work during lessons, giving useful feedback to pupils about how they can make their work better. They ensure that classrooms are well organised and resources readily available. This includes resources for information technology although sometimes, the equipment available could be used more efficiently. Support staff are fully aware of the aims of lessons and are given helpful notes to guide their work with groups of pupils. Teachers use questions very effectively to find out what pupils know and to make them think. In a Year 2 class, pupils had to look very closely at an illustration in their shared reading text in order to answer questions about the parts of the church. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk, tasks are challenging and pupils respond with enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils were finding from maps and globes how far Nazareth was from Jerusalem; Year 5 pupils became interested in the way animals behave to one another when asked what the implications would be of changing the animals in a fable they had been reading.
30. Teachers have worked hard to implement the national strategies and their planning for literacy and numeracy lessons is very thorough. Most lessons are organised to allow most pupils to keep up with the work and to complete the tasks in the time available. In mathematics, pupils are becoming very skilled in using a range of strategies for solving mental calculations that reflect the quality of teaching. Teachers use mathematical games to keep the pupils' interest. Activities are usually, but not always, well matched to pupils' needs and offer sufficient challenge. In a Year 2 class, higher attaining pupils were challenged to find their own methods of subtracting from a £1 using a number line.
31. In literacy lessons, teachers use a variety of interesting texts which pupils enjoy. They teach basic skills well. This is evident in the confidence with which young pupils use phonic knowledge to help in reading and spelling new words and older pupils use punctuation to help them read with expression. However, creative writing tasks prepared for independent work in the literacy hour do not always support the learning objective set for the lesson sufficiently well and consequently work produced is incomplete or pupils do not achieve their learning targets. This is particularly so in Years 3 - 6.
32. Teachers identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage and they receive good quality specialist teaching from the special educational needs co-ordinator, who keeps detailed records of their progress. She has recently introduced a notebook of pupils' learning activities and achievements that the class teacher also uses. This improved communication is helping to ensure that learning targets for these pupils are met and that they are making good progress.

33. Teachers make good use of the plenary sessions at the end of literacy and numeracy lessons to assess achievement and to celebrate pupils' successes. They expect pupils to use the correct technical vocabulary when explaining what they have been doing. This was seen in a Year 3 class where pupils had the opportunities to share rules and methods learned in solving number problems. Teachers are now using these reviews effectively in other subjects. After a Year 3 lesson, in which pupils had designed Anglo-Saxon brooches, the class discussed which materials they would need for the next lesson and decided who would be responsible for bringing them to school. In a science lesson with Year 4 pupils, the teacher intervened to question whether tests were fair, and pupils modified the techniques and achieved better results the second time round. The teacher effectively followed up this work at the end of the lesson by using pupils' findings to explain how variables need to be controlled in a fair test. Information from the plenary sessions is used well to plan further work and to provide relevant homework.
34. The very good relationships and management of pupils continue to be a strength of the school and contribute significantly to the pupils' learning. Teachers know their pupils very well and have a sensitive approach to their needs. This allows teachers to be challenging without being threatening, when asking individual pupils difficult questions in mental arithmetic or their opinions of characters in books.

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

35. The school curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities for learning that meet the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all its pupils. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and those of the local agreed syllabus for teaching religious education. There are stimulating activities, in and out of doors, for children under five. Their curriculum is already covering all the national early learning goals before they become part of the new foundation curriculum later in the year. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, with well-targeted individual educational plans which enable pupils to make good progress. The school is providing equally well for the one child who has English as an additional language. There are effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which is particularly evident in the precise identification of learning objectives for lessons.
36. The school provides good support for learning outside the school day. Homework is used to consolidate and extend work in lessons and is particularly effective in supporting the learning of basic skills in reading, writing and number. The school organises 'booster' classes out of school for its Year 6 pupils that concentrate on improving their literacy and numeracy skills. In 1999 these classes were aimed at improving number skills and had a positive impact upon the school's results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, which were considerably better than in previous years. The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities which include netball, basketball, swimming, rugby, football, quick cricket, and guitar lessons. The school participates in dance festivals and provides opportunities for drama in school concert productions. However, at present there are no additional activities to enhance the curriculum for younger pupils.
37. The school helps pupils take advantage of opportunities to learn through visits, visitors to the school and links with the local community. A residential week is organised for older pupils at Hexham and all pupils go on at least one educational visit each school year. These include a local farm, St. Bede's Monastery, the nearby Roman Fort and Whitburn lighthouse. The school holds its carol concert in the church, has connections with the local history society and participates in the annual village festival. It is currently being supported by the Tilcon Quarry Company in its millennium time capsule project that will offer opportunities to learn about industry. Visitors to the school include authors, the police, the fire brigade, the ambulance service and the nurse, all of who provide learning opportunities in addition to the statutory planning.
38. The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. It ensures that there is full access to all subjects and that all pupils benefit, according to need, from what the school provides. There is a careful match of work and both girls and boys take part in the range of extra-curricular activities provided for Years 3 to 6. The school has analysed why the

performance of girls was better than boys in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for mathematics and have found justifiable reasons which do not compromise its very good attention to equality of opportunity. A significant number of boys did not take full advantage of the voluntary 'booster' lessons after school and, in the test, made simple errors through not reading the questions carefully enough. This is now receiving attention.

39. The school makes good provision for the personal and social education appropriate to the ages and needs of its pupils. As part of the health education programme there is work on sex education and children are made aware of the misuse of drugs. There are constructive links with other primary schools through participation in sport and festivals and pupils are involved in events with the comprehensive school to which they transfer at eleven, during the summer term
40. Good provision is made for pupils to develop spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. The daily act of worship is a special time during which pupils are encouraged to explore questions about themselves, their family and friends and their place in the school community. It includes a chance to listen to carefully chosen music, reflect, pray, take part in stories and share thoughts on themes such as love, happiness, sadness and forgiveness. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem by showing things they have been done at home and items linked to special moments in their lives. The support for charities for the blind, the aged and lepers enables them to reflect on the lives of those less fortunate than themselves.
41. Pupils are taught about their own culture through studies of the local environment, links with the church and the village's annual festival. They learn to appreciate the cultural traditions of the North East such as those connected with the coal industry and the Jarrow march and how the local culture has been influenced by the Romans and Vikings. The richness of their language is recognised through visits by writers such as Tom Bradman and Alan Gibbons. An appreciation of the diversity of other cultures is taught in religious education through the study of the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh faiths and music such as calypsos. Older pupils are made aware of the multi-cultural nature of the Britain's society by participation in projects such as "Let's kick racialism out of football".
42. The provision for moral and social education is very good and is a strength of the school. It is reflected in the high standard of behaviour, enthusiasm, effort and interest shown by pupils in their lessons and by the sensible demeanour they display outside the classroom. The school works extremely hard to fulfill its mission statement of valuing everyone as individuals and the contribution they make towards the school community. Pupils clearly distinguish right from wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and accept that rules are an essential part of living together. They show initiative when acting as team captains, monitors, organising fund raising events for projects such as the Blue Peter Leprosy Appeal and good levels of maturity when working together.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school cares for the physical and emotional needs of its pupils very well. The child protection procedures have recently been reviewed and there are detailed procedures in place to ensure that all the related matters of health and safety, medicines and first aid, risk assessments, fire drills and precautions are dealt with to very high standards. Arrangements for the support of pupils with special needs are very thorough. All staff are good role models and promote a caring attitude amongst pupils resulting in relationships that are very good at all levels.
44. There is an effective behaviour policy and staff work hard to discourage all forms of unacceptable behaviour. The rules or code of behaviour are displayed in many parts of the school and pupils understand what is expected of them. The importance of regular attendance is emphasised to both pupils and parents and everyone is responding well.
45. Assessment arrangements have improved since the last inspection and a new policy is about to be presented to the governing body. The monitoring of pupils' performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, is good and several initiatives are using the data collected to set individual targets and predict outcomes. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements and also include targets for improvement. Ongoing assessment is carried out during lessons and this is frequently used to modify or develop the planning for the next

