

INSPECTION REPORT

SLALEY FIRST SCHOOL

Slaley, Hexham

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122227

Headteacher: Mrs D Ross

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock
25344

Dates of inspection: 12th –14th February 2001

Inspection number: 191567

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Rastall
Date of previous inspection:	27th January 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	Mr J Peacock	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well pupils are taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11368	Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector		Attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17685	Miss L Spooner	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children under five Mathematics Science Art and design Geography History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Slaley Community First School caters for pupils from three to nine years of age and is much smaller than other primary schools. There are 48 pupils on roll, 20 boys and 28 girls and this is virtually the same as it was at the time of the previous inspection. In addition, 13 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis in the mornings only. There are two classes, one for Key Stage 1 pupils and the other for those in Key Stage 2. Almost all pupils come from inside the school's normal zone, which is a predominantly rural area. The attainment of most children when they start school in September in the reception class is about average but a few achieve at a higher level than this.

There are no pupils from homes where English is an additional language, and currently no pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The school has 27 per cent of pupils on its register for pupils with special educational needs, which is well above the national average, but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Numbers on the register have increased markedly since the previous inspection in 1997 when there was only one pupil. The mobility of pupils appears to be a significant factor for a school of this size, as last year nine pupils were admitted and three left during term time.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school serves its local community well, creating a very effective atmosphere in which pupils can thrive. It is an improving school where the strengths outweigh any weaknesses. The headteacher's leadership and management are very effective and a key element in the school's success. Standards in English and mathematics are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 4, when pupils transfer to the next phase of their education. The quality of teaching is good overall and effectively meets the needs of individual pupils. All pupils show a very good attitude to learning, behave extremely well and have excellent relationships with one another and all school staff. Attendance is excellent, as it was in the previous inspection. As a result, all pupils are working at or near to their capacity. When all these factors are considered, along with the above average level of funding, the school is effective and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, attaining above average standards in most subjects. Standards are well above average in geography and information and communication technology.
- Children under five in the nursery and reception class make good progress during their time studying the Foundation Stage curriculum due to the consistently good quality of teaching they receive.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning at Key Stage 2 is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all excellent.
- The excellent level of attendance has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall.
- The level of care for pupils is a strength of the school.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very effective.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 1, where fewer pupils than expected achieve at the higher Level 3.
- The provision of homework for pupils of all ages.
- Outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was previously inspected in January 1997 there was a need to improve the progress of higher attaining pupils in mathematics and provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills. This has mostly been achieved. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in mathematics in many lessons involving most subjects on the weekly timetable. Average and higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged throughout Key Stage 2, but not in Key Stage 1. The curriculum has been developed well at Key Stage 1 and better resources are now available for learning in the Foundation Stage, design and technology and physical education. Programmes of work, incorporating the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines, give teachers clear guidance on the knowledge and skills to be taught. Standards have improved markedly in information and communication technology as a result of the clear guidance and a boost in resources. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have also been successfully implemented. The school has the leadership, staff and commitment needed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

Since there were just ten pupils involved in the national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, statistical information, comparing the performance of pupils in the school with national averages and with schools in similar contexts, is not included. Comments relate to overall standards in order to avoid identifying individual or groups of pupils. The small size of year groups mean that there is considerable variation from year to year in the overall trend in attainment. The mobility of almost 25 per cent of pupils in the last academic year caused disruption and had an adverse effect on standards. However, standards have generally been above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science since 1996. On inspection the standards of work seen in these and all other subjects, except religious education, by the end of Key Stage 1 was judged to be in line with national expectations. In religious education standards are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at both key stages. By the end of Year 4 standards in English, mathematics and science are above those normally seen. Realistic and attainable targets are set for individual pupils in English and mathematics and the school is successful in achieving them. Levels of attainment by the end of Year 4, when pupils transfer to the next phase of their education, are in line with national expectations in art but above those expected in design and technology and history and well above in geography and information and communication technology. Insufficient evidence meant that no judgement could be made for standards in music or physical education at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment. By the end of the Foundation Stage, attainment is above national expectations in children's personal, social and emotional development, language development and reading skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In writing, mathematical development, creative and physical development, it is in line with the expectations for children of this age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. They are attentive in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent, as it was found to be in the previous inspection. Pupils are clear about expectations and work purposefully in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. All work and play together well, showing respect for one another's feelings. Many opportunities are provided to promote pupils' independence and sense of responsibility.
Attendance	Excellent. The very high levels of attendance have been maintained since the previous inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
22 lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Very good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. Very good or excellent teaching occurred in 27 per cent of lessons, compared to 19 per cent at the time of the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be of a high standard. The quality has continued to improve and good, very good and excellent teaching featured in 72 per cent of lessons, most of which were in the nursery and the Key Stage 2 class. The illness and absence of the Key Stage 1 teacher in part accounts for the difference between the key stages. However, inspectors judged that the teacher's expectations of pupils in some lessons were unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1, particularly of average and higher attaining pupils. Little evidence was seen of work at the higher levels. The cumulative effect of six different teachers in this class in the last academic year may also be a factor affecting the standard of work seen. All teachers plan their lessons very carefully and make very good use of the skilled classroom support assistants. There are clear learning intentions in all lessons. The discipline and control in most lessons are also strong features. Teachers' expertise and knowledge of the curriculum is good overall. Religious education, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught well throughout the school. At Key Stage 2, most subjects are taught very well and the quality of teaching in geography is excellent. Pupils have many opportunities to work independently of the class teacher and this effectively raises their self-esteem. Pupils concentrate very well and work hard, making good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding by the time they are ready to leave the school. However, the amount and quality of homework does little to promote pupils' learning in school. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their education with teaching of a consistently good quality. Children appear happy and keen to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, with a particular strength in planning to promote pupils' independence in learning. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a well-balanced curriculum. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, considering the size of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. All pupils are given equal entitlement to the curriculum. The quality of individual education plans is good with clear achievable targets set.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development are strengths. Pupils' knowledge of other religions, such as Hinduism, is particularly good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff help to provide a caring environment. There are very good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and pupils' personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.

There is a good partnership with parents, who are happy with the work that children do and the standards they achieve. Parents are active in supporting the school by offering help and taking part in fund-raising activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership and management, which are very good, are key strengths of the school. There are clear aims and values, understood by all. There is a good commitment to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. All governors take their responsibilities seriously and support the school effectively. Financial planning is very good and spending is strictly controlled. The best value is obtained in all expenditure. All statutory requirements are met, including those for special educational needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring of the quality of teaching, and the way teachers share responsibility for managing subjects and evaluating standards in each subject, is satisfactory overall.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Teachers are deployed effectively and learning resources, including computers, are used to good effect. However, the school maintains a financial balance which is well above acceptable levels.

Staffing levels are good, with support staff playing a very effective role in enhancing pupils' learning. The accommodation, which is spotlessly clean, is good for most aspects of the curriculum. However, the hall is rather small and children in the Foundation Stage do not have a designated outdoor play area to further develop their physical skills. Resources are good for most subjects, answering the criticisms in the previous report. The school has very good resource levels in information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • Parents are kept well informed. • Most feel comfortable about approaching school. • Pupils are expected to work hard. • Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' progress. • The amount and quality of homework. • The school working more closely with parents. • The leadership and management. • The range of activities for pupils outside lessons.

Inspectors' judgements wholeheartedly support parents' positive views about the school. We agree with parents that the provision of homework should be improved, along with pupils' progress at Key Stage 1. However, Inspectors disagree with parents' views on the links with parents and the range of extra-curricular activities, judging the former to be good and the latter to be satisfactory. We strongly disagree with those parents who think the school is not well led or managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There were only ten pupils who completed the national end of Key Stage 1 tests and assessments in 2000, and there are just seven pupils in the current Year 2. References to standards in this section of the report will therefore be general references, so that individual pupils cannot be identified. Judgements about standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, when pupils transfer to the next phase of their education, are based on the work seen in the school.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage attend the nursery class on a part-time basis in the mornings only from the term after their third birthday, and the reception class on a full-time basis in the term following their fourth birthday. The attainment on entry to the nursery and reception class is in line with national expectations. However, some children have well-developed skills for their age and their attainment is above that normally expected. Children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of their curriculum, and by the end of the Foundation Stage attainment is above national expectations in personal, social and emotional development, language development and reading, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment in writing, numeracy, creative and physical development is in line with expectations for children of this age. This broadly reflects the picture found in the previous inspection. The teaching and learning environment is stimulating and caring, and children respond very well in their behaviour and attitudes to work. Teachers and classroom support assistants know the children well and this promotes excellent relationships, enabling all children to make a good start to their education and to do well.
3. Comparisons with the attainment of pupils in similar schools and the national average for all schools are meaningless, as the year groups undertaking the national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 are usually of ten pupils or less. In 2000 for example, ten pupils were involved, but there are only seven pupils in the current Year 2 group of pupils. Trends in attainment tend to vary significantly from year to year, as one pupil's performance can make a big difference in percentage terms. Taking the three years from 1997 to 1999 together, the performance of pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the national end of Key Stage 1 tests and assessments was usually above the national average. However in 2000, the effect of a disrupted year with six different teachers adversely affected pupils' performance. The mobility of about 25 per cent of pupils joining or leaving the school during term time was another significant factor affecting the school's overall performance. Few pupils achieved at the higher Level 3 in the national tests and assessments.
4. Demanding targets to raise attainment have been set for 2001. The school has also set realistic, but suitably challenging, individual targets for all its pupils in an effort to make sure that all pupils achieve their potential.
5. Inspection evidence shows that in English pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations and they make satisfactory progress. However, their skills in speaking and listening are above those normally seen, and progress is good. This is because of the excellent relationships pupils have with staff, the level of independence they are given and the responsibility for their own learning in lessons. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is

