

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**Hipsburn First School  
Alnwick**

**LEA Area: Northumberland**

**Unique Reference Number: 122264  
Inspection Number: 191336**

**Headteacher: Mrs D Charlton**

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**Reporting inspector: Dr D Dodds**

**Dates of inspection: 1 - 3 November 1999**

Under OFSTED contract number: 707681

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

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**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	First school
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lesbury Alnwick Northumberland NE66 3PX
Telephone number:	01665 830210
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mrs V Kay
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Dr D Dodds, RgI	Mathematics Science Information technology Art Physical education Design and technology	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency
Mrs P English	English Under-fives Special educational needs History Geography Religious education Equal opportunities	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr T Smith, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction. She is supported well by teaching and support staff who share a sense of common purpose and are committed to providing the highest quality of education for pupils.
- Teachers provide a stimulating learning environment in which all pupils are challenged. The overall quality of teaching is good, and there are a few examples of very good teaching.
- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science. During their time at school they make overall good progress.
- Governors are very supportive. They play an important part in the life of the school.
- Pupils behave well and their attitudes to learning are good. These features contribute significantly to their personal and social development, good progress, and to high levels of attainment.
- The school's curriculum, and the ways in which planning is used to ensure progression in pupils' learning are effective.
- The ways in which the school provides for its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall.
- The school's partnership with its parents and the community is good; its links with the community are very effective.

### WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Pupils with identified learning difficulties are not always placed at the appropriate stage on the school's register of special educational needs, according to the 1994 Code of Practice.
- II. Pupils' individual education plans are not sufficiently precise to enable them to make progress by short, measurable steps.

**The weaknesses are far outweighed by the strengths, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

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

The headteacher, governors and staff have built, successfully, on the school's strengths and addressed almost all of the points identified at the previous inspection to levels which inspectors judge to be satisfactory or better. As a result, the school is much better than it was. The school was managed effectively when it was last inspected; since then, the quality of the headteacher's leadership has developed to a level which inspectors now judge to be very effective. The school has maintained its high standards of behaviour and issues related to curriculum planning have been addressed in full. Teaching and support staff have developed further into a very effective teaching team, committed to providing the highest quality of education for their pupils. They understand how children learn, work very hard, and have succeeded in providing a very stimulating and enriching learning environment. The quality of teaching has improved from its overall satisfactory level and is now good overall. The presentation of pupils' work has also improved, although inspectors felt there was still room for further improvement. Higher-attaining pupils are now sufficiently challenged in their reading. Standards in information technology have risen and now meet national expectations. The school's partnership with its parents continues to be effective, and its links with the community have developed to a level which inspectors now judge to be very good. Governors continue to be committed, and are involved fully in the life and work of the school. Taken together, all of these features have contributed towards a trend of rising standards since the school was last inspected and to the present high standards. The school was judged to be efficient at the previous inspection; this has been maintained. When all of these features are taken into consideration, the school is very well placed to improve even further.

## STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

<b>Performance in:</b>	<b>Compared with all schools</b>	<b>Compared with similar schools</b>		<b>Key</b>
			<i>very high</i>	A*
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
Reading	A	B	<i>average</i>	C
Writing	A*	A*	<i>below average</i>	D
Mathematics	A*	A	<i>well below average</i>	E

The table above indicates that in the most recent National Curriculum tests and assessments, pupils achieved high standards in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools, and also when compared with schools in similar social contexts. However, Hipsburn First School is much smaller than an average sized school and great care must be taken when analysing and interpreting the results of small year groups. This is because of the small numbers of pupils, and the effect of one additional pupil on, for example, a percentage measure, can be considerable. Nevertheless, results indicate that pupils have maintained a trend of high standards over the last three years.

Inspection evidence indicates that pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment and leave with standards which are well above average. Furthermore, the evidence shows that pupils make good progress as they move from one year group to another in the school. This is supported by data from the school's effective system for setting longer-term targets for all pupils, and for tracking their progress as they move through the school. Careful analysis of this data indicates that over time, pupils' progress has become more accelerated. For example, at the last inspection progress was judged to be satisfactory overall, and almost all pupils now make good progress. This, together with very focused teaching, has resulted in high standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information technology have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and also when pupils leave the school at the age of nine. In religious education standards have been maintained. Pupils continue to meet the recommendations of the Northumberland Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils who find learning difficult, and those with the potential for higher attainment, make satisfactory progress in line with their prior attainment as they move through the school.



## QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 9 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Not enough teaching was seen to make a firm overall judgement	
Religious education		Not enough teaching was seen to make a firm overall judgement	
Other subjects		Not enough teaching was seen to make a firm overall judgement	

Teaching is generally good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is judged to be good in all of the key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is satisfactory in about one lesson out of every three, and good in approximately one lesson out of every two. The quality of teaching is judged to be very good in one lesson out of every eight.

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

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Generally good throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond well.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the average for primary schools nationally and remains a strength of the school.
Ethos*	The school has a very positive ethos. Pupils generally work purposefully; relationships are good; most pupils are eager to learn.
Leadership and management	Very effective overall. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and direction. She is supported well by a committed staff in whom she has succeeded in developing a very strong and unified team spirit. Governors are supportive of the school and involved in its life and work. Teaching and support staff work to a common purpose. Planning for school improvement is very good.
Curriculum	Good overall, including the curriculum for children under five. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and well balanced. Planning to ensure progression in pupils' learning and for equality of opportunity for all pupils to make progress, is good across the school. Similarly, procedures for assessing pupils' levels of attainment and their use to inform the planning of the curriculum are also effective.
Pupils with special educational needs	These pupils have appropriate provision and make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.

Staffing, resources and accommodation

Satisfactory overall. The school is clean, and best use is made of all available space. All areas of the curriculum are at least adequately resourced. Prompt attention has been given to resourcing the numeracy and literacy programmes.

Value for money

The school provides good value for money.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

### What most parents like about the school

- III. They feel the school encourages them to play an active part in the life of the school.
- IV. They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their child(ren).
- V. Parents feel that the school keeps them well informed about their child(ren)'s progress.
- VI. They think that the school enables their child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work.
- VII. The school encourages their children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.
- VIII. Parents feel that their child(ren) like(s) school.

### What some parents are not happy about

- IX. Some parents think that the school does
- X. They feel that the school does not
- XI. Some parents are not satisfied with the  
o at home.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Evidence from the inspection indicates that their concerns are mainly unjustified. Inspectors felt that the school does give parents a clear understanding of what is taught. Whilst the amount of homework is inconsistent across the school, most homework set is effective. During the week of the inspection, pupils' behaviour in and around the school was good.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The school has achieved much in the recent past. In order to continue to improve, the governors, headteacher and teachers need to ensure that:

- i) all pupils who are identified as having special educational needs<sup>1</sup> are placed at the appropriate Stage<sup>2</sup> required by the Code of Practice (1994);

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<sup>1</sup> A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child has a learning difficulty if he or she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age group. Special educational provision means educational provision, which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision, made generally for the children of the child's age. (Code of Practice 1994, page 11)

<sup>2</sup> Schools adopt a staged response to pupils who have special educational needs. This approach recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and, where necessary, brings increasing specialist expertise to bear on the difficulties that a child may be experiencing. (ibid, page 5)

- ii) individual education plans<sup>3</sup> are precise so that pupils learn in short, measurable steps.

Minor weaknesses which the governors may wish to consider as part of the school's action plan are:

- i) the marking of pupils' work does not always inform them of what they have to do in order to improve;
- ii) a more rigorous approach to the development of handwriting and skills of presentation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Hipsburn First School is much smaller than other schools, and is situated near the coastal village of Alnmouth in Northumberland. Most pupils come from the immediate catchment area, although a small group travel to school from some of the more distant villages. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. When they begin school the full range of ability is represented, although their overall attainment is average for children of this age.
2. The school occupies a pleasant site and was purpose-built in 1971. The main building is single storey. The school caters for 60 pupils between the ages of four and nine years. The intake of pupils has risen since the last inspection when 55 pupils attended the school. There are now 38 girls and 22 boys who attend school full time. At the time of the last inspection, in April 1996, there were many more boys than girls. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and all pupils speak English as their first language.
3. Eight pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is 13 per cent of the school's population, and broadly in line with the national average. Twenty per cent of pupils are currently on the school's register of special educational needs. One pupil has a full Statement of Special Educational Need. Three pupils are at Stage 1 of the school's register. Three pupils are at Stage 2, and have individual education plans. Five pupils are currently involved with outside specialists. There are no pupils who are currently awaiting an assessment.
4. Pupils are taught in three classes of mixed ability, two of which are made up of different National Curriculum year groups. One class contains pupils whose National Curriculum age corresponds with reception; another class contains pupils from Years 1 and 2. A third class comprises pupils from Years 3 and 4. The headteacher has a full-time teaching commitment. At the time of the inspection two students were in school as part of their initial teacher training. The average size of each class is 20. At the time of the inspection seven children were under the age of five.
5. The school has a set of aims which are similar to those found in many primary schools. It describes its main purposes as to educate pupils to the highest standards; promote pupils'

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<sup>3</sup> An individual education plan builds on the curriculum the child is following alongside fellow pupils, and should make use of programmes, activities, materials and assessment techniques readily available to the child's teachers. The plan should be implemented, at least in part, in the normal classroom setting. (ibid, page 28)

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; to enable pupils to think for themselves, and to care for others.

6. The school's development plan identifies its broad priorities for 1999-2000 as:

- developing pupils' skills in information technology;
- monitoring the development of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the effectiveness of the National Literacy Strategy;
- improving the quality of pupils' learning.

