

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOOLER FIRST SCHOOL**

Wooler, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122236

Headteacher: Mr P Ayres

Reporting inspector: Barney Payne  
4890

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 192245

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ryecroft Way Wooler Northumberland
Postcode:	NE71 6EB
Telephone number:	01668 281260
Fax number:	01668 282216
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev F Clarkson
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4890	B D Payne	Registered inspector	Art and Design	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievement How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed?
11358	V Lamb	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?
1407	P J Scott	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and Technology Special Educational Needs	
27363	A Burgess	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Information and Communication Technology Geography History Music Physical Education Religious Education Equal Opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

*PkR* Educational Consultants Ltd  
6 Sherman Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 3JH

Tel: 020 8289 1924  
Fax: 020 8289 1919

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33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is small, with 114 pupils aged 4-9. There is a separate reception class of 26 pupils. The children have average attainment when they enter the school. All pupils are from the Wooler catchment area. There is some pupil mobility and 6 pupils joined and 5 left in the last school year. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. All pupils are from white, United Kingdom backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language. There are 25 pupils with a broad range of special educational needs (SEN), a proportion in line with the national average, of whom 4 have SEN statements, which is an above average proportion. The school has more boys than girls (52 boys and 38 girls of compulsory school age). The school is the home of the Glendale Music Trust, which provides opportunities for local schools to work with professional musicians.

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

Wooler First is an effective school providing a good quality of education. Teaching is good and pupils reach standards that are at least average. Nine-year-olds' attainment in English and seven and nine-year-olds' attainment in mathematics and science is above average. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. The school provides some very good learning opportunities, but there are aspects of the curriculum that need improvement. The leadership and management of the headteacher and staff are good, with some very good features. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well, including those with SEN, and nine-year-olds' attainment in English and seven and nine-year-olds' attainment in mathematics and science is above average.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school, behave very well and relationships are excellent
- Teaching is good, including provision for SEN, and the school has very good community links that contribute to pupils' learning
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with very good provision for moral and social development, and pupils are well cared for
- The school has effective links with parents and provides very good quality information for them
- The school is effectively led and managed, with very good procedures in place for staff appraisal and performance management, and financial planning is very good

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

- The curriculum lacks sufficient breadth and balance, because of the time allocated to activities and the lack of clear policies and procedures to cover health and drug education
- Higher attaining pupils need more challenging activities to be planned for them
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT)
- There is no written behaviour policy and the prospectus and annual report to parents from the governing body does not contain all of the information which parents are entitled to receive
- The school has not formalised its arrangements to carry out the local authority's health and safety procedures

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

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

The school was last inspected in 1997. Improvement since that time has been good. Standards have been maintained in English and current work in the school shows improved attainment in mathematics and science. The school now has a detailed duty of care policy in place. It has improved its use of assessment, focusing primarily on English and mathematics. Assessment helps the school plan its development, but it is not used sufficiently to help plan extension work for higher attaining pupils. The school now uses its assessments to inform parents of the progress their children are making. Written reports are of very good quality and the information provided to parents about what their children are learning is now very good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	A	B	C	C
writing	A	A	C	C
mathematics	B	B	D	E

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

In the National Curriculum tests and tasks for seven-year-olds in 2000, performance in reading and writing was in line with the national average compared with all schools. Performance in mathematics fell below the national average. Compared with similar schools, performance in reading and writing was close to average but performance in mathematics was well below average. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level was below average in reading and writing and close to average in mathematics. Compared to previous years, there was a downturn in the 2000 results. The 2000 cohort was small, with a relatively high proportion of pupils on the SEN register, and a more reliable indicator of performance is to take three years as a whole. The three-year average for 1998-2000 shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics exceeded the national average. Boys' and girls' reading, writing and mathematics were better than national averages for each gender. Current attainment in English is average at age seven and above average at age nine. Attainment in mathematics and science is above average at ages seven and nine. Pupils show average attainment in ICT when given the opportunity, but have too few chances to use it. In other subjects, attainment is at least average, with above average attainment in art, music and physical education (PE) by age nine. Attainment in religious education (RE) is in line with that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in the reception class reach the level expected in all areas of learning. Careful deployment of support for pupils on the SEN register leads to good achievement. Higher attainers make satisfactory progress, but need more challenging work in some subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to lessons and respond well to the attitudes and values the school promotes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils work and play well together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils care for one another and are sensitive to the needs of others. All integrate well into the school community.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the average for similar schools.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make a very significant contribution to the life of the school. Pupils relate extremely well to one another and to adults.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	good

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

Teaching is good. None is unsatisfactory. In 71 per cent of lessons, teaching is good or better. In 21 per cent, it is very good, sometimes excellent. In the last inspection, there was a little unsatisfactory teaching and 13 per cent was very good or better, so there has been an improvement. There is more very good teaching in Years 3 and 4, where teaching is good or better in 78 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 33 per cent. However, there is some good or very good teaching in each age range, leading to good quality of learning. Pupils put effort and pace into their work. Teachers use effective methods and manage pupils very well. However, there is more emphasis placed on pupils gaining knowledge than undertaking inquiry. Teachers make too little use of ICT. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good. The teaching of literacy is generally good, and in some parts of the school very good. Teachers' planning is in line with the National Literacy Strategy, but not all the elements are consistently applied. In mathematics, teaching is good overall, sometimes very good. Science teaching is at least good and sometimes excellent.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities but unsatisfactory breadth, balance and relevance overall, due to the amounts of time allocated to some activities and organisational issues.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. The teaching for all pupils with SEN is good, helped by a carefully developed programme of support. Working relationships between the learning support assistants and the class teachers are very good. There is good progress since the last inspection in arrangements for promoting progress of pupils with SEN.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision. Pupils participate well in all aspects of assemblies. Pupils' moral and social development is very good. The Glendale Music Trust offers a wide range of musical opportunities to pupils. Some very good art and music teaching also contributes to pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory procedures to ensure pupils' welfare. Staff know pupils well. The school needs to set out its arrangements to implement the local authority's health and safety procedures.

The school has established good relationships with parents, including links to involve them in supporting their children's learning. Pupils with SEN have good access to all curriculum opportunities. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress, but the school does not have a policy for their provision. There is not enough time allocated to lessons for pupils aged seven to nine. Not all the elements of the literacy strategy are consistently applied and English is not taught beyond the literacy lessons. Year 2 miss a literacy lesson each week due to swimming. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT. There is no framework to cover health and drugs education. There are some problems in planning effectively when combining reception and Year 1 and 2 classes for two afternoons each week. The school has made imaginative use of donated funds, giving an exciting dimension to sport in Years 3 and 4. Class teachers monitor and promote individual pupils' progress well. Staff are vigilant in their care for pupils known to need extra attention. Support staff make a significant contribution to developing the skills of targeted pupils. The monitoring of pupils' attendance and behaviour is good and the school has effective procedures in place, even though there is no written behaviour policy.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides firm, clear leadership combined with great energy and enthusiasm.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities. There are some statutory items that need addressing and governors have little involvement in helping to draw up the school development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has effective monitoring and evaluation systems. The school takes decisive action to address issues as they arise.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses money from its budget appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils with SEN. The sponsored learning support assistant is used with great care to effect improvements in achievement.

The school has a committed governing body that is proud of the school and what it achieves. The school has won the Investors in People award three times and is very well placed to implement its performance management policy. Systems of financial administration in the school are effective. The school has a good level of learning resources and accommodation and an appropriate match of staff to the demands of the curriculum. Small classes increase the spending per pupil, but the headteacher has successfully found extra financial support for a range of initiatives. The school successfully applies the principles of best value to its use of resources. It does not have a framework for formally consulting parents and pupils about developments, and this is something that would add to the school's application of best value principles.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour of pupils</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Expectations the school has of pupils</li> <li>• The way the school helps pupils become mature and responsible</li> <li>• The work of learning support assistants</li> <li>• The way the school encourages all abilities, promoting very positive attitudes to school</li> <li>• Information provided for parents, including reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wider range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. Learning support assistants make an important contribution. Reports are very good, reflecting individual children and the progress they have made. The school caters well for the personal development of pupils. Over a third of parents who returned questionnaires tend to disagree, or strongly disagree, that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. There are gymnastic clubs after school. A well-supported wildlife club, run by a teacher on Saturdays, has temporarily suspended its operation, but is likely to run again. Overall, the extracurricular provision at the time of the inspection is fairly typical of a small first school. There are wider opportunities over the year provided by The Glendale Music Trust.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. Pupils in the reception class reach the level expected in all areas of learning. They are confident, friendly, show an interest in books and a widening vocabulary. Most can count to the number in their class and recognise numbers to 20. Most understand the link between spoken and written numbers and can find *one more* or *one less*. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is reflected in, for example, their ability to estimate and their knowledge of differences, such as *hot and cold* and *full and empty*. Pupils begin to understand simple scientific ideas, such as the conservation of volume of solids and liquids, which they gain from exploratory work using sand and water. High quality displayed work reflects pupils' developing practical abilities. In music, most pupils can respond to musical direction and understand musical ideas such as *loud* and *soft*. However, too little use is made of computers as an integral part of the reception class curriculum.
2. In the National Curriculum tests and tasks for seven-year-olds in 2000, performance in reading and writing was in line with the national average compared with all schools. Performance in mathematics fell below the national average. Compared with schools in similar contexts, based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, performance in reading and writing was close to average but performance in mathematics was well below average. The proportion of pupils exceeding level 2, expected of a typical seven year old, and reaching level 3, was below average in reading and writing and close to average in mathematics.
3. Compared to previous years, there was a downturn in the 2000 results for seven-year-olds, but there were only 23 pupils in the 2000 cohort and there was a relatively high proportion of pupils on the SEN register. It is more reliable to take three years as a whole as an indicator of performance. Based on the three-year average for 1998-2000, standards in reading, writing and mathematics exceeded the national average over the three years, with reading and writing exceeding it more than mathematics. Boys' and girls' reading, writing and mathematics were better than national averages for each gender. Boys exceeded the national average more than girls.
4. The school uses its performance data to see how it compares with similar schools. Small cohorts mean that there are fluctuations from year to year and the school therefore focuses, appropriately, on the attainment and progress of individual pupils. The school has a system for tracking pupils' attainment and uses optional tests in Year 3 and Year 4. As a result of data analysis and teacher assessments, targets are set for pupils. A learning support assistant, acquired through sponsorship, is used to ensure pupils experiencing difficulty make sufficient progress, and this works effectively. The sponsorship is dependent on measurable improvements in attainment and achievement. The school monitors the performance of individuals and year groups of pupils well. It is less effective in monitoring the performance of groups of pupils, for example boys or higher-attaining pupils.
5. Scrutiny of work in English and discussions with pupils provide evidence that the downturn in results in 2000 can be explained by the variations in a small cohort. Standards in English for seven-year-olds are in line with the national average. At the time of the inspection, the 2001 standard assessment test for seven-year-olds had been completed for reading and shows an improvement on last year. The writing test

had not been completed. Standards in spelling are not as high as in reading and writing. Pupils' work is well presented, although standards of handwriting achieved in handwriting lessons are not always as high in other work across the curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on standards since the last inspection and has led to a more structured approach to planning and provision.

