

Emmaville Primary School ----Erratum

On **page 8** under the heading **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**
Subheading: **Provision for pupils with special educational needs**

Third sentence now reads:

At present the school does not formally identify any gifted or talented pupils.
(this applies to the report and summary)

Page 13, paragraph 16, 1st sentence

The school does not, at present, formally identify gifted or talented pupils, but on occasions, provision is made for pupils with special talents in art and music.

Page 36, paragraph 86, 1st sentence

Teachers in the junior classes work systematically

Bench Marque Limited (Inspection Contractor)

INSPECTION REPORT

EMMAVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Crawcrook, Ryton

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108339

Headteacher: Mrs A Slassor

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock
25344

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 4th May 2001

Inspection number: 192222

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Street Crawcrook Ryton Gateshead Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE40 4ND
Telephone number:	0191 4132460
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Purvis
Date of previous inspection:	24 th February 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11368	Miss K Lee	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education Foundation Stage	
23887	Mr P Nettleship	Team inspector	English Art History Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities	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

Emmaville Primary School caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age and is about the same size as most other primary schools. There are 199 pupils on roll, 96 boys and 103 girls and this is about the same as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The total number is made up with 22 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. There are seven single-age classes, three in the infant and four in the junior section, plus the nursery. Almost all pupils come from Crawcrook and Clara Vale, which are former mining villages situated in a rural area. The attainment of most children when they start in the nursery is in line with that expected nationally. When they enter the reception class in September, it is broadly average.

There are no pupils from homes where English is an additional language. At present 14.3 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school has 14.3 per cent of pupils on its register for pupils with special educational needs, which is about average, and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school where the strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. The headteacher cares passionately about the school and strives for excellence in everything, leading by example. Over the past two years, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' performance in the national end of key stage tests, particularly in mathematics and science, which are both above the national average. Standards in English remain in line with those expected nationally. The quality of teaching is very good and effectively promotes a strong sense of responsibility by encouraging pupils to work independently of their teacher in groups or individually. As a result, pupils have an excellent attitude to learning and behave very well in lessons. Most pupils are working at or near to their capacity. When all these factors are considered, along with the above average levels of funding, the school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors are very good.
- Children under six who are in the Foundation Stage are given a very good start to school.
- The quality of care and relationships generate excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of the very good and much improved quality of teaching.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils' computer skills are well above average and strongly support their learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing.

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 February 1997, three key issues were identified for improvement and all have been thoroughly addressed. There are up-to-date policy statements and detailed programmes of work for each National Curriculum subject,

giving teachers clear guidance for their lesson planning. Very good procedures for assessing pupils' levels of attainment and their progress have been developed and the information gathered is used very well to plan appropriate work for individual pupils. Establishing the part-time nursery class, which was why the school had built up a large surplus in 1997, has reduced the present budget surplus to well within acceptable limits. The school has also successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies over the past two years and this is having a marked impact on standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. The level of improvement, taking into account the standards achieved, and the much better quality of teaching, has been good. The school is well on course to meet the targets set for English and mathematics in 2001. Furthermore, the school has the energetic leadership and hard working staff, who function so well as a team, to maintain the current trend of improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	E	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	B	B	
Science	E	D	A	A	

The positive steps taken by the headteacher, ably supported by a hard working staff, are having a marked effect on standards, which show much improvement over the past two years. Pupils' achievements in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, shown above, have largely been maintained. In science, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above in 2000 was very high, being in the top five per cent nationally. Overall standards, when those achieving Level 5 are included, are well above average. When the results in 2000 are compared to similar schools, that is to say those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were in line in English, better in mathematics and much better in science. Inspection evidence shows that, by the time pupils are eleven, overall standards in English are in line with the national average and they are above average in mathematics and science. An analysis of pupils' completed work confirms that average and higher attaining pupils are achieving similar standards to last year. With about one-third of lower attaining pupils in the current year group, the school is doing well to maintain its overall standards.

Targets for English and mathematics are carefully and realistically based on a detailed assessment of pupils' potential. Virtually all pupils achieve the individual targets set for them with many exceeding them. Pupils with all types of special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment due to the careful planning by their teachers and the very good support they receive from classroom assistants. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a significant effect on standards in mathematics and some aspects of English. However, inspection evidence shows that standards in writing are adversely affecting pupils' overall performance in English. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement. Standards in information and communication technology are well above those normally

expected and this is attributable to the level of staff expertise and very good resources available to pupils. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment in all other subjects for eleven-year-olds is in line with national expectations, except in art and geography where they are above.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The high levels of enthusiasm by pupils and interest shown in their lessons make a considerable contribution to their level of achievement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and this contributes well to the pace of learning. There have been no exclusions. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. No racist or sexist behaviour is reported and none seen.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities provided to show independence and responsibility in their learning, and in all aspects of school life. The level of initiative shown by pupils of all ages is excellent. Relationships with all staff and fellow pupils are very good.
Attendance	Well above average. The willingness to come to school, reported in the questionnaire, is high and pupils are invariably punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the previous inspection in February 1997, the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in almost all of the lessons observed, and good in one-third. One per cent was judged to be very good and six per cent were found to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the school has improved a great deal since then, and is very good overall. The same high standard of teaching was found in the infant and junior classes as well as in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception class. Overall, the quality of teaching seen in this inspection was satisfactory or better in every lesson. It was very good or excellent in 39 per cent. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in 75 per cent of lessons, which shows a marked increase in the proportion of high quality lessons since the previous inspection. In all the lessons seen in the Foundation Stage, for example, the quality of teaching was judged to be either good or very good. The overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school.

Staff development has been given a high priority and as a result, most aspects of teaching were found to be of a high standard. The only significant exception is the low expectations by some teachers for pupils' handwriting. Some do not always use the school's adopted style themselves, resulting in handwriting of variable quality from pupils. Strong features, common to all teachers, which contribute to the effectiveness of teaching, were lesson planning, high expectations of pupils, discipline and the use of resources to make learning interesting for

pupils. In addition, the excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils, and the level of independence afforded by working in groups further enhance the quality of learning. Teaching is also very good for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad and relevant and successfully interests and motivates pupils. The curriculum for their personal, social and health education is a strength. The Foundation Stage curriculum is imaginatively and thoroughly planned to cover the nationally agreed areas of learning. Statutory requirements are met, and in addition French is taught. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. All are fully included in lessons and supported well. Documentation is up-to-date and individual education plans clearly identify targets for improvement. At present the school does not formally identify any gifted or talented pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. All pupils are encouraged to become independent, show initiative and accept responsibility. This begins effectively in the nursery. Provision for spiritual development is good and for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a socially inclusive school where all pupils are respected and valued. Child protection procedures are very well developed. Assessment procedures, a previous weakness, are now very good.

There is a good partnership with parents. Good strategies exist to involve parents and keep them informed about the curriculum and school activities. Annual reports are written using a computer and are good, with clear indications on how pupils should further improve. A few parents are not happy about the apparent duplication of phrases for different children. The inspection team do not think that this detracts from the quality of the reports for individual children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is constantly striving for excellence and her staff share a very strong commitment to improvement. Senior management is successfully building a high performing staff who work very well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The business of the governing body is conducted efficiently, with the best interests of the school always in mind. All relevant statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Standards achieved by pupils are closely scrutinised and the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching is a model of good practice. Swift action takes place to bring about improvements where necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is managed exceptionally well and best value in all spending actively sought. Teachers are deployed effectively and learning resources, particularly computers, used to good effect.

Staffing levels are good. The accommodation, which is spotlessly clean, is very good for all aspects of the curriculum. Resources are good overall. They are very good for mathematics, information and communication technology and in the Foundation Stage. There is a very good supply of books and the library is attractive and well used.

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 and make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • Most feel comfortable about approaching school. • Pupils are expected to work hard. • School works closely with parents. • Pupils are helped to become more mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and quality of homework. • The range of activities for pupils outside lessons.

Inspectors are in total agreement with parents' positive views about the school. However, inspectors disagree with the small number of parents' views about homework and the range of extra-curricular activities, judging both aspects to be good. However, parents are correct in that activities of a sporting nature are limited at present.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of abilities. However, levels of attainment on entry are average. They quickly settle into school routines and approach their learning with an extremely positive attitude. During their time in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception class, they make good progress overall, and are well placed to meet, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1.
2. Attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average. Curriculum planning for children under five is detailed and in line with requirements of the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is invariably good and often very good. As a result, the progress of most children in the reception class in language and literacy, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and in their personal, social and emotional development is good. For example, children listen well to all adults, they respond to instructions and sit and listen attentively to stories. They answer questions politely, do not call out, and listen to other children's answers in literacy sessions. In their physical development, children's progress is good in the nursery as they have good opportunities to use large play apparatus and wheeled toys outdoors. Children in the reception class have similar opportunities, as they share the outdoor play area and have exclusive use of it every afternoon when the nursery is closed. By the end of the Foundation Stage, virtually all children achieve the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage curriculum.
3. Inspection findings show that attainment for seven-year-olds in English is in line with that expected nationally, but in mathematics and science it is above the national average. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection in February 1997 when standards were found to be about average in mathematics and science. However, standards in English appear to have got worse as they were above average in 1997 and are now in line with the average. The school has consistently tried to improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection, with some measure of success. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and a marked improvement in the quality of teaching has had a good effect. Results in the 2000 tests for seven-year-olds, in comparison with all schools, show standards in reading and mathematics were in line with national expectations, and above those normally seen in writing. When the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results follow the same pattern, in line for reading and mathematics and above in writing. The results for science, based on teacher assessments, show 97 per cent achieving the expected Level 2 or above which is above the national average, and 24 per cent achieving the higher Level 3, which is in line with the average. On inspection, the overall attainment in science for seven-year-olds was judged to be above average.
4. The results since 1997 show that both boys and girls attained equally well in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The trend since 1996 shows results have been consistently maintained at above average levels. In the school's own analysis,

comparing the predicted National Curriculum level using data from the assessments on entry to the school, pupils mostly do better than expected. The very good start all children have in their Foundation Stage and consistently good quality of teaching they experience throughout the infant section of the school are mainly responsible for how well pupils achieve in relation to their prior attainment. It should be noted that the beneficial effect of the newly established nursery and the development of the Foundation Stage has not yet had time to make an impact on pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments.

5. In English, work seen during the inspection shows that, by the time pupils are seven, the standards that they attain are above the national average in reading, but in line for writing and speaking and listening. Overall, standards in English are average. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to express themselves in class discussions. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills. Reading is taught well, allowing pupils to develop their technical skills well. They have good strategies, for example, to try to read unfamiliar words. As a result, most read with understanding. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read, is helping to improve standards. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to write in most subjects and teachers are focusing effectively on spelling and sentence structures in an attempt to raise standards. In the literacy sessions pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities such as re-telling stories and writing letters or poems. However, few pupils use a joined style of handwriting. It is the school's policy not to formally introduce this until Year 3. As a result pupils do not write very fluently and this affects the amount of written work they produce.
6. In mathematics, standards of work show attainment to be above average and most pupils enjoy counting and using 'big numbers'. Much work of a practical nature is undertaken in science. In Year 1, for example, pupils use magnifying lenses to observe animals, and in year 2, they set up experiments to grow plants under different conditions. Standards are above average.
7. Pupils generally attain standards which are in line with those normally expected for seven-year-olds in art and design, information and communication technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Pupils' attainment is well above national expectations in information and communication technology, mainly because of the clear guidance available, the very good level of resources and the very good use teachers make of computers in their lessons. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus as pupils are acquiring a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and other major world religions.
8. The good progress pupils make after entering the nursery, and the standards they attain by the age of seven, are a reflection of how well they are taught and their excellent attitudes towards their learning. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good but in English it is satisfactory, with some underachievement in aspects of writing, such as sentence structure and handwriting. The school has recognised this and identified writing as a priority for improvement in its current management plan. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire believe that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team recognised the strong impact that the very good provision in the nursery is having on pupils' attainment. All school staff are deeply committed to improving standards and are succeeding.