**Key indicators**

**Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	9	14

National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	4	4	5
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	13	13	14
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93	93	100
	National	82	83	87

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	86	87

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parenthesis refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)			%
missed through absence for the	Authorised	School	4.1
latest complete reporting year:	absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.0
	absence	National comparative data	0.5

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## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during		Number
the previous year:	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	12
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **· EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **· Attainment and progress**

1. Children enter the reception class at Hipsburn First School, at the age of four, with a wide range of abilities, although their overall levels of attainment are average when compared with children of this age. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments show that at the end of Key Stage 1, in reading, the percentage of pupils who attained Level 2 and above was well above the national average when compared with all schools and also when compared with schools in similar social contexts. In writing, pupils' results were above the national average, and well above when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, results are very high when compared with the national average and also when compared with similar schools. In science, the results of teachers' assessments indicate that pupils' results are very high.
2. The 1999 test results showed an improvement in standards in writing since the previous year, at Key Stage 1, particularly at the higher Level 3<sup>1</sup>. Standards in reading were at the levels of the previous year. Standards in mathematics improved slightly between 1997 and 1998. Taking all three subjects together, there has been a general trend of rising standards throughout the last three years. However, whilst great care needs to be taken when analysing test and assessment data for small schools, due to the small numbers of pupils who take tests, the evidence gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work for the previous school year supports these high standards.
3. The school collects National Curriculum test and assessment data, as well as other external test results, and analyses them over time. This allows targets to be set for individual pupils so they make the best possible progress in literacy and in numeracy, and for their progress to be tracked throughout their time at the school. Analysis of this data indicates that pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection, and they make good progress during their time at Hipsburn First School.
4. Inspection findings, overall, reflect the broad picture painted by the results of National Curriculum tests and assessments. Inspectors noted that, at the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards of attainment in the present Year 2 for most pupils are above expectations in English, mathematics and science, and they make good progress throughout the key stage. They continue to make good progress throughout Years 3 and 4 and are on target to attain standards which are well above average overall. When taking into consideration the average levels of attainment on entry to the school, inspectors judge overall progress throughout the school to be good.
5. On entry to the nursery, attainment is average overall in all areas of learning. The school makes good provision for these young children and they make overall good progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes<sup>2</sup>. By the time they start work on the National Curriculum, most

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<sup>1</sup> On levels: By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all subjects of the National Curriculum. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

<sup>2</sup> Desirable Learning Outcomes: QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) formally SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority) has produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Education'. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal and social development.

children attain above the expected standard for five year olds in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development, physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They also reach expected standards in their personal and social development. Children who have special educational needs, and those with the potential for higher attainment, also make good overall progress.

6. At the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils build on this good start, and progress is good throughout the key stage. This is partly because assessments are used effectively to enable all pupils to make the best possible progress, and the targets which teachers set are appropriate. As a result, most pupils reach at least nationally expected standards by the end of Key Stage 1, and their attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good longer-term progress. This is due to very good planning, high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and good use of the school's agreed assessment, monitoring and target setting procedures. By the time they leave the school at the age of nine, they have attained well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
7. Pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening at Key Stage 1. They make good progress overall. They speak confidently, read work aloud and contribute to school assemblies. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 3 and 4, and by the time they leave the school at the age of nine, most pupils attain well above average standards. Nearly all pupils have well-developed skills of reading. They make at least good progress during Key Stage 1 and by the end of the key stage most pupils attain standards which are well above average. Pupils continue to make overall good progress throughout Years 3 and 4 and by the time they are ready to leave the school at the end of Year 4, most have attained high standards. Pupils make good progress in writing during Key Stage 1, and whilst attainment in handwriting is satisfactory overall, the standard varies throughout the school and standards are not as high as they could be. Pupils at both key stages have sufficient opportunities to extend their writing. Progress throughout Years 3 and 4 is good. Pupils are beginning to understand more fully, the skills of spelling and punctuation. Attainment at the end of Year 4 is well above average for most pupils.
8. Pupils make overall good progress in developing their mathematical skills throughout Key Stage 1. This is due to high quality teaching and work which is matched to the needs of all pupils. At the end of the key stage, levels of attainment are above the nationally expected standards for most pupils. Progress throughout Key Stage 2 is good, and pupils are on course to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 4.
9. Pupils make overall good progress in science throughout Key Stage 1, and their attainment is above the level expected for seven year olds. Most pupils make accurate predictions and have the understanding necessary to carry out a fair test with a little help from the teacher. At the end of Year 2, most pupils have a good knowledge of life processes and living things, and of physical processes. Progress throughout Years 3 and 4 is good in all aspects of the subject, and particularly in investigative science. This is due to the teacher's good knowledge of the subject and to good quality teaching. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards are on course to be well above national expectations.
10. At the end of Key Stage 1, in the other two core subjects, which are information technology and religious education, standards are as expected and pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage. They continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 and 4 and, by the time they leave the school, pupils now attain standards which are in line with national expectations in information technology. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils are developing keyboard and retrieval skills and use them confidently with appropriate software packages. In religious education, most pupils reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

11. At the end of Year 4, in the non-core subjects, standards in art are above those normally expected of pupils of this age. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are what are normally expected. Pupils make good progress in art and satisfactory progress in the other subjects. Overall satisfactory standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
12. Across the school pupils' skills in literacy are given good emphasis. All pupils are given sufficient opportunities to write at length and for different purposes as happens in their work in science, history and geography. Pupils are generally provided with sufficient opportunities for reading for information. Pupils' learning is enhanced in a few subjects by opportunities presented to them to use their research skills, as for example, in science, at Key Stage 2. Pupils use subject specific language effectively in English, mathematics, science, information technology, religious education, design and technology, and history. Pupils' skills of literacy are used well in mathematics and science at Key Stage 1, and throughout Key Stage 2. This is because many teachers are skilled in asking questions which have more than one answer. These skills are also demonstrated well throughout the school in the plenary sessions of the literacy hour. In physical education, many pupils effectively evaluate their own performances.
13. At the end of Year 4, when they leave the school, pupils' standards in numeracy are well above average. Most pupils are able to use numbers very well and recall number facts in work across the curriculum; generally their skills in numeracy are well developed. Across the school quite a large number of pupils use their mathematical skills appropriately to support their learning in other subjects such as science, art and design and technology.[Jen1]
14. Pupils' skills in information technology are satisfactory and they use information technology effectively in other subjects such as English, when they redraft their work; in mathematics and in science, when using the computer to construct tables and graph. In art, pupils make designs and use programs to generate pictures.[Jen2]
15. The school does much to help pupils who find learning difficult, and those with the potential for higher attainment. As a result, these pupils make satisfactory progress, and reach standards which are generally in line with their abilities. The learning targets in their individual education plans are appropriate, but are vague and often imprecise. This limits teachers' ability to accurately measure pupils' progress. However, the satisfactory progress is due to overall good teaching, which helps teachers to provide tasks that generally match pupils' abilities.  
[Jen3]
16. At the end of the Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, there are no significant differences between boys and girls in levels of attainment, and no significant variations in the progress of pupils from different backgrounds.

## 22. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

17. The high quality of pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour, relationships and personal development has been maintained since the last inspection.
18. Pupils' have good attitudes to work. They are well motivated, enjoy learning and are keen to respond to the challenges offered. Children under five in the reception class show a strong interest in their work and co-operate well with their teacher and classmates. This pattern of good response continues throughout the school, and has a positive impact on the standards achieved and progress made. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, or when others are speaking. They answer questions sensibly and contribute confidently during discussions. They settle quickly to each new task, and usually work with purpose, determination and good levels of concentration.



19. Behaviour throughout the school is good. This confirms parents' views. The vast majority of pupils show high levels of self-discipline, clearly know what is expected of them and react accordingly. Pupils are orderly and move around the building in a calm and sensible manner. Incidents of bullying are rare and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils are proud of their school and show due respect for all of its fabric and fittings.
20. The quality of relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff is good. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere within the school. Pupils are polite, very open in their dealings with others and always ready to be helpful. In lessons they work well together in pairs or groups, and share ideas and equipment well. At playtime, and in the dining hall, they are friendly and sociable.
21. Pupils' personal development is also good. From their first days in school they are accepted as valued members of the community and made to feel important. Pupils are generally confident, and are clearly aware of, and respect, each other's rights, feelings and beliefs. They understand the importance of sharing and taking turns, and are starting to develop independence in their learning, although this is not always sufficiently built upon. Pupils of all ages enjoy taking on responsibility, and exercise it well. Older pupils, for example, act as head of table at lunchtime and help to run the library whilst younger ones carry registers to the secretary. Close links with the local community and regular support for charity also help to enhance pupils' personal values.

27. **Attendance**

22. Attendance is well above the average for primary schools nationally and remains a strength of the school. Pupils' punctuality is also good. They arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of sessions.

28. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

28. **Teaching**

23. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. [Jen4]Teaching varies within the range of satisfactory and very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching. This improvement is due, in part, to the effective policy for teaching and learning which was introduced into school during the last academic year and focuses on the principles of good teaching which have been agreed by all staff. This allows for consistency of teaching methods throughout the school. Teaching was satisfactory in approximately one lesson out of every three, and good in one lesson out of every two. Teaching was very good in about one lesson out of every 12. This is a high proportion of good teaching which is having a positive effect on the progress and attainment of all pupils.
24. Teachers work very hard and have good relationships with pupils. They have a good knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum and a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils they teach. It was reported at the previous inspection that teachers' planning was insecure. This situation has now been successfully addressed. For example, the literacy and numeracy strategies in particular have helped teachers to plan more consistently and effectively in the short, medium, and longer term. Planning has been developed to a high level. This is another factor which has helped to raise the overall quality of teaching across the school.

25. The school has made a good start to the introduction of the literacy hour and has adapted the National Numeracy Strategy to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the structure and purpose of these national initiatives, and they develop their lessons well. The texts which teachers use in the literacy sessions challenge pupils without being beyond their range.
26. The teaching of children under the age of five years is consistently good; occasionally it is very good. It is good in five lessons out of every six, and very good in approximately one lesson out of every six. The teacher understands the needs of the youngest children and the activities she plans lead effectively towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes for entry into compulsory education. Lessons have a good structure and sufficient opportunities are provided for the children to explore and experiment. The teacher has high expectations of children's behaviour and attainment, and the children rise to these. The very good quality of the relationships between the teacher and pupils, and the careful structure of activities allows each pupil to develop well.
27. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. At both key stages the quality of teaching varies between satisfactory and very good. At Key Stage 1 teaching is satisfactory in approximately three lessons out of every ten, and good in almost half of all lessons observed. At Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory or good in almost equal measures in approximately half of all lessons observed, and very good in a small minority of lessons. Teaching is good overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In the other core subjects, insufficient teaching was seen in information technology in order to make a firm judgement, but in religious education teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. In the non-core subjects, teaching is good in physical education, but insufficient teaching was seen to make a judgement on the other subjects which are art, design and technology, geography, history and music
28. The best quality teaching comes from a combination of factors. Throughout the school, all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can learn and this is a contributory factor to high standards. All lessons are based on very well developed overall curriculum planning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and it allows teachers to plan and prepare coherent series of lessons in which they identify the progress in knowledge, skills and understanding to be achieved. For example, all planning indicates precisely what the pupil will learn and, in the very best lessons, such as in mathematics, literacy sessions, and in dance, planning describes how the pupil will demonstrate what he or she has learnt. This happens in all good lessons and means that pupils share a greater sense of purpose and an awareness of making progress.
29. The very good lesson preparation identifies the resources pupils will use, and specifies precise learning steps to allow pupils to make the maximum amount of progress. This happens particularly in English and mathematics, and provides for a range of teaching methods which ensures that pupils are kept adequately challenged and that learning progresses as much as possible in the time available. The daily planning used by teachers during the inspection is of a high quality. For example, the most successful lessons consist of a blend of direct teaching to the whole class or to groups and individuals. This happens particularly in the literacy hour and in mathematics and science. In these lessons, teaching closely matches pupils existing attainment and builds on it.
30. Effective planning is very closely linked with the ways in which teachers group pupils; this is also a significant feature of the most effective teaching. Whole-class teaching is used particularly well to engender enthusiasm and high expectations as in English, mathematics, science, and in dance. In these lessons pupils benefit from detailed exposition and challenging questions.