6. Most pupils are enthusiastic readers and the most able pupils in Year 2 express preferences for authors and types of story and give reasons for their choices. They read with expression and can also retrieve information. Pupils of all abilities have good strategies for decoding unfamiliar words. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen attentively and contribute well in lessons. Some pupils are beginning to use more adventurous vocabulary. By age nine, when pupils are in Year 4, standards in English are above average. Some pupils are developing a lively style using the conventions of speech and humour to good effect in their diaries. Year 4 work shows some elements of level 4 writing, which is therefore above the level expected of a typical nine-year-old. Pupils make good progress through the school in English. In some classes they are developing skills of independence, but this is not consistent throughout the school.
7. Standards being reached in mathematics throughout the school are above those expected nationally. The decline in 2000 in the standards reached in national tests, compared to previous years, is explained by a small but significant number of pupils with learning difficulties in basic numeracy who joined the school in the year the tests were taken. None of these pupils reached the standard expected of a seven-year-old pupil and, with a small number of pupils taking the test, the effect was to reduce the overall standard reached to below the national average. Early indications show that results in national tests taken in 2001 by seven-year-old pupils will be significantly better than the previous year, with all pupils attaining levels at, or above, the national average. About one in four of these pupils is expected to reach the higher level of attainment (level 3) and this is in line with the picture nationally. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the effective provision for pupils with weaker numerical skills are contributing to keep standards in the subject above national expectations. Since the last inspection, the performances of boys and girls in the tests for seven-year-old pupils have been similar, except in 2000 when the boys performed significantly worse than the girls.
8. Most pupils enter Year 1 with a sound grounding in the recognition and use of numbers. Following identification of specific weaknesses, close attention is given to the needs of individual pupils using an effective system of classroom support and small group withdrawal. This provision is very good and those pupils with special educational needs make good progress. However, the school is less rigorous in the identification and provision for pupils who are mathematically gifted. At the end of Year 4, the pupils are confident in their capabilities and are able to apply their skills to a wider range of mathematical ideas and problems. The school provides a secure foundation for the next stage in the pupils' education in mathematics. Information and communication technology (ICT) makes too little contribution to attainment and achievement in mathematics.

9. By the age of seven, pupils are competent in the use of number and are beginning to use their knowledge and understanding to solve simple problems. They read and write numbers correctly, count in numbers both forward and backward and understand the processes of addition and subtraction. The pupils' skills in multiplication and division, and an understanding of these as reverse processes, are developing quickly. Their acquisition and use of technical language is good. They use comparative statements, such as *large and small*, *empty and full* and *long and short* to describe variations in numbers, capacity and measurement. Pupils are helped to develop skills in using mathematical processes, for example classifying, interpreting and predicting. By the age of nine, pupils use their knowledge by transferring it to new situations to widen and accelerate their learning. This is helped by their interest in the subject and their ability to retain and recall previous learning. They draw simple graphs and interpret data obtained from them. They identify two and three-dimensional figures and identify their properties. Increasingly they solve problems and they are able to calculate areas, perimeters and volumes of regular figures. They measure lengths and angles correctly. Most pupils begin to use different mental strategies to solve the same problem and are able to explain the reasoning behind their solution.
10. In science in 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching level 2 or above, based on teacher assessments, was very high compared to the national average and showed a significant improvement on the previous year. The proportion reaching level 3 was close to the national average and did not improve on the previous year. Standards in science throughout the school are above national expectations. There is, however, an emphasis on the acquisition of scientific knowledge at the expense of extending pupils' skills by using more investigative work. There are no significant differences between the standards reached by boys and girls throughout the school. Since the last inspection the progress which pupils make, including those with special educational needs, has improved with overall progress now being good.
11. In science in Year 1, pupils describe features of living and non-living things. They extend their skills in literacy and can communicate using comparisons such as *heavy or light* and *loud or quiet*. They talk about how they will observe and record results. In Year 2, pupils begin to classify materials, plants and animals. They make sensible suggestions to explain how causes and effects might be linked when changes take place. Natural cycles, such as those of the frog and the butterfly, are studied with interest. Pupils are helped by the pride they take in their work, reflected in neat presentation. At the end of Year 4 pupils make good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and in understanding scientific phenomena. Pupils understand the need for 'fair-testing' and are making suggestions as to how to control some variables whilst studying the effects of others. Basic skills in the uses of literacy and numeracy are strongly reinforced and developed through the use and interpretation of graphs and the extension of appropriate technical language. The use of ICT as an aid to extending learning in science is unsatisfactory. There is limited availability of good quality programs to support the content taught to all year groups.
12. Overall achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory because too little use is made of it across the curriculum. There are signs that pupils can attain at levels expected for their ages, but they have too few opportunities to use ICT. In other subjects, attainment is at least average. In RE, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In geography and history, while achievement is satisfactory, the lack of extension activities restricts opportunities for more able pupils to make progress. In art and design, work is at least average, with examples of above average work in Years 1 and 4. In design and technology, standards are in line with national expectations for

seven and nine-year-olds. In music, attainment is at the expected level for seven-year-olds and there is some high attainment by older pupils due to the quality of music teaching. In physical education (PE), seven-year-olds' attainment is at the expected level and nine-year-olds' attainment is above average, helped by high quality coaching in football from visiting specialists.

13. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress, but the school does not have a policy to address the needs of this group of pupils and in some lessons they have too little opportunity to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding by, for example, pursuing ideas independently.
14. Pupils on Stages 1 and 2 of the SEN Code of Practice are defined by the school as those experiencing difficulty in gaining access to and learning from the curriculum. Using stringent criteria, the school identifies these pupils early and accurately. The aim is to remove these pupils from the register as soon as they reach well-defined standards. About one in three pupils are removed from the register in a year when they reach the required standards. All pupils make good progress because the care in identification and the support received is well matched to their individual needs. The standards reached by two pupils at Stage 5 in Years 1 and 2 are above average because they are making very good progress in overcoming their learning difficulties resulting from their physical disabilities.

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

15. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, especially the range of relationships established, are strengths of the school.
16. Pupils like school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their lessons and special events. Pupils are eager to let staff know that they look forward to returning next day. They respond well to the attitudes and values that the school promotes. Pupils are enthusiastic about the activities provided and chat in a friendly way with each other, their teachers and other adults. When given the opportunity, they display appropriate levels of independence and develop self-confidence and a good level of personal responsibility as they move through the school. Those chosen as monitors are proud to show that they can carry out their duties conscientiously. They help to support the youngest pupils in the playground and at lunchtime and carry out a range of tasks to support preparations for lessons and clearing away. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is good.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good and relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are excellent. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They take notice of each other, work co-operatively and, especially, are patient when some pupils take a while to work out answers, showing pleasure when they succeed. Pupils feel secure with teachers and are able to approach them confidently and respectfully to exchange news, show work and ask for help. Pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to take initiative and act responsibly. They are able to plan and organise their work when they have been shown appropriate procedures, for instance when they record science activities. However, they do not always have the necessary skills, although they are willing, and are often reliant on teachers, particularly as activities are often controlled directly by teachers.
18. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good and they work and play together

well. In lessons, boys, girls and pupils of differing abilities work together in a co-operative and friendly way, supporting one another and sharing materials when necessary. Pupils settle to their tasks well and are very attentive, concentrating effectively in group tasks as well as when working alone. They listen well and join in when necessary, offering sensible questions and suggestions. They persevere when work is difficult and respond well to instructions and guidance. During assemblies pupils join in wholeheartedly. They particularly enjoy singing and take the opportunities provided to reflect on the assembly theme. Pupils are well motivated to succeed and take pleasure in receiving recognition for their efforts. Pupils move in an orderly way between areas and are particularly polite and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. In the dining room and playgrounds they talk with each other and adults in a friendly way and keep to the school routines without fuss. No bullying or other unacceptable behaviour was seen during the inspection. The school has not excluded any pupil in recent years.

19. Behaviour in the playground is good. Pupils organise themselves into pairs or groups to play or chat. Many pupils stand or sit around the edges of the playground as there are no seating areas where they can comfortably pass the time quietly. There is more room for everyone during lunchtimes, when greater availability of supervisors means that a second playground can be used and games can be more structured.
20. Attendance is satisfactory and the rate of unauthorised absence is below the average for similar schools nationally. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and sessions start promptly.