9. Pupils continue to achieve well in the junior classes. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6 class, attainment in English, overall, is in line with national expectations. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with those normally seen, and in reading they are above average. However, in the important area of writing, they remain in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. In mathematics and science, standards are above those normally seen. Standards in mathematics and science for eleven-year-olds have improved since the previous inspection but in English, they do not appear to be as good. However, when the performance of these particular pupils is compared with how they achieved in the tests for seven-year-olds, it is apparent that standards have been maintained.
10. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds pupils in 2000 showed that attainment was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds, they follow the same pattern in all three subjects. The headteacher and staff have analysed the results very carefully and identified writing as a relatively weak area, affecting overall standards in English. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is beginning to have a positive effect on standards.
11. Pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments appear erratic over the past four years with results below or well below the national average in each subject. However, in 2000, the effects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the much improved quality of teaching have been instrumental in raising standards. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for the current Year 6 pupils are in line with the national average for English, and above average in mathematics and science. In other subjects, standards of attainment are above those normally seen in art and geography, and in line for all others except information and communication technology where standards were found to be well above national expectations. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to use the many computers. All show confidence, often working independently of their teacher to research information from the Internet. The school is very effective as the vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
12. The consistently good quality of teaching is an important factor in the progress most pupils make. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has undoubtedly helped to raise standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Well chosen texts and the teachers' skills in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in style, structure and content improve pupils' reading skills and widens their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading remains strong and this also contributes effectively to the above average attainment and good progress pupils make in reading. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in the classroom from their teachers and the skilled classroom support assistants. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills with parents playing a key role by showing interest and listening to reading most nights. Teachers in general provide good opportunities for pupils to write in a wide range of styles or contexts. However, pupils are not taught early enough to develop a fluent joined style of handwriting. This is one factor which is holding back improvements in standards in writing in the junior classes. Standards are in line with the level expected but improvements are not keeping pace with those in the other core subjects of mathematics and science.

13. Standards of attainment in science are particularly good. Pupils have many opportunities to investigate and conduct experiments independently. The science co-ordinator manages the subject very well, giving much advice and support to all teachers. All teachers show confidence when teaching science and are guided effectively by the good programme of work. Boys and girls both enjoy the practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. As a result, there is no difference in the performance of girls and boys.
14. Overall, the achievement of pupils is good by the time they are ready to leave in Year 6. High expectations of teachers, their very good knowledge of the curriculum, and careful lesson planning result in effective learning in a large proportion of lessons. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by their excellent attitudes, very good behaviour and relationships with one another and their teachers. This creates a good atmosphere for all pupils in which to learn. Targets for English and mathematics are not being routinely increased for the next two years as they are realistically based on a detailed assessment of pupils' potential in each year group.
15. Pupils with all types of special educational need achieve well. They make similar progress to others in their class due to the careful planning by class teachers, and the effective support of the classroom assistants. The school sets challenging targets and is on course to meet them. In most classes, those with recognised behavioural difficulties achieve particularly well due to teachers' high expectations of behaviour, very good level of class control and discipline.
16. The school does not, at present, formally identify any gifted or talented pupils, but on occasions, provision is made for pupils with special talents in art and music. The school relies on the very good quality of teaching to afford all pupils with every chance to reach their full potential. All pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in all aspects of school life with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. Some good opportunities for very high attaining pupils to work together in a group on challenging assignments are provided, but these need to be planned more regularly to further extend these pupils' learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. These aspects were identified as areas of strength in the previous inspection and all have improved further since then. From the nursery onwards, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, show excellent attitudes to their work and their life in school. Pupils are punctual, attendance levels are very good and there is no unauthorised absence. There is a quiet working atmosphere throughout the school.
18. The high levels of enthusiasm by pupils and interest shown in their lessons make considerable contribution to their level of achievement in all subjects. Pupils listen carefully in class and work hard with very good concentration and effort. This is a result of the very good teaching and relationships between pupils and all adults in school. For example, in a history lesson on Henry VIII, Year 4 pupils were all encouraged by their class teacher's enthusiasm for the subject, and were eager to share their knowledge and opinions of Henry and his wives.
19. Behaviour is very good, both in and around school. There have been no exclusions reported. All pupils are confident that isolated incidents of bullying have been dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of staff. They walk sensibly about the school, holding doors open for adults and each other. There is a real sense of community. Older pupils look after younger ones at breaks and lunch-time. Everyone, adults and pupils alike, treat each other with

respect. Boys and girls are totally integrated in class and at play. Pupils of all ages co-operate very well with each other in class, for example, from the nursery children helping one another to put on their aprons, to mature collaboration in lessons in Year 6. This rapport and the strong working relationships are key factors in promoting good progress.

20. Overall, the personal development and relationships of pupils is very good. Pupils take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities provided to show independence and responsibility in their learning and in all aspects of school life. This is a strong characteristic of the school. Pupils of all ages willingly undertake a wide range of responsibilities, from tidying up in the nursery to organising fundraising for charity in Year 6. In the group sessions in class, pupils work very well independently from the class teacher and move smoothly from one activity to the other. The level of initiative and personal responsibility shown by pupils of all ages is excellent. For example, when Year 6 pupils were designing a multimedia page about the Quayside and River Tyne, they organised themselves into pairs to work on the computers and regularly consulted each other to avoid duplication and evaluate the clarity of the features described on the page.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. In the previous inspection in February 1997, the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in almost all of the lessons observed and good in one-third. One per cent was judged to be very good and six per cent were found to be unsatisfactory. At that time, well over half of the present teaching staff were settling into the school following a period of change after the appointment of the headteacher in 1995. The quality of teaching in the school has improved a great deal since then, and is very good, overall. Staff development has been given priority and as a result, most aspects of teaching were found to be of a high standard. It was obvious from the interview with all teachers about the co-ordination of subjects, just how well they operate as a team, giving much support to one another. Strong features, common to all teachers, which contribute to the effectiveness of teaching, were lesson planning, high expectations of pupils, class discipline and the use of resources to make learning interesting for pupils. In addition, the excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils, and the level of independence afforded by setting tasks covering different subjects to be completed by groups of pupils in rotation, further enhances the quality of learning. There is a very strong determination by all staff to raise standards.
22. During this inspection, the quality of teaching was of the same high standard in the infant and junior classes as well as in the Foundation Stage. The proportion of good or better teaching, for example, was virtually the same in each section of the school. Overall, the quality of teaching seen in this inspection was satisfactory or better in every lesson. It was very good or excellent in 39 per cent. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in 75 per cent of lessons, which shows a remarkable increase in the proportion of high quality lessons since the previous inspection. In all the lessons seen in the Foundation Stage, for example, the quality of teaching was judged to be either good or very good. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school.
23. A characteristic of the very good quality of teaching is the detailed lesson planning, with clear learning objectives and effective links between subjects. However, it was noted that on a few occasions, teachers did not make it clear to pupils what they were expected to learn in the lesson, or check at the end of lessons that all had been

covered adequately. On these occasions, the quality of the final session where teachers reviewed learning suffered as it lacked focus. Expectations of pupils are generally high and pupils respond by behaving very well and working conscientiously to produce neat work. However, in Years 2 and 3, the standard of pupils' handwriting was not as good as that normally seen, with few pupils able to use a fluent joined style. The excellent relationship with pupils means that the discipline and control in lessons is now of an extremely high standard, showing previous criticisms have been fully addressed. As a result, pupils' work conscientiously for much of the time unsupervised directly by their teacher and invariably complete the tasks set to a high standard. In lessons where teaching was judged to be very good or excellent, the teachers' enthusiasm, and very good subject knowledge, made learning exciting with an element of fun for all. Pupils of all abilities were given suitably challenging tasks and strict time targets to complete them. A strong feature of most other lessons is the effective way teachers promote the independence of pupils by providing challenging activities, which they can tackle either individually or in groups. Criticism raised in the previous inspection over the provision of inappropriate work for pupils has been largely remedied. The excellent attitude pupils in general have towards their work means that they can be left unsupervised and trusted to work diligently. Praise is used well throughout to motivate or reward pupils' good effort. This raises their self-esteem very successfully, giving all a strong sense of responsibility.

24. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions is good throughout the school. All teachers use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions effectively when teaching other subjects. In a physical education lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils' literacy skills were developed as they devised rules for a game of Hoop Netball and wrote them down. Pupils are frequently provided with the opportunity to use computer skills as part of their work in all subjects and this invariably involves literacy or numeracy skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils write poems about tadpoles in science, Year 4 record temperatures when checking the insulation properties of materials and Year 5 pupils produce graphs showing daily temperatures for their geography topic about the weather. The scrutiny of pupils' work confirms how much pupils use computers to support their learning in general and in literacy and numeracy in particular.
25. The consistently high quality of teaching accounts for the good level of achievement for most pupils. In English, pupils are taught well and as a result, virtually all achieve the targets set for them and many exceed them. In mathematics, science and in information and communication technology in particular, pupils' achievements reflect the very good quality of teaching. The quality of teaching is also good in history and art. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology, geography, music and religious education. However, in physical education, there was insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement.
26. All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Teachers have developed clear strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils keep working. In the nursery, for example, the teacher often whispers or sings instructions to the children, gaining their attention immediately. As a result, noise levels are usually low and most pupils concentrate hard on the tasks set for them. Pupils behave very well in lessons and have an excellent attitude towards their learning. This results in a productive working atmosphere in all classes. Pupils' excellent relationships with one another mean that they work well independently of their teachers in pairs or small groups.

27. Teachers use assessment very well to guide their planning and this helps them to plan work which challenges pupils of all abilities. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly and teachers often add helpful comments giving guidance to pupils on how to further improve. There were no gifted pupils identified to the inspection team. However, teachers know their pupils very well and there is a strong commitment to meet the needs of all pupils so that they can achieve their full potential. They succeed as virtually all pupils meet or exceed the targets set for them. Lessons invariably build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with a wide range of resources readily available for pupils. This maintains pupils' interest and encourages them to use their initiative and choose suitable materials to use in their studies when working independently in groups. Pupils respond positively to all their lessons, sustaining very good levels of concentration. As a direct result, very effective learning occurs in virtually all lessons.
28. The quality of teaching and learning for children under the age of five in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. 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 a very good start in school and to develop excellent attitudes towards schoolwork. Support for children with special educational needs is good in each of the six areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage enabling them to make very good progress.
29. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Working in association with the teacher from the special educational needs support service, teachers set clear targets for improvement and make sure that pupils understand what is expected of them. As a result, pupils learn effectively, both in class lessons and in small groups when working outside the classroom with specialist teachers. Their work is regularly reviewed, with accurate assessments made. Pupils show interest in their work. They are increasingly able to sustain concentration and think and learn for themselves. Very effective classroom support assistants are used efficiently to support pupils when they are involved in group activities. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson on the differences and similarities of various animals, pupils were able to fully take part and stroke and examine the rabbit, closely supervised by the classroom assistant who asked relevant questions. They were then helped to complete the worksheet. Part-time teachers teach those pupils identified as requiring additional support in literacy very effectively. The 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.
30. A small 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 do not support these parents' views. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers make good use of homework and the amount and quality usefully supports pupils' learning.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. Particular strengths are:
- the learning opportunities planned for children at the Foundation Stage;
 - links made across a range of subjects that make learning more relevant and exciting;
 - the personal, social and health education provided by the school;
 - the strong contribution of the community to pupils' learning;
 - the constructive relationships that exist with other local schools that benefit pupils.