lessons. Pupils' are known well as individuals and the information about their academic and personal development ensures prompt support from teachers and other professionals, whenever it is needed. The headteacher monitors attendance personally and follows up absences. This, together with the close liaison with the education welfare service, ensures that any absence is owing to illness or parental holidays.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school works at partnership with parents very effectively. Parents and carers have very high opinions of the school. Through the questionnaires, parents' meeting and during the inspection week, they have made their views known. They are satisfied with standards achieved; they feel able to approach the school with problems; they support the homework policy; they praise the commitment of the staff.
47. Parents of all children entering the nursery and reception classes have a series of induction meetings where the routines are explained. Thereafter, the school provides a comprehensive range of information to parents based on regular newsletters, termly parent consultations, clear and informative annual reports on pupils. Informal contact with teachers is encouraged and many parents, particularly in the nursery, reception and Year 1 and 2 classes, do so daily. Parents of children with problems or special educational needs are well informed about progress and contribute to periodic reviews. In the parental questionnaires 93 per cent of the parents who responded feel that the school works closely with them and they are well informed about their children's progress.
48. Parents make a very significant contribution to their children's education. A good number work alongside teachers in the classroom, helping with a variety of activities. Many help on visits and all have the opportunity to support the school's homework policy. Of particular note are the efforts being made by parents of pupils in the reception class, who are working alongside their children to understand how numeracy is taught. They then use this knowledge to reinforce at home what children have learned in school. There is a very active parent teacher association and the funds raised go directly into resources for use in the classroom. They also organise many social activities, bringing together the staff, pupils and parents as a community. Parents also become involved in the wider issues of school management and development. Some take part in the working parties of the governing body and have been consulted on such initiatives as the home-school agreement, safe routes to school, the pattern of the school day and, the introduction of the school uniform.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Since the previous inspection the headteacher and key staff have been very involved in managing change to improve the school, including building a team that is fully involved in all school development.
50. The senior management team was smaller then than it is now and the present group brings a range of expertise and experiences from which the whole school benefits. This greater range of expertise is being used in working groups that include governors and parents to allow as much consultation as possible before any changes are made. There is now a wider understanding of the need for change and the expected benefits that should result from it. The approach to school development planning has been changed and both staff and governors are now involved with the headteacher in determining priorities for future development. Teamwork is well established and everyone now has a good understanding of their management roles and all work together in providing clear educational direction.
51. The headteacher provides good leadership. His presence around the school ensures smooth running from day to day. He is frequently involved in teaching and takes his share of curricular co-ordination. He has very good relationships with the governing body and involves them fully in the work of the school so that they are able to make informed decisions. His management of the staff is sensitive and promotes professional development.
52. Despite the fact that appraisal has lapsed, owing to decisions by the local authority to put a hold on practice while they are awaiting guidance on performance management, another strategy

has been found. The school has won an award for 'Investors in People' that necessitates provision for staff training and support. Therefore practice is better than it might have been.

53. Time is made for each co-ordinator to manage the subjects for which they are responsible and in so doing they are assisting the headteacher in providing a firm steer to the work of the school. The largely informal monitoring systems used at the previous inspection have now gone and a more rigorous style is developing. The monitoring of curricular planning, coverage of Programmes of Study to meet statutory requirements, review of policies and establishing schemes of work are well in place. Written work in the core subjects has been scrutinised and the senior management team is leading an initiative to scrutinise written work in other subjects. The monitoring of teaching and learning has worked well for literacy and numeracy but it now needs extending to other subjects and teachers are eager to do it. The monitoring records show that the feedback to teachers has brought about improvements and teachers are keen to learn from expertise outside their school too.
54. The governing body has much more involvement in the management of the school than it did at the last inspection. Several changes to the governing body has brought in those with the expertise needed to manage change. Their sensitive handling of suggestions and concerns resulted in such initiatives as communication improvement. They see themselves as the school's 'critical friend' but emphasise the need to undertake it in a non-threatening way. Governors value their involvement in the school development planning and management of resources, fulfilling their responsibilities and consulting widely for staff views. Governors have a strategic view of school development and their procedures enable them to fulfil responsibilities for strategic planning. Governors have curricular responsibilities and know what is happening. Some governors meet regularly with teachers, to discuss such aspects as special educational needs and draw the attention of the main body to any concerns or successes. They contributed to the forming of aims and ensure that they are reviewed regularly as part of the development cycle. They are unhappy about the lapse of appraisal but have gone along with the guidance from the local authority and are aware of how staff needs are being met.
55. Since the last inspection considerable work has gone into analysing the results of assessments. This analysis is enabling the school to produce individual and school targets. Governors have introduced a policy and target setting committee. The analysis has influenced future planning. Improved assessment at the under-five stage has enabled the early identification of weaknesses that can be remedied. The use of funds to start 'booster classes' to improve standards has worked well for girls, who attended well, but boys' attendance dropped off and was reflected in results. The better performance of girls has resulted in a further development. A group of talented children has benefited from the decision to have additional part-time teaching in mathematics.
56. Teachers and support staff match curricular needs and additional part-time staff are used regularly to provide particular expertise that will enable improved standards or better quality of education. For example, the expertise of a musician to improve singing is being well used and an experienced teacher to take over the Year 3 class for one half day each week allows the special needs co-ordinator time to work with those pupils and assess their progress. There is effective induction of new staff and the school is used by students in teacher training from time to time.
57. Generally, the accommodation allows for effective teaching, but space for specialist areas is limited. There is a well-used library but it is the only additional space available and it will need to be re-sited when the information technology suite is up and running. It is just satisfactory at present.
58. The school is keen to make effective use of information and communications technology. Standards have been improved for older pupils since the last inspection and they are now satisfactory but more needs to be done. The use of new technologies is unsatisfactory at present as the school lacks some necessary equipment. However, the school is within the framework of the National Grid for Learning and is waiting to receive computers and a link to the Internet. There are generally adequate resources for other subjects but co-ordinators have identified some shortages in a few subjects at Key Stage 1, such as maps for geography and artefacts for history.