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

21. Teaching is good across the school. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and in seven in every ten lessons the teaching is good or better. In two in every ten lessons, it is very good, and sometimes excellent. At the time of the last inspection, there was a little unsatisfactory teaching and 13 per cent was very good or better, so there has been an improvement.
22. There is some variation in teaching, with more very good teaching in Years 3 and 4, where a third of the teaching is very good and teaching is good or better in eight out of ten lessons. However, there is some good and very good teaching across the age range. Teaching in the foundation stage has improved since the last inspection, being good overall compared to satisfactory overall at the time of the last inspection. There was some unsatisfactory teaching in the five to seven age range during the last inspection, whereas now teaching is at least satisfactory, good or better in close to seven out of ten lessons and very good in one out of ten.
23. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding, plan effectively and have appropriately high expectations of their pupils. Pupils, in turn, put a good level of effort and pace into their work. They mostly understand what they are doing, though some depend on the teacher to guide them.
24. The teaching of literacy is generally good, and in some parts of the school very good, especially where learning objectives and success criteria are shared with the pupils. Teachers' planning is in line with the National Literacy Strategy, but not all the elements of the strategy are consistently applied.
25. In mathematics, teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good. The strengths in mathematics teaching lie in the thoroughness with which

lessons are planned, the use of wide experience and professional expertise in the methods used and in the management of lessons.

26. Science teaching is at least good and sometimes excellent. The interest and motivation of the pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, is high, due to the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject content.
27. Teachers use methods that are effective and their management of pupils is very good. However, careful control of pupils and what they do also results in more emphasis placed on gaining knowledge than undertaking inquiry. For example, in science, emphasis on the acquisition of scientific knowledge at the expense of extending pupils' skills by using more investigative work leads to pupils sometimes lacking the skills necessary to undertake work independently.
28. Teachers make good use of time, support staff and resources, but make too little use of ICT. While planning specifically for ICT covers the range of skills required, these are not an integral part of the rest of the curriculum. In mathematics and science, ICT is not widely or consistently used to aid learning and there is insufficient appropriate software to help teachers in reinforcing mathematical or scientific ideas.
29. Teachers make some effective use of questions to assess understanding and take pupils on to new learning. However, assessment is not used sufficiently to help plan work for each level of ability and in particular to challenge the most able. Marking in English is encouraging and pupils' achievements are acknowledged, but teachers do not make constructive written comments or set targets for future work. In mathematics, the quality of daily assessment and its use to help planning for individual pupils is satisfactory overall. In a very good lesson with Year 1 pupils, the teacher sought to introduce the idea of estimating with accuracy. Using a wide range of questions, the teacher quickly discovered the pupils' knowledge was rudimentary. Using a variety of learning resources and allowing pupils time to investigate, the teacher was able to guide them towards an understanding of a reasonable estimation. This led to rapid progress in learning. Very good teaching in music in Years 3 and 4 is based on continual assessment that is used to plan the next stage of learning.
30. The teaching for all pupils with SEN is good. There is, for example, good use of questions that are aimed at gaining participation from individuals. The class teacher, in close liaison with the learning support assistant, decides when support will be given. Generally, classroom support is given when a new topic is being introduced, otherwise pupils are withdrawn in small groups to strengthen the learning. This is an effective system because pupils are given close attention, which raises their confidence, and they do not fall behind average and higher-attaining pupils. There is no similar provision for teaching higher-attaining pupils. Pupils at Stages 1 and 2 of the SEN Code of Practice are taught using a carefully developed programme of support and withdrawal. A learning support assistant is available for these pupils in lessons in which numeracy and literacy are taught. The balance between support and withdrawal is good. Working relationships between the learning support assistants and the class teachers are very good.
31. Overall, homework is appropriate and usefully consolidates work covered in school. Pupils regularly take reading books home and reading records are kept by both staff and parents. Homework is not widely or consistently used as part of mathematics teaching. Parents mostly agree that their children get the right amount of work to do at home.

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

32. The school's curriculum has a mixture of significant strengths and areas that need improvement. Overall, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses, but there are statutory and recommended items that are not in place.
33. The reception class curriculum is appropriate and covers all areas of learning necessary for pupils to reach early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
34. The curriculum for five to nine-year-olds does not have appropriate breadth, balance and relevance because
  - The weekly swimming lesson means that Year 2 pupils do not have the literacy hour on one day each week.
  - ICT is not used enough and pupils therefore do not cover National Curriculum requirements.
  - Art and design, design and technology, music and PE are taught to mixed age reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils on two afternoons per week in large groups of well over thirty. This makes it very difficult to set work at an appropriate level for each age group. The school has identified this as a problem that is to be resolved for the next school year.
  - The time allocated to history and geography is inconsistent class to class.
  - The school does not have clear policies and procedures in place to cover health and drug education.
  - The amount of lesson time falls well short of national recommendations for Years 3 and 4. The national recommendation is 23 hours 30 minutes, but the school provides only 21 hours 40 minutes.
35. The school has satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers' planning is in-line with the National Literacy Strategy but not all the elements of the strategy are consistently applied. There were no instances during the inspection when teachers worked intensively with one group, as expected in the national strategy. English is not taught outside of the literacy hour and, consequently, there are insufficient opportunities, particularly for pupils in Years 3 and 4, to extend their writing. This particularly affects higher attaining pupils.
36. The school responds well to the needs of individual pupils, and learning support assistants help effectively to develop their targeted pupils' personal skills. The school's ethos is very positive, making it easy for pupils to respond to new opportunities and experiences. For example, during the inspection Years 3 and 4 worked on the same afternoon with a visiting music teacher and with coaches from Sunderland Football Club. However, there is no coherent planning to help pupils address health issues, to help them make choices relating to their health; and there is no planning to help address issues relating to drugs. The school provides no formal sex education, but pupils do cover aspects of human growth and development as part of the science curriculum.
37. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with the same curriculum opportunities as other pupils. This is a strong feature of the school's provision, giving all pupils have equal access to what the school provides. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress, but the school does not have a policy for their provision and should clarify how these pupils are identified; how work can be adjusted to take account of their development; and how resources can be targeted to support them.

38. The school makes very good use of the wider community to provide some very valuable curriculum experiences for pupils. The school's grounds accommodate the playgroup, whose children join the school for assembly each week. There are well-established links with the middle school. The Glendale Music Trust has enabled the school to establish links with the other schools in the area, many of them small and isolated. The Trust has enabled a wide range of musical activities to be offered to the children. These include working with a variety of professional musicians and the annual Chrysalis Project, where professional musicians work with schools from different phases and localities, culminating in a concert at a local theatre. The Trust's award of bursaries to talented pupils, the visits to the school by specialist musicians, and the links it has established with schools in the locality, including valuable outreach work, has made the school a centre for adventurous musical experiences. The school has also made imaginative use of donated funds to secure the services of coaches from Sunderland Football Club, which has given a new and exciting dimension to sport for Years 3 and 4.
39. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory. There are significant examples of spiritual development in lessons; for example Year 3 pupils were amazed at the natural world when a carnation changed colour when put into ink, due to its roots taking in water. Such opportunities are not a regular feature of the planned curriculum. The school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. There is a weekly assembly to which parents are invited. Parents show very good support. The assemblies have a weekly theme that is explored through the teacher asking questions of the pupils and through presentations by the pupils themselves. For example, Year 2 pupils effectively presented a short play, *The Rainbow People*, that explored the need to share the world's resources. The theme is explored appropriately in ways that are accessible across the age range. The Year 2 play gained a high level of interest and involvement from the pupils watching.
40. Pupils' moral and social development is very good and makes a major contribution to the school's ethos. The school provides a strong moral code, reflected in the way pupils accept and respond to one another and to adults in the school. Relationships in the school are excellent. The work of the music trust provides a wider spectrum in which pupils work with people new to them. The school has links with a residential school in India, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 recently researched aspects of Indian life as part of an evening devoted to the work of the orphanage. This ensures that pupils become aware of lives that are very different to their own. Cultural development is further catered for through some effective art and music teaching. For example, a visiting teacher has worked with pupils in Years 3 and 4 to teach them how to play steel pans, providing a new and exciting sound language from another culture.
41. Over a third of parents who returned questionnaires tend to disagree, or strongly disagree, that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. There are gymnastic clubs after school. A well-supported wildlife club, run by a teacher on Saturdays, has temporarily suspended its operation, but is likely to run again. Overall, the extracurricular provision at the time of the inspection is fairly typical of a small first school. There are wider opportunities over the year provided by The Glendale Music Trust.

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

42. The school takes good care to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Since the last

inspection the school has developed a policy itemising individual responsibilities as part of the school's duty of care towards pupils. This policy is supported by a checklist in the handbook for staff, outlining a range of procedures designed to ensure that pupils are registered in class each day and appropriately supervised at all times. Staff are effective role models. They praise and encourage achievements and intervene quickly and constructively when pupils require guidance.

43. Parents are satisfied with day to day arrangements and generally agree that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns about their children. Staff know pupils well. They are conscientious in establishing and maintaining very high quality relationships with them and encourage children to get along well together. Staff are vigilant in their care for those pupils who are known to need extra attention and look on pupils as individuals, helping them accordingly. Teachers and non-teaching staff supervise the pupils well throughout the school day and appropriate procedures ensure that pupils are safely dismissed from the premises at the end of the day. Parents are satisfied that their children like going to school.
44. The school's arrangements for child protection follow Local Education Authority procedures and are satisfactory, but the school has not developed its own policy or procedures for training staff in related issues. Staff are made aware of appropriate responses should they have concerns about a child's welfare.
45. In general, pupils' personal development is well monitored and promoted. The high level and quality of support staff makes a very significant contribution to the achievements of pupils with specific needs, although the school is less effective in identifying and supporting pupils who are particularly gifted or talented. There is no formal programme for personal, social and health education to provide a forum for pupils to express their views and feelings and to learn skills to use to look after themselves. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by events such as celebration assemblies, which highlight and reward significant achievements, and opportunities to help in class and in the dining room. In particular, the quality and level of support staffing make a significant contribution to the developing skills of targeted pupils. Significant aspects of pupils' personal development are included in annual reports for parents and provide a good means of acknowledging their good points and boosting self-esteem. Teachers identify individual strengths and weaknesses and share them with parents, in discussions and in written reports. Targets are set to aid further progress, by focusing on specific skills and providing strategies to help. The school maintains a good working relationship with outside agencies for additional support and advice when necessary.
46. The school has adopted local authority procedures for health and safety. A suitably experienced governor has been recently appointed to take a particular interest in this aspect of school life and regular reviews are carried out. However, the school has not produced a document that details arrangements with respect to implementing local policies and procedures specific to the school environment and activities. The results of risk assessments were not made available for the inspection team. During the inspection a health and safety issue was reported to the headteacher. Fire drills are held each half-term and the fire bell is regularly tested. Accidents or illness are dealt with appropriately. The school has qualified first-aiders on its staff.
47. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour mean that pupils are always well behaved. Pupils know who to turn to for help if they need it and parents are satisfied that any incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are taken seriously and resolved quickly. The school sets very high standards for behaviour during

lessons, based on a system which makes expectations clear to all pupils. Staff provide very good role models and demonstrate a very positive approach to managing pupils. This is reflected in the school's duty of care documents, which are shared with staff, but the school has not produced a publicised, written behaviour policy to make arrangements known in school, to parents and anyone who provides services in the school. However, the school's general approach to discipline is shared with parents in the prospectus and newsletters and support is requested from home should a child have difficulty in achieving an expected standard in any aspect of school life. Non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors, make a significant contribution to good behaviour and standards during breaks.