having a beneficial effect on standards at both key stages. By the end of Year 4, when pupils are ready to transfer to the next phase of their education, standards in all aspects of English are above national expectations, and all pupils make good progress. This is mainly due to the very good quality of teaching they receive. Pupils listen well to their teacher and confidently express their thoughts and ideas. By the end of Year 4 most are fluent readers and show a good understanding of what they have read. All can offer opinions and preferences for specific stories and authors and most read with expression. Writing is well developed and there are many examples of writing for different purposes. Pupils have good opportunities to write at length and their work is neatly presented with accurate spelling. Most are successfully using their own style of handwriting.

6. Standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected nationally and pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 4 attainment is above national expectations and all pupils make good progress. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well throughout the school. Pupils of all ages respond enthusiastically to activities during oral and mental starter sessions to lessons and show confidence with two- and three-digit numbers. All can apply their knowledge of numbers well when solving problems. Literacy and numeracy skills are frequently used during work in other subjects.
7. Observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards in science are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, with pupils making satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 4 standards are above national expectations and pupils' progress is good. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to carry out experiments and conduct investigations, often working in groups independently of the class teachers. They have a good knowledge of electrical circuits and this was seen as they tried to light up their models in design and technology. All record their findings carefully, often using a computer to present evidence in the form of graphs.
8. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, with pupils making satisfactory progress, but well above national expectations by the end of Year 4. Progress throughout Key Stage 2 is very good. The school has built up its resources for the subject, and they are now very good, providing all pupils with good access to computers and giving them a wide range of programs to use. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and planning very good. As a result, pupils frequently use computers as part of their work in other subjects, such as geography or science. There was much work in evidence produced by pupils in Years 3 and 4 confirming the high standards. In addition, the computer club for Key Stage 2 pupils is having a significant effect on raising pupils' attainment.
9. In religious education, standards by the end of both key stages are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, with pupils making good progress. In art, standards are in line with national expectations at both key stages and pupils' progress is satisfactory. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education standards are in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, with pupils making satisfactory progress in each. By the end of Year 4, pupils generally achieve higher standards, largely due to the overall quality of teaching, very good subject knowledge and high expectations of the class teacher. In design and technology and history standards are above national expectations and pupils make good progress. Standards in geography are well above those expected nationally, with all pupils making very good progress. The work seen in the topic on developing houses for the village of Denwick showed pupils had a very good knowledge of

maps, plans, geographical features and environmental factors. However, in music and physical education there was insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement on standards at Key Stage 2.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages, as they did in the previous inspection, largely due to the close attention and very good support they receive in lessons from their class teachers and the skilled and conscientious classroom support assistants. All have individual learning targets and make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. These targets, in individual education plans, are detailed and relevant. Teachers use them well to carefully plan work which enables pupils to build effectively on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Additional literacy sessions, provided by a retired teacher, and special reading and writing programmes, supervised by a classroom support assistant using a talking computer, very effectively raise pupils' literacy standards. This gives them confidence in all lessons which require them to use reading and writing skills, and this helps to increase their rate of progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. These aspects were praised in the previous report and remain as major strengths of the school today. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and towards their school in general. They are enthusiastic and, judging by the very high attendance rate, all appear to enjoy coming to school. Virtually all parents who responded to the questionnaire, sent out before the inspection, agree that their children like school. Attendance is excellent with no unauthorised absence and pupils rarely arrive late for school in the morning. This was also found to be the case in the previous inspection.
12. Pupils listen well to their teachers and generally show very good levels of concentration due to the good quality of teaching. For example, in the Key Stage 2 class literacy hour, Year 3 and 4 pupils all listened well as their teacher enjoyed reading a humorous poem with them and were keen to identify adjectives, verbs and similes within the text. Occasionally, when pupils are not sufficiently challenged or stimulated in a lesson, some become distracted and talk amongst themselves. This was seen during the introduction to a literacy session in the Key Stage 1 class, but the timely and very effective intervention by the classroom support assistant quickly restored pupils' attention, allowing the teacher to continue uninterrupted.
13. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is excellent, as it was found to be in the previous inspection. They respond very well to the established classroom routines and to their teachers' high expectations of behaviour. The only incidence of challenging behaviour seen was in the Key Stage 1 class when pupils became over-excited with their success in completing tasks set in physical education, but this was very well managed by staff. Throughout the school, there is a calm, purposeful working atmosphere. It is not surprising that no pupils have had to be excluded since the present headteacher took up her post four years ago. Pupils behave exceptionally well at lunch-time and breaks, and these are well organised with nominated pupils from Year 4 acting as 'Buddies' to make sure no one is left out of games, or lonely. They also look after the play equipment available for pupils during their break time. Pupils show a high degree of respect towards one another and there is a genuine 'family' atmosphere in which all pupils feel valued.
14. Pupils have excellent relationships with adults and with each other. These have come about because of the many opportunities staff take to give pupils a sense of independence, and the right to make choices whenever possible. This strategy is very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and sense of responsibility. It also

promotes pupils' desire to learn and do well in their lessons. All pupils work very well together in groups, co-operating with each other. For example, a strong feature in a Year 3 and 4 geography lesson on planning a housing development for a village was the way in which pupils organised themselves and shared ideas and resources. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful to all adults and visitors.

15. Pupils' personal development is excellent. Older pupils show a willingness to take on responsibilities such as reading to children in the nursery during their break-time or writing the menu for the school dinner on the board in the hall. The school places a very high priority on pupils' personal development and provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility or consider one another's feelings. In assemblies, for example, pupils are often encouraged to consider and respect different beliefs and ways of life to their own.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. In the previous inspection, the quality of teaching was judged to be of a high standard, being satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, with five per cent of it being unsatisfactory. Two-thirds of teaching was found to be good or very good. The quality of teaching in the school has continued to improve since then and is judged by this inspection team to be good overall. The effectiveness of teachers' planning, the good control and discipline in lessons and very effective support provided by the classroom support assistants mean that the basic skills are taught well. There is a strong determination by all staff to raise standards.
17. During this inspection there was a distinct difference in the quality of teaching between the Key Stages 1 and 2. Overall, in Key Stage 1, teaching was satisfactory whereas in Key Stage 2, it was very good. This was caused in part by the illness and absence after the first day of the inspection of the Key Stage 1 teacher. Fortunately, a temporary teacher known to the pupils was able to teach the class, following the lesson planning prepared by the class teacher. During this inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons seen and it was very good or excellent in 27 per cent. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in 72 per cent of lessons, which shows an increase in the proportion of high quality lessons since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching particularly at Key Stage 2 and in the nursery, is a strength of the school.
18. Detailed lesson planning, with clear learning objectives and lessons delivered at a good pace were the main features of the very good teaching. Much higher expectations of pupils in the Key Stage 2 class and excellent rapport and relationships with pupils led to excellent discipline and control in many of the lessons seen. In addition, the teachers' enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge made learning exciting with an element of fun for all. A strong feature of most lessons at Key Stage 2 is the way pupils are provided with many planned opportunities to work without the direct supervision of the teacher. This raises their self-esteem very successfully, giving all a strong sense of responsibility. The geography topic on the housing development for Denwick in the school hall was a prime example. The criticisms raised in the previous inspection over the slow pace of some lessons and the fact that pupils were left without teacher support for too long, have been fully remedied.
19. At Key Stage 1, however, the scrutiny of work showed that the standard of most of the work produced by pupils, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was at the level expected, with little in evidence of work at the higher Level 3. In a numeracy lesson, for example, the teachers' expectations of average

and higher attaining pupils was unsatisfactory, as no work was planned to suitably challenge them. It should be noted that the current Year 2 pupils had six different teachers last year because of the long-term absence of their teacher and their present teacher only joined the school last September. However, the inattention of a few pupils observed in some of the lessons seen, such as religious education, is directly attributable to the lack of challenge, particularly for the average and higher attaining pupils.

20. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions was satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. All teachers use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions effectively when teaching other subjects. In addition, pupils are provided with good opportunities to use a computer as part of their work in all subjects. The latter is mainly due to the very good provision of computers in school and teachers sound knowledge of the subject. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows the use of computers is an integral part of most lessons.
21. The quality of teaching in most subjects is generally of a higher standard at Key Stage 2 and accounts for the good progress most pupils make. At Key Stage 1, the overall quality of teaching in religious education and information and communication technology is good. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except geography, where there was insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is excellent in geography and very good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and design and technology. In religious education, teaching is as good as it is at Key Stage 1. During the three days in school, it was not possible to see enough lessons in art, history, music and physical education at Key Stage 2 to form a reliable judgement about the quality of teaching.
22. All teachers work hard to establish a very good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Teachers have effective strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils keep working. As a result, noise levels are low and most pupils concentrate very well on the tasks set for them. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and have a very good attitude towards their learning. As a result, there is a highly productive working atmosphere in most classes, with all pupils making good progress compared to their prior attainment by the time they are ready to leave the school at the end of Year 4. Pupils generally work well independently of their teachers in pairs or small groups. This was seen in many lessons from the nursery class, where children listened to story tapes, to Year 4 where pupils in pairs created electrical circuits to make their models light up.
23. Teachers use assessment well to guide their planning and this helps them to plan work which gives adequate challenge to pupils of all abilities. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly and helpful comments give further guidance to them on how to improve. There were no gifted pupils identified to the inspection team, but it was noted that provision was in place to meet the needs of these pupils. Lessons invariably build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with resources readily available for pupils. In most lessons the wide variety of resources gives pupils good opportunities to use their initiative and choose suitable materials to use in their studies. Pupils respond positively to all their lessons, sustaining high levels of concentration. As a direct result, effective learning occurs in most lessons.
24. The quality of teaching and learning for children under the age of five in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. At all times it is good, and on

occasions, very good. The high quality relationships, plus the variety of activities, result in good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children enjoy the challenging tasks they are given and have very good attitudes to their learning. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the level of independence given to children. This lifts their self-esteem, helping them to make good progress in their learning and to develop a positive attitude towards schoolwork. Support for children with special educational needs is good in each of the six areas of learning.

25. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Individual education plans have clearly set out targets for pupils, and teachers use this information to match work to their pupils' individual needs, helping them to make good progress. Very effective classroom support assistants are used efficiently to direct group activities. For example, they use specialist support programmes such as Accelerate and Acceleratewrite, which use speaking computer programs for short 20-minute sessions to increase pupils' rate of progress in reading and writing. Pupils identified as requiring additional support in literacy are also expertly taught by a volunteer helper who is a retired teacher. High expectations of behaviour of all pupils and very good classroom management skills mean that pupils with special educational needs learn effectively in a supportive and orderly environment.
26. A significant number of parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. At the meeting for parents, some said pupils were given too much homework and others felt that the tasks set were not well matched to pupils' capabilities. Inspection findings support parents' views. The school's policy statement does not give clear guidance to teachers or sufficient information to parents on homework.

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

27. The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall. It promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, social and personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of education. Statutory requirements are met.
28. The previous inspection identified as key issues the need to develop the quality of the curriculum at Key Stage 1. This has been successfully remedied and long- and medium-term planning provide a sound framework to sustain pupils' progress. A second key issue was to develop programmes of work for all subjects. These are now in place for all subjects and take good account of the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is good. It fully covers the six areas of learning recommended nationally and makes good provision for children to achieve the Early Learning Goals. It ensures children are well prepared for entry into Key Stage 1 at the end of the reception year. A high level of emphasis is placed upon the children's personal, social and emotional development and on literacy and numeracy. Very good opportunities are planned for the promotion of language development. Learning through play is valued and there is a very good balance between adult-directed activities and opportunities for children to make their own choices, especially in the nursery. However, the lack of a suitable outdoor play area restricts children's opportunities to further develop their physical skills. Elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being

successfully introduced. Teachers of children in the Foundation Stage plan the curriculum jointly. This ensures that continuous provision is in place. Children with special educational needs receive good support through planned activities and this helps them to make good progress.

30. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and complies fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education through 'circle time' when pupils in all parts of the school are provided with opportunities to express their feelings and beliefs. Sex education and drugs awareness are delivered principally through the science curriculum. The school follows the locally agreed framework for teaching religious education. All subjects have a policy and programme of work, and these provide good guidelines for medium- and short-term planning. The school takes full account of the most recent National Curriculum guidelines.
31. The effectiveness of teachers' strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills is good overall, but is more effective at Key Stage 2 where high quality teaching is having a very positive impact on standards in both English and mathematics. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to carry out their own investigations in mathematics and science.
32. Planning is detailed and well matched to the needs of most pupils. However, at Key Stage 1, lesson planning, although thorough and detailed, does not provide middle ability pupils with enough challenge to enable them to reach higher levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
33. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Procedures are well organised. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. Pupils' individual learning plans are of a good quality. They contain realistic learning targets and are used well by teachers to guide planning. Parents are appropriately involved in reviews. The school has in the past identified talented or gifted pupils and made special provision for them. Currently there are none, and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
34. The school makes good provision overall for pupils to make progress across the curriculum. This is more effective in the nursery and at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Good use is made of assessment information to monitor the progress of boys and girls. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and opportunities to take part in educational visits.
35. Extra-curricular provision is limited to a computer club, football and some opportunities to experience playing musical instruments. However, it is satisfactory for a small, rural school where many pupils have to be transported home immediately following the end of the school day.
36. There are good links with the community, for example, links with local churches and the police force. Last year, the school and parents from the local community produced a Millennium tapestry. Relationships with the middle and first schools in the area are well established through sport, inter-school visits and curriculum links.
37. Very good provision is made overall for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. This judgement reflects an improvement since the previous inspection when provision for cultural development was satisfactory. The provision for spiritual development is good.

38. The school provides planned opportunities for prayer and reflection, for example in the course of school worship. Collective worship is thoughtfully planned and linked to meaningful topics such as sharing and the meaning of the love of God in an assembly linked to Saint Valentine. During 'circle time', pupils have good opportunities to talk about and reflect on their place in the world.
39. Very good provision is made for the moral and social development of the pupils. This judgement confirms the views of most parents who believe that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. There is a well-understood, whole-school approach to behaviour management and a unity of purpose in everything the school stands for. School rules are displayed in classrooms. Effective incentive awards are in place and success is recognised and celebrated in assemblies and lessons. Pupils are provided with opportunities to help others both in school and in the wider community. For example, pupils in Year 4 read to children in the nursery and are encouraged to help younger children at lunch-time. Pupils' work is valued and attractively displayed around the school. All staff promote good relationships and provide very good role models for social and moral development. The school supports charities such as Children in Need and the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal, and also supports a school in Ghana.
40. The provision for cultural development is very good. The planned curriculum ensures that the beliefs and ideas of the major world faiths and cultures are taught. The school has ensured that books in the library and in classrooms represent the wider world. Visits to local places help reinforce the pupils' own culture and heritage, through, for example, visits to the Roman Wall, Laing Art Gallery and the Tynedale Festival. Lessons, particularly in art, history and geography provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about famous artists, and to compare their own lives with those of people in other parts of the world. Special meals are served at lunch-times from time-to-time to link with school projects. For example Indian, Chinese and Victorian meals have been served to the pupils as part of their topic work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. There is a genuine family atmosphere in school in which all pupils are valued. The excellent relationships in school encourage pupils to work hard and do their best. There is good support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs. The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. The many opportunities to give pupils independence and choice in lessons mean that they are able to work well in groups for long spells often without direct supervision. An example of this was a geography lesson on planning for the 'New Denwick Village Project' where groups of Year 3 and 4 pupils accomplished much work through co-operation and collaboration all afternoon.
42. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour, backed by very good procedures based on acknowledging and rewarding the positive. These effectively contribute to the excellent behaviour in school. Pupils like the individual rewards of 'Owl' and 'Dragon' spots in their personal files for very good work and effort. The school monitors and promotes attendance satisfactorily. Parents agree that their children like school. This results in excellent attendance with the rare absences always reported by parents.
43. Pupils receive a high level of care. This ranges from good procedures for child protection and health and safety, down to the little things such as having a break for drinks and a snack before the start of the after-school computer club. All staff have the pupils' welfare at heart and are involved in promoting this high quality of care.

The cook manager has organised a competition for a healthy eating poster and the caretaker keeps the building spotlessly clean.

44. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good. A clear policy is in place. The school has maintained standards in this area since the previous inspection when they were identified as effective. The assessment of children's attainment begins with an initial attainment profile during the first few weeks in the nursery, and again following admission to the reception class. The end of Key Stage 1 assessments in English, mathematics and science are in place. The school uses standardised tests to assess pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in each year group. Regular assessments are also used to monitor attainment and progress when units of work and topics have been completed. Teachers in both key stages keep ongoing records of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. Children in the nursery and reception and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 help to compile their own records of achievement. Assessment opportunities are included as part of teachers' medium-term planning for all subjects. All pupils have individual learning targets. These are reviewed each term and discussed between teachers and pupils. Information is passed on to the next teacher or school at the end of the year or on transfer.
45. Good assessment procedures are in place to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs and to set new targets through regular reviews of individual learning plans.
46. Assessment information is analysed carefully and used effectively to set ability groups for learning, to check the performance of individual pupils and to set targets for and monitor the overall attainment of year groups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school has a good partnership with parents. Most parents are supportive of the school and its family values. They agree that their children like school, that behaviour is good and that their children are helped to become mature and responsible. Most parents also agree that the teaching is now good and are happy that the previous year's staffing difficulties have been resolved. Some parents are less happy with the amount of homework and the provision of extra-curricular activities.
48. The inspection team agrees with all the positive comments made by parents. It also finds that homework could be linked more effectively to individual pupil's capabilities and more set as pupils move up through school. The policy statement is not very clear so parents are unsure about exactly what homework is expected from year to year. The scope of extra-curricular activities is limited because many pupils go home by school bus at the end of the day. The amount of extra-curricular activities is reasonable under the circumstances.
49. Parents receive good quality information through regular newsletters and other communications. Annual reports on pupils' progress are good, illustrated well with examples of pupils' strengths and areas for improvement. They also contain appropriate targets for the coming year.
50. There is good involvement of parents in the work and life of the school. They regularly listen to their children read at home and make helpful comments in the reading diaries, which help to raise standards. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in their children's termly reviews. The Friends of

Slaley School hold social events regularly to raise funds for resources, for example equipment for the nursery. Some parents and other adults give a regular commitment to help in school such as in the nursery, running the computer club and accompanying pupils to swimming lessons and on the many educational visits, which enhance pupils' experiences.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school were judged to be areas of strength in the previous inspection. The headteacher, who was appointed shortly before the previous inspection, has taken positive steps towards improving the key issues identified. As a direct consequence of her commitment to the school and determination to raise standards, leadership and management is very good and an undoubted strength of the school. The headteacher holds firm views on what is achievable and provides a clear educational direction for the work of the school. Her dedication and hard work has justifiably earned the respect and trust of governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors strongly disagree with the small number of parents who thought that the school was not well led and managed in their response to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection. Relationships in school are excellent and good links are being made with parents and with the local community. The extremely conscientious teaching and non-teaching staff provide good support.
52. Following the previous inspection, the school produced a clear action plan and as a result, all four issues have been rectified. The headteacher and staff have revised the policies and programmes of work for all subjects and put in place satisfactory management procedures to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Pupils are now provided with plenty of opportunities to work independently in mathematics and to use their mathematical skills more widely in other subjects of the curriculum. The quality of the curriculum at Key Stage 1 has been improved and resources for the Foundation Stage curriculum, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education have been improved. In addition to the above improvements, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. Overall, the pace of improvement has been good. The headteacher has appointed all her staff and is able to share the workload satisfactorily with her 'team'. As a result, the school has the leadership, dedicated staff and commitment needed to continue to improve.
53. The school has clear aims and these are revised on an annual basis. The good standards achieved by the time pupils are ready to transfer to the next phase of their education at the end of Year 4, reflect the strong sense of purpose at the school, the quality of teaching and pupils' very good attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour. Results of the National Curriculum tests are analysed thoroughly and realistic targets are set, taking into account the potential of individual pupils.
54. The responsibility for the management of the daily work of the school, and the development of the curriculum, is effectively shared by the teaching staff. There is a clear rolling programme setting out when each subject is to be the focus for review. Standards of pupil achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are monitored satisfactorily through regular assessments and results are used to set targets. Teachers have regular contact with one another in this small school and their close relationship helped with the programme of monitoring teaching during lessons as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were introduced. Monitoring has focused mainly on these two areas over the last two years but a satisfactory monitoring procedure is in place to monitor the quality of teaching in all subjects. The school has responded very effectively to the latest initiatives in

performance management with clear procedures to effectively monitor many aspects of the school's work. Governors have attended training in performance management and are fully involved in the process, setting targets for the headteacher and staff. The commitment to improve is strong and shared by all who work at the school. This means that everyone works to capacity to meet any targets set. Satisfactory systems exist to support newly qualified teachers or train new teachers. The school has not been used in the past two years for the initial training of teachers, but is regularly used for training non-teaching personnel from local colleges.

55. There have been few changes to the governing body over the past twelve months and the conscientious and knowledgeable chair of governors leads a willing team. The governors fulfil all of their statutory duties well, giving good support to the school. Most governors pay regular visits to the school, the chair of governors visiting the school just about every week to meet with the headteacher to discuss progress on areas identified for improvement. There is a really strong commitment by the governors to attend training sessions and an equally strong capacity for success. A sound committee structure gives adequate support and advice on areas such as the curriculum, buildings and finances to the full governing body. There are very good strategies for the governing body to evaluate the work of the school, and governors are fully involved in deciding the priorities for the school's development plan.
56. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All legal requirements are met and formal records carefully maintained. Links with support agencies are very good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a clear vision for the development of this aspect and is steadily improving provision. Classroom support assistants are suitably qualified and some have specialist expertise in support programmes using talking computers, for example, to increase pupils' rate of progress in literacy skills. The governors are kept well informed of provision and developments.
57. Financial planning is very good with detailed long-term forecasts covering the next three years. Good use is made of additional funds and grants to ensure that they provide the support for which they were originally intended. Through the diligent work of the school secretary, monitoring of the school's spending against allocations made in the development plan, is effectively tracked. Good use is made of new technology to administer the accounts at the school and maintain records. The school carried forward a large surplus from 1998 and 1999 amounting to 9.6 per cent of the total funding. This is set to rise to over ten per cent this year, which is unacceptably large. The governors have built up reserves to safeguard staffing levels in anticipation of an expected fall in pupil numbers. However, this may or may not happen and it assumes that present funding levels will be maintained. Additional financial resources are denied the school as a result. The headteacher, for example, has to undertake all administrative work after normal hours due to a full-time teaching commitment. The only time available to concentrate on management responsibilities, at present, is when all pupils go to swimming lessons on Thursday afternoons. This is an unsatisfactory situation in management terms, as the headteacher's expertise is not being used efficiently for the benefit of the school. Governors and the headteacher constantly check that the school is obtaining the best value when placing orders or contracts. The efficiency of staff and the standards pupils achieve are also closely scrutinised to ensure the principles of best value are applied in the management and use of all resources. An audit of the school's finances and procedures by the local education authority three years ago found few areas for attention and action was promptly taken to rectify these.

58. The school is well staffed, and teachers are very well supported by the talented and extremely hard-working non-teaching staff. All are well qualified to teach the National Curriculum effectively. Each teacher is delegated to co-ordinate a subject of the National Curriculum and job descriptions are well matched to the roles and responsibilities of all staff. Good provision for staff training has enabled the school to successfully improve areas of weakness such as investigative work in science or the use of mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
59. Overall, the accommodation is good. The main school building is exceptionally clean and well maintained. Rarely has the sun shone through such clean school windows! There are good library facilities with plenty of fiction and reference books for all subjects. The hall is small for a whole class to do physical education lessons and so half a class at a time use it. The school is fortunate to have its own kitchens, and meals are often prepared which relate to topics covered in lessons such as Indian or Chinese food when festivals associated with these countries are being studied. There are no facilities available for disabled pupils but access is not a problem because of the level floor area. There is a good-sized playing field and the playground is in good condition and large enough for the number of pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage however, do not have a designated outdoor area where they can take part in adventurous play or share large wheeled toys. This tends to restrict their social skills and also the development of their physical skills.
60. Learning resources for all subjects are good in range, quality and quantity. Good use is made of the newly erected store shed, making resources readily accessible for use by pupils and adults. In information and communication technology, resources are very good, giving all pupils plenty of opportunities to use computers and the wide range of programs which are available. These resources have had a significant effect on standards, which are well above those expected at the end of Year 4. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage are good with a wide variety of educational materials and large toys. However, all the wheeled toys are for individual use, giving children little opportunity to play together or to share them.
61. The cost per pupil is much higher than the national average because of the small size of the school. However, considering the standards of attainment achieved by pupils and the progress most make from when they start at the school, the consistently good quality of teaching, pupils' positive attitudes and their excellent behaviour, together with the quality of leadership and management, inspectors judge this to be an effective school giving good value for money. This represents a good improvement on the report received following the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school has many strengths and forms an important part of the community. In order to build upon the strengths and to improve the overall quality of provision and raise standards further the school should:

- Improve standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 by:
 - raising teacher expectations of pupils' capabilities;
 - planning work to help more pupils achieve at the higher levels than normally expected for their age.

(paragraphs 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 17, 19, 32, 74, 78, 83, 87, 90, 91)

- Use homework more effectively to support pupils' learning by:
 - matching the work set more closely to pupils' capabilities;
 - clarifying the policy statement so that parents know exactly how much is expected for each year group and how they can help.

(paragraphs 26, 47, 48, 80)
- Improve the provision for children's physical development in the Foundation Stage by developing a suitable outdoor play area.

(paragraphs 58, 69)

The following less important weakness, not included as a key issue for action, should also be considered by the school.