The Foundation Stage

32. Provision in the nursery and reception class is very imaginatively and thoroughly planned, with detailed attention to national guidance on early learning. It provides a very rich, stimulating and comprehensive range of opportunities for all aspects of young children's learning.

National Curriculum subjects

33. Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced programme of work in the subjects of the National Curriculum. The allocation of time to subjects is effectively related to pupils' needs. It shows a necessary emphasis on basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Parental concerns that there is an over-emphasis on English, mathematics and science are not borne out by the evidence of this inspection. New policies and schemes of work are in place in all subjects. This fully addresses a key issue from the previous inspection. Many curriculum plans are skilfully linked together. This enables a range of investigations and activities to run in parallel across different subjects. Other programmes of study are covered in isolation. This ensures that all areas of the National Curriculum are taught. Standards in information and communication technology and in science have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
34. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good. A whole-school approach to developing literacy has been successful in identifying those areas in need of improvement, for example, the standard of writing. The daily literacy hour is now well established, ensuring very good progression between lessons. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are good. Throughout the school, the National Numeracy Strategy is well established, and all teachers plan and teach securely in relation to its framework and three-part lesson structure. They also work together to carefully plan opportunities to reinforce and extend mathematical skills by using them to support learning in other subjects.
35. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good access to the full range of curriculum opportunities. This is an inclusive school that values the contribution of all pupils to its everyday life. Children of all abilities work together in groups for science, information and communication technology, history, geography and art. They are often paired, so that one can help the other. Consequently, support comes automatically to the lower attaining pupils, both from staff and their peers. All pupils gain from these pairings, including the higher attainers. Some good opportunities are provided for them to work alongside others of a similar ability to extend their knowledge but their rate of progress would be further increased if opportunities were more frequent. Whole-school projects, such as the large Four Seasons wall hanging (to which all pupils made a contribution) typify the commitment to involve and celebrate the work of all pupils.

36. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The school identifies those in possible need of help at an early stage. Programmes to address their needs are well provided at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, children's individual programmes are clear and purposeful. Good links have been forged between the full- and part-time staff and between the school and outside agencies. Parents and carers are kept well informed and are consulted appropriately. Consequently, individual needs are well met.
37. Pupils of all ages and abilities benefit from a curriculum that is very well focused on their personal, social and health needs. The success of this work is evident in the responsibility which older pupils accept in setting their own personal targets, the close links between all the boys and girls, whether working or playing in groups, and the commitment of the school towards promoting healthy, informed life-styles.
38. 'Circle-time', when pupils co-operate and discuss matters of interest or concern, is being well used in some classes. Pupil confidence and skills are increased by these lessons. There is an annual programme that ensures that older pupils receive expert tuition, from various professionals, on drugs awareness and for sex education.

The broader curriculum

39. There is a good range of activities where pupils can extend their learning after school. Teachers run most of these but, with extra pressures on them to attend courses, some of the sports activities have been taken on by outside organisations. The Culture Club is particularly successful. Parents, grandparents and teachers combine to teach skills linked to the local area. These include clip-mats, knitting, bobbin-crochet and cross-stitching. It is open to children of both key stages and is very well attended. Other clubs enrich the school's own curriculum, such as those for science, mathematics, recorders, information and communication technology and the choir.
40. The school has developed very good links with the local community that enrich pupils' learning well. Sporting links exist with both amateur and professional clubs. These enable pupils to benefit from expert coaching in courses for rugby, soccer and cricket. They also experience visits from hockey and ice hockey players to promote their sports. Class 4 pupils make visits to local exhibitions and art galleries to extend their artistic appreciation and to participate in workshop events. The school provides pupils with regular first-hand experiences. Visits and visitors often enrich the pupils' education across a range of subjects. This includes close links with the local churches. The school has good links with the University of Northumbria and other training institutions. Students regularly visit the school, to the mutual benefit of both parties. These links especially impact on extending pupils' creativity in such areas as music and art.
41. The school has very good working links with its partner schools. Teachers from Ryton Comprehensive School visit to provide specialist tuition in French and physical education. Ryton School covers the costs of 'artists in residence' for all its feeder schools. Pupils also benefit from an annual five-day trip to an outdoor education centre. Pupils gain much from these activities in preparation for their transfer to the next phase. Curriculum co-ordinators also benefit from good collaborative links with colleagues from other cluster schools.
42. The school makes very good provisions overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. It has strengthened these provisions considerably since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be good. Its aims give high status to social awareness and action, to active moral and spiritual values, and to an appreciation of cultural heritage and diversity. These aims are fully reflected in the daily life of the school. Almost all parents agree that the values, attitudes and

behaviours that the school promotes contribute strongly to their children's personal development.

43. The provision for spiritual development is good. The school works hard and effectively to develop pupils' self-understanding and self-esteem. Assemblies regularly develop such themes, using the life-stories of high achievers such as Alan Shearer. They include opportunities to reflect on the meaning of common human experiences and shared values, and they often make good use of relevant prayers written by pupils. Work in religious education consistently asks pupils to reflect quietly on how key ideas, such as the Hindu commitment to peaceful protest, apply to their own lives. In these and other lessons, pupils sit in a circle and use ordered turns to share their feelings and beliefs, and to develop ideas about their place in the world. All teachers value children's personal contributions and uniqueness. They promote opportunities for them to reflect on experiences of beauty and wonder. For example, children in the nursery are encouraged each day to wonder at new growth from the seeds they planted. Every classroom has a dedicated corner to which pupils can go to think in quietness, or to write about themselves.
44. The provision made for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school provides a clear moral code and applies it consistently in all contexts, so that pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. The whole ethos is firmly based upon care and respect for others, and all adults exemplify this in practice. There are consistently high expectations of honesty and trust, and of the need to consider and take responsibility for the consequences of one's own actions. The school's approach is positive and practical. For example, in response to evidence that some pupils did not understand and respect elderly people locally, the school took steps to involve itself more closely with older citizens. One result of this is that pupils now raise funds to support homeless people, and also donate Harvest Festival offerings to the elderly. Assemblies are often planned to develop moral and social themes, using moral stories or working on environmental or sporting issues. One very effective assembly made powerful reference to the Paralympics. The teacher skilfully managed the simple activity of pupils carrying wooden blocks across the hall to demonstrate how difficult this becomes when one is blind or disabled, but how the help of others can ease the difficulty.
45. At the weekly Special Mentions Assembly, each class teacher nominates two pupils for awards which consistently recognise and celebrate the small moral and social achievements that contribute to the ethos promoted by the school. Pupils greatly value these awards, and they honour those who have earned them with spontaneous and whole-hearted applause. Particularly notable throughout the school are its vigorous and sustained efforts to develop pupils' independence, responsibility and initiative. These are highlighted in daily learning activities in every class. Children in the nursery register themselves and must account for their choices of certain activities. In reception, children are asked to plan ahead for some of their learning, and to explain what they will do, and later, what they got out of the activity. Throughout the school, pupils are expected to help each other: the oldest to help the youngest, the more able to help the less able. They are given opportunities to make a more formal contribution to school life through the School Council. They are asked to play a key part in initiatives such as the development of the school site, outdoor visits, school performances and fund-raising efforts for charities. As a result, most pupils respond to changing situations and opportunities with remarkable maturity. For example, when three pupils in Year 6 unexpectedly lost their partners in a collaborative task in the 'ICT lab', they promptly, and without seeking help, discussed and evaluated alternative strategies for getting on with the task, chose the best option and used it efficiently.

46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also very good. The planned programme for religious education ensures that the beliefs and values of Christianity and other world faiths are taught coherently. There are close links with local churches and the clergy are regular visitors in school. Other visitors represent other faiths. For example, one visitor introduces pupils to Hindu festivals, food, clothes and traditions. Pupils also visit a Hindu temple and participate in its customs, and the school sponsors a child in India. Work in history, art, geography and music enables pupils to learn about the cultures of our past and of the wider world. The school has ensured that books in the library and classrooms represent this same diversity of cultures. Local culture is strongly promoted. A very popular Culture Club meets each Wednesday for pupils to learn traditional local crafts from teachers and elderly friends of the school. Pupils in Year 5 undertake a major practical study of Clara Vale and its mining heritage, whilst Year 6 pupils research the Internet to develop their knowledge of the Tyne Valley. During the inspection, these pupils wrote lyrics about local customs and traditions, fitting the words to the Beatles' tune, 'Yesterday'.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. This is a very caring school. The caring ethos identified in the previous inspection has been continued and further improved to very good effect. The strong emphasis on promoting personal development and independence is the key to the good progress made by pupils. Parents are very pleased with this aspect of the school's work.
48. The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. Child protection procedures are good and effective. The caretaker and cleaner work conscientiously to keep the school spotlessly clean. The very good programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHC) encourages healthy living and pupils' awareness of safety issues such as the misuse of drugs. Caring and sympathetic induction to the nursery helps the young children to settle quickly into school routines. Transfer to secondary education is eased through good links with the local comprehensive for lessons such as French, and with other feeder primary schools on the joint residential visit for Year 6 pupils to Dukes House Wood.
49. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, which effectively contributes to the very good behaviour in school. Staff have high expectations that pupils will behave well. They promote a calm working atmosphere throughout the day. Behaviour is so good that sanctions are rarely needed. There is a clear anti-bullying policy and pupils are confident in its procedures for their protection. Year 6 pupils have written sensitively about the feelings that occur when bullying takes place. There is good monitoring of attendance using a computerised system so that any patterns of absence are quickly noticed.
50. The school has developed very good procedures for assessing and recording the academic progress of individuals and groups. Four years ago, weaknesses in this area prompted the previous inspection to require the school to improve the range and consistency of its systems. The school has responded diligently and imaginatively, and so successfully that assessment is now a strength. The procedures start as soon as a child enters the Foundation Stage, and consistently tracks progress throughout the school. The range and quality of these procedures are very good, and there is good balance between formal and informal, external and internal, periodic and continuous assessments. The attainment levels of the National Curriculum are broken down into small steps. All teachers use the same simple but effective system for recording individual gains in knowledge, understanding or skill against these small targets. By this means teachers can identify individual learning difficulties or underachievement in any subject area at any one time. Because these

records are passed on and continued, year on year, by successive teachers, patterns of progress can be studied and then acted upon. In addition, pupils complete a detailed self-assessment at the end of each year, and set particular targets for themselves.

51. The school makes very good use of the range and quality of information yielded by these procedures. Senior staff analyse test results to monitor the achievements of different groups in English, mathematics and science, and also to evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and teaching. All teachers use the full range of available assessment information to ensure that they pitch work at the correct level for different groups, and that they arrange groups and set targets, especially in English and mathematics, so that all pupils can achieve their best. Targets are shared with parents and with pupils, and teachers use their detailed knowledge of individual progress to find ways of encouraging pupils to develop a more independent understanding and control of their own learning.
52. The school makes very good provision for pupils' educational and personal support and guidance. Every opportunity is taken to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem. For example, the Year 2 class has a 'Thinking Table'. Each pupil has a turn at having a 'Special Week' when the others in the class write about what makes the chosen person special. The school gives lots of praise and recognition for good work and effort. There are very good displays of pupils' work celebrating their achievement across the curriculum. The reward systems work very well. Pupils appreciate the 'Special Mentions' assemblies with the awards of 'Students of the Week'. Staff know their pupils well and foster excellent relationships and mutual respect which encourage pupils to do their best and to become mature and responsible. There are very good procedures through the individual targets to encourage pupils to evaluate their own performance in English and mathematics. Pupils play a full part in deciding the targets and also reviewing their success at regular intervals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school is maintaining the good partnership with parents noted in the previous report. Most parents are very supportive of the school. They feel that the school expects their children to work hard and that they make good progress. They feel welcome and comfortable to approach staff if there is a problem. A few parents are less happy about the level of homework set and the range of activities outside lessons.
54. The inspection team agrees with all the positive points raised by parents. However, it finds that teachers make good use of homework, which is set at an appropriate level for individual pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, with the exception of a current lack of sporting opportunities for pupils outside normal lesson time. The school provides the full statutory curriculum, linking subjects in a thoughtful way. Standards of attainment may not be as high as the neighbouring school, which is in a more advantaged area, but this is a very effective school, where all pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. It has successfully maintained its high standards since the previous inspection.
55. The school provides a good range of information for parents. The annual reports, although written on a computer, are tailored to individual pupils and contain useful information on what pupils can do and how they can improve. However, some parents are unhappy about the duplication of phrases for different pupils. It is the view of inspectors that this in no way detracts from the quality of the reports for individual pupils. There are regular consultation evenings and pupils' individual targets are shared with parents. The school acknowledges that it has yet to invite

parents of children in the nursery to formally discuss their progress and now has plans to do so. The school tries hard to involve parents in their children's learning and achieves this well. The newsletters always contain details of topics to be studied and parents are asked to supply any artefacts which might be helpful. In a geography lesson on the River Tyne, for example, Year 6 pupils were fascinated to examine old photographs of the area, which had been lent by a parent. The home reading diaries are often used effectively to communicate with parents. In Year 2 the class teacher shares the focus of the reading task with parents, for instance counting syllables, which enables parents to continue the activity at home.