48. The school has satisfactory procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and makes satisfactory use of assessment information to guide curricular planning. The school is effective in taking action to help individual pupils. However, assessment is not used enough to help plan work for pupils of different levels of ability, in particular the most able. Throughout the academic year, class teachers monitor and promote individual pupils' progress well. A range of data is collected with appropriate emphasis given to English and mathematics. Individual strengths and weaknesses are identified and targets are set for children to assist further progress. These targets are included in annual reports to parents so that they can also support their children's achievements.
49. Pupils at Stage 5 of the SEN Code of Practice have individual education plans. Those at Stages 1 and 2 have targets in literacy and numeracy according to their need. Care is taken when compiling the targets and these are very closely monitored using well-documented procedures. Weaknesses in reading are addressed by the learning support assistant listening to pupils at lunchtime.
50. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is good and the school has effective procedures in place to encourage improvement. Registers are completed accurately, are kept up to date and regularly examined to identify any pupils who may need support to maintain regular and prompt attendance. Good working relationships are established with a range of support agencies. These measures ensure that reasons for absence are notified and recorded appropriately and support is provided for pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.

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

51. The school has established a good relationship with parents. Links are well established to involve parents in supporting their children's learning. Parents have positive views of the school. They find staff approachable, feel welcome in school at any time and are satisfied with the information that they receive on their children's progress and that the school works closely with them. Parents confirm that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on at school and that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. Day-to-day communications between school and home are good.
52. High quality information is provided for parents about the life of the school and the progress that their children make. However, the school prospectus and annual report to parents from the governing body does not contain all of the information which parents are entitled to receive. The prospectus is clear about the attitudes and values that the school aims to promote and includes a good range of information about school life, day-to-day procedures and the curriculum provided. Letters are frequently sent to parents to update them on new developments and special events and there is a notice board for parents in the school. Parents are consulted if problems arise concerning their child. Formal opportunities are provided for parents to consult teachers each term and at other times as necessary. Written reports are of a very good quality. They are specific to individuals and include significant aspects of pupils' academic progress and personal development as well as targets for parents to use when supporting their children's work at home. The school seeks parents' written comments about their children's progress. There are two exceptionally good sources of information that the school provides for parents. One is in the form of lists of topics and specific areas of English, mathematics and science, which let parents know what their children will be learning each term. The other is a timetable showing things to do and any items, including homework, which children need to take to school on various days.
53. A strong feature of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is the close partnership between the school and parents. Parents are fully involved in all aspects of the provision, from the time a pupil is diagnosed as in need of focused teaching. Parents are fully involved in setting targets and reviewing the progress made. Reviews take place every six-months and reports are received and discussed with parents at the end of each term.
54. Parents are involved in the life of the school and make very good contributions towards supporting their children's learning, by helping with reading and other homework, taking part in special projects and attending school events. Parents feel able to approach teachers easily on an informal basis day to day and all parents attend consultations with staff. The school helps parents prepare their children for school by inviting them into school to meet staff and see some of the activities provided. Pupils take reading books home daily and there is a clear system of homework that is known by parents. Parents and grandparents are invited to special events, such as assemblies and concerts. Parents help with library sessions and supervision during excursions. The school benefits substantially from the hard work of the parent teacher association. This dedicated group organises special fundraising and social events which many of the other parents, as well as other family members and staff, support.

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

55. The headteacher and staff provide good leadership and management. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities, although there are some statutory items that need

addressing. The school takes decisive action to address issues as they arise.

56. The headteacher provides firm, clear leadership combined with great energy and enthusiasm. This results in clear educational direction and strong reflection of the school's aims in its work. All staff have curriculum responsibilities that contribute to the school's work. There is a shared commitment and the capacity to succeed. The school has effective monitoring and evaluation systems, including lesson observations by the headteacher and visits by governors that focus on specific issues.
57. The school has a committed governing body that is proud of the school and what it achieves. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher and also make regular visits as part of their monitoring and evaluation role. The governing body has an active committee structure with each committee reporting back to the full governing body. Reports and minutes of meetings show careful budget monitoring, planned governors' visits with specific foci, the setting of performance objectives for senior managers and a complaints procedure in operation, leading to a written response from the governors. Governors take on specific responsibilities for literacy, numeracy and SEN, and these responsibilities include written records of visits.
58. Governors have a clear, and accurate, view of what the school does well, but there are areas that need improvement. Governors recognise that ICT needs integrating across the curriculum. There are other shortcomings in the delivery of the curriculum that need attention. The school does not have a framework to help teachers cover personal, social and health education. Lesson time for pupils in Years 3 and 4 falls well short of national recommendations. To release the headteacher for necessary administration time, reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes are combined two afternoons per week, which leads to teaching groups that are too large to focus on the needs of each level of ability in foundation subjects. The school is aware of this problem and plans to resolve it for the next school year.
59. The annual report to parents does not include the date, time and place of the annual parents' meeting. There is no information on the next election of parent governors. There is reference to progress regarding the school development plan, but not to the action plan following the previous inspection. There is a general statement regarding professional development undertaken by staff, but no specific information. The information on SEN lacks sufficient information concerning the governing body's policy on pupils with SEN and any changes to the policy during the last year. The school prospectus contains good quality information. However, to meet statutory requirements in full, it needs to include a reminder that parents can withdraw their children from all or part of the RE and collective worship provided, plus details of any alternative arrangements for pupils withdrawn. The prospectus should also include rates of authorised absence.
60. The current school development plan identifies relevant priorities that focus on curriculum development in the light of new National Curriculum orders and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The plan sets out who is responsible and who will monitor its implementation. Success criteria are identified with time scales. There is a strong relationship to staff development. Staff training costs, needed to implement the plan, are identified. Governors have an identified role in monitoring the school development plan, but have very little involvement in helping to draw up the plan with the headteacher and staff.
61. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in its arrangement for identifying, providing for, and monitoring the progress made by pupils with special

educational needs. There is recognition by the governing body that further developments to strengthen the provision are needed and that these are to be addressed in the next school year.

62. The special educational needs co-ordinator's role does not extend to involvement in the organisation of the teaching and administration for the pupils at Stage 5 of the SEN Code of Practice. This is a weakness, which the school has identified and the issue is to be addressed by the governing body. Principles, procedures and processes associated with the identification and provision for special educational needs are of a high standard. There is close monitoring of every identified pupil. Provision for learning assistant support is very good. The school uses money from its budget appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils with statements of special educational needs. It receives no other finance for special educational needs. Provision is made for the special needs co-ordinator to receive time each week to administer the programme for special educational needs. The school meets fully the statutory requirements for special educational needs.
63. Local industry has financially supported the employment of the learning support assistant for Stage 1 and 2 pupils. The contract is not permanent but is tied to pupils' performance related to closely focused criteria. Each year the school has to demonstrate that the sponsorship has resulted in clear and measurable gains. This is a well-conceived initiative.
64. The school has won the Investors in People award three times. The most recent assessment was in February 2001. The award reflects the school's commitment to the development of strategies designed to improve the school's performance, including use of lesson observation leading to detailed feedback to teachers and the identification of strengths and weaknesses. All staff now have a personal development file, as do governors. The school is therefore very well placed to implement its performance management policy.
65. The last financial audit showed no matters of serious concern and systems of financial administration in the school are effective. The school secretary has clear, straightforward systems for budget monitoring and provides the information the headteacher and governors need to undertake their roles. Her work is effective, unobtrusive and makes a significant contribution to the day to day management of the school. Office staff make very effective use of new technology as part of school administration.
66. A major priority for the governors has been to maintain a staffing structure of five teachers and avoid any mixed-age classes. Their success in continuing to achieve this has made curriculum planning more straightforward. Staff are appropriately matched to the demands of the curriculum and the deployment of some staff to teach music and art to classes other than their own has helped produce some high quality outcomes. Support staff make a very significant contribution. They are well trained and work effectively in partnership with teachers.
67. The school has a good level of learning resources. Recent investment in leasing computers is not yet sufficiently reflected in lesson planning. A library has been created and is managed by parent volunteers.
68. Accommodation is in good order, safe, with suitably spacious classrooms, a large multipurpose hall and well-maintained grounds. The school is very clean and well maintained. A playgroup is based in a mobile classroom on the school grounds, which

provides an easy transition from pre-school to reception. Display space is ample and the quality of display is very good, creating a very positive and stimulating learning environment.