- Use the school's financial resources more effectively to the benefit of pupils currently in school.

(paragraph 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.5	22.7	45.5	27.3	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	7	48
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.3

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	44
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	129,331
Total expenditure	125,610
Expenditure per pupil	2,463
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,749
Balance carried forward to next year	12,470

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	61
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	17	11	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	36	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	33	11	8	19
The teaching is good.	56	33	6	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	22	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	17	11	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	22	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	42	33	22	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	33	39	11	0	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	42	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	22	44	6	22

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term after their third birthday. They can attend for up to five school terms. Admission to the reception year, full-time, is at the beginning of the school year after children have had their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 children enrolled in the nursery, those in their final three terms attend every morning and younger children two mornings each week. The nursery does not operate in the afternoons. Four children of reception age were integrated with Year 1 and two pupils in the Key Stage 1 class. A qualified teacher is in charge of the nursery and works with the support of parent volunteers. During the week, children in the reception spend time in the nursery, benefiting from the teaching and facilities there. When working in the Key Stage 1 classroom, reception children are provided with very good support by a skilled and extremely conscientious classroom assistant. Attainment on entry to both the nursery and reception is in line with the national expectations. Some children have well-developed skills and others have yet to develop the skills expected.
63. Children make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress during their time in reception towards the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is because of the consistently good teaching in the nursery, where children are constantly challenged with a good range of well-planned activities. By the end of the Foundation Stage, when most pupils are six, attainment is above national expectations in personal, social and emotional development, language development and reading, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment in writing, numeracy and creative and physical development is in line with expectations for children of this age. This broadly reflects the judgements on standards reported at the time of the previous inspection when attainment was above expectations in some areas of learning and in line in others.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The children happily come to school. They know the routines of the class and in the nursery have already developed good skills in choosing which activity they would like to do. During introductions to lessons children in both age groups are attentive to what their teachers say. When sitting on the carpet, for example, during 'circle time' or when listening to a story, they listen carefully to each other and are very good at waiting until it is their turn to speak or take part in an activity. The children are always well behaved. This is because teachers and support staff ensure that children know what is expected of them. Many opportunities are planned for them to take turns and share. Children are confident to speak to adults in class other than known members of staff. In the nursery especially, a good balance of supervised and independent activities is provided. This helps the children to make decisions about their own learning. A good level of support is provided for the reception children, however, because of the relatively small number of children in this age group, this is often quite intense and does not allow them sufficient opportunities to be independent.

Communication, language and literacy

65. The majority of the children are on target to attain all the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum by the end of the reception year. In the

nursery the children speak confidently. They listen attentively to stories and enjoy joining in with familiar words and guessing what might happen next. They are interested in the illustrations and know the difference between print and pictures. When involved in role play, they act out being 'Goldilocks' or one of the 'Three Bears'. A few children are making marks to represent writing and attempting to write their names.

66. The children in the reception class are confident to speak to adults in the classroom. They listen to and follow instructions well. During activities they talk about what they observe and what they are doing. They express themselves clearly and in sentences and are developing a good vocabulary to explain what they know and understand. Standards in reading are above expectations for children of reception age. They read with good levels of accuracy from the early books in the school's reading scheme. Higher attaining children are beginning to use letter sounds to build up less familiar words. In their writing, they are developing a secure understanding that writing communicates meaning. Children in the early stages write recognisable letters to express what they want to record. Higher attaining children are beginning to write short sentences to accompany a picture. The large majority of children hold a pencil or crayon correctly.

Mathematical development

67. The majority of children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. In the nursery, most children know the basic colours and some are able to identify a broader range. They count to ten and can order bowls and bears by size in the 'Three Bears' role play area. Children in the reception class with support, can count to ten and back. They recognise circles, squares and triangles. Higher attaining children are beginning to add numbers to five.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Children in the nursery are interested in the world around them. They work independently on the computers, demonstrating good mouse skills. With supervision, they can make cheese and grated carrot sandwiches and use good levels of descriptive language to comment on what they are doing. Previous work on display and in their achievement files indicates that they can identify rooms in a house and items of furniture and equipment. Children in the reception year learn that metal is attracted to magnets and that wood and plastic are not. They are familiar with the computer programs available to them and use the mouse well to control events on the screen. In their work on life one hundred years ago, they know that toilets were outside and that jugs were used to fill baths with water.

Physical development

69. The development of physical skills is broadly in line with expectations of children of nursery and reception age. In the nursery, the children are controlled and aware of the need to be careful of others' safety. Outside, when playing on the wheeled toys on the playground, they show above average levels of co-ordination and use the slope to build up speed. However, as there is no designated outdoor play area with easy access from the nursery, these sessions involve all children and need the teacher and volunteer helpers to supervise activities. Opportunities for children to further develop their physical skills are therefore restricted. All handle pencils, crayons and brushes with satisfactory levels of skill. In the physical education lesson observed, children in the reception class follow routines well. They know to find a

space and sit down in it when they come into the hall. They listen carefully and can move forwards and backwards and 'freeze' when instructed. They make satisfactory attempts at different types of rolling on the floor mats.

Creative development

70. Children in the nursery paint, draw and print. They cut out shapes and stick them onto paper to make pictures and patterns. They enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes and remember the words and actions. In the hall, they explore the sounds made by a range of musical instruments and go on a 'bear hunt' as part of a dance activity. Reception children were observed in a Key Stage 1 music lesson. However, although they listened attentively, the material chosen, a pre-recorded radio-tape, was not well matched to their level of understanding. In assemblies, they make good attempts to join in with the hymns sung by the rest of the school.
71. The quality of teaching observed is satisfactory for children in the reception year. In the nursery it was good or better in all of the lessons observed and on occasions, very good. The nursery and reception class provide an attractive and caring learning environment. Children respond well in their behaviour and attitudes to their work. Teachers and support staff know the children well and this promotes very good relationships. Particular strengths lie in the quality of teaching in the nursery. Lesson planning is of a very good quality. Learning objectives are clearly stated and activities are well thought out to provide challenging experiences that effectively develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding in all learning areas. Lessons are regularly evaluated and the children's progress in all areas of learning is carefully monitored. Very good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their language skills and make choices about their own learning. This results in high levels of structured independent learning.
72. Although children in the reception class are provided with very good quality support by the classroom assistant, there are insufficient planned opportunities for them to develop independent learning skills. The inclusion of reception children as a minority group in a Key Stage 1 class sometimes results in whole-class activities not being matched well to the needs of children of this age.
73. An appropriate policy, covering the provision for the Foundation Stage, guides staff well in their planning for all the six areas of learning for children of this age. Most planning for the reception class children also takes account of the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning. Assessment procedures are good overall and are very good in the nursery. The school does not allocate support staff to the nursery as a regular part of its practice. As a result, the school relies on the good support provided by parents. Resources are generally of a good quality, including the large outside play toys. The inside accommodation in the nursery is of an adequate size and presents an attractive learning area where children's work is valued. Although the outside accommodation is spacious, it does not provide a dedicated, fenced outdoor play area. This limits the opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to improve their skills of co-ordination, control and movement.

ENGLISH

74. In the years 1998 to 2000, pupils' test results in the national end of Key Stage 1 tests, when averaged over the three years, show that their performance in reading and writing was above the national average for their age group. In the latest national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading were below average, but above

average in writing. When compared to similar schools, results were well below average in reading, but in line with the average for writing. The small year group size inevitably means that there is considerable variation from year to year. The performance of one pupil can make a significant difference. However, in 2000 very few pupils achieved at the higher levels in reading or writing. The fact that the class had six temporary teachers due to the long-term illness of their teacher, and there were a few pupils with special needs in the year group, most likely accounts for the school's performance in the national tests.

75. The previous inspection reported that attainment was above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' performance in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 1 is above the level expected. In reading and writing standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the close support they receive in class. By the end of Year 4, when pupils are ready to transfer to the next phase of their education, standards in all aspects of English are above those normally seen, with all pupils, including those with special educational needs, making good progress. It is not possible to make a reliable statistical comparison of yearly results by pupils in each key stage, as the number of pupils in each year group is very small. However, the high expectations of the class teacher and overall very good quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is helping to raise standards for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
76. The above average standards in speaking and listening at both key stages are largely due to the level of independence pupils are given when working, and the excellent relationships they have with one another, their teachers and classroom support assistants. Pupils at Key Stage 1 listen carefully to explanations and instructions and respond well. They are articulate and confident when explaining their views or answering questions. All are eager to share opinions and ideas when trying to decide what characters would say in the stories such as the 'Three Little Pigs', yet careful to listen to each other. Pupils' self-esteem is developed well and the above average standards in speaking and listening are maintained throughout Key Stage 2. All readily suggested words which would add expression to their writing when discussing entries for a diary, for example adding 'most' before 'wonderful'.
77. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils clearly find pleasure in books. They read accurately and have developed clear procedures to work out more difficult words. All recognise punctuation in texts and can recount the main points from stories they are reading. Most of those heard reading could quite easily have managed with a more difficult text. However, progress is satisfactory overall by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 4 pupils' enthusiasm for reading has developed further. All can name a favourite author and pupils express preferences for different types of books, some preferring fiction over non-fiction or poetry books rather than stories. Most add expression when reading aloud and are able to define words accurately and deduce from limited information what is going to happen next. The school has a good collection of books, carefully labelled, in the library at the end of the hall and pupils make good use of this, returning books carefully to their correct shelf. All pupils religiously take home their reading books each night and parents help the school by recording progress in reading diaries. There is generally a good emphasis placed on reading skills and this accounts for the good progress pupils make and the above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 4.
78. As with reading, standards in writing are better at Key Stage 2. In the literacy session observed at Key Stage 1 only one pupil was successfully joining handwriting and the

work being produced was at the expected level, rather than the higher than expected Level 3. Taking into account the disrupted year caused by teacher illness last year, more could be expected, particularly of average and higher attaining pupils, who make up more than half of the current Year 2 group. Pupils' spelling is fairly accurate and all form letters correctly. There was good evidence of pupils at Key Stage 1 writing in a wide range of contexts, such as letters, re-telling stories, imaginative writing and reporting events in a diary. All make good use of computers to help them with their work.