59. The budget reflects the objectives identified in the school development plan and the school's aims. Financial decisions are made as a result of process of audit and prioritisation. Financial administration is efficient. Grants for specific purposes such as special educational needs are used well to provide additional adult support in classes, some learning resources and advice from outside agencies. The governing body shows an awareness of best value principles by taking a keen interest in the school's performance, showing interest about how it is perceived locally, making good use of assessment analysis, including comparisons with other schools, targeting its spending to bring about improvements to standards and seeking parents' views about some possible changes to the curriculum. The headteacher and staff regard the governing body as dynamic, very involved and supportive. Their contributions are an effective part of the leadership and management of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. **The school should now:**

- improve the standards in writing, as planned, particularly at Key Stage 2; *(paragraphs: 6, 27, 31, 76, 77, 83)*
- extend the range of opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the teaching and learning at first-hand; *(paragraphs: 53, 105, 108, 119, 124)*
- make better use of new technology as already planned; *(paragraphs: 26, 58, 124)*
- develop a consistent approach to the marking of work to mirror the good practice that exists; *(paragraph: 29)*
- extend current work for improving staff development and teacher performance by meeting the statutory requirements for appraisal when the Local Education Authority issues its policy and guidance; *(paragraph: 52)*

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	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	36	39	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	204
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	no FT pupils	45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		45

English as an additional language

	No of pupils	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	23	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (84)	86 (81)	90 (90)
	National	82 (80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	13	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	22	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (84)	90 (90)	86 (94)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	19	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	10
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	19	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (56)	73 (47)	73 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	10	10
	Girls	10	10	7
	Total	16	20	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (56)	67 (56)	57 (59)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5
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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 of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	347,087
Total expenditure	342,519
Expenditure per pupil	1,502
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,666
Balance carried forward to next year	12,234

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	35	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	58	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	14	3	1
The teaching is good.	66	32	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	39	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	50	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	38	7	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	45	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	32	15	8	14

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

61. Children enter the school at the age of three and are in the nursery for a year before transferring to the reception class at the age of four. In the nursery children make good progress and are working towards the desirable learning they need for the foundation stage. On entry to the reception class, the children still have a wide range of knowledge and skills but the attainment of the majority is broadly what would be expected for their age with a small group of brighter children and a significant group of slower learners.
62. The foundation curriculum is organised in six areas of learning that enables teachers to plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop many competences, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.
63. The personal and social area of learning is a priority as it forms the foundation for every other area of learning. Each day in the nursery there is a range of activities that make children interested, excited and motivated to learn. This continues in the reception class. They form very good relationships with adults and one another. By the end of the nursery year most children can maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. The organisation of the nursery enables children to select and use activities independently. This is built on at reception stage. By the end of the reception year children confidently try new activities, initiate ideas and talk about what they are doing. They are developing an awareness of their own needs and feelings and becoming sensitive to those of others. They understand what is right, what is wrong and why. They are happy to work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly. Activities such as visiting the local church to baptise their teddies help their understanding about people having different needs, views and beliefs which need to be treated with respect. Good standards are achieved and children are well on course to reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. There is a small group of children who will do this earlier.
64. In the language and literacy area of learning, nursery children enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language and use it in their play. They make imaginative stories as they use small world toys to play in the sand or dress up and take different roles in the home corner. In the reception class this progresses to play in a hospital where they diagnose ailments in their roles as doctors and nurses, measure height, weigh babies and write prescriptions and ward notes. The children see themselves as writers and understand it has a purpose. Some still only make marks but older reception children copy letters accurately and make a list. The book corner is popular and children retell a story in sequence, speaking clearly and confidently. A small group of mainly older children in the class are interested in books with simple sentences that they try to read and one child reads exceptionally well for his age. As they sit in the large class group they listen attentively and respond to what they have heard with sensible comments or questions. Literacy sessions have been introduced and children use terms such as *author*, *title*, *cover*, *page* and *illustrator* with confidence. They enjoy the big book sessions and are learning to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding letters of the alphabet. They apply their knowledge to such games as the sound bag where they match objects to letter sounds and then to the printed word. The majority of children recognise and write their own name although some still need support. Most can hold a pencil effectively to form recognisable letters and use this skill in other activities, when, for example using their sense of smell to list what they have discovered. A small group of talented pupils write a sentence to convey meaning. They have made a first reading book and ordered words independently to make sentences. About two-thirds of the reception class will achieve the expected goals by the end of the year but others will still need support.
65. In mathematics, the nursery children willingly take part in number rhymes and jingles, and are learning to count everyday objects reliably. They use mathematical language such as *more*, *less*, *greater* and *smaller* to compare two quantities or numbers. They observe patterns and try to repeat them. By reception stage, children are engaged in longer numeracy sessions and oral work emphasises counting. Children understand that counting can start with any number. When practising the basic processes of simple addition, those less confident are encouraged by the teacher's use of a puppet and find they can correct the addition when the puppet gets it

wrong. There are lots of number games and practical activities to help children acquire numeracy skills. The majority of children are on line to achieve the early learning goals for mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1.