56. There is good involvement of parents in the work of the school. Many parents help alongside class teachers and make an effective contribution in the classroom. The Friends of Emmaville School offer very good support, providing extra funds and resources, for example, to help finance the annual visit by an author and the exciting major development of the playground.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The overall standard of leadership and management has strengthened considerably since the previous inspection when it was reported as good. It is now very good in virtually all aspects and this has a positive impact on the daily life of the school. The headteacher cares passionately about the school and has a very clear picture of what she wants to achieve for the benefit of the pupils and community. She is very well known by the pupils, who respect the high standards she sets. Staff and governors share her commitment to improve and work hard with her to meet the clear and specific aims of the school. These aims and values are strongly reflected in all aspects of school life such as pupils' excellent attitudes to their work and very good behaviour.
58. The effective delegation of responsibility to senior staff is a strong feature. The senior management team is very experienced and provides an effective forum in which the school's current successes can be evaluated and its future planned. The deputy headteacher, for example, carries out her responsibilities very efficiently and effectively. Individual staff who co-ordinate the development of subjects within the curriculum and the special educational needs co-ordinator take their responsibilities seriously, giving much support to one another. The newly formed Foundation Stage for nursery and reception aged children is currently managed as part of Key Stage 1. This is not appropriate, and the headteacher and senior staff are aware that this is an area for future management re-organisation. Non-teaching staff feel part of the 'school team' and value the guidance and support they receive from teachers. The quality of their work adds to the success of pupils' learning experiences.
59. The governing body carries out its statutory duties very effectively and works extremely hard to support the school. The experienced and knowledgeable chair of governors has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through regular weekly meetings with the headteacher. Individual governors are linked to a specific year group and have responsibility for a subject of the National Curriculum as well as areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. This gives them a clear overview. All approach their duties conscientiously and are proud to be associated with the school. Minutes of the governing body's meetings indicate that meetings are well attended and business is conducted efficiently. The statutory requirements for the special educational needs Code of Practice and for the Act of Collective Worship are met in full.

60. The effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching is a strength of the school, giving staff opportunities to spread good practice and to support colleagues in any area of insecurity. In the recent national initiative to reward high performing teachers, for example, the school's procedures for assessing their performance were praised by an external assessor and the documentation was taken away to be used as a model of good practice for other schools. The headteacher is constantly striving for excellence and has a regular programme for looking at pupils' books to evaluate the standards being achieved. There is also a very good programme for monitoring and evaluating basic teaching skills in classrooms, giving co-ordinators and the senior management team a clear overview of actual standards of teaching in all subjects. When the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were introduced, for example, careful monitoring enabled areas of difficulty to be quickly identified and put right. This led to writing being identified as an area for improvement.
61. In the previous inspection, the school was severely criticised for largely underspending its budget. Funds were being held back for the creation of a nursery and these were used to resource the new nursery in 1999, and provide additional computers for school. The school is now well within acceptable limits for the amount it holds for contingencies. The budget is carefully directed to the school's main educational priorities, improving standards in writing and the major development of the grounds to provide a valuable additional learning resource. The school development plan is well organised with clear links to the school's aims and specific success criteria so that senior staff and governors can see precisely how effective the school is in meeting its targets. The school is taking appropriate action to meet its targets for English and raise standards to the level of those in science and mathematics.
62. The school administrator runs the school office very efficiently. All her duties and responsibilities are carried out cheerfully and calmly, and this helps to give a positive first impression of the school to visitors. Very good use is made of new technology in the office, with an electronic mail facility for parents and computer programs for managing the finances and registration. Government grants are used effectively and correctly. The special educational needs co-ordinator is meticulous in making sure that funds are applied to the best effect. Overall financial control is very good. Local authority finance officers supply good quality up-to-date information for the headteacher and governors to use as the basis for financial planning. There has been an audit since the previous inspection and only a few minor items for improvement could be found. These have been put in place. The school buys its resources at the most competitive prices and pays careful attention to quality. Taking into account the effective way in which the school is led and managed, the standards achieved, the very good quality of teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes, it provides good value for money.
63. The school is well staffed and concerns in the previous inspection report about weak discipline have been addressed successfully. Arrangements for assessing the performance of teachers have been introduced sensitively and are securely in place. The induction of new teachers into school is very good and training opportunities, identified through regular professional development, are always readily available for all staff. The school has established strong links with local universities and is used extensively to train new teachers. In the last academic year, for example, 26 trainee teachers worked in the school for varying lengths of time. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The range and quality of teaching resources is good overall, and they are used effectively throughout the school. Resources are particularly good for mathematics and for children in the Foundation Stage and there is a very good range of books available in

classrooms and in the spacious library. Resources for information and communication technology are very good, considering that the school has not yet received its grant for the National Grid for Learning from the government. Pupils make very effective use of computers in virtually all lessons.

64. The building and grounds are spacious. A major improvement project is due to begin soon to provide pupils with a more stimulating outdoor learning environment and play area. The school caretaker, who takes an obvious pride in his work, keeps the school meticulously clean. He is supported well by a conscientious cleaner. Classrooms and corridors contain many interesting and colourful displays of pupils' work, adding interest for pupils and showing that their work is valued. Children in the reception class have easy access to the part-time nursery's very good outdoor play area which they use most afternoons to develop their physical and social skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

This community school has many strengths, recognised and appreciated by the vast majority of parents. 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 writing by:
 - carrying out fully the school's own proposed development for writing.
(paragraphs 5, 9, 10, 12, 23, 60, 74-83)

The following less important weaknesses, not included as key issues for action, should also be considered by the school:

- Allocate responsibility for the management of the Foundation Stage to a member of staff.
- Ensure that all pupils develop a fluent joined style of handwriting as early as possible.
- Take steps to identify pupils who are gifted or talented and provide opportunities for them to be suitably challenged in school.

(paragraphs 5, 12, 16, 23, 35, 58, 79)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.8	36.8	36.8	24.6	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	188
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	26

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	13	14	12
	Total	26	29	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (87)	100 (93)	90 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	28	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (87)	93 (90)	97 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	15
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	24	26	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (61)	84 (54)	100 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	11
	Girls	11	11	14
	Total	18	19	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (57)	61 (71)	81 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	168
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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	86.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16.25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	433,394
Total expenditure	440,925
Expenditure per pupil	2,161
Balance brought forward from previous year	74,144
Balance carried forward to next year	66,613

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	40	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	45	7	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	7	4	7
The teaching is good.	52	46	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	34	9	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	27	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	39	55	3	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	34	48	7	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	48	10	3	6

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

65. The high quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception classes, builds a very good basis for their future learning. The previous inspection report on children under five was very positive but the school's provision has improved significantly since then. The most important development is the opening of the nursery almost a year ago in June 2000. This followed an excellent refurbishment of former classroom and storage space in the old part of the building, and the construction of a secure outdoor play space with soft-surface areas. The nursery offers 30 morning-only places. Children enter the nursery as three-year-olds and will move into the long-established reception class as four-year-olds at the beginning of the next year. At the time of the inspection, 22 children were attending the part-time nursery, and 19 were in the reception class, of whom all but four had passed their fifth birthday. Attainment on entry is average overall. Both nursery and reception provide structured routines, well-organised and stimulating environments, consistent expectations, and very warm, buoyant and friendly relationships. This helps children to settle quickly and happily, and they soon develop the confidence and skill to participate purposefully in different activities, and to show what they know, understand and can do. Much enthusiastic, determined and extremely well directed effort by the nursery teacher and other staff has established the nursery as a highly effective unit.
66. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work very well together following a good team development process led by the dynamic reception teacher. They plan, in great depth, a good variety of interesting activities and experiences that support children's development towards the Early Learning Goals recommended for children of this age. Activities are linked by broad themes such as 'Growth and Change' or 'Touch and Texture'. Teaching is very good overall. In the nursery it is mostly very good; in the reception class it is mostly good and often very good. The nursery nurses make a very strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, and teaching is never less than good. Staff are highly skilled at identifying individual needs, planning for them and observing the progress children make. They are also highly effective in deploying parent helpers and students so that they have clear and productive roles. Imaginatively designed and resourced areas and activities provide a very good quality and range of learning opportunities across all areas of learning. The high quality of teaching, combined with a close working partnership with parents and close links between assessment and planning, means that children achieve very well in both nursery and reception. However, because the nursery is in its first year of operation, it is not until next year that work in reception will be able to build on the strong progress that nursery children are making. Currently about 80 per cent of children are achieving, and some exceeding, the expected levels by the end of the reception year. Attainment is above expected levels in the nursery because these children have made their good progress at a younger age.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The school places great emphasis on this area of development, and provision begins before children start school because of a very good induction programme that includes home visits, meetings, an open day and good guidance booklets for parents. Teaching is very good in both classes. All staff provide clear, positive and encouraging role models and treat children with courtesy, fairness and respect so that children learn to trust staff, behave well and get along together happily. Nursery children learn to share resources such as books or outdoor equipment, to take turns,

and to listen to each other with interest and respect. Nursery staff create opportunities to celebrate each child's new achievement and to discuss what it means. As a result, a climate of appreciation grows in which children are aware of their own and others' achievements. This promotes helpful and supportive attitudes and children often help each other quite spontaneously. Staff in both nursery and reception value the processes of play, and they encourage children to be curious, to explore different roles, investigate, share ideas and take charge of different aspects of a task such as planting beans in compost. Staff are well organised and place great emphasis on independence and responsibility. Children get out resources for themselves and use them carefully, and put them away efficiently at tidy up time. Children register themselves on arrival, and are expected to observe clear rules when they are able to choose their own activity. In reception, children must plan part of their own learning each day, and record their decision and its results in their planning book. Expectations are high. Children understand clearly what is right or wrong, and they thrive in the order and security that very good behaviour brings. All staff are dynamic and interactive in their work with children. They value each child and each activity, using questions and positive comments to draw children confidently into social talk so that they learn to converse, be aware of others and form good relationships. Children are never idle, sullen, isolated or lost for things to do, and most exceed the learning goals in this area by the time they leave the reception class.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Teaching and learning are very good in this area, especially in the development of speaking and listening skills, which are strongly promoted in all activities. Staff skilfully provide a wide range of ways for children to listen and talk, for example by showing interest in what children do and prompting them to talk about it. Children come together each mid-morning in the nursery and pass a microphone round a circle as they take turns to explain what they have done and achieved. Children flourish in this setting, and the good daily practice with an attentive audience develops their ability to speak clearly and string thoughts together to tell the story of their morning. The teacher and nursery nurse prompt each child calmly and encouragingly, drawing out their ideas and feelings and showing great sensitivity to the needs of children who have language difficulties. Talk has similar prominence and quality in reception, where children are also challenged to plan and negotiate activities with others and to record what they achieve.
69. Staff ensure that pupils are able to see lots of print and have good access to books in both classrooms. For example, as children work with a parent to plant seedlings outside, the adult shows how consulting a book can help the group to do the task well. Both class teachers read stories very well, expressing the quality of the tale well and bringing its characters to life. This makes children eager to listen and respond, sometimes commenting or predicting or pointing to recognised features of print or illustration. Both teachers are adept at promoting a love and knowledge of books and stories. For example, nursery children were drawn into comparing the giant in 'Jim and the Beanstalk' with the fierce one they know in 'Jack and the Beanstalk', and their language was extended as they shared a range of words that mean 'big'. Both classes visit the library; the reception class go regularly to the nearby public library where they enjoy working with the librarian and learn, for example, that the library has fact books as well as storybooks about penguins. Children choose books and understand the procedure for borrowing them for a period. On return they share and compare the different books they have borrowed, showing a good awareness of the variety of books as well as of their common features. All children take books home and are encouraged to read regularly with their parents. They make good progress in reading simple common words and