79. In Year 4 pupils are encouraged to develop their own style of handwriting and all join their writing competently, producing neat work. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length, answering a criticism in the previous inspection. Pupils write imaginative stories about magic lemonade bottles, report visits to places of interest, such as the Laing Gallery, write their own play or compose poetry. Written work is usually well punctuated, lively and thoughtful. High expectations from the class teacher are in evidence, as pupils are challenged to replace simple words like 'said' with more expressive ones such as 'snarled', which add expression and feeling to their written work. Pupils throughout the school make very good use of computers to word process their work and consolidate skills such as letter recognition, punctuation and spelling in the reception class. All competently use dictionaries to check spellings.
80. The quality of teaching overall is good. The excellent relationships which exist in school, and the exceptionally good behaviour of pupils in lessons, means there is a calm, orderly and industrious approach to learning. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and use classroom support staff and resources very effectively in their lessons. The discipline and control of pupils is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2, where pupils are trusted to work in groups or individually on challenging tasks and given clear instructions with strict time limits for them to complete tasks. Teachers' expectations of pupils are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1, as much of the work shows a distinct lack of challenge, and in the scrutiny there was little evidence of pupils achieving above average standards. Overall the quality of teaching is therefore satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2, where planning, teaching methods and the teaching of the basic skills are all rated highly. At both key stages teachers' marking is good, with clear guidance given to pupils on how to improve work. The queuing to have work marked, which was criticised in the previous inspection, was not seen. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, as reading books are regularly taken home and pupils often have to learn spellings or finish written work. However, the same level of work is often set, and as a result some pupils find it easy, whereas others struggle to complete it.
81. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the dedicated hour spent on literacy skills is having a beneficial effect on standards. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Teachers maintain detailed records of pupils' strengths and areas for development in the subject and set clear targets for improvement on an individual basis. Pupils' literacy skills are used well in other subjects when they write reports about investigations in science, for example. Good arrangements have been made to monitor standards and the quality of teaching in English, and this information helps the school in its forward planning strategy. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and meets statutory requirements.

MATHEMATICS

82. In the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 national tests, standards in mathematics were below the national average. When compared with those of similar schools, results were well below average. No pupils attained the higher than expected Level 3. This is partly due to the instability of staffing at Key Stage 1 during the year 1999/2000 when pupils were taught by six temporary teachers. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of both boys and girls was above the national average, although overall girls have outperformed boys. The results from 1996 to 2000 indicate a fluctuating trend in attainment. This is partly the result of the statistical effects of relatively small numbers of pupils taking part in the tests each year.
83. The previous inspection reported that attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 was in line with national expectations, but found that higher attaining pupils did not achieve as well as expected. The findings of this inspection indicate a similar picture. By the end of the key stage, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations, with pupils making satisfactory progress. This is because virtually all are in line to attain the expected Level 2. However, evidence from the lesson observed, the analysis of previously completed work and discussions with pupils indicate that relatively few are on course to attain Level 3. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the close support they receive from their teacher and the skilled classroom support assistants.
84. Good improvements in standards have been made at Key Stage 2 since the school was previously inspected. Standards by the end of Year 4 are now above national expectations where they were previously in line and pupils make good progress.
85. By the end of Key Stage 1, the large majority of pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of number and number operations. They count in fives and tens from any number by reference to a 100 number square. They can find an odd or even number between two other numbers within a range and have a reliable understanding of 'more than' and 'less than'. Previous work indicates that the majority of pupils understand the relative value of numbers within two-digit numbers and can add and subtract to 100. There was limited evidence in their books of addition and subtraction using larger than two-digit numbers. Higher attaining pupils can round numbers up and down to the nearest ten. In the lesson observed, lower attaining pupils demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of two-dimensional shapes, for example, they could identify and label squares, triangles and cones. Other pupils in the year group demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of shapes and were able to describe them in terms of faces and edges. Previous work indicates a satisfactory understanding of o'clock and half past the hour when reading the time, accurate measurement of lines, and a sound understanding of data handling in the form of bar charts.
86. Pupils currently in Year 4 are achieving high levels of numerical knowledge and understanding for their age. They confidently count forwards and backwards in fours and eights. They halve and double numbers to 100 with ease and use their knowledge of multiplication and division to work out fractions of numbers mentally. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to explain their strategies and these result in good levels of understanding and confidence. In the lesson observed, very good learning was evident in the gains made by most pupils in understanding clockwise/anticlockwise and the link between the measurement of time on a clock and right angles. This was as a result of clear explanations by the teacher and challenging activities that engaged the pupils' interest. Work completed previously indicates that pupils have a good understanding of the properties of three-dimensional shapes, know the terms equilateral and isosceles in their work on

different types of triangles and are developing good skills in investigational work. This last aspect was identified as a weakness at the time of the previous inspection.

87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers in both key stages manage pupils well and encourage good relationships, but this is of a very high standard at Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and all teachers have a good knowledge of the requirements for numeracy sessions. Lesson objectives are clear, tasks and activities are well organised and at Key Stage 2, well matched to the abilities of all groups of pupils. At Key Stage 1, insufficient challenge is provided to ensure that pupils in the middle and upper ability range are provided with sufficient opportunities to attain Level 3. In the best practice seen, skills teaching, clear learning objectives, very high expectations and interesting and challenging activities ensure good levels of attainment. Progress is carefully monitored through incisive questioning and pupils with special educational needs make good progress through good levels of support.
88. The overall management of the subject is good. A clear mathematics policy is in place. Planning for the subject is good. It follows the National Numeracy Strategy and incorporates guidelines for teaching mixed-age classes. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment to guide planning are of a good quality. Assessment information is used well to track the progress of year groups and in identifying ability groups. It is also used effectively to inform parents in the annual reports. Resources to support the subject are of a good quality and well organised.

SCIENCE

89. Standards in science have been maintained at both key stages since the previous inspection. A programme of work is now in place and planning provides a clear framework for pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding.
90. The year 2000 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments in science showed that the percentage attaining the expected Level 2 was similar to the national average, but well below the average for schools in similar circumstances. No pupils were assessed as achieving the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that the large majority of pupils in Year 2 are on course to achieve Level 2 but few to achieve Level 3. This is partly because expectations of attainment are not high enough and planned learning objectives are not always linked to the prior attainment of all pupils. By the end of Year 4, inspection evidence shows that standards are above national expectations. Pupils are developing good investigational skills and a secure understanding of scientific knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good support and make good progress.
91. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils carry out simple investigations. In their work on magnets, pupils observe and describe what happens when magnets come into contact with objects made from a range of materials. They know, for example, that metal is attracted to magnets and that plastic and wood are not. They record their understanding pictorially by classifying objects according to whether or not they are attracted to magnets. Higher ability pupils are learning how to make predictions, classify and record using simple sentences. However, in the lesson observed which was planned by the class teacher but taught by a supply teacher, it was evident that many pupils already understood the relationship between magnets and materials. They would have further benefited by being given planned opportunities to extend their knowledge by using it to solve scientific problems related to magnetism. Work

completed earlier in the year indicates that overall, pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory understanding of light sources and the dangers of electricity.

92. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 in developing their scientific knowledge and skills. This is because teaching provided pupils with good opportunities to work together, and skills in scientific investigation. In the lesson observed on the effects of light, pupils understood the importance of collecting information, made careful observations and demonstrated a good ability to carry out scientific tests by controlling all variable elements carefully. Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of light. For example, they know that shadows are formed because light cannot travel through some materials and that light is reflected from surfaces in different ways. Work completed previously indicates that by the end of Year 4, pupils know how electrical circuits work and that plants disperse seeds in different ways. They understand the properties of a range of different materials, and classify living and non-living things according to a specific criteria. Pupils are developing good skills in scientific enquiry through obtaining, presenting and evaluating evidence.
93. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. In the Key Stage 2 lesson observed, the quality of learning was very good because pupils were given clear explanations and opportunities to take a full and productive part in the lesson. The lesson was very well planned with detailed activities designed to challenge all groups. Pupils with special educational needs were provided with high quality adult support and this enabled them to make the same level of progress as others. At Key Stage 1, lesson planning did not take full account of the pupils' prior knowledge and this resulted in some middle and higher ability pupils not being provided with enough challenge.
94. The management of science is good. The school has successfully introduced the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines to support its scheme of work and medium-term planning. Assessment procedures are good throughout the school, and in Key Stage 2 good use is made of assessment information to guide planning. Resources provide good support for teaching and learning. They are well organised and of a good quality. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

95. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported as satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. During this inspection, only one art lesson was observed at Key Stage 1. Work on display throughout the school and sketchbooks were scrutinised and discussions with pupils took place. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, when pupils leave the school, are in line with national expectations. The school plans the full Programme of Study for art and design and during the inspection, a range of drawing, painting, weaving and printmaking was seen. All pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject.
96. In the lesson observed, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made woven designs using wool and card. They chose their own colours, cut the pieces of wool to an appropriate length and demonstrated satisfactory skills levels in threading it alternately to make the finished design. Completed work by pupils in Key Stage 1 indicates satisfactory skills in painting in the style of Bridget Riley.
97. At Key Stage 2, pupils paint in the style of Monet and Van Gogh with their work demonstrating a sound understanding of colour and form. Discussion with a group of pupils in Year 4 indicated that they know the names and some aspects of the work of

a range of famous artists. For example, they know that Leonardo da Vinci mainly painted figures and that Van Gogh's work was often very brightly coloured.

98. Completed work is attractively displayed and the finished products show that pupils take a pride in their work. During last year, pupils were involved with members of the community to produce a Millennium tapestry. This is displayed in the school hall and is of a very high quality. Pupils at both key stages use illustration to support their work in other subjects.
99. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the small amount of teaching observed, lesson planning provided a satisfactory framework for learning and pupils were provided with good basic skills teaching in how to thread a plastic weaving needle, and cut and weave the wool. Pupils maintained their concentration on their work even when they had problems threading the needles and were confident when explaining the technique they were using.
100. Management of art is satisfactory. There is a policy and good scheme of work in place. Medium-term planning clearly identifies the understanding to be gained and skills to be developed. The school has ensured that good quality resources are available to support all aspects of art. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards of work are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make satisfactory progress. They are above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 with pupils making good progress throughout the key stage. This represents an improvement on standards seen in the previous inspection, where they were in line with expectations at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally as well as other pupils throughout the school because of the practical nature of the subject and the very good quality of support they receive from class teachers and non-teaching assistants. The very good quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 class accounts for the difference in standards between the two key stages and the good progress pupils make.
102. There is a clear emphasis in teachers' planning upon designing and making skills. This starts as early as in the nursery, where children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to draw birthday cakes before making them out of dough with real candles. In the Key Stage 1 class pupils have made puppets with textiles, vehicles with moving parts and models with winding mechanisms. At Christmas, levers were built into pop-up Christmas cards designed by pupils.
103. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 they have designed and made shoes and the packaging for them. All have made storybooks with moving parts and designed, made and decorated wooden frames to display their art or written work. In food technology they bake bread, paying good attention to the rules of hygiene. During the inspection in the Year 4 class, pupils were busy creating electrical circuits to add lights to their models of lighthouses, gateposts, warning signs and traffic lights. They showed a good understanding of rigidity and strengthening techniques and all worked extremely conscientiously to finish their models to a high standard. When questioned, all could evaluate the success of their design compared to their original design sketches. All enjoyed working independently of the teacher, either individually or in pairs. Relationships are

excellent, as all unselfishly help one another and readily discuss their work, accepting suggestions for improvement willingly.

104. As a result of timetable arrangements, it was only possible to observe one lesson. However, design and technology skills were used most effectively as part of a geography topic in the Year 3 and 4 classes, where pupils were designing the layout of new houses for the village of Denwick. Judgements are based upon the lesson seen, observations of design and technology work in other lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. All teachers plan their work carefully and make good use of support staff and a wide variety of resources, such as computers and hard materials like wood or plastic. Good links are made with other subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, art and geography. In the housing topic in geography, for example, pupils had to use numbers over a million to work out potential costs for their development, and skills in art and science had to be used to complete the models in the Year 3 and 4 class. In the Key Stage 2 class there are high expectations of pupils, and the class teacher obviously has a very good knowledge of the subject. Discipline and control are effortless, as pupils are given clear instructions and much independence when working. Pupils respond by working productively and showing a very good level of interest. All concentrate very well on their tasks and, as a direct result of the very good teaching, they very effectively acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. The quality of marking is satisfactory at both key stages.
105. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator monitors lesson planning carefully and pupils' progress is assessed at the end of each year to check the progress individual pupils make. Following criticism about resources in the previous report, they have been improved and are now good for all aspects of the subject, with plenty of suitable tools and a wide variety of materials for pupils to use. Teachers' expertise is used well and the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines have been successfully incorporated into the learning programme for each year, providing good guidance for teachers. This is another improvement the school has made since the previous inspection. The effective links with other subjects means that statutory requirements are met and pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn new skills and try out their ideas.

GEOGRAPHY

106. During the inspection, one lesson was observed in Key Stage 2. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1. This evidence, combined with an analysis of the work of pupils in both classes and discussions with pupils, indicates that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected. By the end of Year 4, when pupils are ready to transfer to their next school, standards are well above national expectations. This indicates that pupils are making satisfactory progress during their time in Key Stage 1 and very good progress throughout Years 3 and 4. Very good improvements have been made at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection when standards at both key stages were broadly in line with national expectations. The improvements made at Key Stage 2 are largely as a result of the very high quality of teaching in the subject.
107. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory comparisons between two geographical areas, Slayley and Struay in Scotland. Their work indicates that they can identify what places are like, for example, the landscape, jobs and the weather and are developing satisfactory skills in making comparisons. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are working on the 'New Denwick Village Project'. This is a relatively long-

term unit of study that successfully links geography, mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology.

108. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was excellent. The teacher obviously enjoys teaching geography and has excellent knowledge of the subject. Very high expectations and the highest quality relationships resulted in all pupils making excellent progress. This showed in their ability to ask geographical questions and in the way they collected, recorded and analysed evidence. All pupils communicated their findings with a confidence beyond their years to the rest of the class. In addition, very good opportunities were provided for the pupils to work both collaboratively and independently, and this enabled them to demonstrate very good decision-making skills. Pupils use accurate technical vocabulary, draw up plans and decide on ways to improve and sustain the environment.
109. The management of geography is good. A clear subject policy and programme of work provide a good framework for learning. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when there was no coherent programme of work in place. Planning takes full account of the recent curriculum changes and the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Resources to support the subject are of a good quality and well organised. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HISTORY

110. Only one lesson was observed in history at Key Stage 1. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. Evidence from previous work and discussions with pupils indicates that standards are in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and above national expectations at the end of Year 4. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when standards at Key Stage 2 were satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. Good progress is made in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. This is because they are provided with good levels of support in lessons.
111. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand some of the differences between domestic life now and 100 years ago. They record their work through illustrations and simple sentences. Higher attaining pupils focus on specific aspects of life in the past, for example having to share a bed with others, and are able to explain orally and in short pieces of writing their views on this. Work previously completed shows a satisfactory understanding of aspects of the life of Florence Nightingale.
112. Work in pupils' books and on display at Key Stage 2 indicates a good understanding of the differences between life in mediaeval times and the present day. Most pupils use their writing skills well to explain how farming then differs from present day agricultural practices. In their study of Ancient Greece, they show a sound understanding of some of its mythology, for example in their work on the story of King Midas. Through visits, books, photographs and the handling of artefacts pupils are able to gather information on how people lived in the past.
113. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The lesson observed was well organised. Pupils were clear about what they had to do and the activities provided enabled them to reinforce their learning. Pupils were expected to concentrate on their work. This resulted in most pupils completing the activity by the end of the lesson. Effective use was made of time at the end of the lesson when pupils were provided with good opportunities to share what they had learned. It was not possible

to observe a history lesson at Key Stage 2. However, work in books indicates high expectations of presentation and the amount and quality of work to be done.