66. In the area of learning known as knowledge and understanding of the world, children are developing the skills, knowledge and understanding that help them make sense of the world. At this stage the activities lay the foundation for later work in science, history, geography, design and technology and information technology. Children talk about what they do at home. They respond to photographs of themselves in church, explaining what happened in the recent past. They join the pieces of a jigsaw and make objects by choosing materials. At reception stage, pupils learn about their senses and how they are used to be aware of the world. They talk about the weather and record it. They use malleable material such as dough and learn how to manipulate it with tools. Children gain control of tools for sticking objects together and learn to use a stapler or adhesive tape for the purpose of joining materials. They explore and observe as they use binoculars or the kaleidoscope. A few children experiment with the computer in the nursery and are learning that the mouse helps them move things on the screen. At reception stage, pupils use the computer for graphic work. They show improving skills in controlling the mouse as they click on the screen pencil, select a colour and draw a snowman using the *teddy* sticker on the keyboard. Children are well on line to achieve the early learning goals by Year 1.
67. In the physical development area of learning children are progressing rapidly and their achievement is better than might be expected for their age. They engage in physical activities indoors and out. They use the outdoor equipment safely and confidently. They run, jump, climb and balance. Most children change their clothes for physical activity with the minimum of fuss. When in the hall, they move with good control and co-ordination, travelling over balancing and climbing equipment. They understand the need for a warm up activity and for cool down at the end. They show a good awareness of space and use it sensibly. Indoors most children use tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with considerable control. They are achieving the early learning goals already and their work in the hall is at the early National curriculum levels.
68. In the creative development area of learning children explore sounds by making them themselves with percussion and are beginning to make patterns. They have favourite songs and rhymes and comment on everyday sounds such as the ambulance passing by the school with siren sounding. They make music using loud and quiet sounds and are beginning to follow hand gestures of loud, quiet and soft to communicate meaning. They recognise some colours and many children associate colour with everyday objects such as the fruit they eat at snack time. They paint to communicate meaning. They use their imagination in role-play and stories. Children are on line to achieve the desirable learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.
69. At the previous inspection attainment was judged to be appropriate for children under five but there was no nursery teacher and the progress of more able children was not as good as it might have been. There are no such problems now. Children experience a range of very good quality activities appropriate to each stage of learning and the adult input is particularly good, enabling children to achieve the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to start the National Curriculum. A few will not have achieved all the skills but most will and a significant minority are at that stage already. The foundation stage is now a strength of the school
70. The quality of teaching for children under five is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers have a very secure knowledge and what children need to know, understand and do to attain a foundation ready for the National Curriculum and this is used well when planning for activities and assessing children's progress. Teachers plan opportunities that enable children to become valued members of their group so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted. Teamwork is excellent between the teachers and nursery nurses and all are involved in the planning and teaching. Sessions are well planned with clear learning objectives and assessments are planned into the daily lessons. Relationships are very good, which is a motivating force for children's learning. Very good efforts are made to involve parents in their children's learning, particularly numeracy.
71. The new nursery teacher who is the under-fives co-ordinator is having a positive impact on the standards being achieved. There is better organisation and provision. A draft policy is being discussed by the under-fives team. The new curriculum for children under five is already in place and due attention is given to both the literacy and numeracy strategies. Assessment has

been improved to identify weakness early and action is taken to remedy it. For example, assessments revealed weakness in speaking and listening skills and the action taken has led to improvements. The work is monitored regularly. Homework has been introduced in the form of a toy library. Liaison between the nursery and reception class is now very good.

ENGLISH

72. By the time they are seven, children's standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are close to the national average. Standards in speaking and listening are just above those in writing. These findings broadly reflect the school's results in National Curriculum tests for 1999. Attainment is better, in both reading and writing, when compared with schools with pupils from a similar background. Although the number of pupils reaching the higher level is above average, there are still too few pupils reaching the average Level 2 in reading and writing. The school has analysed its test results and has targeted the achievement of this group of pupils.
73. At the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory and these standards, because they are well supported in class and their work is monitored by the special needs co-ordinator, have been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make good progress. The library now is fully functional and has an adequate stock of books. It is used on a regular basis for developing library skills.
74. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The good teaching produces seven year-olds who are confident readers. Most have developed sufficient fluency, accuracy and understanding to enable them to read aloud with expression and to effectively use books and worksheets for written assignments. Teachers choose texts that they know will capture the pupils' interest and the pupils respond by listening attentively and behaving well. A statement underlying the planning of a Year 2 teacher is 'enthusiasm is catching' and the effectiveness which she promotes this is plain to see. In a shared reading lesson about the Jolly Witch, pupils were fascinated by the way the witch commanded her tools to clean the house with the words 'Rise and Shine,' They decided that the witch was last in a broomstick race with other witches because she was fat and old and used their imaginations well to suggest ways in which she could win. From an early age pupils are taught about the layout of a book and to use the terms *fiction* and *non-fiction*. In a Year 1 class, pupils were comparing five books they had read about teddy bears and writing about the one that they liked best. Pupils' interest in bears had been stimulated by the class magic bear that goes on travels around the world and sends them postcards.
75. Good systematic teaching of phonic skills in Years 1 and 2 ensure that pupils have confidence when trying to read or spell new words. By seven they can spell simple words correctly from memory and the pupils of higher ability competently use simple dictionaries to help them spell more complicated words. Teachers plan appropriate work to test pupils' phonic understanding and provide some challenging writing activities; for example, in a Year 1 class pupils had to find four incidents from a story they had been reading.
76. Pupils write simple stories, letters and poems. The higher attainers write at length. The range of work seen suggests that pupils need more opportunities to develop their writing skills. Some of the worksheets used provide too little useful learning and involve pupils in unnecessary copying out of writing from the sheet. A new handwriting style is being successfully introduced in Years 1 and 2 and the work in handwriting books is of good quality. The skills they are developing are not always being well used in other written work. Some worksheets used for handwriting practice are not helping to improve the quality of writing. Pupils use computer programs to reinforce and consolidate their knowledge of the blending of letter sounds and to write stories and poems, especially in shared work.
77. At Year 6 the results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 were well below the national average and few pupils were reaching the higher Level 5. When compared with schools with pupils of similar background, the results were better but still below average. The findings of the inspection show that standards have improved this year, although there is still work to be done to improve writing skills.