matching letters to speech sounds. Each class has a writing corner and children learn to make increasingly systematic marks on paper. Some children in nursery, and most in reception, can write their own name, holding the pencil properly to form legible letters in correct sequence. They make their own little books and arrange pictures in suitable sequence to tell a known story. They use sentence makers and different degrees of adult support to produce written sentences. One higher attainer wrote, very clearly, 'A baby needs a mobile ova the cot to help him to sleep'. A slightly less able child wrote, rather less legibly, 'a baby has a cot tu sleep in'. All but a few achieve the standards expected for their age, whilst the higher attaining children achieve the first level of the National Curriculum.

Mathematical development

70. Teaching of very good quality enables children to make good progress in this area and, in all but a few cases, to develop the expected knowledge, understanding and skills by the end of the reception year. Staff support the learning needs of all children well by providing a rich variety of opportunities to develop basic concepts of number, shape, space and measure. For example, in the nursery, children count leaves and petals as they add them to stems, though some experience difficulty as they calculate, 'How many more do you need to make five?' Most children count accurately to 12 and recognise numerals to nine. When working on the computer, they count a set of items before using the arrow keys to guide a figure around a route of ladders and planks to the target number. In outside play, they read the numbers on their wheeled vehicles and use them to park the toys in order when the activity ends. As they use scoops and jugs to fill buckets during water play, they pick up the teacher's cues and begin to estimate 'just one more', 'more than one' or 'less than one'. Most reception children count to 20. They use dominoes to develop a concept of 'doubles' and then explore the classroom to find examples of doubles, in car wheels for instance. They compare the height of their friends or the length of snakes they have drawn using words like 'taller', 'longer' and 'shorter'. Staff find opportunities everywhere. For example, as children line up at the door, they are asked to say who is first, who is last and how many are in between. They respond eagerly to these constant challenges and enjoy proving that they understand mathematical language and can count quickly and correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Teachers place great emphasis on this area and the quality of teaching and learning is very good. All staff use photographs, objects and visitors well to help children to learn about their school and neighbourhood, and about people, occupations and the environment. They benefit from visits by the police and fire service. Using books, objects and stories, children point out examples of different homes, transport, foods, seasons, creatures and clothes. They act as doctors, florists and farmers. A strength of teaching in this area is that it challenges children to investigate and find out for themselves, and to predict, describe and explain from what they observe first hand. In the nursery, they explore different ways of using sieves and containers to separate peas from dry sand. They discover seeds in melons, apples, oranges and tomatoes, and plant and water them to find out whether they will grow. They observe and discuss the results each day, and show them proudly to visitors. Children in reception predict what will happen when soapflakes mix with water. They explore how the flakes and water change each other, and use words such as 'dissolve' and 'frothy'. Some children verbalise effects expressively. 'Look at my bubbly gloves!' one exclaimed. The teacher structured this play process cleverly so that children checked their predictions and fitted words exactly to what they experienced. Staff strike a good balance between structured guidance and free exploration, and always use opportunities to stress health and safety issues. Children wore goggles, for example, as they sawed wood when cutting, bending and stretching different

materials to discover different properties. When they made scrambled eggs, they discussed the need for a correct sequence and observed each point carefully in the ordered procedure. They predicted, estimated, tested and described, and learned the use of words like whisk, beat and fluid. Teachers ensure that children have constant access to computers and cassette recorders, and develop the skills to use technology for different purposes. They also ensure that children engage in washing hands and dishes and laundry work, and in preparing food and cleaning, so that they learn about healthy lifestyles. All these activities provide a strong foundation for learning in science, technology, history and geography, and help children to achieve a knowledge and understanding of the world that is at least typical for their age.

Physical development

72. By the end of the reception year, most children reach the level of physical skills and co-ordination expected for their age. Teaching is good in this area. Children in both classes develop sound ability to climb, balance and move over and under the frame in the new playground, whilst showing good awareness of others and of safety. They happily take turns to use ride-on toys and show a good control and understanding of speed, direction and space as they pedal their vehicles around a bending course. They are becoming quite good at dealing with aprons and coats, zips, Velcro, buttons and shoes during class routines. When playing outside, children are active and often energetic, and they hop, skip, jump and run in their games with each other. Adults give vigilant support and clear guidance as children learn the finer skills of cutting, joining, sticking, planting, drawing and writing. Most children hold pencils, brushes and scissors correctly but some have difficulty in exerting suitable pressure and achieving precise control of movement. In both nursery and reception, children have good opportunities to work with a range of construction equipment. They show good skills in building and threading, and they use and develop their learning in other areas in doing so. For example, nursery children count and describe shapes as they try to use different beads in sequence to copy a pattern from a card. In reception, they use small-world toys to create a farmyard or they discuss the 'bendy' and 'springy' properties of paper as they fold it.

Creative development

73. Good teaching in both nursery and reception classes enables children to make good progress in this area. Staff plan and resource many and varied opportunities for children to explore colour, texture, shape and music creatively in relation to the current theme. As a result the creative development of four- and five-year-olds is at least typical for their age. Both classrooms have dedicated areas where children can access paint and craft materials, explore sound and rhythm, and dramatise various roles imaginatively. Opportunities are well structured and supported so that children are challenged in terms that they understand and can achieve. At the same time, children are encouraged to respond personally to their sense impressions and to express their own ideas confidently in different media. Children explore what happens when they mix colours, and brush or blow paints of different consistencies. In the nursery, they cut, print and stick different materials and colours to make bright collage pictures of flowers, or of giant beanstalks to illustrate the story. They experiment with dough, using cutting tools to make the shapes of hens and other creatures. The pictures made by reception children are bold, confident and expressively colourful. They also work skilfully in their good computer base, using paint software to create colourful patterns by selecting, dragging and positioning different images. Music enriches the day in both classrooms and children enjoy using their growing repertoire of songs to mark changes of activity. In the nursery for example, the singing of 'We're going to make a circle' summons children from their different activities to the carpet area for mid-morning milk and circle time. They suit actions to songs, such as 'In and out the dusty blue bells', or experiment with small

percussion instruments to accompany their voices. Reception children were spellbound by the professional musicians during a music workshop, and most managed to clap in time to the rhythms of music from different cultures.

ENGLISH

74. Standards in English are broadly typical for seven- and eleven-year-olds. This represents a marginal drop since the previous inspection. This is mainly because standards in writing have not kept pace with improvements made in speaking, listening and reading. The school has identified writing as an area for improvement. It has begun to address prioritised areas systematically, across every class. As a result of tackling writing in all subjects and using computers to further develop skills, standards are beginning to rise.
75. When pupils start in Year 1, their basic literacy skills are similar to those expected for their age. The literacy hour is well used to extend listening and speaking skills. Pupils in Year 2 make especially good progress. High levels of class management enable children to develop skills across all areas of English. In the national tests last year, almost all pupils reached the expected levels by the age of seven, though none exceeded them in writing. Good teaching through the junior classes links work well across different subjects, to raise standards of literacy. Last year's national test results for eleven-year-olds almost exactly mirrored national average percentages. Pupils achieved equally good scores to those in similar schools. Higher reading standards helped compensate for lower than average writing levels. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, make the best progress. This is because of the good support they receive from the teaching staff, as well as from their fellow pupils. The current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of these lower attaining pupils than usual. However, more pupils than last year have reached an above-average standard. Test results overall have risen over the past four years at a similar rate to the national trend. Inspection findings reflect these test results.
76. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils listen well and are keen to contribute to discussions. These are often given added relevance by their links with other studies being undertaken on the same theme. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils volunteer to act the parts of individuals from the story of Medusa and sit in the 'hot-seat' to answer questions. This extends their language skills, as well as enabling them to gain new insights into the Ancient Greeks (being studied in history). Regular experiences of addressing the class give pupils increased confidence when addressing an audience. However, the same children were unable to demonstrate a similar facility with words when contributing to a formal debate on the advantages of living in the contrasting city states of Sparta and Athens. Only the higher attaining pupils were able to present reasoned, persuasive arguments from their respective standpoints.
77. Standards in reading in both the infant and junior sections of the school are good. A strong contributory factor for this is the close liaison that exists between school and the many parents who hear their children read on a regular basis. Texts read in the literacy lessons are skilfully exploited to extend the pupils' range of techniques to tackle unknown words. For example, they sound out individual letters, break words into syllables or look for clues in the sentences to work out what they say. As a result, many develop an interest in reading and gain much pleasure from books. They have definite views on favourite authors and enjoy reading aloud, using good expression and voices for different characters. However, there is sometimes a mismatch between the ability of the pupils and the books that they are actually reading because pupils are given a choice of their own reading material and many go by

personal preference for a particular book. The local library is very well used on a regular basis. Older pupils are well taught how to access books using the Dewey location system. Most can quickly find information from a book using the index and contents pages. This helps them to carry out research in different subjects. Annual visits by authors further stimulate children's interest in reading and in books generally.

78. Standards of writing in both the infant and junior classes are similar to those seen in most schools. The school is putting a lot of effort into raising these standards. Well-planned targets are set for every class. They include the use of increasingly more complex sentences, improving levels of punctuation and the development of children's vocabularies. Good teaching in the infant classes is already laying the foundations of punctuation well. More able seven-year-olds produce accurate work, though it is rather brief in content. Skills of grammar are very well extended, through both key stages, by computer programs that are carefully linked to the literacy hour's daily objectives. In many classes, however, there is insufficient use of dictionaries and thesauri to improve spellings and word selections. This adversely affects the quality of pupils' written work. By the age of eleven, most pupils are able to produce written work for a range of different purposes, with the higher attainers reaching above average standards.
79. Handwriting standards are satisfactory, overall. The scheme of work is thorough, but it is not being sufficiently followed. For example, a significant number of pupils who are left-handed hold their pencils in unorthodox ways that inhibit fluency. In the lower junior classes, a lack of fluency inhibits the rate and the quality of work produced in most lessons observed. In addition, some teachers have lower expectations of handwriting standards than others. Some make no attempt to use the school's adopted style in their own blackboard and book writing. Consequently standards are variable, though consistently legible.
80. The quality of teaching in English is good throughout the school. Over three-quarters of the teaching seen were good or better, and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers plan very thoroughly. Particularly effective are the introductions, when the class is given specific instructions on the targeted areas for the day. Well-directed questioning leads to high standards of discussion involving all the pupils. For example, children in Year 3 combine ideas to produce a letter, seeking information for a forthcoming visit. Teaching skills of a high order are demonstrated, as pupils are encouraged to refine their contributions. Such high expectations encourage the pupils to express their ideas accurately. In this lesson, as in most successful ones, pupils have a clear understanding of what it is that they are learning through clearly identified lesson objectives. However, opportunities are sometimes missed, at the end of sessions, to discuss the extent to which these objectives have been realised and to analyse exactly what has (and has not) been learned. Very good class management skills are a feature of the vast majority of lessons. This enables the teacher to target one specific group to teach, whilst other groups work independently on individual or paired assignments. Pupils' work is well displayed, both to celebrate achievement and to help raise levels of understanding. For example, Year 4 pupils write imaginatively and in precise detail about their predictions and aspirations for the future.
81. Good assessment procedures are in place to note progress in writing, spelling and grammar. Analyses of the annual national tests identify areas in need of improvement. Samples of pupils' work are graded accurately to determine levels of the written work. Assessment is well used during lessons to refine ideas during discussions, to adapt planning in the light of experience and to teach individuals via

correction. However, the quality of marking varies between the classes. It is usually encouraging but it is not always sufficiently used to maintain high standards or to teach pupils via their errors.