69. The school maintains relatively small classes and a staffing structure that allows the school to avoid mixed-age classes for most of the time. This staffing structure is based on sound educational principles. While this increases the spending per pupil, the school, through the energy and resourcefulness of its headteacher, has successfully found sponsorship and financial support for a range of initiatives, including music, sport and extra support in classrooms. Overall, therefore, the school balances costs against effectiveness. The school provides good value for money. This is reflected in good teaching, none of which is unsatisfactory, and the use of outside resources, such as musicians and football coaches, which adds significantly to the curriculum opportunities provided for pupils. The school compares its performance against that of other schools and acts to improve what it does. This is reflected, for example, in deployment of support staff and the strong Investors in People ethos. The school looks to see who could provide services better than it could do itself and the headteacher recognises and seizes opportunities. The school does not have a framework for formally consulting parents and pupils about curriculum or other developments, and this is something that would add to the school's application of best value principles. The school does ensure best value through its financial administration and tenders out work to achieve the best value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to continue raising standards and to improve what the school provides, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve the breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum by:
  - Increasing the weekly lesson time for Years 3 and 4, in line with national recommendations (paragraphs 34, 58);
  - Ensuring all pupils have a daily literacy hour and that there are more opportunities, particularly in Years 3 and 4, for pupils to extend their writing (paragraphs 34, 35, 84, 85);
  - Integrating ICT into planning and ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are met in full (paragraphs 1, 8, 11, 12, 28, 34, 67, 72, 90, 94, 103, 113, 114, 115);
  - Ensuring that art and design, design and technology, music and PE are covered appropriately in reception and in Years 1 and 2, avoiding large, mixed age classes (paragraphs 34, 58, 78, 104);
  - Ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to geography and history (paragraphs 110, 112)
  - Formulating clear policies and procedures to cover health and drug education (paragraphs 34, 36, 58).
- (2) Improve provision for high attaining pupils, including gifted and talented pupils, by:
  - Ensuring that extension activities suitable for high attainers form part of all curriculum planning (paragraphs 12, 29, 35, 48, 93, 109, 111);
  - Planning opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of independent inquiry (paragraphs 6, 10, 13, 17, 27, 83, 93, 107, 125);
  - Developing the means to identify gifted and talented pupils (paragraphs 8, 13, 37, 87).
- (3) Ensure that the following statutory duties are fulfilled:
  - A written behaviour policy, to make arrangements known in school, to parents and to anyone who provides services to the school (paragraph 47);
  - The school prospectus and annual report to parents from the governing body should contain all of the information which parents are entitled to receive (paragraphs 52, 59).
- (4) Formalise arrangements with respect to implementing local authority health and safety procedures, with a specific focus on the school's environment and activities (paragraph 46).

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Improving standards of spelling and handwriting (paragraphs 5, 79) and using all the elements of the National Literacy Strategy to help pupils acquire literacy skills to be used within and beyond literacy lessons (paragraphs 24, 35, 79, 84)
- Improving marking and target-setting in English teaching (paragraphs 29, 84)
- Ensuring there is appropriate software to support teaching and learning in mathematics and science (paragraphs 90, 94)
- Improving use of homework in mathematics (paragraphs 31, 90)
- Developing governors' involvement in drawing up the school development plan with the headteacher and staff (paragraph 60)
- Extending the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator to include involvement in organising the teaching and administration for pupils at Stage 5 of the SEN Code of Practice (paragraph 62)
- Consulting with parents about the curriculum and other developments as part of the application of best value principles (paragraph 69)
- Improving teacher assessments in science through moderating effectively against national levels of attainment (paragraph 96)
- Improving assessment procedures in art and design, design and technology and geography (paragraphs 101, 106, 110).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	17	50	29	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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	25

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	11	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	7
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	21	20	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91(95)	87(100)	78(85)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	7	11
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	22	18	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96(95)	78(85)	100(90)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	88(87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	90
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 – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	22.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	227456
Total expenditure	228759
Expenditure per pupil	1939
Balance brought forward from previous year	21970
Balance carried forward to next year	20667

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	114
Number of questionnaires returned	70

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	42	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	35	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	43	4	0	3
The teaching is good.	65	33	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	36	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	28	7	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	48	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	46	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	38	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	33	33	3	4

### Other issues raised by parents

At the pre-inspection meeting, parents were very positive about classroom assistants. They feel that the school encourages all abilities, promotes very positive attitudes to school, does not tolerate bullying and that behaviour is good. Parents feel well informed.

## **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**

71. Pupils in the reception class work successfully towards the early learning goals set out in the foundation stage curriculum, which prepares them for work in Year 1. Most have already attended the playgroup, which is on the school site, and are therefore well prepared to begin school. Their attainment meets the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Overall achievement is good. Pupils with SEN make good progress. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The teaching is good overall and shows secure knowledge and understanding. Planning is effective. Expectations and teaching methods are good and pupils are managed well. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and put a good level of effort into their work. For example, in a mathematics lesson they understood what was asked of them because they listened well to instructions. When given the opportunity, they can learn independently.
72. The school has also improved aspects of its provision for reception pupils. There are more opportunities for imaginative play to extend language and literacy skills. Use of mathematical language has improved. There are more opportunities for pupils to develop designing and making skills. Creative development has improved because pupils are now able to explore and experiment for themselves. The combining of reception pupils with Year 1 and Year 2 for two afternoons each week has a detrimental effect on creative development because the combined classes are too large and it is not possible for staff to plan effectively for all levels of ability. Otherwise, there is good use of time, support staff and resources, but still too little use of computers, which was also identified as a weakness in the last inspection.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

73. Pupils meet the early learning goals for this area of learning. They are excited and enthusiastic about their work. They are keen to learn and to talk about what they are doing. Many are able to sustain levels of concentration that are in advance of those expected for their age. Teaching in this area of learning is good. The teacher's high expectations are helping them to become independent. For example, all pupils undertake tasks on a rota basis and understand the concept of waiting their turn. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and know and understand classroom rules and routines. All staff contribute to the development of skills of patience and politeness. They allow the pupils to experiment and learn for themselves with an appropriate level of intervention and support. There are good relationships in the classroom between children, children and adults and between adults, which help to create a happy and purposeful environment in which to work and learn. The foundation stage provides a good start to the pupils' school careers and lays sound foundations for future learning and behaviour.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

74. Pupils entering the reception class achieve at around the national average and make good progress during the year. They meet the early learning goals for this area of learning. Pupils are confident and friendly towards visitors and try to involve them in the work in hand. Most pupils are interested in books and can recall the main points of familiar stories; they show a widening vocabulary. Teaching in this area of learning is good. The teacher provides a stimulating learning environment for pupils, with appropriate activities and experiences; this includes taking opportunities to develop

language skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils are encouraged to describe the texture of play dough and the changes that take place whilst they are helping to make it. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the very effective learning support assistants working in the class. Planning shows that the teacher's day-to-day assessments are used in the next stage of planning. She makes notes on her lesson plans about the achievement of individuals or groups.

### **Mathematical development**

75. Pupils meet the early learning goals for this area of learning. Most pupils can count to the number of pupils in the class and can recognise numbers to 20. The majority understands the link between spoken and written numbers and can find *one more* or *one less* on a number line, although some struggle to keep up with this activity which is administered to the whole class. Teaching in this area of learning is at least satisfactory and includes very good teaching, which reflects the teacher's skills in enabling all pupils to make progress. Work is planned from the national early learning goals and is linked to the National Curriculum. For example, bar charts of eye colour of individual pupils have been carefully made. This work had been extended to a similar chart showing how the pupils travel to school. There are clear learning objectives and work is matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support staff. Appropriate mathematical language is used in the classroom and pupils respond to this. Mathematical concepts underpin practical activities and this provides a good basis for work in Year 1. The school has made good progress in this area since the last inspection.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

76. Pupils meet the early learning goals for this area of learning. Pupils begin to understand simple scientific ideas such as the conservation of volume of solids and liquids, which they gain from exploratory work using sand and water. They are acquiring skills in using a syringe and water pump and can estimate with some accuracy how many syringes of water it will take to fill a bottle. They know the difference between *hot* and *cold* and between *full* and *empty*. Pupils learn through discovery and the teacher gives them opportunities to explore for themselves whilst being on hand to support their learning. Teaching in this area of learning is good, showing effective planning. Language skills are developed throughout investigative work. For example, good progress is made in the use of antonyms. Interpersonal skills such as politeness and sharing are encouraged. Pupils show increasing independence in being able to choose activities in a responsible way. The pupils' models of Wooler High Street, which are part of a cross-curricular topic, illustrate improved provision for designing and making. Pupils have also made Easter nests using cooking techniques. There is little evidence that computers are used as an integral part of the curriculum.

### **Physical development**

77. It was not possible to observe a PE lesson during the inspection but planning shows that provision is appropriate and helps to develop pupils' co-ordination and gross motor skills. Music and movement were used together in a mathematics lesson to encourage number recognition. Fine motor skills are developed through classroom activities such as cutting with scissors and making badges.

### **Creative development**

78. Pupils meet the early learning goals for this area of learning. They are encouraged to explore for themselves, although activities are carefully and thoroughly planned. There are some examples of high quality work displayed in the classroom. In music most pupils can follow a conductor and can play percussion instruments and vary the volume. They understand *loud* and *soft*. A pupil with hearing impairment is fully involved in the music activities. The music lesson observed was less effective than it might have been as the pupils were joined by half of the Year 1 class, making a class of 35. Consequently, too much of the emphasis was on managing the class rather than teaching and learning. This arrangement occurs on two afternoons a week and is very disruptive. However, funds should be available for extra staffing next term and it will no longer be necessary to split the Year 1 class in this way. Otherwise, there is good teaching in this area of learning, based on effective planning that makes use of incidental learning opportunities and a good balance of creative activities.