78. At the last inspection, attainment was judged to be satisfactory. Although reading and spelling have been maintained, standards in writing are less good but the analysis has helped the school to see what needs to be done for improvement.
79. Teaching is at least satisfactory, and sometimes good or very good. Teachers plan, in detail, an interesting range of activities. Lessons are usually well organised and whole-class presentations, that involve question and answer sessions, are of a high standard. Emphasis is put on developing the pupils' vocabulary, especially the use of technical words in literacy. Most pupils read accurately and understand what they are reading. They talk confidently about the content of shared reading texts, stimulated by effective questioning from teachers. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils showed good understanding of the nature of a fable from a previous lesson and were very keen to answer questions. The teacher kept the pupils focused on relevant answers to her questions and this led to an interesting discussion on the place of fantasy in fiction and non-fiction texts.
80. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the very good relationships in classes. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour. They know their pupils very well and the sensitive approach to their needs, allows teachers to ask them challenging questions without being threatening; for example, helping a pupil with special educational needs who wants to answer a question but cannot find the right words. Occasionally classroom organisation leads to lack of concentration when pupils are grouped in such a way that some are unable to see the text being used. This is, in part, a resource problem that the school hopes to overcome in the near future. Also there are times when the teacher fails to engage all pupils in class discussion which allows the views and knowledge of a few pupils dominate the session.
81. Teachers provide a variety of opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills. Year 6 pupils are given personal targets for development in their written work. Through poetry, stories, and information in other lessons they are beginning to understand the difference between fact and opinion and to express points of view confidently. They show sympathy with other people's feelings and problems through letters written as a soldier in the First World War or a nurse in the Crimea. Pupils' work shows a thorough understanding of grammar and punctuation and of the way to structure a story.
82. The range and quantity of creative writing varied from year to year. Teachers in Year 4 and 6 provided more opportunities and also, through their marking, gave the best guidance on how to make work better. Pupils generally work with care and present it well. Handwriting skills should improve with the introduction of the new handwriting scheme. Although there are some examples of very good writing, too few pupils are achieving as well as they might. The tasks set are not always well focused to meet the learning objectives of the lesson. Consequently, work produced does not meet the pupils' learning targets. For example, in tasks designed for practising the use of adjectives to create mood or describe something in detail, the work pupils are given to do requires them to focus on too much and they forget the main purpose of the writing. This is particularly so for some average and slower learning pupils when the whole class write on the same subject. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use information technology skills on a regular basis; for example, plays written by Year 4 pupils about Red Riding Hood. The pupils then made puppets of the characters and performed a play for the nursery children. Displays around the school show examples of writing skills used in other subjects.
83. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor standards and progress. She has already identified writing as an area of weakness and has a strategic plan for future development. The National Literacy Strategy is fully implemented. The school's own evaluation of literacy by the co-ordinator and senior management team has identified strengths and weaknesses. Plans are in place to improve the latter. The school is beginning a programme of booster classes for Year 6 pupils which it is hoped will improve their performance as specific time will be made to deal with the writing problems for which there is insufficient time during literacy sessions.

MATHEMATICS

84. The attainment of seven-year-olds in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was well above average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. More than 30 per

cent of pupils attained a higher than expected level. These results were similar to 1998 and the inspection evidence confirms that these standards are being maintained. The 1999 results for eleven-year-olds were above the national average and well above average in comparison to similar schools. Almost 40 per cent of pupils attain a higher than expected level. This is a marked improvement on the three previous years when standards were below average. The present Year 6 is currently attaining these above average levels.

85. The performance of girls in the Key Stage 2 tests was significantly better than boys. However, the scrutiny of the current Year 6 work and observations during oral and mental work shows no marked difference in the standards boys and girls are achieving. The school is addressing the evidence found during the analysis of the 1999 tests which showed that boys made more careless mistakes than girls through not reading the questions carefully enough. Another factor was the poorer attendance of boys at the voluntary 'booster' lessons organised during the spring and summer terms of 1999.
86. There has been a significant improvement in standards since the last report, when attainment was judged as broadly average. Problem solving and investigative skills were highlighted as areas of weakness. Attainment in these is now good and pupils throughout the school show confidence when using their number skills to solve problems. In a Year 2 class, for example, pupils were observed applying their understanding of place value when counting money and recording it in decimal notation and a Year 5 class was successfully solving problems about sale prices and discounts by applying their knowledge and understanding of percentages.
87. The National Numeracy Framework has been successfully implemented. The greater emphasis on oral and mental work has resulted in better number skills and growing confidence and interest in mathematics. Most seven-year-olds can add and subtract two-digit numbers mentally using methods such as partition, place value, halving and doubling. They have good recall of 2, 5 and 10 times tables and use them in solving problems involving larger numbers. Eleven-year-olds understand how to use place value, rounding numbers up and down, and use inverse functions to find answers to problems and puzzles. They have good mental recall of number tables and metric measure. The numeracy lessons have been well used to improve vocabulary and pupils use a growing range of mathematical terms when explaining their methods of finding answers.
88. The above average attainment in number work is shown in the understanding of place value to 1000 by seven-year-olds, the division and multiplication of large numbers by two-digit figures and the understanding of negative numbers by eleven year olds. In shape, space and measure Year 2 pupils know the names and some of the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, understand how to measure using standard and non-standard units and the meaning of estimating.
89. Year 6 pupils know the names and size of angles such as acute and obtuse and can make sensible estimations of a range of measures such as *metre*, *kilometre*, *kilogram* and *litre* in relation to everyday situations.
90. Pupils in all classes show good skills and understanding when compiling and interpreting graphs. Other areas of the curriculum contribute towards the teaching of numeracy - for example, in science when graphing the number of calories needed for a balanced diet and recording the stopping distances of model cars; in history, time lines and direction; and coordinates in geography.
91. The quality of teaching is very good and this results in well above average standards in pupils' learning, attitudes, behaviour and interest. The good pace of lessons with opportunities for pupils to answer questions and explain their thinking fosters enthusiasm and develops confidence. The very good teaching of basic skills is evident in the methods used to promote quick recall skills, efficient ways for mental calculation and the insistence on the correct use of vocabulary when pupils are explaining their answers. Teachers use skilful questioning and often both correct and incorrect answers are used to improve learning and ensure that the contribution of all pupils is treated with equal importance. An excellent lesson in which pupils' learning included meeting time targets when working mentally, explaining answers to homework questions, recognising what functions were necessary for solving money problems, learning equivalent metric units, demonstrating the correct recording of calculations using place value and finding alternative ways of finding answers was a superb example of teaching basic skills.

Because of the high quality of pupil teacher relationships there is good concentration and effort. Pupils are productive, work at a good rate and can be trusted to work hard when the teacher is busy with other groups of pupils.

92. For example, in a lesson with Year 4 pupils using instructions for moving across a squared grid there was very good learning by all pupils despite much of the teacher's support time being concentrated on one particular group.
93. The good quality of lesson planning by teachers ensures that pupils are fully aware of learning objectives, are challenged effectively, know exactly what they have to do and what they have to achieve. Teachers regularly set time targets for completion of sections of work that encourages pupils to use quick methods for finding answers. In a Year 2 lesson about coin values and decimal notation of money this was evident when, on completion of set work, faster learners were challenged to use a 0 to 100 number line to illustrate answers to problems about change from £1.
94. Teachers also match work effectively to learning objectives and to the needs of pupils whatever their stage of learning. For example, in a lesson with six year olds good learning was observed for a group of pupils with special educational needs who were using random numbers of buttons to develop counting skills. The teacher recognised how they arranged these and developed some basic skills in counting in two's and five's. Lessons are effectively concluded and teachers highlight the key facts, ideas and vocabulary the pupils have learned and need to remember. Assessment and evaluation are often done at this time and, in the classes for older pupils, homework is set to consolidate or extend the work in lessons.
95. The most significant weakness in teaching is the lack of the use of information technology to support learning. Some was observed in, for example, interpreting and preparing questions from data about bird's habitats, food and nesting habits in Key Stage 2 and the development of counting skills by matching and ordering groups of objects in Key Stage 1. While it is generally satisfactory, in some classes it is not used regularly enough. The other weakness identified in the scrutiny of work is the inconsistency of the quality of marking in some classes in Key Stage 2. During lessons direct teaching occasionally lacks pace and leaves insufficient time for pupils to complete their tasks.
96. The subject is effectively managed. Recent monitoring of teaching and staff development has helped to improve expertise in teaching basic skills. Accurate and consistent lesson evaluation and pupil assessment are used effectively to plan future lessons. The analysis of annual tests is being used successfully to identify specific areas of weakness in teaching and plans are in place for further numeracy training.