82. Pupils with special educational needs have good individual education plans with clear targets and areas for development. Their work is well focused, with most receiving additional help both in classrooms and in withdrawn groups. Appropriate work is set to enable them to make good progress at both key stages. Equal opportunities are given to these, as to all pupils. For example, they are invariably expected to contribute to discussions and their group work is often featured in reviews at the end of lessons. They also have the same regular opportunities to extend their literacy skills through work on computers.
83. English is managed well. The headteacher and co-ordinator have clearly identified the areas for development and have instigated changes that are starting to raise standards. Class targets to improve writing exemplify this attention to detail. These are firmly based on a detailed analysis of pupils' achievements each term. The co-ordinator and headteacher regularly and thoroughly evaluate teachers' planning and the quality of teaching so areas for improvement are quickly identified. Good resources, such as the central library, enhance opportunities for learning. Resources produced by teachers themselves make them even more relevant to the interests and needs of their pupils. For example, additional pages (produced by the Year 1 teacher) add relevance and extend the focus of the week's big book for the literacy hour. The staff works well together as a team to improve the quality of both the teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

84. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 who are aged seven and eleven respectively attain standards above those expected for their ages, and above those reported by the previous inspection. National test results in 2000 showed similar standards at eleven but lower standards at seven, in relation both to all schools nationally and to schools in similar contexts. The tests showed that boys and girls did equally well. Taking account of the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, it is clear that standards are rising at both stages. The rising trend in the performance of eleven-year-olds has been particularly impressive as test results for this age group had been consistently well below average up to a year ago. Pupils of all abilities also achieve well over time in relation to their earlier attainments. This is because the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Features that were then identified as weak are now strong. The school has, for example, greatly improved its assessment procedures and its uses of the information they yield. Planning now takes good account of this information to strengthen weak skills and to provide work and support which enable all groups of pupils, including those who are most able and those who have special needs, to make the best progress they can. This is made easier and more effective by an arrangement that allows pupils of similar ability to work together. It is also made more effective by the much better quality of teaching, by improved resources and homework arrangements, and not least, by the quality of teamwork and shared records. The effectiveness of these improvements is due to the high quality of subject leadership, reinforced by a very good response to the National Numeracy Strategy. A strong basis is laid for continuing improvement.
85. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress in learning and consolidating their mathematical skills, concepts and vocabulary. The rate of progress is particularly good in Year 2. Work shows a secure grasp of shape and space, and an

ability to perform calculations with money and to use rulers and simple scales to measure length and capacity. When set the task of placing two-digit numbers on a number square where 0 is the starting point, lower attainers persist in counting along the rows to arrive slowly at the right answer. The more able pupils have good strategies for deducing number positions rapidly using an understanding of the patterns found between columns and rows.

86. Teachers in the junior classes work systematically within the numeracy strategy to build on pupils' earlier learning and maintain good overall progress so that, by age eleven, about a third attain the levels expected of pupils two or three years older. The rate of progress is not constant, however, and pupils' past work shows more secure and quickening progress from Year 4 onwards. The most likely cause of this is the absence of the usual class teacher who is on maternity leave. All pupils achieve well in shape and measure. For example, pupils of differing attainments in Year 4 coped well with graded tasks requiring them to show their grasp of symmetry by reproducing complex shapes in reverse form on the other side of a mirror line. In Year 5, higher attaining pupils eagerly took on the challenge of using a brochure to find the best value holiday in Crete. They understood the several steps involved in the calculation, recognising factors such as room supplements. However, other pupils in the class experienced difficulty with single-step problems, failing sometimes to reduce them correctly to simple mathematical 'sentences'. The school has identified the need to strengthen work in these areas and is effectively doing so.
87. By the time they are eleven, most pupils can perform and explain work with all four operations, and their mental competencies are above average overall. Below average attainers can explain the effect of multiplying or dividing decimal numbers by ten or 100, although they cannot always relate a decimal number to its equivalent fraction. Higher attaining pupils start with a number such as 250 and progressively and accurately halve, although they become less assured as they encounter the need to combine different fractions to achieve an exact half such as 16? .
88. The climate for learning in the subject is very favourable. Almost all pupils show an eager commitment to learning, and tackle challenging number work with interest and determination. They listen and participate actively in discussion, answering relevantly and demonstrating constructively. They function in an orderly and responsible manner, and maintain strong intellectual effort whether working independently or collaboratively. They respond enthusiastically to mental sessions and practical tasks, and do their best to cement the very good working relationships found throughout the school.
89. Throughout the school, the National Numeracy Strategy is well established, and all teachers plan and teach securely in relation to its framework and three-part lesson structure. They also work together to plot opportunities to reinforce and extend mathematical skills by using them to support learning in other subjects. Skills in information and communication technology are also well used in mathematics sessions to support learning, especially in data handling and graphical work. Planning is always good, and includes assessment opportunities and graded work for groups of differing attainments. All lessons had clear and shared objectives, and good structures for developing and reinforcing relevant learning. All teachers insist that pupils use correct mathematical language, present their work carefully, and show or explain their methods. 'How did you work that out?' is the question on every teacher's lips. As a result, pupils know where they are going and what is expected of them, and they focus on new understandings, apply relevant effort, and take pride in their growing command of 'special words'.

90. The quality of teaching and learning overall is very good and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. However, there were variations in the quality of teaching in lessons seen during the inspection. It was found to be satisfactory in Years 1 and 3, good in Year 4, and very good in Years 2, 5 and 6. The common strengths which distinguish the very good teaching from that which is satisfactory are:
- pupils are challenged at their precisely known level of individual competence. Not only are group tasks accurately matched, but also the questions put to specific pupils during the mental session. As a result, pupils are stretched but not confounded, and they advance at assured speed;
 - the lucid clarity of procedure and language. Every new point is explained, demonstrated, checked and reinforced in terms that pupils understand. This enables pupils to acquire new understandings and skills with clarity and confidence, and to build and practise them in logical steps;
 - teachers working interactively, enthusiastically and at a cracking pace. Consequently pupils are enthused and swept along coherently, engaged and kept productively busy;
 - resources and tasks are interesting, and well designed to support the challenges made. Few commercial resources are used because teachers devise fresh and imaginative aids, such as the holiday task in Year 5, which generate independence and interest and fit the context;
 - teachers maintaining a buoyant presence during group activity but, without compromising independent skills or positive attitudes, they look for and expertly use small opportunities to intervene and move learning forward a notch;
 - the impetus of learning is maintained through homework tasks and constructive marking.
91. Whilst these features are present in satisfactory lessons, they operate at a lower level, and a lower pace, and the quality of learning is not as good, particularly for the more able. Common weaknesses found in these lessons are that some pupils are unclear about what to do, and there is a tendency to compromise the higher expectations by failing to insist that pupils proceed when they can to the more demanding aspects of a task.
92. Management of mathematics is very good. The co-ordinator's rigorous and systematic approach to the development of the subject is a model of high standards and works effectively to eliminate weaknesses in teaching. She has developed very good assessment systems so that individual progress is now monitored closely through the school, and accelerated by clear targets which are shared with parents as well as pupils. Focused monitoring of teaching works well to strengthen specific elements such as the use of end-of-lesson reviews. Very good programmes of staff training have developed expertise, confidence, consistency and teamwork across the school. Very clear priorities have been set for the systematic improvement of standards, and action taken to achieve targets has been highly effective. The school is now able to see that these efforts are beginning to pay off.

SCIENCE

93. Standards in science for seven- and eleven-year-olds are above those expected nationally with all pupils achieving well in the subject. This represents a good level of improvement on the previous inspection when standards were in line with the national average throughout the school. The very good subject knowledge of teachers and the practical approach adopted in most lessons, coupled with their

detailed lesson planning with clear objectives for every lesson, have been instrumental in raising standards.

94. The year 2000 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in science showed that the percentage attaining the expected Level 2 or above (97 per cent) was above the national average whereas the percentage attaining the higher Level 3 (24 per cent) was in line with the national average. When pupils' performance is compared to that of schools in similar circumstances, their results are above average for those achieving Level 2 or above and about average for the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have been maintained with virtually all pupils in Year 2 on course to achieve Level 2 and there has been a slight improvement with about one-third attaining at the higher Level 3. The very good quality of teaching in the Year 2 class is largely responsible for this improvement.
95. In the national tests and assessments in 2000 for eleven-year-olds, pupils did very well. Overall standards were well above the national average and when compared to similar schools, pupils' performance was also well above average. The percentage of pupils achieving at the expected Level 4 was very high compared to the national figure with every pupil reaching the expected level. Their attainment ranks in the top five per cent nationally. Pupils also did well at the higher Level 5 with 48 per cent successfully achieving this level compared to 34 per cent nationally. The practical approach in many lessons and very good quality of teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 means that pupils are developing sound investigational skills and a secure understanding of scientific knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good support and they too make good progress.
96. By the time pupils are seven, they carry out simple investigations with confidence. Year 1 pupils, for example, enjoyed using magnifying lenses to observe goldfish and the stick insects as part of their task to find similarities and differences when comparing them with a rabbit and hamster. In Year 2, most pupils could describe what plants needed to grow, name the parts of a plant and complete an electrical circuit. In their work on sound, pupils carefully describe how they hear sounds. All are learning how to make predictions, classify and record the results of their experiments using simple sentences. The help and support of classroom support assistants was invaluable in these circumstances, helping lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs to write their observations. There was much evidence of computers being used in science lessons to record information, produce graphs showing their results from weather recordings or design a flower. Work completed earlier in the year indicates that overall, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of sound, the best materials for insulating against the cold, push and pull forces and caring for pets.
97. On the basis of the scrutiny of work over the year, pupils continue to make good progress in the subject as they move up through the junior classes, further developing their scientific knowledge and skills. This is because teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to work together in groups when conducting scientific investigations. Evidence from lesson observations is limited from this section of the school as only Year 6 included a science lesson during the inspection period and this was to revise knowledge for the forthcoming national tests. All demonstrated a secure knowledge of sight and sound, covered in topics earlier. Their very good behaviour and attentiveness enabled the lesson to progress at a good pace, with all pupils keen to contribute.