31. High quality assessment is used particularly well in all of the core subjects. Procedures for assessment, and the ways in which it has been carried out, have been developed to a very high level. In all subjects, assessment is very well used to establish checkpoints to provide feedback, monitor pupils' progress, and set targets for further development.
32. Other features of the most successful teaching are the quality of questioning. For example, in the most successful lessons in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history, and music, the teacher is adept at asking the right questions of the right pupil at the right time. When this is used particularly well, as in English, mathematics and science, questions identify weaknesses or reinforce knowledge and understanding, and provide a firm foundation for further progress.
33. Small group work and individualised work are very effective approaches where pupils need to observe closely, practise skills or collaborate. Very effective use is made of small group work in all subjects. Examples of this were seen in a dance lesson involving pupils from Years 3 and 4 in which pupils worked in small groups pretending to be a Ferris wheel whilst still retaining control of their bodies, and in a science lesson involving pupils from Key Stage 1 who were working on magnetic fields. Here, pupils worked together well to analyse how different materials behaved when they were placed near to magnets. These lessons had a brisk pace and little time was lost in moving between activities.
34. Teachers have worked very hard to implement the literacy hour and the National Numeracy Strategy, and many effective sessions were observed. Care over teaching of literacy and numeracy means that lessons are well planned, they move at a brisk pace, and include much effective consolidation to reinforce the main focus of each lesson. Teachers develop pupils' skills of literacy well at times other than English lessons, for example in science, mathematics, art, and information technology where special vocabulary is used, and in registration periods, and in assemblies. Similar good use is made of mathematics throughout the school and many examples were seen in history when pupils measure Viking longboats, in science when pupils construct various types of graphs and charts, and in design and technology.
35. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with many features of good teaching. However, the overall quality of teaching is hindered by the lack of precision on pupils' individual education plans, which do not identify how learning is to proceed in small measurable stages.[Jen5] The special educational needs co-ordinator has carefully monitored pupils' progress. There is a good level of support which includes support from learning support staff, and this enables pupils to make satisfactory progress overall.
36. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good overall although it varies in quality. All work is marked, and much marking is of a high standard, and wherever possible in the presence of the pupil. Written comments are good; they are supportive and indicate what pupils should do in order to improve. However, this practice is not consistent across the school and in many cases pupils' work is acknowledged either with a tick or a comment which does not indicate what pupils need to do in order to make the best progress. Homework supports the work in classrooms. Whilst its use is inconsistent across the school, the regular use of homework is effective in promoting the development of reading, spelling and number work.
42. **The curriculum and assessment**
37. The curriculum provision for children under five is good. For pupils at Key Stage 1 and for those in Year 3 and Year 4 the provision is also good. All pupils have access to a broad and suitably balanced curriculum that effectively promotes their intellectual, physical and personal and social development and prepares them well for the transition to subsequent stages of education.

38. The curriculum for children under five is clearly linked to national recommendations and is systematically planned to achieve nationally agreed learning outcomes. This represents an important improvement since the previous inspection. However there is, currently, no discrete policy document to facilitate the monitoring of the provision for this phase. Effective policies are in place to ensure requirements are met for each of the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Policies for religious education, music, dance and physical education are also in place. Policies for history, geography, design and technology and art are currently under review. Good curricular provision is made for health education through a policy that includes sex education and the appropriate raising of awareness of the misuse of drugs. The clear behaviour policy and practical policy for personal and social education ensure that support for pupils' personal development is consistently effective. The balance of the curriculum is appropriately supported by the allocation of time to each subject. The particular priority being given to English and mathematics illustrates the importance the school places on improving literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school.
39. Overall the planning of the curriculum is good. Despite the absence of a discrete policy on equal opportunity the school ensures that all pupils have access to all aspects and have opportunities to make progress. A useful whole-school framework is in place to direct when topics are to be taught over a two year rolling programme so that teachers are able to avoid planning repeated learning experiences in mixed-age classes. Since the previous inspection the planning of topics has improved significantly so that the knowledge, skills and understanding related to each subject linked to the topic are clearly identified. This contributes significantly to the progress all pupils make. Wisely where subjects do not naturally link with a topic they are planned separately. The school successfully uses the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for the systematic development of English language and literacy skills. The co-ordinator has suitably supplemented support for breadth of experience in reading and extended independent writing through school-based guidance. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced to support teachers' planning for the systematic development of skills in mathematics. Sound use has been made of schemes of work developed by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority to improve the provision for, and subsequently, the standards achieved in information technology since the previous inspection. Guidance provided in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education has been followed successfully to develop a good scheme of work. Sound planning guidance has been developed for art and music and design and technology. Plans for history and geography are under review. Overall teachers' medium and short-term planning is good. Plans include clear learning objectives that are directly linked to appropriate Programmes of Study. Activities are planned to challenge higher and lower-attaining pupils appropriately. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection and has a significantly positive impact on the attainment and progress of all pupils.
40. A good range of extra-curricular activities such as five-a-side football, seasonal cluster group sports activities and dance and music projects, enriches the curriculum and makes a major contribution to the social and cultural development of all pupils. Educational visits to sites such as Cragside, Beamish and Warkworth and visitors to the school such as artists and historians have a significantly positive impact on the quality of the curricular provision.
41. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Improvement in the systematic teaching of reading skills has been put in place since the previous inspection and there are now clear strengths but some significant weaknesses. The policy document for special educational needs broadly reflects the requirements of the Code of Practice and in addition, articulates the governors' intention to vigorously support those pupils who demonstrate the potential for high attainment. However, in practice, the criteria for placing pupils on the appropriate stage of the school's special educational needs register are not clearly understood. For those pupils already with a Statement of Special Educational Need provision is good.

Detailed individual education plans are devised, appropriate support is in place and regular reviews of progress meet requirements. However, for those pupils with learning difficulties on earlier stages of the special educational needs register, the individual education plans are insufficiently precise to ensure that progress is made in short, measurable steps.

42. Procedures for assessing the attainment of children on entry to the reception class are effective and information from baseline and ongoing assessment strategies is used well to inform planning at all levels. Good assessment procedures are in place to ensure requirements are met at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 and Year 4. The data from statutory tests and a range of standardised tests in English and mathematics from Year 2 to Year 4 is effectively used to monitor the progress of each pupil, enable suitable learning targets to be set and to inform curriculum planning at all levels. Statutory requirements for recording the attainment and progress of pupils have been implemented. Parents are reported to each term and receive an appropriate written report annually.
48. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
43. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a significant contribution to the attainment and progress made by all pupils.
44. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to share their experiences, ideas and feelings and teaching and support staff consistently value these. This significant support for the self-esteem of all pupils is particularly important to those pupils with special educational needs. In areas of the curriculum such as English, religious education and history pupils have opportunity to consider the values, feelings and beliefs held by people of other times and places and to make personal responses from their own experiences. This was well illustrated in the work on the Roman invasion and the subsequent events leading to the death of Queen Boudicca. Assemblies and daily acts of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for pupils to experience a sense of 'belonging' and time to reflect on values and dilemmas common to all. However, except for religious education, the planning of possible opportunities for reflection in areas across the curriculum is at an early stage of development.
45. Good provision is made for moral development. A high priority is placed on equipping pupils with a clear set of moral values. The whole-school policy on behaviour and the management of bullying ensures that rules are practicable, rewards and sanctions are appropriate and that teaching and non-teaching staff have a consistent approach and equally high expectations. Throughout the school pupils learn to recognise right and wrong and the values of honesty and fairness. These values are demonstrated by the personal example of all adults who work with pupils, by direct teaching and through stories and discussion of issues as they arise. Positive behaviour is consistently acknowledged. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled calmly and sensitively and all pupils are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions for themselves and others.
46. Provision for the development of pupils' social skills is good. This has a particularly positive effect on the youngest children and those with special educational needs. All staff demonstrate considerable respect for pupils, raising their self-esteem and confidence in all aspects of school life. Members of staff are good role models for demonstrating social conventions and sensitively use opportunities to directly teach them. The day-to-day interaction within mixed-age classes and the good balance of whole-class and varied group activities organised within lessons supports the development of inter-personal skills well. The development of responsibility is fostered appropriately through opportunities to help with class and school routines such as returning registers to the office, librarian duties and acting as head of table at lunch. An understanding of the special responsibility attached to representing the school is promoted well through the involvement in cluster group activities and a good range of

educational visits. Children under five have suitable opportunities to develop appropriate independence and to make choices from a structured range of activities. However most of the learning activities in the remainder of school are teacher-directed and the development of independence in learning lacks continuity. The school provides a firm foundation for the development of an understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship through acting as hosts to elderly lunch guests each week, a visit to the local magistrates' court and involvement in charity work

47. The provision for cultural development is good. Through subjects in the curriculum pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own culture are fostered well. Pupils experience traditional and modern stories and poetry in English. They learn to empathise with people of other times in history and link past events with customs held today such as, the influence of Roman and Viking invasions in this region. Through religious education pupils learn about the Christian influence which permeates British heritage and begin to understand the beliefs, values and customs that influence the way people of other cultures live. The study of life in a Caribbean village and opportunities to experience, first-hand, the art, music, dance and food of a range of other cultures makes a very significant contribution to the development of their understanding.

53. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

48. Provision for pupils' support, guidance and general welfare remains effective, and continues to make a positive contribution to the quality of their education. Pupils are secure and happy in their work and play, and all adults work well together to provide a caring and supportive environment for them. Children under five and their parents are sensitively introduced into the school and given clear guidance about its routines and expectations. Pupils in Year 4 are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education. Almost all parents believe that their children like coming to school and are well supported by staff
49. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are mostly informal, but effective. Praise and rewards are used appropriately to encourage effort and good behaviour, and significant achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways. The special end-of-year Awards Ceremony is a notable example of this. Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress and achievements as they move through the school are also good. In mathematics and in English they are very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, although targets identified in individual education plans are often imprecise.
50. The school has good procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour and discipline, and since the last inspection an appropriate behaviour policy has been implemented. Rewards and sanctions are used fairly, and a simple, but effective, code of conduct ensures pupils' thoughtful and orderly conduct around school. Clear guidelines are in place to deal with bullying. Any reported incidents are taken seriously and dealt with satisfactorily.
51. Registers are not always properly maintained. Some are completed ahead of time. They are, however monitored regularly, and satisfactory arrangements are in place to investigate any unexplained absence. Levels of attendance are reported appropriately to parents.
52. Pupils' general welfare is promoted successfully. The local authority's guidelines have been adopted for child protection and the headteacher has designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies. A suitable health and safety policy is in place and risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis. Standards of cleaning are very high and the building is in good repair. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day and lunchtime arrangements are well managed. As a result the school functions as a calm and orderly community. Arrangements for dealing with accidents and illness are good, and emergency equipment is serviced regularly.

58. **Partnership with parents and the community**

53. Strong links have been maintained with parents since the last inspection. Parents actively support their children's learning at home, and most indicate that they appreciate the amount and balance of homework set. They feel welcome in school and a few regularly give up their time to help with various classroom activities. When they do so, they are well organised and used effectively. Many others accompany educational visits. A clear home-school agreement has been produced and sent to parents. The Parent Teachers' Association remains active and gives very generous support to the school in a number of ways. Recently for example, it has donated computer equipment and an overhead projector.

54. Communications with parents are good. They are kept well informed about life in the school through regular newsletters, and also receive advance notice from teachers about the work done in class. Parents are well satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress. Written annual reports are generally informative. They give an indication of progress made and set targets for improvement, although these are often too general. At other times, parents find teachers very approachable if they have any worries or concerns, and consider that matters raised are handled well. The prospectus is satisfactory, but the governors' annual report has a number of omissions. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about developments and invited to review meetings.

55. Links with the local community remain very good and continue to have a positive impact on pupils' education. Effective use is made of the surrounding environment to support classwork and enhance pupils' understanding of their local heritage. Pupils make detailed studies of the village in history and geography, and have taken part in a local project involved with making the Alnmouth Maps. Their experiences are also broadened through a wide range of visitors. Notable examples of this are the artists in residence, who worked with pupils to produce a pictorial history of the locality in Malawian batik and a Japanese student who helped with their studies of Eastern culture. Pupils' personal and social development is enhanced when they take part in various activities with other schools in the cluster and through well-established links with local elderly residents. Generous support for charity and the distribution of harvest gifts in the locality raises pupils' awareness of the needs of others and promotes citizenship.

61.

**THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

61. **Leadership and management**

56. The school's leadership and management has been the driving force behind the school's improvement, including the effectiveness of its response to the previous inspection. Almost all weaknesses have been overcome to levels which inspectors judge to be at least satisfactory.

57. The leadership of the school provides very good educational direction. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and, in spite of a full-time teaching commitment, has addressed the task of continuous school improvement with determination, energy and considerable competence. Her leadership is caring and supportive, and her agenda for the school's development is characterised by careful prioritising and pacing. She is supported well by a committed staff in whom she has succeeded in developing a very strong and unified team spirit.

58. Governors continue to play an important part in the life of the school and carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively. They are well informed, highly supportive and continue to

act as critical friends of the school. Members of the school's governing body have attended courses in order to familiarise themselves more with their responsibilities, as national initiatives have continued to develop. These have included courses on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as attendance at meetings organised by the local authority. The impact of these courses is evident in the work undertaken by governors. They have a very clear understanding of their role and are involved at all levels of school life. There are appropriate policy-making committees, which continue to be effective. The governors' role in the strategic management of the school is very good.

59. The expertise of the staff has been directed towards priorities related to raising standards. The headteacher monitors the quality of education well by tracking the attainment and progress of all pupils in the medium and longer term. This arrangement helps to ensure that the quality of education is continually improving. The governors' role in holding the school to account for the standards it achieves and the quality of education the school provides is well developed.
60. Subject co-ordinators play an important part in the management and leadership of the curriculum. They carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently and contribute their individual strengths to the work of the school. This has been a contributory factor to the high standards attained by most pupils. All subjects are managed to standards which inspectors judge to be at least satisfactory. English, mathematics, science, information technology, and religious education are all managed well. Planning for future improvement is well developed in all of these subjects, and especially in mathematics. Teachers with responsibilities for curriculum areas also give good advice and support to colleagues. They evaluate standards across the school through staff meetings and examination of teachers' plans. The ways in which the progress and attainment of pupils is managed in literacy and numeracy is very effective. However, co-ordinators' views of standards of attainment are limited because they do not monitor the quality of teaching in sufficient detail.
61. The management of special educational needs is underdeveloped. This is because pupils' individual education plans are not detailed enough nor are they used effectively in classrooms. Whilst the plans are monitored, the process is not sufficiently rigorous, and not enough effective guidance is provided for colleagues.
62. The headteacher, governors and staff have an agreed set of aims and values which are supported by parents and form the basis of a shared sense of purpose. They influence the work of all staff and express high expectations of values and of what pupils are expected to achieve.
63. The school has monitored its progress very well since the last inspection. There is a shared sense of determination to succeed and move forward. In terms of literacy and numeracy, all staff understand the targets which have been set.
64. Planning for school development is very good. The previous report stated that 'school development planning successfully links in-service training to objectives agreed by the whole staff', and this continues to be the case, although improvement was noted in a few areas. The plan is a well-produced document; it is detailed, thorough and comprehensive. It provides staff and governors with a very clear overview of planned initiatives which reflect fully the current identified needs of the school, as well as longer-term needs as the school continues to develop. The plan continues to be successful because there are direct links between the targets which have been identified on the school's development plan and the school budget. As a result the school is able to check on the effectiveness of its planned initiatives, and set realistic targets for continued improvement.
65. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good. The headteacher and staff have been successful in developing the positive ethos reported at the time of the last inspection. The



school's ethos is very good. Pupils work hard and high standards of behaviour and attainment are expected. This ethos is the result of a whole staff approach, and parents appreciate the values implicit in the ethos. The very good relationships and the commitment to high standards of provision and service are apparent throughout the school. Staff and pupils work in a stimulating environment with equal opportunities for boys and girls. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and indicate that the school is very well placed for further improvement.

**71. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

66. The school has an appropriate number of suitably qualified teaching staff to effectively meet the demands of the recommended curriculum for children under five, the subjects of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for religious education for pupils in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. All teachers carry multiple curriculum co-ordination responsibilities so that, inevitably, some responsibilities do not reflect initial training. However all staff have clearly documented job-descriptions that are adhered to and regularly reviewed. They have developed a very effective collaborative approach to the work of the school.
67. Special educational needs support staff are suitably qualified and work effectively to meet the needs of pupils as required. Effective administration, caretaking and ancillary staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school and quality of the learning environment provided for all pupils. All staff and much-valued voluntary helpers work well together and are committed to achieving the aims of the school. This makes a major contribution to the ethos of the school.
68. Procedures for the professional development of staff are good. An appropriate policy and cycle of appraisal is in place through which agreed objectives for development are identified. In-service training has been provided to support the implementation of national initiatives. The confidence with which teachers manage the literacy and numeracy hours illustrates the positive impact of in-service training on the quality of education, teaching and pupils' progress. Although there are useful handbooks to inform staff about the routines of school there is no induction policy to provide clear strategies for the support of staff new to the profession. This has a limiting effect on the quality of support for such teachers.
69. The accommodation provided at the school is good. Classrooms are of good size, suitably organised to support a practical curriculum and allow for the important provision of a central library and resource area. The display around school enriches the learning environment as it celebrates pupils' achievement and records a rich variety of experiences. The school enjoys spacious outdoor facilities. The varied hard and planted areas provide well for vigorous play, quiet activities and are a valuable resource for environmental studies. However there is no secure outdoor area for children under five to engage in vigorous and imaginative purposeful play.
70. Overall the range and quality of learning resources are satisfactory. Good resources have been provided for English, mathematics, science and information technology. To support the work in religious education the school has access to religious artefacts within the cluster group and is developing a bank of artefacts within school. Resources for non-core subjects are broadly satisfactory. They are generally organised effectively and are accessible to both pupils and staff.

**The efficiency of the school**

71. Financial management is good. This has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Financial planning is based on good current data and sound projections. The school's development plan identifies priorities for the current year and where appropriate, the priorities have explicit targets and associated costs. The use of funds to invest in literacy and numeracy are effective. Governors receive regular financial reports which are used to monitor expenditure and consider future needs. Taken together these factors means that the school is able to check how effective it is in raising standards and continuing to provide a good quality of education for its pupils.

72. Teaching and support staff continue to be used well. Teaching staff are efficient and take their responsibilities seriously. All teachers have co-ordination responsibilities and other staff are deployed effectively. Good use is made of ancillary staff and volunteer parental help; their use to support pupils is effective. All of these factors have a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.
73. The school continues to make good use of its accommodation and resources. There are many strengths in the efficiency with which resources are used. For example, the headteacher and staff effectively monitor and evaluate the work across the whole school. Curricular time is used well, with little or no time lost during the course of the working day. Staff make efficient use of the accommodation, both inside and out. They are efficient in their own classrooms; there is a high proportion of satisfactory and good teaching, and pupils' progress is good. This represents an efficient use of resources. Furthermore, the governors have ensured that the building is well decorated and in a good state of repair. The building meets all health and safety requirements.
74. The school has good procedures for financial control. Secure systems of budget control and expenditure are in place. The school makes good use of computerised financial systems and finances are kept in good order. Governors receive regular financial reports which are used to monitor expenditure and consider future needs. Routine administration and financial control procedures are carried out effectively by the headteacher and school secretary. Administration gives support to the running of the school and supports the endeavours of teachers.
75. Children enter Hipsburn First School with average levels of attainment. They receive a good quality of education and, as a result, make good progress throughout the school. By the time they leave at the age of nine, most pupils are attaining high standards in English, mathematics and science. When taking into account all other factors, including the high cost per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

76. Children enter the reception class in the year in which they will become five. Most of the children have had some pre-school experience in a play-group privately organised within the school building. Overall children's skills and understanding in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development are in line with those expected of children between the ages of four and five.