SCIENCE

97. Evidence from the inspection indicates that by the time they are seven the majority of pupils are achieving broadly in line with national expectations. This is a slight improvement on the 1999 teacher assessments, which indicated that 86 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or better compared with the national average of 87 per cent. Only ten per cent of pupils achieved the higher levels compared with 20 per cent nationally. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been rising for the last three years and are now broadly in line with the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. They are doing particularly well in achieving an above average number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. These results accord closely with the evidence from the inspection. Despite the 1999 test results, which showed that boys are doing better than girls, the trend over the last few years shows no significant differences. The school is monitoring the situation carefully.
98. By the time they are seven, children have a good knowledge of animal classification and are beginning to understand the food chain and the role of predators in that chain. They are able to distinguish between what is alive with what has never been alive and what is dead. They know that different materials have different properties and that they can be used for different purposes. They are less able to record investigations which restricts their ability to refer to prior learning as they begin to develop a scientific approach to experimentation and investigation.

99. By the time they leave the school pupils have a good knowledge of the human body and understand the life cycle of humans. They understand the effects of gravity and friction on moving bodies and are able to conduct investigations and experiments on a number of scientific issues. Pupils are beginning to understand the need for fair testing, although this element is not as well developed as it might be, given that it should be a major factor in every investigation. Pupils know that a device such as a switch affects an electric circuit and that some materials make better conductors than others. This was evident at Year 5 where pupils were involved in investigations about which materials were good conductors or not. In this lesson pupils were using their scientific knowledge to good effect. For example, one group who had decided that a pen top would not conduct found they were wrong and concluded that it must be made of metal and not plastic as they had thought.
100. It was possible to observe only one lesson in Key Stage 1 and therefore no overall judgement will be made on teaching. However, in the one lesson seen teaching was very good, resulting in pupils who were keen and interested. The pace of the lesson moved pupils on quickly and the teacher was able, through careful planning and skilled questioning, to ensure that pupils were constantly challenged and their interest maintained. The teacher used the extra adult support effectively to give extra help to the slower learners. There was a very good mix of teaching styles such as group work, pupils demonstration, teacher exposition and whole class activities. In Key Stage 2, pupils displayed very positive attitudes to the very good teaching. The teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge generated a similar response from pupils. As most lessons were well planned and the learning outcomes were clear and well focused, pupils had a good understanding of what they had to do. Teachers used exposition particularly well resulting in pupils who listened carefully and responded sensibly. They maintained good concentration.
101. The co-ordinator has been in post for only one year but has already been successful in addressing standards in the school. His analysis of each child's test results has enabled him to target weaknesses in the teaching programme. For example, he identified that pupils were weak in their understanding of scientific language and there is now greater emphasis in the teaching programme. The analysis also enables realistic targets to be set for individuals and for groups of pupils and thus informs the target setting for the school. He has re-organised the resources and made them more accessible and has produced a set of assessment sheets which will be invaluable in tracking pupils' progress. This has created more confidence in the teachers and is already helping to raise standards.

ART

102. Too few art lessons were seen during the inspection for it to be possible to make judgements on teaching and learning. Although a limited amount of work was seen, teachers' planning suggests that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum covering most aspects.
103. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experiment with pencils, paint and textiles to create colour and texture. They use their skills to paint such things as trolls and penguins. Often their work forms part of a class frieze to support work done in other subjects, particularly literacy.
104. The very limited amount of work seen in the older classes was good. Year 6 pupils successfully used perspective in their drawings of buildings in a lesson on line shape and perspective. Two pupils had used a colour magic information technology program to produce their drawing. Year 5 pupils produced high quality observational drawings of boots and shoes, and are continuing to develop their skills.
105. Artwork is in need of review. Colourful displays enhance the corridors, but often the work done by pupils has offered little scope for them to develop their skills. One class has designed prints in the style of William Morris, but there is little evidence in the school of pupils having studied the work of famous artists, from European or other cultures. The policy and scheme of work need updating. The co-ordinator is well aware of the needs of the school and has already begun work on introducing the new national guidelines.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. There is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1. However, there is sufficient evidence to show that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum covering the required Programmes of Study and are learning in a systematic way. The one lesson seen was sound. At the previous inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory although pupils had insufficient opportunities for design and evaluation. This aspect of the work has improved.
107. Only two lessons were seen at Key Stage 2, one was good and one was very good. The high expectations set by the teachers were evident in the quality of work produced by the pupils. Very good introductions to lessons ensured that all pupils were aware of the objectives, expectations and safety rules. Appropriate pauses for discussion during the activities gave pupils the opportunity to talk about any problems they were experiencing. In a Year 3 class decisions had to be made about whether they could find the materials they needed to make an Anglo- Saxon brooch. Year 5 pupils were given time to review the success of the models they were making using electric circuits. Teachers used evaluation at the end of the lessons successfully to review the work done so far, and to suggest the way forward. Teachers have planned a range of work that links well to other subjects, including puppets and Tudor houses. Year 6 pupils have designed time capsules as part of a millennium project. The school hopes that one design will be chosen by a plastics firm to make a model that will be buried in the school grounds.
108. Design and technology has been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for further development. He has reviewed the policy, scheme of work and assessment arrangements to identify what staff training is needed. The school is now ready to move forward and raise achievement further.