98. Pupils in Year 5 showed a good understanding of the planets in our solar system and how materials change when heated. Work completed previously indicates that by the time they are eleven, pupils know 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 as much emphasis is placed on actually conducting experiments or investigations for themselves. All are regularly required to present and evaluate evidence. A scrutiny of completed work shows pupils have tried to measure how much air their lungs can hold, separated mixtures of different substances and tested megaphones of different shapes to see which was the most effective. Very good use is made of computers to record data or record their observations.
99. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good throughout. All teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and this helps them to set clear objectives for their lessons. They give much independence to pupils and they respond in a very mature way, working very hard to complete the tasks set for them. All pupils enjoy conducting investigations. All lessons are very well planned with detailed activities designed to challenge all groups. Teachers and classroom support assistants provide pupils with special educational needs with good support and this enables them to make the same level of progress as others. All teachers carefully mark pupils work and include, as a matter of routine, helpful comments on how to further improve the quality of their work. The use of homework is satisfactory overall. It usually involves pupils in finishing assignments from science lessons.
100. The management of science is very good overall. The school has successfully incorporated the latest Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines to support its programmes of work for science and to guide teachers' lesson planning. The headteacher and co-ordinator carefully monitor all teachers' planning and both monitor standards, analysing the results of national tests for seven- and eleven-year-olds and, on a termly basis, pupils' completed work. Procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching during lessons are also very good, enabling areas of weakness to be quickly identified and put right. Assessment procedures, which were an issue in the previous inspection, have been developed well and are now very good. Information about the progress of individual pupils is used very well by teachers to plan future work, making sure all pupils can achieve their full potential. This has been one of the reasons that pupils are doing so well in science. There is a very strong commitment to improve amongst staff and all support one another exceptionally well, working as a team. Good use is made of the pond and wild areas in the school grounds to study insects, minibeasts and plants. Resource levels are good and provide effective 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

101. Few art lessons were seen but sufficient evidence was available from displays of pupils' work and teachers' planning to allow judgements to be made. Pupils make good progress in art and design. By the age of seven satisfactory standards are reached and by eleven, standards are better than expected for pupils of this age. The main factors that lead to this good progress are the relevance of much of the art work, which arises from other areas of study and the promotion of the subject throughout the school by the curriculum co-ordinator.
102. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are underpinned by the scheme of work, tailored to link art with other studies being undertaken. For example, a group from

Year 5, investigating 'Ancient Greece', produce accurate pencil sketches of a replica vase. The teacher had given instructions at the beginning of the week and other pupils (having already completed their sketches) pass on their tips. Pupils learn the basic skills they will need and successfully apply these to their work. There are annual visits by 'artists in residence'. These visits often generate large-scale, whole-school projects, such as the inspired 'Four Seasons' collage that attractively dominates the hall. Pupils feel an 'ownership' of such endeavours. They add to the pupils' self-esteem and to the pride that they have for their school. Year 4 children benefit from an annual trip to exhibitions, such as Shipley Art Gallery, or to workshops where they undertake group enterprises. Pupils in every class study the work of a famous painter. By Year 6, they are given free reign to select an artist or style to study in depth. This challenge produces some high levels of response. Folders contain research (from books and from the Internet), reproductions of artists' work and the pupils' own simulations of their particular styles.

103. Management of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator leads the subject enthusiastically and supports her colleagues well. For example, the introduction of rules about painting and colour mixing ensure consistency of practice throughout the school. Displays celebrate the work of children of all ages and abilities. These are best seen in the junior classes and especially in Year 4. Corridors are well used to celebrate pupils' work on more public display. The Art Gallery typifies this goal. One extra-curricular activity, the Culture Club, is a rich addition to the provision of the school. Mums and grans inspire many children to learn new skills to celebrate the culture of the area. This passing on of local traditions to a new generation (such as the art of making peg-mats) gives another added dimension to this successful subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards are similar to those expected for pupils at age seven and eleven. Previously it was reported that they were also in line with national expectations, showing that the school has maintained standards. Evidence is limited as only one lesson was observed during the week of inspection. However, a scrutiny of work, photographs and displays of pupils' models, show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, progressively develop their understanding and skills, from Year 1 through to Year 6. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory.
105. Issues raised previously were inappropriate teaching, which resulted in unsatisfactory progress and poorly focused worksheets. Teachers' planning and the displays of completed work show that both areas have been corrected. Teachers are guided well by a detailed policy statement and annual programme of work for each year group and as a result, designing and making techniques are developed well. This was exemplified by the construction of a dice tower in Year 3. This was a device used by Roman soldiers to allow a dice to drop without a player's control, ensuring that there was no cheating. Pupils used scissors carefully and added reinforcements when gluing the towers together before decorating them. All worked well independently of the class teacher and were disappointed when it was time to tidy away at the end of the lesson. Pupils complete teacher-produced design sheets conscientiously and evaluate their finished work, listing possible improvements. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and other pupils working with them in their group, and the practical nature of the subject means that they achieve similar standards to other pupils.

106. Overall, taking into account teachers' planning, which is very good, and the quality of pupils' finished work, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, with lessons being well organised with appropriate challenges for the pupils. Year 2, for example, design and make sweets with magic powers after listening to the story of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Year 3 try to attract tourists to Crawcrook by designing an information leaflet. Year 5 pupils are challenged to invent a device which makes water go upwards! Good links are effectively made with other subjects. In Year 4 for example, pupils make models of hot air balloons as part of their history topic and in Year 6, they design a multi-media page about bridges for a geography topic using a computer program. The quality of the displays and finished models throughout the school indicate a high level of enjoyment and application on the part of the pupils in response to the interesting tasks set by class teachers. However, teachers tend to promote design and technology skills within other subjects; designing brochures about places in geography, for example. There was limited evidence of the subject being taught in its own right with specific tuition of skills such as cutting or gluing needed to make designed items. In Year 3, for example, pupils used far too much glue when joining their Roman dice towers.
107. The management of the subject is good. The programme of work is firmly based on the latest National Curriculum guidelines and is effectively developing pupils' designing, evaluating and making skills. Assessment procedures are very good and the headteacher and co-ordinator monitor the quality of planning, teaching and pupils completed work each term. The accommodation is spacious allowing pupils plenty of room to work in safety. There is a good range of resources, including tools, construction kits and materials for modelling and these are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Very good use is made of computers throughout the school to promote pupils' designing skills.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards of attainment in geography are in line with the national average for pupils aged seven but better than those normally expected by the time pupils are eleven. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when they were in line with national expectations throughout the school. Pupils aged ten and eleven work very well independently of their class teachers on carefully planned activities and produce a copious amount of neat work of an above average standard. All have very good attitudes towards the subject, behave very well and enjoy excellent relationships with one another and their teachers. Teachers plan work effectively and make good links with other subjects, such as history. As a result, pupils' level of achievement is good.
109. In the only lesson seen in the infant department, Year 1, pupils talked about recent holidays, when they were accompanied by either Ted or Rhino, two cuddly toys. They focused on the mode of travel, the weather and geographical features of countries such as Tenerife, Northern Ireland and towns around England. Much of the work pupils do in Years 1 and 2 is correctly through discussion and observation so evidence of the work covered is limited. They begin work on maps through drawing plans, and this is continued into Year 2, where pupils also study the weather, countries which make up the United Kingdom and geographical features of Crawcrook. Pupils' achievements in geography in this section of the school are satisfactory.

110. Much more written work is expected from pupils in the junior classes. Pupils of all abilities work together well in groups, often without the direct supervision of their teachers, who are teaching other pupils. In Year 5, for example, pupils research information from holiday brochures to produce a guide about different Greek islands. All describe in detail the climate and significant geographical features such as the hilly terrain. Year 6 pupils know the main features of a river system and successfully arrange a series of aerial photographs along the course of the River Tyne, in order, from its source to the sea. Pupils make very good use of computers, maps and aerial photographs in their studies, showing criticisms in the previous report have been corrected. For example, they use different web sites on the Internet and old photographs provided by parents to gather information about the bridges across the River Tyne in Newcastle. Most readily locate Greek islands or cities in India using maps. Attractive displays of work around the school contribute to the standards achieved. These include work in Year 1 on the worldwide travels of Ted and Rhino and a river system in Year 6.
111. The standard of teaching overall is satisfactory, with some very good teaching seen in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers display a very good knowledge of the subject and match activities closely to pupils' individual capabilities. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged and on occasions asked to work as a group on specific projects designed to further challenge them. These usually involve pupils researching information using books or computers to make comparisons between their own locality and east Gateshead, Alnmouth, Whitley Bay or Chembokoli in India. Skilled questioning challenges pupils constantly and inventive worksheets, such as half a map to complete, keep pupils interested and motivated. All teachers plan their lessons very well, with clear objectives identified and good links made with other subjects. Year 6 pupils, for example, use advanced computer skills to design an information page on Tyne bridges, incorporating text and scanned photographs, and Year 3 pupils locate Roman towns and Hadrian's Wall on a map as part of their history lesson. Pupils mostly work independently in groups and this effectively promotes a very good sense of responsibility. The level of discipline and class control is a strong feature of most lessons. As a result, all pupils concentrate very well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from working as part of a group as they have the support of other pupils and their teacher.
112. Management of the subject is good. The extremely conscientious co-ordinator has developed a thorough programme of work to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered thoroughly. Very good procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress and the information is used effectively to guide teachers' future planning. The co-ordinator regularly and very effectively monitors planning, teaching and work done. This has a beneficial effect on standards as areas for development are identified and steps are quickly taken to improve them. Resources for all aspects of the subject are now good. Educational visits are made within the local area and include day visits to contrasting areas such as Gateshead.

HISTORY

113. Standards in history are satisfactory for pupils aged seven and eleven years of age. Strengths in the subject are the linking of work with other subjects to enhance the historical studies, the high levels of class control that foster good group work ethics, and the wide range of visits and visitors that allow pupils first-hand experiences of those periods that they are studying. Although higher attaining pupils are set appropriately challenging work to do in lessons, the bulk of their time is spent working alongside other pupils in mixed ability groups. As a result, little evidence was found of work to above average levels produced by higher attaining pupils.

114. Lessons were only observed in the junior section of the school but work samples were seen from all classes. Standards of teaching observed were good, and sometimes very good or excellent. Teachers use the resources very well to stimulate pupils' thinking. For example, Year 4 pupils study portraits and wear costumes from the Tudor age. These are creatively exploited to breathe life into personalities and the fashions of their age. Visitors provide invaluable primary source evidence, such as granddads discussing their World War Two memories. Computers are used imaginatively, both to access information and to word-process elements of pupils' studies. Work on Roman Britain is linked to geography via maps, music of the Tudors is heard and discussed, the mask of Tutankhamun becomes the stimulus for art work, 'Athenians' and 'Spartans' debate the merits of their respective city states. Historical studies become much more vital and relevant through this cross-curricular approach. Pupils enjoy the work and have good recall of the historical periods studied in the school. They predominantly work in groups of mixed ability. In these groups they either undertake individual tasks, or they are paired so that one pupil can help another. Invariably all children undertake the same tasks, with higher attaining pupils producing work in more depth or quantity. These arrangements enable most pupils to reach satisfactory standards. However, few pupils are producing work of an above average standard in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards in all aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) are above national expectations at the age of seven, and well above at age eleven. All pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve very well over time. The previous inspection judged attainment to be above average at seven and average at eleven. However, the fact that expectations nationally have risen significantly in the intervening period means that standards have been raised at all stages, with an increasing rate of progress as pupils move through the school. The improved standards mirror a significant improvement in the number of computers available in school. The range and quality of resources for the subject have been developed extremely well, as has the quality of teachers' expertise, planning, teaching and assessment. The ratio of machines to pupils is very generous, and there is a very effective arrangement of small 'ICT labs' within or between classrooms. All this stems from a clear and imaginative vision for development and from prudent financial management. Wise investments over several years are paying off handsomely.
116. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good across the school. Teachers carefully plan the use of computers so that every pupil has regular and sustained daily access, and is required to develop ICT skills across a good range of contexts. Expectations are high and there is a particularly strong emphasis on independent work. To support this, teachers provide clear guidance for each task. They use assessment well to ensure that tasks challenge pupils to use and develop their ICT skills in order to advance their learning in other subjects. Teachers regularly pair higher attainers with less confident pupils. This 'P.C. Pals' system gives the weaker partner extra support whilst challenging the stronger by the need to explain the how and why of each operation. This promotes confident independence of skill and attitude as well as productive collaborative working. All teachers have strong expertise in the subject. This is reflected in the quality of their planning, and also in their ability to sort out technical problems quickly and to use accurate on-the-spot assessments to move pupils forward more rapidly. When a new technique is introduced, such as the use of a scanner, teachers demonstrate and instruct very clearly, checking pupils' understanding of each step in the process. All groups of pupils respond well to this very effective balance of instruction and independence, challenge and support. They acquire skills securely because their work is interesting

and matched exactly to their attainments. Their enjoyment, confidence, independence and clarity of purpose lead to sustained concentration on task, brisk work-rate and a clear awareness of their own learning. As a result, the level of achievement is very good.