#### **82. Personal and social development**

77. By the age of five children's level of development is above the expected levels. The well-organised induction procedures ensure that most children enter reception with a good measure of confidence and they continue to make good progress. After only half a term in school all the children are coping well with the routines of school life. When they reach statutory school age children have a well-established understanding of right and wrong and an increasing understanding of the consequences of their own actions for themselves and others. They have an appropriate understanding of social conventions and relate well not only to each other but, to unfamiliar adults visiting their classroom. All children work and play co-operatively and are able to share and take turns. This was very well illustrated when they were trying to make bark rubbings on a very windy afternoon. They settle to tasks promptly and sustain concentration, for instance, for however long it takes to build a whole village with a railway spanning a river and then colouring in where the fields will be. Most children respond well to opportunities to make choices for themselves and are able to use and clear away equipment responsibly.

#### **83. Language and literacy**

78. By the age of five most of the children have developed language and literacy skills above those expected at that age. They are able to listen attentively to stories and rhymes. They follow instructions given individually and as a class group and respond to open and closed questions appropriately, often extending their explanations. They readily talk about their experiences, ideas and feelings to each other and adults who work with them. This was well illustrated by two children discussing what was needed to overcome the problem of a missing railway bridge support. Children make good progress in developing a personal vocabulary that they understand and can use. This is reflected in their speaking, reading and writing skills. They know how books are organised, talk about the pictures and from them interpret the story content in some detail, giving reasoned guesses as to what might happen next. They understand that print in books and that which they see around them carries meaning. At five most children recognise a number of simple, frequently recurring words and through a structured phonic programme recognise an increasing number of letter shapes and associated sounds. By five children are able to write their name, record a visit or retell the story of the three little pigs through pictures, some copied words or their own words made of letter-like shapes. Higher-attaining pupils use their early phonic knowledge to write independently.

#### **84. Mathematics**

79. By the age of five most children have developed a range of knowledge, skills and understanding above those expected of children of this age. Most children sort objects according to size, colour and shape and match sets of objects one to one. They readily recognise repeated patterns, can continue them and create simple sequences of their own. All children make good progress in acquiring numeracy skills. They confidently count objects to ten and most recognise the associated numerals. Through practical experiences they make good progress in developing

an understanding of addition and subtraction and by the age of five record simple addition activities. Children use mathematical language with increasing confidence and accuracy when, for instance, describing features observed in the school grounds in terms associated with regular two and three-dimensional shapes.

85. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

80. Overall by the time children enter Key Stage 1 they have a knowledge and understanding of the world which is above age-related expectations. They are aware that in every-day life changes take place over time. They recognise the changes in their own lives since birth and observe and record the growth of plants and what they need to grow best. Through practical observation the children are clearly aware of their home and school environment, and the special features of living by a river and the sea. They have an increasing understanding of the meaning of plans and maps. Children use a range of construction equipment to represent what they know about the world. Through these children make plans, choose materials and solve problems. Two groups of children, for example, when constructing rail-tracks spanning a river or road, demonstrated a significant degree of ingenuity and ability to collaborate in designing supporting arches. Children manage computer equipment with a good measure of skill and confidence. They use a 'mouse' to 'drag' chosen elements from one position on screen to another and several children can confidently return to a menu and select a different program for themselves.

86. **Physical development**

81. By the age of five children's physical development is in line with age-related expectations. Most children move around the indoor and outdoor areas with appropriate awareness of space and the position of themselves and others in it. They can control movement appropriately when, for instance, lowering themselves to the floor from a standing position, curling up and rolling to a new position. Most can jump from two feet to one foot, change direction and land lightly. Fine motor skills are suitably developed in the daily opportunities to handle such tools as, pencils and scissors, and to use construction equipment and malleable materials.

87. **Creative development**

82. Children enjoy these activities and make sound progress overall. Most children already confidently name primary colours and know that these can be mixed together to make a greater range of colours. They use a range of collage materials and draw portraits of themselves using pastels. When exploring the technique of printing all the children observed made considered choices when selecting materials and deciding where and how they needed to place each print in order to create a pattern. This was particularly well illustrated by a child totally engrossed in refining her technique over a significantly long time and her quiet display of pleasure on completion. Children enjoy opportunities for role-play but of those observed few became absorbed in imaginative activity or sustain involvement for long. It was not possible to observe other creative activities but from planning documentation it is clear that children have appropriate opportunity to make progress in music making through singing and exploring the qualities of non-tuned instruments.

88. **THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

83. Overall the quality of provision for children under five is good.

84. The quality of teaching is good with a few instances of very good teaching observed. This makes a significant contribution to the progress all children under five make. It is characterised by the secure knowledge and understanding of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of

this age and, in particular, the secure knowledge of how young children learn. Using day-to-day assessment, lessons are planned with clear learning objectives that reflect the natural links between the recommended areas of learning. Activities are well planned to meet objectives and challenge children appropriately. Teacher intervention as children work is purposefully and pertinently directed to extend children's language, expression of ideas and problem solving strategies. The teacher demonstrates considerable respect for the children and support for their personal and social development permeates all activities.

85. The management of provision for children under five is good overall and has a positive impact on the progress all children make. Although there is no discrete policy currently in place, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. It includes all of the recommended areas of learning and is planned systematically to achieve the agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes and provide a smooth transition to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This represents an important improvement since the previous inspection. Procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of children under five are good. Baseline assessment is used appropriately on entry and progress is continually tracked. The information from assessment activities is used effectively to inform planning at all levels. Overall resources are satisfactory. However, the lack of an appropriately equipped secure area for vigorous, imaginative play has a limiting effect on the progress of some of the less mature children.

## 91. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

86. At the end of Key Stage 1 the overall attainment of pupils in Year 2 in English is above average. Pupils throughout the key stage make good progress. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 continue to make good progress and inspection evidence indicates that they are on target to attain well above average standards. This confirms the trend of improving standards over the last three years and that improvements have been made since the last inspection.
87. Inspection findings broadly reflect the 1999 Key Stage 1 statutory assessment test results. At that time the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or Level 3 in reading was well above the national average and in writing it was above. However it is important to note that when comparing the school's performance with national statistics the cohorts in the school are relatively small.
88. Overall, at the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have established good speaking and listening skills. During a paired activity exchanging accounts of holiday events pupils listened attentively and respectfully to each other and, when speaking, organised what they had to say in appropriate sequence and included detail which would sustain the interest of the listener. Most Year 2 pupils follow relatively complex instructions competently. Year 4 pupils maintain good listening habits. They explain their thinking with a good measure of fluency using a substantial vocabulary of technical language with confidence. They demonstrate a growing awareness of the need to hold the attention of the listener by varying speed and tone when reading aloud. Many already show a developing understanding of when it is appropriate to use standard and non-standard English.
89. Pupils throughout the school make at least satisfactory progress with a significant minority making good progress in speaking and listening. They enter the key stage with good listening skills. In Year 1 they listen attentively to stories, explanations and instructions and are very anxious to be involved in answering questions and talking about their experiences. As they move through the key stage they make good progress in acquiring an ever-increasing vocabulary that they can understand and use. In Year 3 speaking and listening habits are

sustained and children expect to discuss their work using technical language such as, 'verbs', 'phrases', and 'alliteration'. The progress all pupils make owes much to the consistent provision teachers make for them to contribute orally in all areas of the curriculum and the value they place on what pupils have to say.

90. At the end of Key Stage 1 the overall attainment of pupils in reading is above average. By the time pupils leave the school most are attaining in line with age-related expectations and a significant minority attain beyond this. The results of standardised tests reflect this judgement. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have a good knowledge of individual and combined letter sounds and a suitable range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They recognise punctuation conventions and use these to support fluency and understanding. Pupils talk about the plot and characters in stories and from the context predict what might happen next. They know terms such as fiction and non-fiction and that content and index tables help them to find information quickly. By the time pupils leave the school most use their increasing knowledge of more complex phonic rules so that they read for information and pleasure with a good measure of confidence and accuracy. They are able to discuss what they read, express personal preferences and make comparisons. Pupils know about basic library organisation and information retrieval strategies but opportunities for them to systematically build up these skills are sometimes overlooked.
91. Good progress is made in reading. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with good early reading skills and in Year 1 they quickly gain a good range of frequently occurring words which they recognise and an increasing knowledge of letter sounds. Using these and clues found in pictures and the story content they successfully establish meaning and gain confidence and fluency as they move through the key stage. In Years 3 and 4 the systematic teaching of more complex phonic rules and the frequent opportunities to discuss what they read with the teacher supports pupils' progress. This approach represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
92. At Key Stage 1 overall attainment in writing is well above average. By the time pupils leave the school most are attaining well above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes. They use suitable structure when, for instance, writing stories, a poem about what is behind the dustbin, a recipe for buns or a book review. Most pupils are able to spell simple words phonetically and make reasonable attempts at more complex words as phonic knowledge increases. Pupils know about basic punctuation required for writing sentences and use it to an appropriate level. Higher-attaining pupils use speech marks in their stories with a good measure of success. Most pupils use a clear print script and are developing a joined script. By the time pupils leave the school they have experienced writing for a wide range of purposes as diverse as, a news report on Queen Boudicca, informal letters of thanks, a poem related to World War II and play scripts. These demonstrate an age-appropriate knowledge of punctuation and grammar. Higher-attaining pupils use words imaginatively. For example, in a re-working of 'The Ugly Duckling' a pupil wrote the duckling, 'could feel a greater joy in all the loveliness and good fortune that was ahead...'. Sentences are constructed for effect as in 'I felt terrified, devastated, horrified'. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics appropriately when spelling but irregular spellings are less secure.
93. Good progress is made in writing throughout the school. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 well able to record their ideas using pictures, copied words and their developing knowledge of sounds to make words independently. In Year 1 they develop an understanding of the basic conventions associated with writing accounts of events, stories or sets of instructions. Direct teaching of phonic knowledge ensures that sound progress is made in spelling over the key stage. In Years 3 pupils often use learned writing techniques well in subjects across the curriculum. For example letters of thanks were written following a visit to a boat yard; pupils empathise with a bronze-age child whose 'most prized possession is a bronze short sword' and a Viking stowaway watches as, 'The Saxon dropped dead, his blood turning the sand around him to red'. Although

handwriting is taught systematically the process is too protracted and opportunities to directly teach basic elements of good presentation are overlooked.

94. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. The National Literacy Strategy provides a structured approach to the development of reading and writing skills and this represents a significant improvement in provision for all lower-attaining pupils since the previous inspection. However the planning of individual education programmes to meet the specific needs of some pupils with special educational needs is insufficiently precise to ensure that they make progress in short steps which can be measured by pupil, parent and teacher.
95. Pupils throughout the school show consistently good attitudes to English. This has a very positive impact on the progress all pupils make. They enjoy reading and handle books responsibly. Most pupils enjoy whole-class activities and are eager to answer questions and contribute ideas to discussions. They settle to tasks quickly, are able to work alone or collaboratively and sustain attention for relatively long periods. However few pupils are concerned to take care with the presentation of their work.
96. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and makes a major contribution to the attainment and progress of all pupils. Where teaching is best teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They consistently reinforce appropriate terminology when talking with pupils about their work. Planning of lessons is clearly linked to the National Curriculum and suitable use is made of National Literacy Strategy advice in defining precise objectives. Good use is made of a balance of whole-class and group organisation to support good pace and to meet the needs of mixed-age and ability groups. The identification of success criteria for each ability group clarifies, for pupils, the purpose of the activity and what they must and possibly could achieve. In class sessions open and closed questioning is used pertinently to include a range of pupils in discussion and time is given for them to think before answering. Weaknesses occur when whole-class sessions become protracted and the opportunities to teach skills to improve presentation are overlooked. Teachers provide good opportunities to use literacy skills across the curriculum.
97. The co-ordinator has developed a sound policy to ensure the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and has successfully implemented the advice of the National Literacy Strategy. Where concerns have arisen, regarding the provision of opportunities for the development of extended writing and reading, the school has made suitable provision. Assessment procedures are good and used to track the progress of all pupils and as a tool to monitor the curriculum. This quality of provision has a significantly positive impact on the attainment and progress of all pupils.
98. Overall resources for this subject are good. Good use has been made of funding to implement the National Literacy Strategy. Books are of good quality and organised to ensure access for pupils and teachers. The library is used well to encourage pupils to borrow books but insufficiently used to systematically provide opportunities for older pupils to practise independent research skills.

## **Mathematics**

99. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with above average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 4 standards are well above national expectations and pupils are making good progress throughout this key stage. In Key Stage 1, National Curriculum test results for 1999 show that the percentage of seven year olds attaining the expected Level 2 or above was very high when compared with all schools and also with schools in similar social contexts. These high

standards have been maintained since 1998 and represent an overall improvement since the previous inspection. Whilst the numbers of pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 were below the national average when compared with all schools, and average when compared with similar schools in 1999, the numbers of pupils in the year groups are quite small which means that great care needs to be taken when interpreting the data from national tests and assessments. Nevertheless, scrutiny of test data over time indicates that pupils in both key stages make good progress in all aspects of mathematics during their time at school. Whilst it is still early in the school year, the evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are on target to achieve similarly high standards by the end of this year.

100. On entry to Key Stage 1 pupils can make simple sets of unit numbers. By the end of the key stage they are able to make sets of shapes, showing sets without vertices and sets with some square faces. They recognise and name shapes in two dimensions such as square, circle, pentagon and hexagon, and solid shapes such as sphere, cuboid and cylinder. Many complete addition and subtraction of two digit numbers up to 100 and show a good understanding of place value. Many count in twos, fives and tens. They collect and record data, and make graphs with accurate scales.
101. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine, they have a good understanding of the relationships between vulgar, decimal and percentage fractions. They accurately measure to make pie charts and frequency graphs, and many pupils comment upon and interpret their findings when data handling. Pupils recognise and name angles such as 'acute', 'obtuse' and 'reflex' and draw and describe 'parallel' and 'perpendicular' lines. Many pupils have good skills in number and carry out mental calculations quickly and with accuracy. They understand terms such as 'probability', 'average' and 'range'.
102. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in mental mathematics. The youngest pupils count accurately words to ten. As they move through Year 2, most can accurately count a set of 20 objects. They count in twos and are aware of the differences between odd and even numbers which are developed further in Years 3 and 4. Pupils make good progress in solving problems. For example throughout Key Stage 1 many pupils are able to organise and check their own work, and most pupils further develop these skills during Years 3 and 4. Throughout both key stages pupils with the potential for higher attainment develop accuracy in their predictions based on their own experience. All pupils make similarly good progress in number. The youngest pupils in the key stage count orally to ten and beyond accurately. They are further developing an understanding of place value and know that 34 is made up of three tens and a four. Pupils' skills of estimating are developing well. The youngest pupils in the key stage make sensible estimates of a number of objects up to ten. Throughout both key stages pupils are developing an ability to construct graphs, which range from pictograms at the beginning of the key stage, to block and line graphs in Years 3 and 4. Their knowledge and understanding of money is also developing well. Pupils make similarly good progress in classifying data.
103. Pupils have good attitudes and approach their work positively. The vast majority of pupils apply themselves diligently to tasks, are polite in their response to teachers' questions and co-operate well with each other. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good, and are a major contributory factor to the high standards achieved. Pupils tackle problems without giving up, as for example when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed devising strategies for identifying odd and even numbers. Pupils co-operate well with each other when working in small groups. This again is a feature of all mathematics lessons and contributes to pupils' self-confidence and to their skills of literacy.
104. The overall quality of teaching is good. Of the four lessons observed, three were good and one was judged to be very good. All lessons are characterised by very good planning which is



clearly focused and contributes to the raising of standards of attainment. Work is matched very closely to pupils' needs, and learning intentions are precise: pupils appreciate them, so that teachers and pupils share a greater sense of purpose and awareness of making progress. Very effective planning and lesson preparation provides for a range of teaching methods which ensures that pupils are kept adequately challenged and that learning progresses as much as possible in the time available. In almost all lessons, teachers interact very well with pupils and there is mutual respect between teacher and learner. This allows pupils to gain in confidence and happens in most lessons at both key stages. This was particularly well demonstrated in a lesson in which pupils from Years 3 and 4 were working with strategies for identifying odd and even numbers and came to the front of the class and explained the reasons for their answers to their classmates. Pupils are encouraged and supported, and teachers are adept at asking the right question of the right pupil at the right time. This happens in many lessons and particularly in mental mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Used well, as in lessons throughout both key stages, questions identify weaknesses or reinforce knowledge and understanding, and provide a firm foundation for further progress. Small group work and individualised work are effective approaches when pupils need to practise their skills or collaborate. Small groups of pupils often work together effectively and gain in understanding by the exchange of ideas. This happens in all successful lessons, although it is best demonstrated when pupils in Year 1 were selecting numbers on a grid so that each row, column and diagonal added to the number 6. One overall area of weakness, however, is in the marking of pupils' work. Teachers always mark and correct pupils' work. However, they do not always identify the errors pupils make nor tell them what they need to do to correct them.

105. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with the potential for higher attainment, make overall satisfactory progress. However, although pupils who find learning difficult have individual education plans they are not sufficiently detailed so they can learn by short, measurable steps.
106. Pupils' recording of their work contributes to the development of their literacy skills. Speaking and listening skills are developed very well through class discussion at the start and end of lessons. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of numeracy and the application of mathematics in 'real situations'.
107. The school follows the national guidelines for numeracy. In line with the priorities of the school development plan, mathematics is currently the curriculum area on which attention is focused. The commercial scheme previously used by the school is being phased out and discussions are underway among the staff to evaluate other, more relevant material as the basis of a school scheme. Other factors contributing to high levels of achievement are the effective leadership of the co-ordinator who has developed several initiatives to further raise standards. For example, the use of target setting and the systematic monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress over time has been developed to a very sophisticated level. These initiatives help to identify pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and ensure that future planning is based firmly on pupils' prior attainment. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator is also effective. Taking all of these factors together, the co-ordinator is able to ensure that the quality of education is continually improving. Resources are good, in quantity and quality. Those purchased recently for practical work are particularly effective.
113. **Science**
108. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with overall attainment that is above average. The results of the most recent teachers' assessment indicate that, at the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards are very high. Inspection findings broadly reflect these findings. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 standards are well above average. This is an improvement since the last

inspection when attainment was judged to be average overall and sometimes better than average. Progress is good throughout the school. The raising of standards is due to effective assessment, good teaching, and high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve.

109. Pupils in Year 2 know the names of the main parts of a plant; they understand the meaning of 'pollen', 'stamen', and 'stem'. They know what a seed is, and understand the basic requirements for plant growth. They use simple equipment such as rulers and measuring tapes, to make observations about plant growth, and almost all of them can say whether their findings are as they would expect. Pupils understand the meaning of a 'life cycle' and recognise the characteristics of young creatures such as chickens. Most pupils identify the main stages in the lives of specific creatures. They know whether objects are 'transparent', 'translucent' or 'opaque', and relate the properties of materials to their use. Almost all pupils understand that some materials can be changed irreversibly by heating. Pupils in Year 2 understand the term 'vibrating', and they know when they use a sound box and tubes, it helps them to understand better, high and low tones. They recognise the principles of a fair test. Pupils understand how the water cycle works, and many know the differences between some of the world's climates.
110. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine, almost all of them recognise the need for a fair test and make predictions where appropriate. This allows them to make appropriate hypotheses such as deciding from a range of liquids, the one which is most beneficial to humans' teeth. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the need for a complete circuit in order for an electrical device to work. They understand terms such as fuses and jump leads and use these words appropriately. They effectively carry out investigations to find out the effects of various forces. In their studies of living things, they classify materials into groups according to their properties. For example, when studying the swan, they can describe its flight pattern as laboured. They know its colour, its approximate measurements and the type of food it prefers. When studying physical processes, pupils understand cause and effect in simple examinations of phenomena, as for example, when they are conducting experiments to show that light can be reflected with mirrors.
111. Pupils make good progress in investigation skills in Year 1, predicting and modifying their ideas when investigating the ways in which sunflower seeds and beans grows. In Year 2. pupils identify the need to repeat an investigation to be sure results are representative, and use correct scientific vocabulary in context, for example, 'forces', 'circuits' and 'life cycles'. Pupils in Year 1 are developing appropriate skills in collecting and classifying data. They use information gained in experiments designed to investigate the use of human senses, produce relevant data using appropriate measurements and units, record it in tables and present their finding in the form of graphs. By the end of the key stage, good progress is made in pupils knowledge of the weather.
112. Good progress is maintained throughout Key Stage 2. Teachers continue to provide pupils with opportunities to be involved in first-hand practical activities. This enables pupils to suitably develop their scientific knowledge and understanding whilst also developing further the progress made in using their investigative skills. This was evident when pupils from Year 3 investigated the properties of soil and were able to draw appropriate conclusions. Pupils in Year 3 extend their ability to make predictions and use this as a basis for planning a fair test in activities involving friction, and in experiments to determine the strength of the structures of various types of bridges. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress in their ability to group and sort materials according to given criteria. Pupils are learning how to use a wider range of scientific equipment and a more extended scientific vocabulary to explain their ideas and actions.
113. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with the potential for higher attainment, make satisfactory and often good progress. Teachers know their pupils well, there is good parental support, and the very detailed planning ensures good provision.