114. Management of history is good. A clear policy and scheme of work is in place. The quality of planning is good and is based on the most recent national guidelines. The school makes good use of the wealth of history in the area, including visits to Hadrian's Wall, Bede's World and Jarrow. Resources support the subject well and are efficiently organised in classrooms and a central resource area. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, but well above those normally seen by the end of Year 4. This represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations at both key stages. In 1997 progress was found to be uneven across the different elements of the subject, and this was mostly due to the old equipment owned by the school and computers not being used effectively to support pupils' work in all subjects of the curriculum. The quantity and quality of computers has been improved since then and inspection evidence shows that pupils of all ages regularly use them in their work in all lessons. As a result, progress throughout Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and it is very good at Key Stage 2.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have used an art program to design their own patterns or pictures, and there are many examples of word-processed text accompanying displays in and around their classroom. Discussions with pupils shows their knowledge of computers and their ability to access information and use it for different purposes, producing graphs about favourite pets, for example. The computers are also used effectively within most literacy and numeracy sessions to enhance the curriculum.
117. By the end of Year 4 pupils use the computers regularly for work in all subjects and judgements about levels of attainment and pupils' progress were aided by the volume of work available. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 2 pupils were using the three computers in the hall to enter data and search for information about houses for sale in the local area. All could produce a graph of their results and compare the efficiency of using a computer database over information on paper. Good links were evident with English, mathematics, geography and science, but examples of work showed computers were used in all other subjects too. In science, for example, pupils researched information about the sun and in an excellent geography lesson, pupils prepared the cost of developing houses on different sites around Denwick. This involved using mathematical as well as geographical skills. Pupils show much enthusiasm, and interact when working with computers, and are often trusted to work independently of the class teacher. On these occasions their personal development and co-operation with one another is excellent.
118. The quality of teaching is good overall. There was little chance to see the Key Stage 1 teacher, as she was absent through illness after the first day of the inspection. However, a scrutiny of work and the very detailed planning documents shows much time is devoted to the subject, making very good use of the available resources and support staff. The quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 class is very good in virtually all aspects. The teacher obviously has a very good knowledge of the subject and high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Planning is equally as thorough and pupils are very well organised and controlled during lessons. Marking of work is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching means that all pupils

at Key Stage 2 acquire a very good level of skills, knowledge and understanding and produce work of a high standard.

119. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Resources are very good, with high quality personal computers recently purchased and access to the Internet. In addition, the school successfully uses other electronic equipment: tape recorders and listening centres in literacy sessions, for example. Teachers' planning is monitored each term and the standard of pupils' work is regularly analysed. Good assessment procedures enable teachers to check pupils' progress termly and the information is used well to guide future lesson planning. A comprehensive policy statement and effective programmes of work ensure that all statutory requirements of the curriculum in respect of information and communication technology are met.
120. An extra-curricular computer club, taken by a former lecturer in computer science, very effectively promotes pupils' knowledge and skills in the subject. Advanced work, such as managing text, using sound and spreadsheets and producing animated cartoons is covered during the well-attended after-school sessions. Throughout the school there is a very good commitment to raising standards in the subject, and along with pupils' enthusiasm, it is already paying dividends. The subject is rapidly becoming a strength of the school.

MUSIC

121. Evidence from the lesson observed in the Key Stage 1 class indicates that standards in music are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. No music lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 and therefore no judgement on standards can be made. In the previous inspection, standards were found to be in line with those expected at both key stages. During assemblies hymns are tunefully sung, both accompanied and unaccompanied. There is some provision for pupils to learn a musical instrument. This is principally through after-school tuition in playing the violin and weekly extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to play an instrument. Pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to perform before an audience at Christmas and Harvest time. The school took part in the Tynedale Music Festival and was awarded second place.
122. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen to pre-recorded music programmes. They can clap a three-four rhythm with their teacher and are developing a satisfactory understanding of dynamics, identifying when the music gradually becomes quieter. During the lesson, pupils were provided with satisfactory opportunities to respond to the music through working with the teacher. However, the pre-recorded material was too difficult for the younger pupils in the class to follow. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1.
123. The management of music is satisfactory. A clear policy is in place, providing adequate guidance for teachers. Planning addresses the Programme of Study and takes account of recent curriculum guidelines. Resources consist principally of un-tuned percussion with some recently purchased, good quality, tuned instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Standards in physical education by the end of Key Stage 1 are similar to those found in most schools and pupils make satisfactory progress. This reflects the judgement made at the previous inspection. During this inspection it was possible to observe only one physical education lesson at Key Stage 1, plus an outdoor physical development session, involving children in the nursery. However, teachers' planning

indicates that pupils of all ages participate in dance, games, gymnastics, athletics and swimming. Although no definitive judgement can be made for Key Stage 2, the standards found at Key Stage 1, and reported previously for both key stages, mean it is safe to assume that at Key Stage 2 standards are also in line with those expected. Certainly there was no evidence to suggest otherwise.

125. The provision for swimming is good. All pupils have a weekly session each term at a nearby indoor pool with only a short break before Christmas. The school reports that by the time pupils are ready to leave at the end of Year 4 all pupils achieve the required standards in the National Curriculum for swimming.
126. The level of resources have been improved following criticisms in the previous report, and are now good overall. However, the lack of space in the school hall means that the internal accommodation remains unsatisfactory for physical education. Lessons usually involve half of the pupils in each class, as this is all the space will safely allow. In the Key Stage 1 gymnastics lesson observed the classroom assistant, who used to be a physical education teacher, taught the lesson. Pupils behaved very sensibly and obviously enjoyed the session. Some became over-excited with their success when performing a forward roll for the first time, but were controlled well by the non-teaching assistant, who showed a good level of subject expertise. All pupils knew the importance of warming up before exercise and the effect of exercise on their heart and muscles. Pupils are confident in their movement and demonstrate a satisfactory level of control and co-ordination. They follow instructions well and take good care of their own safety and that of others when developing gymnastic sequences.
127. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned carefully and very good use is made of support staff and resources. The organisation of lessons and range of resources provides pupils with a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop physical skills. Health and safety issues are fully complied with. During the Key Stage 1 lesson observed pupils were provided with appropriate skills training to help them to learn and improve in a satisfactory way.
128. Subject management is satisfactory. The latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines are used well to give clear guidance for teaching all aspects of the curriculum and teachers' planning is carefully monitored by the subject co-ordinator each half term. The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory and the information is used satisfactorily to guide curricular planning. The spacious playground and large field provide a good resource for activities when the weather is suitable. The large new shed means that resources can be stored tidily and that they are readily accessible to pupils.
129. The provision of extra-curricular sporting activities is satisfactory, considering the size and resources of the school. Pupils are able to take part in football and netball training and competitive matches are often arranged with nearby schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school is better than that normally seen and generally above the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the subject. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, where standards were judged to be in line with expectations at both key stages. Since then the policy guidelines have been revised, leading to an improvement in the quality of teaching

and more resources provided, particularly artefacts associated with other world religions.

131. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a good knowledge of stories from the Bible, such as when Jesus met Peter and Andrew fishing, or the story of Zachaeus. They can explain the importance of Christmas and Easter to Christians and are familiar with the Christening ceremony following a visit to a local church. They know that not all people are Christians and are able to explain some of the traditions of the Hindu faith and stories such as the birth of Krishna. Pupils in the Key Stage 1 class behaved very well in the lesson observed, even though it was taken by a temporary teacher due to the illness of their own class teacher. All listened attentively to the story and showed a good level of knowledge and understanding as they keenly responded to questions.
132. By the end of Year 4, when pupils transfer to the next phase of their education, they show a very high level of care and consideration for others. Human values and beliefs, such as not being selfish, are effectively promoted in assemblies, along with Bible stories and a sound knowledge of the main features and ceremonies associated with other world religions, such as Sikhism, Judaism and the Muslim faith. All know about the Sikh story of the Guru's cloak, for example, and many Old Testament stories from the Bible, such as Abraham and Isaac, Moses and Solomon's judgement when two women each claimed the same baby. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 2 on faith and belief, pupils showed much interest and concentrated very well when working independently of the class teacher in groups. All knew facts about famous people such as Nelson Mandela, Helen Keller and Lord Shaftesbury, and discussed their contributions to society sensibly and maturely.
133. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. All teachers plan their lessons very carefully, and as a result pupils acquire a good level of knowledge and understanding, working with interest on the tasks set for them. This was especially true in the lesson on faith shown by famous people in the Key Stage 2 class.
134. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The scheme of work has been revised and improved following the previous inspection and now provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which complies fully with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils' progress is assessed carefully at the end of each year and reported in detail to parents. Assessment information is used satisfactorily by teachers to plan future work and ensure all pupils build effectively on their previous knowledge. Teachers' planning is closely scrutinised by the co-ordinator and the standard of work monitored regularly. Satisfactory plans to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching are in place as the school, along with others nationally, develops procedures to monitor its performance in all areas. There is a clear and continuing commitment to improve standards in religious education. Assemblies are well planned and make a good link with many aspects of the subject. Very good use is made of resources by all teachers to make the subject more interesting. For example, visits are arranged to the local church, the Methodist minister leads assemblies on a monthly basis and the school is successfully developing its range of religious artefacts. The annual calendar includes lessons about religious festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Diwali (Hindu), Eid and Ramadan (Muslim) and Hanukkah (Jewish). The school cook often prepares typical food eaten by people to celebrate these festivals for school dinners, further enhancing pupils' learning and appreciation of other faiths. All serve to motivate pupils and stimulate their interest. Overall the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.