## ENGLISH

79. Overall, pupils' attainment in English is in line with the national average at age seven and above average at age nine. Seven-year-olds' writing is average and nine-year-olds' is above average. Pupils' reading at age seven and age nine is above average. Pupils make good progress through the school. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, but need more opportunities to extend their writing. Pupils with SEN make good progress. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils' work is well presented, although standards of handwriting achieved in handwriting lessons are not always as high in other work across the curriculum. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained standards in reading and writing. Pupils' speaking and listening have improved. Teaching in English has improved. The National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on standards since the last inspection and has led to a more structured approach to planning and provision. However, not all elements of the strategy are applied.
80. Standards were in line with the national average in reading and writing in the national tests in 2000, but the school exceeded the national average in the previous two years. Compared to similar schools, attainment in writing in 2000 was close to average in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving level 2, which is the level expected of a typical seven-year-old. It was above average in reading. The proportion achieving the higher level 3 in reading and writing was below average. Standards in spelling are not as high as those in reading and writing. On the basis of work scrutiny and discussions with pupils, there is evidence to suggest that the downturn in results in 2000 can be explained by the variations in a small cohort, 25% of whom were identified as having special educational needs. At the time of the inspection, the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds had been completed for reading. These show an improvement on last year, with 95.7% of pupils achieving level 2 or the higher level 3. The writing test had not been completed.
81. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. They listen attentively and contribute well in lessons. By age seven, some pupils are beginning to use more adventurous vocabulary. For example, a pupil in Year 2 wrote about a blizzard: "Our greenhouse door smashed into little smithereens". Another wrote: "It felt like pins and needles".
82. Most pupils are enthusiastic readers. Pupils of all abilities have good strategies for decoding unfamiliar words and pupils in Year 2 can describe what they would do if they saw a word they did not know. The most able pupils in Year 2 express preferences for authors and types of story and give reasons for their choices. They read with expression and can also retrieve information. A higher attaining pupil in Year 1

understood and used the contents page of a book and knew that words in the index are arranged in alphabetical order. Higher attaining nine-year-old pupils read with feeling, using appropriate phrasing and modulation and know how to retrieve information from books.

83. At age seven, pupils write using basic punctuation and show their knowledge of phonics when attempting more difficult words. Seven-year-olds' handwriting is sometimes joined. By age nine, some pupils are developing a lively style using the conventions of speech and humour to good effect in their diaries. Their work shows some elements of level 4 writing, which is in advance of that expected of a typical nine-year-old. Less able nine-year-olds still present their work well and show developing vocabularies, with correct grammatical structure.
84. Pupils in some classes are developing skills of independence, but this is not consistent throughout the school. For example, pupils sometimes depend on the teacher to tell them what to do next and this can interrupt the teacher's work with other pupils. Pupils are well behaved and motivated in all lessons.
85. Teaching of literacy is generally good and, in some parts of the school, very good, especially where learning objectives and success criteria are shared with the pupils. There are some examples of imaginative activities. For example in Year 3, pupils sent each other postcards, having discussed how to write in an informal style. Their interest in imagining they were in the places shown on the postcards and the added bonus of actually receiving cards from classmates helped create an industrious and briskly paced lesson. Teachers' planning is in-line with the National Literacy Strategy but not all the elements of the strategy are consistently applied. For example, although teachers move around during group work, supporting each group in turn, there were no instances during the inspection when they worked intensively with one group. English is not taught outside of the literacy hour and consequently there are insufficient opportunities, particularly for pupils in Years 3 and 4, to extend their writing. This is particularly true of higher attaining pupils. Literacy skills are well used across the curriculum. For example, a pupil in Year 1 was able to explain clearly how she will systematically record the daily growth of plants. Support staff are well deployed to cater for pupils' needs and their work helps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Marking in English is encouraging and pupils' achievements are acknowledged, but teachers do not make constructive written comments or set targets for future work.
86. The management of the subject is satisfactorily directed towards monitoring, evaluating and improving performance. The literacy co-ordinator monitors the planning of the subject and from this she identifies priorities for the school development plan and the literacy development plan. The headteacher is responsible for monitoring the teaching. There are systems for tracking pupil progress, which have been developed since the introduction of baseline assessment, but as yet there is no system to analyse data in any detail. As a result of monitoring and evaluation, the school identified writing as an issue and was able to secure advice and support from a Local Education Authority literacy consultant. Parents are provided with very good curriculum information on what is expected of their children and what they will be covering. Detailed information is provided on spelling, the writing focus and homework expectations. The Tuesday literacy hour in Year 2 is split by a swimming lesson, making two short sessions at the beginning and end of the morning which are not appropriate to meet the requirements of the literacy strategy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. Overall standards being reached in mathematics throughout the school are above those expected nationally. In 2000, national tests for 7 year-old pupils showed that there had been a decline in the above average standards reached in the years immediately following the previous inspection. This was because a small group of pupils with learning difficulties in basic numeracy joined the school in the year the tests were taken. None of these pupils reached the standard expected of a 7 year-old pupil and, with a small number of pupils taking the test, the effect was to reduce the overall standard reached to below the national average. Early indications show that results in national tests taken in 2001 by 7 year-old pupils will be significantly better than the previous year, with all pupils attaining levels at, or above, the national average. About one in four of these pupils are expected to reach level 3, the highest level of attainment, and this is in line with the picture nationally. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the effective provision for pupils with weaker numerical skills are contributing to keeping standards in the subject above national expectations. Since the last inspection, the performance of boys and girls in the tests for seven-year-old pupils have been similar, except in 2000 when the boys performed significantly worse than the girls. The school monitors the performance of year groups of pupils well. It is less effective in monitoring the performance of groups of pupils, for example boys or higher-attaining pupils.
88. Most pupils enter Year 1 with a sound grounding in the recognition and use of numbers. Following identification of specific weaknesses, close attention is given to the needs of individual pupils using an effective system of classroom support and small group withdrawal. This provision is very good and those pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Four pupils with statements of special educational needs, in the 5-7 age range, make good progress because each has an individual tutor with specific experience and expertise. Effective teaching means that all other pupils make good progress. However, the school is less rigorous in the identification and provision for pupils who are mathematically gifted. At the end of Year 4, following four years of thorough teaching in the use and understanding of numbers, the pupils are confident in their capabilities and are able to apply their skills to a wider range of mathematical ideas and problems. The school provides a secure foundation for the next stage in the pupils' education in mathematics.
89. By the age of seven, pupils are competent in the use of number and are beginning to use their knowledge and understanding to solve simple problems. They read and write numbers correctly, count in numbers both forward and backward and understand the processes of addition and subtraction. The pupils' skills in multiplication and division, and an understanding of these as reverse processes, are developing quickly. Their acquisition and use of technical language is good. Most take delight in learning new mathematical words and they are quick to use them correctly at the first opportunity. Application of comparative statements, such as *large and small*, *empty and full* and *long and short*, are used to describe variations in numbers, capacity and measurement. Pupils' are helped to develop skills in using mathematical processes, for example classifying, interpreting and predicting. In a very good lesson with Year 1 pupils, the teacher sought to introduce the idea of estimating with accuracy. Using a wide range of questions, the teacher quickly discovered the pupils' knowledge was rudimentary and was limited to describing estimating as guessing. Using a wide range of containers and materials such as rice, peas and beans and allowing pupils time to investigate, the teacher was able guide them towards an understanding of a reasonable estimation. Progress in learning was quick and by the end of the lesson all pupils could make sensible estimations without the use of equipment and materials to help them.

90. By the age of nine, pupils use their knowledge by transferring it to new situations to widen and accelerate their learning. This is helped by their interest in the subject and their ability to retain and recall previous learning. They draw simple graphs and interpret data obtained from them. They identify two and three-dimensional figures and identify their properties. Increasingly they solve problems and they are able to calculate areas, perimeters and volumes of regular figures. They measure lengths and angles correctly. Most pupils begin to use different mental strategies to solve the same problem and are able to explain the reasoning behind their solution.
91. Overall the quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and sometimes is very good. The strengths in the teaching lie in the thoroughness in which lessons are planned, the use of wide experience and professional expertise in the methods used and in the management of lessons. The teaching is greatly assisted by the pupils' very good attitudes towards learning and their respect towards each other and their teachers. Expectations are high and pupils respond by working hard and rarely moving off task. Teachers make lessons interesting and pupils enjoy the work they do. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used a programmable robot to introduce the class to an understanding of angles. The pupils derived much pleasure from predicting the program required to make the robot describe acute, obtuse and reflex angles and discovering if the predictions were correct. Learning was easy because interest and enjoyment were shared by all. Throughout the lesson rigorous questioning was used to stimulate the pupils into thinking clearly before making a prediction. The effectiveness of the teaching is assisted by the close working of the teachers with the support staff who discuss carefully the approaches to be used when teaching those pupils with special educational needs. Sometimes the teachers do not match the work closely enough to the capabilities of individual pupils and this means that some pupils, for example those who are potentially higher attaining, are insufficiently challenged and extended. Homework and information and communication technology (ICT) are not widely or consistently used as tools to aid learning in the classroom. There is insufficient provision of good appropriate software to help teachers in re-enforcing mathematical ideas taught in the classroom. The quality of daily assessment and its use to help planning for the individual pupil is satisfactory overall.
92. The subject benefits from effective leadership in which monitoring of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching play a prominent part. The needs of the pupils are met by matching the professional development of the teachers with the continuing development of the subject in a thorough programme of in-service training. An imaginative scheme of work has nearly been completed using the statutory requirements of National Curriculum and the requirements for the teaching of mathematics as given in the National Numeracy Strategy. The scheme incorporates the school's philosophy for teaching mathematics and fully meets the school's aims. The use of numeracy in the teaching of other subjects of the curriculum is good. The teachers seek opportunities to strengthen pupils use and application of number. In science, pupils measure the growth of plants and a number of projects in design and technology, history and geography show the successful use of number in graphs, time-lines, measurement and timing.
93. Improvements since the last inspection are good. Pupils' attainment has improved and pupil's progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good and support for their learning has improved. There is no evidence that pupils lack confidence in using and applying their mathematical knowledge. There is a greater consistency amongst teachers to provide pupils with opportunities to apply their knowledge and investigate problems. Teaching throughout the school is good and monitoring of pupil progress has been developed successfully.