GEOGRAPHY

109. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils are attaining satisfactory standards in geography. This is in line with the previous inspection, which reported pupils' attainment to be appropriate for their age.
110. At age seven, children show sound skills in making maps of real and imaginary places - for example, in response to stories and finding routes around the school. They understand how to use symbols to indicate types of weathers and features on a map and most know the main compass points and how to use them to show direction. They know about the seasons and different types of weather and how this affects the clothes people wear and the activities they pursue. Children readily use geographical terms such as *river*, *hill*, *coast* and *road* when describing their locality and have some understanding of how and why land is used for farms, houses and buildings. In a lesson about 'people who help us' they learned about the dependence people have upon one another. Mapping skills are developed further by older pupils. For example, in a local study of Whitburn, pupils located buildings and landmarks on maps and began to understand the significance of these in regard to how and why the settlement was established.
111. Pupils develop a sound understanding of physical geography as they move through the school. They know that climate and landscape have a significant effect upon human activities - for example, through the study of the Sahara Desert and the Tyne River system. By the age of eleven most can locate Whitburn on a map of England but fail to locate important rivers and cities of England. Many do not know that the rivers Tyne and Wear flow into the North Sea, cannot name the world's continents accurately or use an atlas confidently to find the main countries of the world.
112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The lessons observed were well planned with clear learning objectives and a good match of content to pupils' age and stage of learning. Teachers' good management ensured high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. This was particularly good in a Year 5 lesson when pupils were shown the location of well known countries you would pass on a sea journey from England to Egypt and used their literacy skills to read the names of unfamiliar countries in North Africa. In this lesson there was good

learning about the links between location, climate and landscape. There was sound teaching of important geographical vocabulary in work on the features of the River Tyne, such as, *sources, tributaries, valley* and *mouth*. The work on the human attractions of South Tyneside, generated good levels of interest. The use of human resources was an effective feature of a Year 2 lesson when pupils were taught the skills of enquiry and investigation as they interviewed the school caretaker. The main weakness in the teaching of geography is the lack of emphasis on teaching the names and location of places, important countries, rivers, oceans, seas and mountains. For example, a significant number of Year 6 pupils were unable to name the North Sea on a map of the local area.

113. The policy and planning are currently under review. A very good action plan has been written to address the implementation of the revised National Curriculum during the current year. The subject is adequately resourced in Key Stage 2 but there are shortages of maps in Key Stage 1.

HISTORY

114. Only one short lesson was seen in history in Year 2, one in Year 5 and one in Year 6. However, there is sufficient evidence to show that by the age of seven pupils have experienced opportunities that extend their knowledge and skills as they learn about people's lives and lifestyles, respond to stories and use sources of information to help them ask and answer questions. By the age of eleven, pupils know about significant people, events and places from both the recent and more distant past. They learn about change and continuity in their own area, in Britain and different parts of the world. They are learning to look at history from political, social, religious, cultural or aesthetic perspectives. They are aware that they can use different sources of information to investigate the past.
115. At the time of inspection younger pupils were extending their chronological understanding as they were taught to place events and objects in chronological order and use common words relating to the passage of time. The Year 2 children were learning how to use photographs and family members' memories to find out about the past and put these in the correct time sequence. Learning was satisfactory but the attempt to combine history with geography resulted in a lack of time for history and work was rushed.
116. Year 6 pupils were learning about British history and, in particular, what led to the Jarrow Crusade. Since Jarrow is only a few miles from the school, it provided an opportunity for pupils to extend their understanding of how their local area was affected by unemployment and poverty and the subsequent changes over a long period of time. Learning was satisfactory but many pupils did not find this topic inspiring and found it difficult to imagine the level of poverty experienced by the Jarrow people and how their desperation led to the march. There is a very good range of resources on local history and older children discussed these, showing a good knowledge of how the area has changed over time.
117. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection but the tendency to plan and teach it as part of humanities makes it more difficult to cover the scheme of work and provide for in-depth study. There was little evidence of pupils' ability to understand the different ways in which history is interpreted. This improved for talented pupils. In those lessons seen, children generally showed interest in history and responded at least satisfactorily to the tasks. Brighter pupils did better, particularly at Year 5. However, work on display and in lessons shows a greater awareness of the need to reinforce literacy skills, particularly at Years 3, 5 and 6. Pupils tackled such tasks as writing an account about being an archaeologist at Sutton Hoo or writing a letter as if a participant in the Jarrow Crusade.
118. There were too few lessons to make an overall judgement about teaching at Key Stage 1. In the two lessons at Key Stage 2 one was sound and one was good. Teachers' secure knowledge of the subject meant that their planning had aims and clear objectives for what they wanted pupils to learn. Clear explanations were given about work to be completed and pupils understood what they had to do. During lessons their understanding was checked and additional information provided or constructive comments to enable pupils to make progress. Tasks were often challenging and in some lessons teachers were able to inspire enthusiasm in pupils which made them keen to work hard. For example, in a lesson about Egyptian hieroglyphics, pupils asked interesting questions about the tools used and additional teacher

knowledge enabled faster progress. In their explanations about writing their own messages they showed a good understanding of the task and one pupil produced an entirely new alphabet. In all the lessons seen there were two outstanding factors that contributed to learning – very good management and discipline and very good relationships. These two factors ensured that pupils made good efforts and were able to work without disruption. Weaknesses were seen in the pace of lessons that were sometimes too slow resulting in unfinished work or too fast when work was rushed. Occasionally tasks were too mundane and pupils lost interest.

119. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed for history but although very knowledgeable, she has yet to make an impact on the subject. Teachers receive good written guidance from the policy and new scheme of work. She has correctly identified the need to monitor the teaching and learning in this subject and improve the range of artefacts at Key Stage 1.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

120. It was not possible to see any lessons of information technology (IT) during the inspection but evidence from scrutinising pupils' work, from teachers' planning and from talking to pupils, indicates that standards are broadly in line with those expected of seven and eleven year olds. This maintains the standards of the previous inspection for Years 1 and 2 and shows an improvement for Years 3 to 6 for whom standards were judged to be too low, as children were still doing the work of younger pupils.
121. By the time they are seven, most pupils are able to use IT to help them generate and communicate ideas in different forms such as text and pictures. With adult support they retrieve and store work. They use IT-based models or simulations to explore real or imaginary situations. For example, Year 1 children explored mathematical shape and Year 2 pupils explored shopping. They develop better control of the keyboard and mouse as they move through the school to Year 2.
122. By the time they are eleven, most pupils have become proficient in a range of IT skills. They are able to use a word-processing program confidently to compose text, change font size and style and create an appropriate format for the purpose. For example, they know how to use columns when creating a newspaper. They successfully open, save and amend their work, using both a spell check and grammar check to improve what they have written. They enjoy entering data to make a programmable toy move around a maze, but his particular skill needs further development through more opportunities. Pupils are able to amend and interrogate previously stored information and are becoming aware that care has to be taken when framing questions in order to obtain the information required. This was seen in a Year 5 class where pupils were writing questions for other pupils involving the use of a database about birds. The use of simulation programs has been successful, particularly when finding routes around imaginary places. Good use is made of IT for research into other subjects such as history, geography, science and art. Little work is being done in the sensing element of the subject but this is largely due to the lack of appropriate software for the new machinery.
123. Although no lessons were seen, a discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed an enthusiasm for the subject. Their knowledge enabled them to talk confidently, using technical language. They listened carefully to the views of others and responded sensibly. They talked about co-operating on different projects and were polite and courteous throughout the discussion.
124. The school has recently abandoned its old scheme in favour of the new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance but this is not yet firmly established throughout the school. New computers have been purchased for a new IT suite that will have an Internet link. The co-ordinator recognises that there is an urgent need for guidelines and training for teachers to enable them to have a systematic approach to the teaching of IT skills. This has been clearly identified and a joint working party of teachers, governors and parents is intent on seeing it done.