114. Science supports literacy in all years through research, discussion, recording and presentation of investigations. Good use is made of key words so that pupils systematically build a wide scientific vocabulary. Numeracy is supported through pupils using a range of measurements, in their experiments.
115. Pupils' attitudes are good. They are well behaved and work responsibly, as for example, when they are engaged in practical discussion in groups and in the sharing of equipment. Pupils sustain concentration in carrying out investigations responsibly and in the completion of written work. This enables teachers to complete the scheme of work in sufficient detail in order to further raise standards of attainment.
116. The overall quality of teaching is good. Out of the lessons observed, one was judged to be good and the other, very good. The best features of the lessons were good subject knowledge, as for example, in the class of pupils from Years 3 and 4, which enabled the teacher to challenge and develop pupils' understanding of materials which are attracted to magnets. This secure knowledge ensured that the teacher was able to structure the class discussion and use pupils' existing skills and knowledge so they could make hypotheses about the nature of a fair test. Teachers plan well and ensure that work is appropriate to pupils' age and ability.
117. Other factors which have contributed to pupils' high standards are the headteacher who co-ordinates science and has a clear vision of how the subject will continue to develop. She has had a significant effect on raising standards through raising the profile of the subject and the review of the recent scheme of work so that it is more closely linked with the new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's exemplar scheme of work. Work is now more closely related to pupils' age and ability than when the school was previously inspected, and the progression of what pupils have to do is more clearly identified. Systematic assessment identifies pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and ensures that planning is based on pupils' prior attainment. Pupils have also benefited from increased learning resources which are of good quality and were purchased following an audit of resources two years ago.

123. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

123.

**Information technology**

118. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and also when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. This is an improvement, at both key stages, since the previous inspection. Most pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages.
119. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils know that 'shift keys' make capital letters and many can operate a variety of function keys. They can use a mouse (an electronic pointing device) to select items. Pupils edit their work appropriately and redraft text. In handling information, many pupils understand databases and use relevant programs to help them. Pupils use sorting to classify objects when they study science. When developing routines for controlling shapes, patterns and models, pupils use all four arrow keys and when talking with pupils they explain how they are able to move a programmable toy to a pre-determined place.
120. At the end of Year 4, pupils understand and use correct terminology, for example 'icon', 'drive', 'hard disk', 'folder' and 'directory'. When word processing, pupils use a mouse to highlight blocks of text; pupils in Year 4 use techniques of cutting and pasting to re-order pieces of work. Many pupils experiment with the size of fonts for different purposes. A small number of pupils can use the spell-checker effectively. Pupils use their word processing skills to write stories and reports in English as well as in topics in geography and history. Many pupils are

independent users of commonly available graphics software. They combine images and text in their topic work to produce materials for specific audiences.

121. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1. They are developing appropriate subject specific language. Skills of communicating information by using a word processor are developing as they should. For example, pupils in Year 1 produce individual writing on the screen. The youngest pupils in the key stage are developing good skills of controlling the mouse, and their keyboard skills are developing well. As they progress through the key stage, pupils move the cursor around and make simple corrections to punctuation and grammar. Throughout the key stage pupils are developing routines for controlling shapes. Year 1 pupils make sound progress in sorting, classifying and interpreting data.
122. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils are provided with opportunities to change and edit their first drafts. During the key stage pupils are becoming more confident in using the mouse to highlight blocks of text. As pupils progress through Years 3 and 4, many can print out graphs without adult support. Pupils in Year 4 are developing their understanding of how data is stored on a computer.
123. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall in relation to their prior attainment. This is due to teachers' improved subject knowledge since the previous inspection, good planning of information technology in lessons which takes account of the needs of pupils of differing abilities, and good levels of support during lessons by support staff.
124. Teachers plan carefully for the use of computers. In almost all classrooms pupils use computers appropriately across the curriculum, including literacy and numeracy. Pupils are frequently placed in situations where they become increasingly confident and independent users of information technology. This happens particularly in Year 4. Structured opportunities allow pupils to gain the necessary skills and experience required by the National Curriculum and there are a few strong areas of coverage, particularly in word processing. Computers are often used as an integral part of the lesson. Information technology is used appropriately in English, science, mathematics and art.
125. Pupils' attitudes are good. At both key stages pupils listen attentively and their level of interest is high. Across the school, pupils are safe in handling equipment and generally behave well. Many are willing to explore the potential of software to solve problems. Levels of concentration are good at all times; pupils persevere with their tasks and co-operate well with each other. Taken together, these features have a positive effect on pupils' self-esteem, and on their levels of attainment and overall satisfactory progress.
126. Insufficient teaching was observed to make an overall judgement. However, teachers' planning indicates that lessons are consistently planned well, and that planning builds successfully on pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. In these lessons, pupils have the ability to carry out tasks effectively, and teachers encourage pupils to become independent users of information technology. These features are particularly evident in Years 3 and 4.
127. Several significant features contribute to pupils' sound progress and appropriate standards. All staff have received training to develop further their skills in information technology. The management of information technology is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and has a very clear picture of how the subject will continue to develop. She is supported well by one of the school governors. There is a useful policy and the school's development plan for information technology is of a high quality. There is a computer in every classroom and learning resources, especially computers, are good. The quality and quantity of software is good and it is used well.

## Religious education

128. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 is in line with the age-related expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make sound progress as they move through the school.
129. At Key Stage 1 pupils know that Jesus is the Son of God and are aware of the stories of His birth and death and the associated celebrations Christians keep. Pupils know that through the stories of Jesus' life Christians know how God wants believers to live. They know that within the Christian tradition there are people who have shown special qualities in their lives and are known as saints. They know that Saint Cuthbert lived part of his life in this region and that we know of his life because Saint Bede recorded the oral accounts of people who knew Cuthbert. Pupils are aware of the importance to believers of belonging to a community, that churches are where believers worship and that this involves special ceremonies. By the time pupils leave the school they have a basic understanding of the beliefs of Judaism and Hinduism. They know that these beliefs have elements in common. For example they identify the common features of festivals and celebrations such as Hannukha, Diwali and Christmas. They know that the Bible and the Torah are sources of authority and that religious communities have artefacts, such as the cross, menorah and star of David, that have special significance in worship and everyday customs.
130. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with an appropriate awareness that groups have expectations about how members will behave towards one another. They understand that special occasions are celebrated regularly and involve gifts, special food, parties and often special clothes as, for example when babies are baptised. In Year 1 the significance of Bible stories is developed and the relationship of the stories to their own experiences is explored. In Year 3 pupils are introduced to other major faiths. From Old Testament stories they learn about the major figures in Judaism, the source of the commandments and customs and practices kept today.
131. Pupils show good attitudes to religious education and this makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They are eager to contribute to discussion and to be involved in group activities.
132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The strengths of the observed teaching included the setting of clear learning objectives that are directly linked to the agreed syllabus. Criteria by which success is to be judged are identified. Suitable links are made with what has been taught previously. Provision is made for pupils to be involved in the development of the lesson through discussion and their contributions are clearly valued. Weaknesses occur when resources are not appropriate for the purpose as, for instance, when a text used with the whole group is too small and when quiet, inappropriate behaviour is overlooked. Teachers use educational visits and visitors well to support the work in this subject. These initiatives have a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use their literacy skills effectively in this subject.
133. The co-ordinator has developed a useful policy and a suitable framework is in place to direct when elements are to be taught. This follows the agreed syllabus advice. The development of a complete scheme of work is supporting medium-term planning. Plans for this subject are monitored. Useful links are made between the work in this subject and the programme of assembly themes. Overall resources for this area are satisfactory. Good use is made of the small schools borrowing facilities to provide artefacts.
139. **Art**

134. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, attainment is above that normally found in pupils of this age. Pupils make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations.
135. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sound understanding of the intentions and styles of great artists. Many are able to compare styles and methods, express preferences and give reasons for them. Pupils explore a wide range of materials and techniques including paint, chalk, pastel, printing and collage. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced good-quality pencil drawings of what they think they will look like when they grow old. These pupils have also made collages of historical figures linked with Boudicca. They have produced interesting work linked with Celtic tartans, and made illuminated bookmarks in the style of the Lindisfarne Gospels. Some of the results are quite sophisticated.
136. At the end of Year 4, pupils produce work in the style of famous artists, such as Hockney and Renoir. Good use is made of computer software as an alternative approach to 'painting'. Pupils have worked with a local artist and produced some outstanding batik work on the theme of Alnmouth which they began when they were studying African art.
137. Throughout both key stages pupils make good progress in colour mixing and in modelling in three dimensions. For example, pupils in Year 1 make thumb pots from clay. Work involving collage develops particularly well during this key stage. Pupils make similarly good progress throughout Years 3 and 4, as for example when pupils draw cave pictures in pastels which are linked with prehistoric art. The development of skills of colour mixing is demonstrated well when pupils make a colour wheel collage composed of primary and secondary colours.
138. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with the potential for higher attainment, make similarly good progress. This is due to teachers' secure subject knowledge, lessons which are matched to the abilities of all pupils, and good support in classrooms by learning support staff.
139. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' skills of literacy. Examples were noted in plenary sessions when pupils were evaluating the quality of their own work, and that of other pupils. Good use is made of language that is subject specific, and when pupils discuss the work of famous artists; this also contributes to pupils' cultural development. The subject makes a good contribution to information technology. For example, the youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 use a computer programme as an alternative method to painting human shapes. Art also makes a very worthwhile contribution to pupils' cultural development through their studies of African art and local history. Teachers and pupils use art to successfully support and enhance their work in other subjects such as geography, history and science. All of these examples indicate appropriate use of each medium.
140. Pupils' attitudes to art are good. Whilst only one lesson was seen, pupils listened carefully and followed instructions accurately to complete tasks. They co-operated well; many took responsibility for putting out and clearing away equipment and materials. These features had a positive effect on their personal development and on their overall good progress.
141. Insufficient lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching was satisfactory with some features of good teaching. Good features were the appropriate planning which builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge and skills, and the very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of attainment.
142. The headteacher co-ordinates art and is largely responsible for the above average standards. The school has a broader curriculum than when it was last inspected, and it has further developed aspects of its work such as three-dimensional art, the use of textiles, and art from

other cultures. The school has taken full advantage of artists in residence and from visiting experts. Other features which have an impact on these above average standards are the resources which are adequate in quantity, good in quality, and accessible to all pupils.