117. As a result of all this, when pupils in Year 6 were asked to design a multimedia page about the Quayside and the River Tyne for a particular audience, they were able to succeed independently and efficiently. Pupils worked in pairs, each pair using two computers, one linked to the Internet, the other on Apple Works to develop the layout. They showed very secure understanding of the process, and used their skills systematically to search different sites, locating and selecting relevant information in the form of text and pictures. Bringing these items together, they competently manipulate the size, font and layout and consider the quality and content of information in relation to their audience, evaluating and editing their work as it developed. In addition, when one group unexpectedly lost half its members for a while when they were reading to an inspector, the remaining pupils promptly and independently discussed how best to make progress, agreed a sensible strategy and got on with it.
118. The heateacher's outstanding co-ordination of the subject over several years has led to very good improvement overall. It has ensured that every classroom is very well equipped and that all pupils have very good quality of access and opportunity to use that equipment. It has also ensured that every teacher has had good training opportunities to achieve the confidence and expertise to plan and teach the full range of understandings and skills. This strong situation has been achieved before the school has received its allocated funding from the National Grid for Learning. An excellent long-term plan proposes ambitious but achievable steps for further development over the next two years. Developments in resources, teaching and the curriculum proceed side-by-side. They are informed by rigorous monitoring and strongly focused on raising standards. This focus is not only on standards in ICT skills but also in all areas of the curriculum where those skills can support learning. For example, relevant and well-planned ICT tasks contribute to every literacy hour. Very good policy and guidance support the very good teamwork which ensures consistency of strategy and high expectations throughout the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

119. A satisfactory introduction has been provided for pupils in Year 6. There are no national expectations relevant to this age group. Pupils are taught French for one half-hour session each week by the head of the French department from the local comprehensive school as part of a community project involving a number of primary schools, which is now into its third year.
120. Pupils counted confidently in French, knew the days of the week and most were able to respond to questions about the weather as well as naming colours, animals, articles of clothing and parts of the body. All listen carefully and try hard to repeat accurately key words or phrases with the correct pronunciation. In the lesson observed, pupils learnt how to ask politely for items of food and drink. They copied down the relevant phrases neatly in their exercise books as an aide-mémoire for future reference. Good links are made with other subjects such as design and technology and science as pupils devise a healthy eating menu in French.

121. The lesson observed was conducted at a good pace and supported very well with visual materials such as pictures of food items. Pupils' interest was maintained very well by making them all stand, whisper or sing phrases or particularly difficult words to pronounce. They were asked to investigate products from France which could be found in local shops for homework.
122. Lessons in French add breadth to the curriculum on offer at the school and give pupils a worthwhile introduction to a modern foreign language.

MUSIC

123. Only two lessons were observed, but sufficient evidence was available to allow judgements to be made. Standards in music are satisfactory and match what is expected by the age of seven and eleven. Strengths in the subject include the thorough scheme of work that enables staff to cover all aspects of the subject, the good levels of resources for whole-class accompaniments and for composition, and the support provided by the education authority music staff.
124. All pupils attended a half-termly concert given by a quintet of the education authority's peripatetic music teachers. This enabled singing standards to be evaluated. Most pupils in the school sing with good pitch and with due attention to rhythm. The vast majority of them enjoy singing and their diction is good.
125. The local education authority provides specialist music teachers to support schools and every class in school benefits by receiving lessons over half a term annually. Teaching from a specialist teacher has clear benefits for both the pupils and the staff of the school. All pupils receive some teaching in musical notation via recorder playing. Opportunities are available to enable pupils to receive specialist instrumental tuition on violin, cello and brass. Class teachers also run a small recorder club as an extra-curricular activity. Skills developed by these pupils are well exploited in lessons. For example, a good Year 3 recorder player provided a descant accompaniment when his classmates were learning the song, 'Life in Ancient Britain'. Musical traditions of different cultures are well explored. For example, the mystical, echoing gongs of the Gamelan music of Indonesia are, literally, a striking contrast to the more 'down-to-earth' Geordie songs learned in Class 3! A recently formed school choir allows pupils further opportunities to develop their musical talents. Future plans to develop a recorder band to exploit the potential of computers for musical composition, and to develop further the staff's confidence in delivering the subject, are all appropriate targets.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. Standards in physical education for all pupils are in line with those found in most schools. This represents an improvement over the previous inspection, when standards were below those normally seen for seven-year-olds and in line with expectations for eleven-year-olds. Judgements are based on three lessons observed involving infant classes and one lesson with Year 4 pupils taken by the head of the physical education department of the local comprehensive school. However, an analysis of documentation, teachers' planning files and discussions with pupils added further evidence. Teachers are guided by a detailed policy statement, which covers in detail the curriculum for gymnastics, games, dance, athletics and swimming for all year groups. The school has also successfully built up a good level of resources for all aspects of the subject. As a direct consequence, the quality of teaching in all the lessons seen during the inspection was either good or very good.

127. The provision for swimming is satisfactory. All pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 have ten sessions each term at a nearby indoor pool. Those who are unable to meet the required standards are given additional swimming lessons with younger pupils. Standards in swimming are in line with those normally seen with almost all pupils achieving the required standards in the National Curriculum for swimming.
128. By the age of seven, all pupils know the importance of warming up before exercise and the effect of exercise on their heart and muscles. Pupils in Year 1 are confident in their movement and demonstrate a satisfactory level of control and co-ordination in gymnastics when balancing using different parts of their bodies. They follow instructions well and take good care of their own safety and that of others when, for example, running around the hall to warm up. In a Year 2 games lesson, pupils are clearly enthusiastic and enjoy using hoops or balls. All develop their catching skills successfully. In games, both boys and girls are keen to do well and demonstrate a strong determination to improve their accuracy when throwing or catching a ball. Pupils readily evaluate one another's performance.
129. Most of the physical education lessons took part outside of the inspection timetable. Year 6, for example, had two games sessions practising their netball skills and learning to work as part of a team to meet set challenges in an obstacle course. However, Year 4 pupils were observed working with a visiting teacher on their netball skills. All showed fluency of movement when trying to evade an opponent and worked hard to practise their passing skills. Pupils behave well in lessons, listening to their teachers' instructions carefully and responding immediately when their attention is needed. In the Year 4 lesson, for example, even though pupils were excited and enthusiastic, they responded immediately when asked for their attention. This shows that teachers have responded to the criticisms over control in the previous inspection. Pupils get on extremely well with one another when working in pairs or small groups. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve a satisfactory standard in physical education.
130. No overall judgement about the quality of teaching is possible as none of the junior teachers were observed. In the lessons seen involving classes in the infant department, teaching was mostly good and on one occasion with Year 2 pupils, it was very good. Teachers' knowledge for all aspects of the subject is good and they plan lessons very carefully so that the basic skills are covered well. Good use is made of support staff and resources. The organisation of lessons and plentiful resources provides pupils with a good range of opportunities to develop physical education skills working either individually or in groups in the infant department. Health and safety issues are fully complied with. For example, all six- and seven-year-old pupils wear appropriate clothing and footwear for their lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and discipline and control in all the lessons seen was good. In the lesson, where the quality of teaching was very good, the teacher motivated pupils well; set challenging tasks and maintained a good pace throughout. Pupils in this lesson responded to the teacher's obvious enthusiasm and effective use of praise by giving 100 per cent effort.
131. Subject management is good. The latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines have been successfully incorporated into the very good policy statement to give clear guidance for teaching all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers' planning is carefully monitored by the headteacher and co-ordinator each half term. In addition, the co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching and routinely monitors and evaluates standards achieved. The assessment of pupils' progress is good, as a consistent approach is followed throughout the school. Assessment opportunities are clearly identified in teachers' medium-term planning and consequently, teachers are able to reliably use

assessment information to guide their future planning. All statutory requirements for physical education are met and there is a strong commitment to improve any identified areas of weakness. The spacious playground and large field provide a very good resource for physical education activities when the weather is suitable. Resources have been steadily improved year-on-year and are now good for all aspects of the subject. They are stored tidily in a special area inside the large well-equipped school hall making them readily accessible to pupils.

132. The provision of extra-curricular sporting activities is unsatisfactory at present. A strong commitment to in-service training for all teachers and the maternity leave of the teacher responsible for football has meant that there are few opportunities for girls and boys to take part in sporting activities such as football training or competitive matches against nearby schools. However, the school has maintained a good range of other extra-curricular sessions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards at the ages of seven and eleven match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All groups of pupils throughout the school respond well in lessons and make satisfactory progress in developing their religious knowledge and understanding. Teachers make good links with assemblies and draw on pupils' learning in other subjects. They also make consistent use of strategies, which effectively enable pupils to connect religious ideas with their personal experience.
134. As they move through the school, pupils develop these connections more fully by learning to use skills such as investigation, reflection and empathy. Pupils in all year groups use and extend these skills through the study of Christianity, its beliefs, practices and moral teachings, and its major figures, festivals and ceremonies. Pupils also develop a sound knowledge of the world faiths of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. As pupils in Years 1 and 2 do little recorded work in religious education and have their lessons on Fridays, it was possible to gain only limited evidence of the attainment of these pupils. However, the evidence of planning and discussion shows that they achieve satisfactory knowledge of Christian and Jewish festivals, symbols, ceremonies and places of worship. By the age of eleven, pupils achieve a secure basic understanding of the similarities and differences between the major faiths. They know about the different sacred books and places, and can explain how special objects and symbols highlight differences between faiths and cultures. They appreciate the special nature of prayer and can rewrite the Lord's Prayer into a version which makes its full meaning accessible to younger children.
135. The quality of teaching and learning in the seven to eleven age-range is satisfactory, although one very good lesson was observed. Teaching is effective in helping pupils to develop an active interest in the subject and to engage thoughtfully with its themes. Teachers' plans, lessons and displays of work show that pupils experience a balanced and coherent programme of religious education, informed by good subject knowledge and enlivened by very interactive approaches and well-used resources. Teachers are particularly effective in using and developing the skills of reflection and discussion to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to make connections between their learning and their everyday lives. For example, in a very good lesson on Hinduism, very skilful use of discussion following a period of quiet reflection enabled pupils to develop strong interest and insight into how they could apply the doctrine of Ahimsa in difficult situations in their own lives. Pupils respond very positively to such 'circle time' opportunities, and learn by sharing their personal

perceptions of religious ideas and disciplines. However, successful use of such opportunities depends heavily on a very clear initial communication of the theme in question, and this is not always achieved. For instance, in an otherwise satisfactory Year 3 lesson, the uninspired reading of a brief outline of the life of St. Alban failed to bring out clearly enough the lesson's focal theme of what it means to stand by one's beliefs when persecuted. As a result, discussion lacked focus and development, and pupils' eager contributions went off track into anecdotes about abuse between rival groups of football fans.

136. The subject has a secure place in the school's curriculum and in the interests of teachers and pupils. The curriculum time allocated to the subject provides opportunity for lively development of themes through discussion, but it allows few opportunities for new learning to be extended and reinforced through further research or recorded work. As a result, the subject's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is valuable but less decisive than it could be. Teachers' records of pupils' learning are less comprehensive than in other subjects.