MUSIC

125. In the previous inspection standards in music were better than might be expected but evidence from the inspection was inadequate to make comparisons. In the three lessons observed it was possible to see only the performing element of the music curriculum. Standards in singing throughout the school are good. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Their diction is clear and they respond to the mood of the music with appropriate tones and feeling in their voices. For example, the singing of pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 was quiet and reverent when singing hymns but they sang the music from the cantata with all the exuberance demanded of a rock-and-roll song. The good behaviour means that pupils listen attentively and practise hard to improve their performance. They show particularly good concentration in the large group.
126. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching because of the few lessons seen but in those that were observed the quality of teaching was very good. All the lessons were well planned and clear in their purpose, which meant that the learning was well focussed. Teachers use the expertise of the visiting pianist well to supplement their own knowledge. Time was used well and this ensured that pupils' interest was maintained. Teachers chose songs that were appropriate to the age groups, which again captured and maintained their interest. For example, the singing of Years 1 and 2 contained nursery rhymes and action songs for the very youngest children while that for the older pupils included a very popular up-beat song to which pupils responded enthusiastically. Teachers have effective skills for managing pupils, particularly in the large group lessons, which contained several classes. This meant that teachers were able to concentrate on the singing and learning without spending an undue amount of time on control. In one lesson where one pupil showed very challenging behaviour, he was not allowed to spoil the lesson for other pupils.
127. The subject is enhanced by visiting specialists and by a guitar club. At present the headteacher is co-ordinating the subject and recognises that a new scheme of work will be necessary in preparation for the new curriculum in September.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. The last inspection reported that pupils' attainment was satisfactory and this standard has been maintained. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils are reaching the levels expected in the targets of the National Curriculum. Attainment by approximately 20 per cent of pupils is better, especially in games skills.
129. In a gymnastics' lesson Year 2 pupils showed sound skills in performing basic actions of travelling, using hands and feet, turning, rolling, jumping, balancing, swinging and climbing on the floor and using apparatus. Most are able to link a series of actions, varying shape and speed in their movement. Older pupils catch, throw and aim balls accurately and understand why rules are needed to play games successfully. By using dance to interpret the music of 'War of the Worlds' pupils effectively controlled their movements by varying shape, speed and continuity. They expressed feelings, moods and ideas associated with the pitch and rhythm. Year 6 pupils show satisfactory levels of agility and mobility when performing basic jumping and rolling actions.
130. The overall quality of teaching is good. The way that teachers draw attention to the learning of safe practice is a strength. Pupils are taught to respond readily to instructions. They recognise and follow rules, know how to lift, carry, place and use equipment safely. They understand about risks relating to the wearing of inappropriate clothing. Teachers make effective use of resources and their good management of pupils is resulting in positive attitudes and high levels of interest and behaviour. Teachers use lessons successfully to develop pupils' confidence, particularly when using climbing and balancing equipment, and improve self-esteem by the careful selection of pupils to give demonstrations. Activities are well matched to the clear lesson objectives and to the needs of the pupils. New learning was evident in most lessons. For example, younger pupils were being taught that balance and poise are as important as strength and speed in gymnastics and, by the introduction of more difficult elements in games, pupils are learning how to refine their targeting skills. The only significant weakness in teaching, in some lessons, is the lack of an element of vigorous activity to promote cardiovascular health, muscular strength and endurance.

131. The school has a swimming programme that results in most pupils being able to swim unaided, competently and safely, for at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The school provides good opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities during the residential week for Year 6 at Bromley Hall, Hexham, and challenges of a physical and problem solving nature including orienteering and water activities locally.
132. The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities that include football, netball, basketball and quick cricket. The indoor accommodation and school field are good but the quality of the playground presents some difficulties in playing games such as netball. The school has participated in the Top Sports and Top Play projects that have helped to improve skills in teaching games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. It was possible to see only one lesson at Key Stage 1 so no overall judgements can be made about the quality of teaching or pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2. However, sufficient evidence was provided to judge that pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the South Tyneside Agreed Syllabus at both key stages. Standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and better at Key Stage 2. By Year 2, children are becoming aware that for many people religion is important in their lives and that teachings of religions include the importance of the world and all living beings, their special value and need to be cared for responsibly. They talk about what they have learned about Christianity and have a growing understanding that some people have beliefs different from theirs which need to be respected. By Year 6, pupils have acquired a good knowledge of Christianity and understand that there are other world religions practised in this country. They understand the unique features of religions and the part played by symbolism, handling artefacts used in religious ceremonies with care and respect. They are gaining an understanding of the influence that religion has on people, their families and communities. Some of the religious issues they discuss are challenging and even the Year 3 pupils try to understand such aspects from the ministry of Jesus about being a disciple and what it means to leave everything that is secure in life to spread Christian belief and teaching.
134. Standards have at least been maintained at Key Stage 1 and improved at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection when they were generally sound. By Year 2, children have a particularly good understanding of some events in the life of Jesus and in the life of a religious leader of another faith. These two elements have been combined so effectively that children have made good progress in both aspects. For example, a knowledge of the boyhood of Jesus extends to new knowledge and understanding of Jewish history and the leader Moses when it is taught initially as how Jesus learned it from his mother as a child. Factors contributing to improved standards at those that create stimulation and interest. For example, Year 5 pupils have opportunities to handle and talk about artefacts that extend their understanding of symbolism and religious belief. At Year 3, brainstorming sessions followed by group discussions related to their own experiences help pupils to come to difficult concepts such as giving up everything to be a disciple.
135. Although no overall judgement can be made about teaching at Key Stage 1, in the one lesson seen it was good. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is very good. In all lessons the teachers showed a secure knowledge of the subject which was reflected in the lesson planning, particularly in the objectives for learning. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the effective ways the classes were managed made for a calm, orderly, working atmosphere in which tasks were accomplished and there were real gains in knowledge and understanding. The effective use of resources and use of pupils' prior knowledge in other subjects often stimulated learning. For example, Year 2 pupils' prior knowledge of homes and weather conditions in hot countries and their ability to find Israel on a globe contributed effectively to the progress made in understanding life at the time of Jesus. Teachers used their time well, moving pupils on to the next stage and ensuring there was an opportunity for them to explain what they had done and their learning from it. In some classes teachers have the ability to challenge pupils with tasks that make them work to the utmost level of the ability and they find this stimulating. Teachers know the children well and take care to match the work to the stage of learning but occasionally resort to the use of mundane tasks such as completing a worksheet which some find too easy.