## SCIENCE

94. Standards in science throughout the school are above national expectations. In 2000, teacher assessments for 7 year-old pupils showed that there had been a significant improvement since the previous year, with the percentage attaining level 2 reaching a very high level. The percentage of higher-attaining pupils reaching level 3 did not improve and remained close to national expectations. This can be partly attributed to the extensive use of worksheets with limited extension work for the higher-attaining pupils. There is an emphasis on acquisition of scientific knowledge at the expense of extending pupils' skills by use of more investigative work. There are no significant differences between the standards reached by boys and girls throughout the school. Since the last inspection, the progress which pupils make, including those with special educational needs, has improved with overall progress now being good.
95. In Year 1, pupils describe features of living and non-living things. They extend their skills in literacy and can communicate using comparators, such as *full or empty*, *heavy or light* and *loud or quiet*. They talk about how they will observe and record results. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher skilfully developed pupils' speech and scientific thinking by inviting individual pupils to explain to the class how they would record the growth of a plant over a period of time. All suspected that a plant needed light to make it grow and they developed rudimentary record sheets appropriately. The class offered constructive criticism on the attempts, showing that the pupils had a sound understanding of the data, which needed to be collected. Interest and involvement was high and, eventually, useful individual record sheets were produced. Year 2 pupils begin to classify materials, plants and animals. They make sensible suggestions to explain how causes and effects might be linked when changes take place. Natural cycles, such as those of the frog and the butterfly are studied with interest. Pupils are helped by their neatness of presentation and pride in their work. Some pupils, especially those with below average attainment and those with learning difficulties, have limitations when recording observations by the use of drawing. At the end of Year 4, when pupils are 9 years old, good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and in understanding scientific phenomena has been made. Pupils understand the need for 'fair-testing' and are making suggestions as to how to control some variables whilst studying the effects of others. Basic skills in the uses of literacy and numeracy are strongly re-enforced and developed through the use and interpretation of graphs and the extension of appropriate technical language. The use of ICT as an aid to extending learning in science is unsatisfactory. There is limited availability of good quality programs to support the content taught to all year groups.
96. The teaching is at least good and sometimes excellent. The quality and use of assessment is good and homework is set as appropriate. The interest and motivation of the pupils is high, especially in Years 3 and 4 because the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject content is very good in these classes. Classroom management is very good, aided throughout the school by pupils' positive attitudes to learning. These combine to enable teachers to give of their best and for pupils to learn effectively, usually at a good pace. In an excellent lesson on water transport in plants in Year 3, the pupils' enjoyment and desire to learn was contagious and this stimulated the teacher to exercise a high level of professional skills. A barrage of pertinent questions from the teacher produced a high level of response, which led to many pupils' questions, which in turn extended further the teacher's thinking. Resources were readily available to enable pupils' enquiries and predictions to be followed up quickly, preserving the momentum for learning. This extended to the proprietor of the town's garden centre joining in the discussion towards the end of the lesson.

97. The adoption of national guidelines and suggestions, which have been incorporated into the school's scheme of work, means that that curriculum co-ordination is satisfactory and that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met fully. The joint leadership of the subject is unnecessary because the procedures and principles for monitoring and teaching the subject have been agreed and there is a shared commitment to improvement. Teacher assessments in 2000 were not effectively moderated against national levels of attainment and this is something that the school needs to improve. The provision and adequacy of materials, equipment and accommodation is satisfactory and there is good use of support staff to address the needs of those pupils with special educational needs.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

98. No art and design lessons were observed during the inspection, but pupils' work gives a good indication of attainment. There is work that is above average, particularly in Years 1 and 4. Year 1 work on scarecrows, linked to pupils' creative writing on the same theme, makes imaginative use of paint and collage materials. Due to effective teaching, the pupils have composed the images well, showing a secure understanding of proportion. Similarly, Year 1 weaving shows secure technical understanding and some very good choice of materials and colours. Other work in Years 1 and 2 is at least average. Year 2 landscapes, produced in response to a winter blizzard, show good use of texture and contrasting use of materials to represent snow, trees and sky. Other work, inspired by Indian miniatures, shows good awareness of symmetry
99. In Years 3 and 4, attainment is at least average, using a range of starting points. Drawings based on Greek vases, produced by Year 3, show an understanding of the original subject matter and pupils used a wide range of cut-out shapes. There is some particularly strong work in Year 4 and evidence of very good learning. Clay birds, made with a local artist in her studio, are of high quality and show a very good understanding of form. The range of ceramics techniques used, including cutting away a clay block to create shapes and use of a range of techniques to create pattern and texture, led to excellent progress. A unit of work on journeys, using David Hockney's Californian landscapes as a starting point, shows very good understanding of the artist's approach. The teaching has led to effective experiments with marks, patterns and textures that have created vibrant images. Other Year 4 paintings of the local landscape are in a contrasting style and use a range of painting techniques to create atmosphere. They are well composed with some good attempts at showing space.
100. The use made of community links in art and design provides a very significant dimension. Pupils have provided illustrations for a recently published booklet on North Northumberland. Artists work in the school on an annual basis and pupils have been involved in producing living willow sculptures in the local environment.
101. The art co-ordinator teaches art and design to both her Year 1 class and Year 4. This deployment of specialist expertise works well and leads to good achievement. In common with other subjects, the school is developing a scheme of work for art and design based on the scheme produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Each class in the school has identified units of work it will cover, with approximate time allocations. The art co-ordinator has mapped each unit against a checklist of visual elements and processes, reflecting a commitment to ensuring specific art and design skills are covered. The scheme is still being tried out, and kept under review, and is not yet a consistent part of planning in every class.

102. The school has maintained the quality of its art and design provision since the last inspection. There is still no formal system for assessing work in art and design, which was identified as an issue in the last inspection report. The introduction of the QCA scheme provides a good foundation for developing an assessment system linked to key objectives for each unit of work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. It was possible to make only limited observations of design and technology lessons. However, pupils' work was studied, teachers' plans were analysed and discussions took place. From all these sources, sufficient evidence was obtained to allow secure judgements to be made. Standards are in line with national expectations for seven-year-old and nine-year-old pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils' standards and achievement are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. There are no differences in the standards reached or the progress made by girls and boys.
104. Some well-presented displays around the school celebrate the pupils' work. Year 3 pupils had designed their own clan tartan. Other pupils had designed and made a working torch. The results show a good level of creativity and the topic re-enforced the work on electricity covered in science. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were making a storybook for the reception children. They were working closely to a design brief, which required them include at least one mechanism for moving pictures. Skills in cutting, joining, shaping and gluing were being used to produce original storybooks, which extended the pupils' literacy skills. By the age of nine, in Year 4, pupils know and understand the need to design and draw a model before making it and to continually make judgements on the function and appearance of the product, modifying if necessary to meet the needs of the consumer. There was no evidence that pupils widen their design skills to include use of ICT.
105. The re-organisation of five classes into four for two afternoons each week affects the teaching of design and technology in Years 1 and 2. Classes are large and usually one teacher and two learning support assistants teach groups of mixed-age pupils in one class. This unsatisfactory situation has been recognised by the governing body. The school plans to use financial resources from the commencement of the next school year to reduce class sizes when teaching the subject. A group of Year 1 pupils were observed making a book mark by weaving wool. A learning support assistant in the presence of a teacher, who was teaching a larger group of older pupil's techniques in art, supervised the activity. The pupils took great care in designing the bookmark on paper before discussing with the supervisor and making modifications. A number of pupils had not developed sufficient fine motor skills to enable them to thread the needle but their eye-to-eye co-ordination when weaving was good. They were assisted and satisfactory progress was made. The pupils had a good understanding of the design process. Conscientiously and methodically they wove linear stitches copying accurately their design. Attention to detail and pride in presentation was evident in the products, which were made with care and at a steady pace. Pupils use a wide range of materials when carrying out three design projects each year. A published scheme of work ensures that a broad range of processes is carried out safely by the pupils.
106. Overall, teaching in design and technology is satisfactory. Some teachers have limited knowledge and understanding of the wide range of techniques required in teaching the subject. Their teaching is, however, secure because they have expert guidance in the adopted scheme of work and access to a knowledgeable co-ordinator, who provides good leadership. Topics are chosen in which the demands are not excessive.

Teachers' classroom management is very good. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm means that teachers are fully involved in the activities and ideas are shared as projects are completed. They offer advice and suggestions but expect that pupils will take decisions based on the information available and discussions about their work.

107. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The use of a published scheme has provided a scheme of work, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. This has provided a framework for teachers' planning and a structure for the curriculum. Assessment procedures are in place. However, they do not allow for monitoring the progress of pupils from entry until leaving the school. This is an area for development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108. It was only possible to observe a small sample of lessons during the inspection but other evidence was gathered from pupils' work and classroom displays and from discussions with the pupils. Standards are in line with national expectations for seven-year-old and nine-year-old pupils. Pupils throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of their own locality and teachers make very good use of local resources. In Year 3, pupils can compare and contrast two localities, for example Finland and Britain. However, the pupils are very dependent on the teacher's questions and show little evidence of independent learning, although they are engaged and interested in the task.
109. Pupils in Year 1 can identify opportunities and places for leisure activities. They know and use the term "leisure". Pupils are challenged by the teacher's questions, which help them to raise their achievement by deepening their understanding. Their teacher shares future intentions with the pupils and tells them how they will be using the information they will be gathering. The teacher also sets homework which is directly related to the lesson and which will provide data for future classroom work. Pupils are well behaved and contribute with interest to class discussion. By age seven, most pupils can identify significant local buildings and know about their uses. There is evidence in Years 1 and 2 of imaginative activities involving the travels of the class teddy bear, who is photographed with pupils in various locations and who sends postcards from his travels which are identified on a map of Britain. Pupils in Year 2 can explain why the bear might need a passport.
110. Teaching in geography is at least satisfactory and there are good features. Teachers' planning shows very clear learning objectives and activities which are appropriate and interesting but which are not sufficiently differentiated according to pupils' abilities. There are very good links between geography and other subjects. For example, in Year 4, Wooler is compared with India through the themes of transport, work, homes, landscape, religion and school. The school sponsors a residential school in Panchsheel in India. In this context, pupils' awareness of issues such as health, industry, wealth and resources is heightened and developed.
111. Good use is made of local resources and the curriculum is appropriately broad. While positive features have been maintained since the last inspection, the subject has not improved. Assessment was identified as an area needing improvement in the last inspection. Although the teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' abilities and needs, assessments are not carried out on a formal basis. There is little evidence that informal assessments are used to help plan the next stage of work, since work is not sufficiently differentiated to cater for levels of ability. Pupils are often challenged in lessons but their work indicates that higher attaining pupils are not challenged by

written tasks and teachers' marking does not give pupils clear guidance to help them improve. Class timetables show that the amount of time allocated to geography varies considerably from class to class. In Year 2, geography is subsumed within other activities. The school should evaluate its curriculum framework to ensure that sufficient time is being allocated to geography in each year.