148.

### **Design and technology**

149. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1. Evidence from this lesson, scrutiny of pupils' work and talking with pupils demonstrates that overall, they achieve standards which are as expected at Key Stage 1, and by the end of Year 4. These satisfactory standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
143. Year 2 pupils design and make invitations for a party. They work in groups to complete an information sheet which they use to create a design using a computer-generated program.
144. Through topics related to their local studies, pupils in Year 4 design a 'sailing welly'. They design the body of the boot using soft rubber, with thicker rubber for the soles and toe-caps. Careful attention is paid to the design and positioning of toggles. Pupils also give appropriate reasons for their choices of designs. Through a topic related to the Romans, pupils design a robot horse to explore the Roman city of Pompeii. They design plungers for the feet of the horses so "they can go up steep hills and travel upside down". Most pupils are able to evaluate the effectiveness of their own designs.
145. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress. Discussions with pupils indicate they have studied ways of joining surfaces together. They understand the meaning of moveable joins and pivots.
146. Pupils with special educational needs make similarly satisfactory progress. Teachers know their pupils well, there is good support, and appropriate planning makes good provision, particularly at Key Stage 1.
147. Design and technology supports literacy through discussion and recording, as for example in pupils' work on designing invitations in Years 1 and 2. Pupils use a range of numeracy skills in most classes to measure and plan.
148. Pupils' attitudes are good throughout the school. They are confident when generating their own ideas and persevere to complete work. They are well behaved and work responsibly, for example, when discussing in groups and sharing equipment. This has a positive affect on attainment as it enables the teacher to focus on developing the objectives of the lesson.
149. As only one lesson was seen it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. However, the positive aspects of that lesson were the teacher's good subject knowledge, her clear expectations of pupils, good planning and sound management of pupils.
150. Design and technology is co-ordinated satisfactorily by the headteacher. The subject is not currently prioritised for development but the policy statement is useful in seeing how the subject intends to move forward, and the medium-term topic plan ensures adequate continuity. The resources for design and technology have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory and developing.

### **Geography**

151. Only one lesson was observed. From samples of work and planning documentation, evidence suggests that standards are what is normally expected of pupils of this age. Pupils make broadly satisfactory progress throughout the school.

152. Pupils enter the key stage with a good awareness of their own environment and the purposes and features within it. They have appropriately developed observation skills and are well practised in using construction equipment to represent what they know about the world.
153. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' recorded work indicates that they have an appropriate knowledge of their home and school environment from first-hand observation tasks and an awareness of Alnmouth's position in the region. From map work most pupils understand the lay out of a map of Great Britain and can annotate it appropriately. They understand the difference between maps and plans and can record areas familiar to them as, for instance, the layout of the classroom and the route from home to school. Pupils are introduced to countries beyond the British Isles through such projects as 'Homes'. They understand that the weather patterns associated with each country affects the style and choice of materials used. In Years 3 and 4 pupils extend their understanding of maps and mapping skills. They recognise the differences in presentation and specific purposes of road maps, street maps, ordinance survey maps and that a grid system is common to each. Pupils use geographic terminology when discussing maps and can describe a position on a map by using simple co-ordinates. Pupils study their own locality and a similar village in St Lucia. They are able to describe the features such as climate, land-use and the human effect on the environment.
154. There is insufficient evidence to make definitive judgements on either pupils' attitudes to geography or teaching. However in the one lesson observed most pupils sustained their interest well and were eager to answer questions and the teaching was judged to be satisfactory.
155. The review of the provision for this subject is included in the current development plan. There is no discrete policy developed for this subject although notes for guidance are include in a general planning document. After consultation with the receiving school a useful framework has been developed to direct when elements are to be taught over a two year rolling programme but gives insufficient guidance to the non-specialist teacher planning work to be linked to a general topic. Resources in this area are satisfactory overall.

## **History**

156. It was not possible to observe any lessons. From examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning documentation, evidence indicates that standards are what is normally expected of pupils of this age and pupils make generally sound progress as they move through the school.
157. On entry to Key Stage 1 pupils have clear understanding that change takes place over time through reflecting on their own development from birth and family recollections of events before their time. At Key Stage 1 pupils begin to develop an understanding of chronology through tracing the development of equipment used today. For example, within such topics as 'Homes' and 'On the Move', they trace the way schools, writing tools, and the ways we travel have developed over time. They become aware of the range of sources of evidence available to historians when using pictures and site visits to such places as Beamish Museum and Cragside. In Years 3 and 4 much of the body of work is centred on the history of the region building up a time-line to reinforce the concept of chronology. Pupils are able to empathise with people at the time of the Roman occupation such as, foreign auxiliary soldiers, the victims of barbarian raiders from the far side of the wall and Queen Boudicca and her people.
158. There is no evidence on which to base judgements on pupils' attitudes or teaching other than to note the good use made of opportunities to use literacy skills purposefully in this subject.
159. The review of the provision for this subject is in the current development plan. Although there is no discrete policy in place as a point of reference in monitoring the provision a useful whole-school framework is in place to direct when elements are to be taught. This supports teachers'



planning for progression. Resources for this subject are satisfactory overall and good use is made of educational visits to support learning.

166.

### **Music**

160. No music lessons were observed during the inspection. From observation of assemblies, discussions with staff and examination of planning documentation it is clear that since the previous inspection music continues to be 'valued and promoted'.

161. By the time pupils leave the school they sing tunefully and with good articulation and pitch. Where more complex rhythms occur they use breath control appropriately. All pupils enjoy listening to the music that introduces and closes assembly each day and many respond to the mood created.

162. Planning documentation clearly identifies the systematic ways in which skills are developed in singing, composing, performing and appraising as pupils move through the school. To ensure that pupils have a continuing experience the scheme of work is developed over a two year rolling programme. This represents a sound support for teachers' short-term planning and a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The provision of peripatetic music tuition for some pupils enriches their experience and supports their knowledge about music and performance skills. The involvement in local creative initiatives makes a significantly positive contribution to the musical knowledge, skill and understanding of all pupils. Resources for this subject are satisfactory overall.

169.

### **Physical education**

163. At the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine, their attainment is what would normally be expected of pupils of this age. These standards, noted during the previous inspection, have been maintained. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress throughout the school.

164. It was not possible during the inspection to see the full range of physical education lessons and activities, and only two lessons were observed, one in gymnastics and the other which focused on dance. In gymnastics, the youngest pupils in the key stage perform simple skills, linking their actions appropriately. Even at this young age they are aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies and use space appropriately. Some are able to evaluate and refine their performances. In dance, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use the theme of the fairground to 'dance with words' using words such as 'Ferris wheel' and 'swingboat' as stimuli. Pupils attend swimming lessons, and almost all who leave at the age of nine are able to swim at least the required distances. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and make similarly satisfactory progress.

165. Insufficient lessons were observed to be able to make a judgement on the quality of teaching at each key stage. However, of the two lessons seen, one was judged to be good, and the other very good. Both lessons were well planned, with clear, achievable aims. These lessons were structured to give time for reinforcement and for pupils to refine their actions. In the lesson which was judged to be very good the dance teacher made very good use of pupils' demonstrations and when coupled with very high expectations, ensured that pupils made the best possible progress.

166. The curriculum for physical education is broad and balanced. Extra-curricular sports activities are popular. These include tag rugby, and a 'High Five Club' for boys and girls at Key Stage 2. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in seasonal activities such as short tennis, inter-

school football matches and kwik cricket. There is a sound policy and scheme of work for physical education. The school's facilities for physical education are good, including a large hall and outdoor hard-surfaced and grassed areas. Other apparatus is generally satisfactory, both in quality and in quantity.

173. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

173. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

167. A team of three inspectors carried out the inspection. During the inspection all, or part, of 24 lessons were inspected and a total of over 16 hours was spent in lessons. A range of assemblies, registration sessions and extra-curricular activities were also inspected.
168. Inspectors looked at the work of many pupils. The recent work of a representative sample of three pupils, from each year, in each class, was examined and discussed with teachers. These pupils were heard to read and inspectors recorded their skills, the strategies they used and their understanding. Pupils' ability to use reference books was also examined. The reading of many other pupils was observed during lessons. A wide range of displays and some photographs of pupils' work were scrutinised.
169. Informal discussions were held with many pupils in class, during lunchtimes and at break times. The work in some specific subject areas was discussed with small groups of pupils.
170. Planned discussions were held with the headteacher, members of staff with whole-school responsibilities, including teachers responsible for co-ordinating the school's provision in each subject area and with key members of the non-teaching staff, including the school secretary.
171. A large amount of documentation provided by the school, including policy statements, schemes of work, long and short-term curriculum plans and records, pupils' records and reports, the school development plan, budget information and minutes of meetings was analysed before and during the inspection.
172. A meeting took place between the registered inspector and the Chair of Governors and some other governors before the inspection. A formal meeting took place between the registered inspector, and the Chair of Governors and other governors during the inspection.
173. Fifteen parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector to give their views on the school and the team considered 29 responses to a questionnaire for parents about the school, some parents providing additional written comments.
174. The school's accommodation, resources and storage were inspected during and after the school day.

181. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

181. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y4	60	1	12	8

181.

**Teachers and classes**

181. **Qualified teachers (YR - Y4)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1.90
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	20.69

181. **Education support staff (YR - Y4)**

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	31.2

181. **Average class size in the school**

Average class size:	20
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181. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998 - 1999
	£
Total income	116,211
Total expenditure	112,602
Expenditure per pupil	1,975
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,578
Balance carried forward to next year	7,187

181. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 60

Number of questionnaires returned: 29

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	59	38	3	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	69	21	0	3	3
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	41	14	7	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	34	45	10	10	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	41	55	0	3	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	45	42	7	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.	31	66	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	31	45	3	10	10
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	48	38	10	0	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	27	48	10	7	7
My child(ren) like(s) school	66	28	3	3	0