## **HISTORY**

112. It was only possible to observe one history lesson, in Year 4, during the inspection. Other evidence was drawn from pupils' work and through discussions. In Year 2 pupils are able to recall the main events of the Great Fire of London and have used extracts from Pepys's diary in their work. Work shows that the attainment seven-year-olds is in line with that expected. By the end of Year 4, pupils are working at levels that are sometimes in advance of those expected. In Year 4, pupils' skills in literacy help them to research the Ancient Greeks. This reflects teachers' effectiveness in making links between different areas of the curriculum. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and independent work in the lesson. However, pupils are not familiar with note taking and tend to copy text rather than rephrase and summarise it. The teacher's enthusiasm is apparent and is instrumental in encouraging the pupils to explain what they are doing and his prompts enable pupils to work out their own strategies for historical enquiry. Although the teacher matches his questions to pupils' abilities, all are given the same task. The last inspection highlighted an over dependence on worksheets and, whilst this has improved, work is still not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs. The lack of extension activities restricts opportunities for more able pupils to make progress.

113. Local resources are used well to develop pupils' sense of history. For example, Year 4 visit and study nearby Hadrian's Wall. A time-line displayed in the Year 4 classroom makes good use of past and future tenses. Planning shows that the history curriculum is broad and contains a good balance of practical activities. The subject is well managed and there is clear progression throughout the school. Younger pupils are encouraged to explore the immediate past and this provides a good basis for developing historical perspective. Class timetables show that the amount of time allocated to history varies considerably from class to class. In Year 2, history is subsumed within other activities. The school should evaluate its curriculum framework to ensure that sufficient time is being allocated to history in each year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. While pupils show that they can work at nationally expected levels in ICT, lack of opportunity to use computers leads to unsatisfactory achievement. There were few opportunities to observe pupils using information and communication technology (ICT) and there were no examples of the skills of ICT being taught. Examples of pupils' work show signs that pupils are achieving appropriate levels of competence. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have constructed picture sentences using the *Inclusive Writer* programme and can programme the *Roamer*, a floor turtle robot, to follow a simple route. In Year 1, pupils use the computer to illustrate stories and to record work in other curriculum areas. They have produced a book, "The Good and Bad Dragons". In Year 4, pupils regularly produce a newspaper and take turns in being the editor or sub-editor. The result is well presented, using an appropriate news format, with columns and a good combination of text and pictures, including photographs. They have also produced posters advertising school events.
115. Computers are most often used for word-processing and graphics. The headteacher has obtained a number of *e-mate* machines, which can be used for producing text. Pupils were observed using these during break. In Year 4, pupils can use both a scanner and a digital camera to enhance their work. Pupils have access to the Internet, which is used for research purposes, and use e-mail on a regular basis, but this was not observed during the inspection. Although support staff help pupils' work in this area, pupils are usually taught in large groups and this makes it difficult for the teachers to teach the skills of ICT, as it requires the whole class to gather round a single computer.
116. The co-ordinator identified the need for new computers to replace the old Apple Macs. The school has recently leased five PCs and a local company has donated a further two. The school's resources have improved since the last inspection and the Year 3 and 4 classes both have Internet access. The co-ordinator has received training through the National Grid for Learning programme and the rest of the staff will be trained in the next school year. Planning ensures coverage of the skills of ICT but these have not yet become an integral part of the rest of the curriculum. In order to meet statutory requirements, the school will need to ensure this happens. Staff confidence and competence have increased since the last inspection and the planned professional development opportunities should reinforce this.

## **MUSIC**

117. Three music lessons were observed as well as a recorder group session. Throughout the school pupils are enthusiastic and confident musicians and all have opportunities to play percussion instruments on a regular basis. They have a good sense of rhythm and timing. Attainment is at the level expected for seven-year-olds and well above average for nine-year-olds. In Year 4, pupils know and use technical terms such as "dynamics" and "ostinato". They use volume and pace well in their chants and some

can change pitch. Voices as well as instruments are used to good effect and pupils in Years 3 and 4 can sing tunefully even when unaccompanied.

118. Pupils take pride in their considerable achievements and enjoy playing the steel pans and composing their own repeating rhythm and tune. Some pupils in Year 4 are achieving elements of level 4 music through improvising rhythmic phrases within a group performance and are therefore well in advance of the national expectation. There are three recorder groups for pupils in Years 3 and 4, each of which meets once a week at lunchtime. The pupils are enthusiastic and perform at assembly. Pupils' work shows that good links are established between music and the rest of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 can clap the rhythm of their name, using syllables.
119. Teaching is satisfactory overall and very good in Years 3 and 4. Since the last inspection, there are more opportunities for pupils to explore music and develop skills. In Years 3 and 4, the teacher encourages pupils who are nervous and builds on previous learning very effectively. The teacher's continuous assessment is used to plan the next stage of learning. At the end of the lesson she encourages them to assess and reflect on what they have learned. The Glendale Music Trust provides opportunities for pupils to work with visiting musicians, such as the teacher with the steel pans, and this enhances the school's own provision. The trust has also provided professional development opportunities for the music co-ordinator. In the reception class and in Years 1 and 2, provision is satisfactory. However, it is less effective because of the large groups created when combining classes for two afternoons a week. This arrangement is due to cease in the autumn term.
120. The Local Education Authority has provided percussion instruments and the school is well resourced for music. The headteacher was responsible for setting up the Glendale Music Trust, which provides extracurricular singing and piano lessons and visiting musicians, and also extends opportunities for working with other schools in the area, all of whom benefit. As a result of the trust there is an annual project based on a different theme every year and a concert is given by pupils at Alnwick Playhouse. This year the theme was Mardi Gras. Music forms one of the main contributions to pupils' cultural development, giving them a sense of their own culture and enabling them to appreciate and learn about other cultures. Some teachers were observed using music to good effect in their classrooms to provide an appropriate ambience and encourage reflection. The school's provision for music, particularly for Years 3 and 4, is exceptional and goes beyond what would be found in the majority of schools.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. Two physical education (PE) lessons were observed during the inspection. In a dance lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed an ability to work together and a sense of rhythm. By age nine, pupils' attainment is higher than that expected nationally. They show good ball control skills in football and higher ability pupils can make sophisticated moves and anticipate the next move. Pupils throughout the school enjoy PE and show an ability to work together and help each other. In this respect, the subject contributes to the development of personal and social skills.
122. Teaching in PE is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, with clear planning that links together the separate elements of the lesson. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching has been supplemented by coaches from Sunderland Football Club, who have clear objectives, give high quality demonstrations and respond well to the needs of individual pupils. The coaches provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. They are well supported by the headteacher, who supervises the session and intervenes as

necessary. Pupils go on to use their skills in a game of football. All pupils are able to take an active part during the skills session and during the game, with the headteacher joining in and providing an excellent role model. This leads to above average attainment.

123. Provision for PE is good. All pupils go swimming and the school aims to teach every child to swim before they leave the school. This is above what would be expected in the majority of schools. This also means that a higher than average proportion of the timetable is spent on PE. Planning for PE is effective and pupils are aware of learning objectives. Teachers encourage and support pupils.
124. The headteacher is a PE specialist and has organised a range of activities for pupils, including the weekly coaching sessions from two professional football coaches from Sunderland Football Club. The school makes very effective use of resources and is successful in attracting extra resources and support. The good features noted in the last inspection report have been maintained and good progress made in all areas.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. It was only possible to observe one religious education (RE) lesson during the inspection but pupils' work was examined and displays noted. Pupils show satisfactory progress in RE. Pupils have some knowledge of the major world religions through themes such as *Celebrations* and *Festivals*. They are familiar with stories from the Bible and respond appropriately to them. They have a less well developed knowledge of other religions but this is at least satisfactory. By Year 3, many pupils understand that there is a spiritual dimension to life and that some people devote their lives to religious causes. They have some sense of the place of religion in the history of the world and particularly of their own culture. Pupils have a very strong sense of their own community and of belonging to it. In the RE lesson observed in Year 3, pupils displayed an understanding of "faith". They understood how their actions might affect other people and the concept of "charity".
126. Pupils are considerate towards each other and respect each other's views. They listen well and are anxious to make their own contributions. Pupils show varying degrees of independence, which is often dependent on the expectations of teachers.
127. Teachers plan according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE, and use supplementary material from other sources. Teaching in the observed lesson was good and provided an effective framework in which pupils could contribute their ideas. The teacher's planning is effective and very clear links were made between the Bible story and its relevance to everyday life. The teacher's questions help pupils to develop their ideas. Work in pupils' books throughout the school shows little evidence of work being matched to pupils' abilities, although this was present in the lesson observed.

128. The school conducts a daily act of collective worship, which reflects the breadth of the RE curriculum in that it is broadly Christian in character but also encompasses stories and music from other religions and cultures. Music is used very effectively to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures and provides a starting point for discussion. Overall, the school has maintained the quality of its RE provision since the last inspection.