

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH HYLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108791

Headteacher: Mr E R Brown

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Wagstaff
19260

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 May 2001

Inspection number: 192633

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Union Street South Hylton Sunderland
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Fraser
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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			Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			Foundation Stage	What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Vicky 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?
1682	Liz Godman	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
			Art	
			Special educational needs	
18547	Chetana Shah	Team inspector	Science	
			Equal opportunities	
23399	Eileen Torr	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			Geography	
			History	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19599	Carmen Markham	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of South Hylton, a residential area on the outskirts of Sunderland. It is part of the Sunderland Education Action Zone and receives additional resources through a Government regeneration project. There are 317 fulltime pupils aged between 5-11 years and taught in 13 classes, with 35 children attending the nursery on a parttime basis. The school is not full and rolls have been falling in recent years adding to financial pressures on the school. There are more boys than girls in the school with some classes containing a significant number of boys. Thirty-two percent of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. This is above average. The area served by the school represents a broad social mix. The majority of pupils come from the local area, but with a significant minority attending from the area of Pennywell. An average number of pupils have special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties, but the number with English as an additional language is low. Standards of attainment are generally below average on entry to the school. Although many reach average levels on entry, very few exceed the average and many achieve below average levels. During the inspection, the school held a Science and Technology Week involving numerous visits and science workshops. Two senior staff were absent during the inspection and a relief teacher was teaching one of the two Year 6 classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

South Hylton Primary School is effective in achieving high standards in mathematics. Achievement in English is catching up with the national average. Pupils have very good attitudes and they behave very well. They are treated equally and all are involved fully in lessons. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teaching is good overall and is very effective in the nursery and reception classes. However, curriculum weaknesses affect the progress and standards achieved in some subjects. Resources are limited in some areas and limited progress has been made against some issues from the last inspection. The needs of pupils are met in many areas. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics are well above the average for similar schools.
- Good progress has been made in addressing weaknesses in pupils' written work.
- Children in nursery and reception classes achieve very well and make significant gains.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well throughout the school.
- Teaching is good resulting in pupils generally making good progress in lessons.
- Relationships are very good and pupils show care and consideration for each other.
- Staff are committed, work hard and provide an atmosphere where all pupils are included and learn equally well.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- A very good range of out of school activities is provided to support pupils and build on their interests.

What could be Improved

- Standards and provision for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.
- Achievement in reading is inhibited through the limited range of good quality reading books available for pupils to take home and through restrictions in the use of the school library to develop research skills.
- Standards in religious education, art and design and music are below those expected. Progress should be better and is restricted by an imbalance in the curriculum. Insufficient attention is given to some subjects and there are weaknesses in planning for progression over time in some aspects of the work.
- The monitoring of teaching and the standard of work is inconsistent across subjects. Where the school identifies areas for development, these are not always effectively addressed.
- There are inconsistencies in the marking and assessment of pupils' work.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in 1997 praised the school and identified many good, and some strong features. Since then the school has faced a number of challenges which have affected progress. Falling rolls and increasing financial difficulties, reductions and changes in staff, along with the need to respond to new national and local initiatives have affected the ability to address some issues raised in the last inspection. Reasonable progress has been made on many issues. Standards in writing have improved. The school still has high standards in mathematics and is closing the gap in English. A homework policy is now agreed but there are inconsistencies in how it is practised. Progress in information and communication technology provision has been unsatisfactory and standards have declined since the time of the last inspection. The library was identified as a priority for development at the time of the last inspection but it is still not used effectively by pupils for research and continues to have a shortage of good reference books and material.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	D	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	A	C	B	A	
Science	C	D	E	D	

Results of the 2000 national assessments indicated that, by the time they left the school, pupils attained standards above the national average in mathematics, but well below in English and in

science. However, compared with similar schools, they were well above in mathematics but below in English and science. Over time, high standards in mathematics have been sustained and standards in English have been improving steadily. Standards seen in mathematics during the inspection were high and similar to those seen in the school's national assessment results. The standard of written work in English and in science during the inspection was broadly in line with that expected and was better than 2000 assessment results would suggest. The school has been focusing on narrowing the attainment gap with additional support, homework clubs and by better preparing pupils for the assessments. This is working well and is raising standards. Although appropriate targets have been set for English in 2001, based on previous results, the target for mathematics would appear to be modest. The school is on track to exceed the targets set in both subjects. Results of assessments for seven year olds in 2000 show standards in mathematics to be average but standards in writing and science were below the national average and well below in reading. The school has been successful in addressing weaknesses and standards observed in the inspection are now higher in English and science.

By the end of both infants and juniors, standards in design and technology, history, geography and physical education are broadly in line with those expected nationally. They are below in information and communication technology by the end of both the infants and juniors. Whilst standards in music are in line with those expected by the end of the infants, they are below by the end of the juniors due to limited coverage of breadth of the curriculum in the depth required. Standards in art and design and in religious education suffer for the same reason and are below expectations by the end of the infants and juniors. Additional time provided for teaching English and mathematics has restricted time for some other subjects. Opportunities have been missed to teach literacy and numeracy skills through these subjects or to plan a realistic progression and balance of experience within some subjects.

Whilst standards on entry to the school are below average, progress made through the nursery and reception years is at least good with most children reaching the expected Early Learning Goals by the time they enter the infants. Good progress is sustained into the infants. Younger pupils achieve well in their reading and writing and respond well to the initiatives introduced to help raise standards. Whilst they continue to achieve well in writing through the infants and juniors, progress in reading slows for many who are not yet developing a reading interest outside lessons. Pupils continue to achieve very well in mathematics throughout the school. Achievement of able pupils is satisfactory overall. It is particularly successful in mathematics. However, in many subjects, few are investigating for themselves or researching their own ideas and interests. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils are very keen, interested and want to do well
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Consistently very good, pupils behave very well. They show respect for each other.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, pupils respond well and are supportive of each other. Where pupils are provided with responsibilities, they take these on willingly.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average.

There is a real willingness to work. Pupils are keen and very supportive of each other, spontaneously praising and applauding others when they do something well. They work well together. Where some confidently organise themselves and develop gameat play and lunchtimes, few however show initiative and take responsibility in lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 overall and ensures that pupils learn and make progress. It is satisfactory or better in 97% of lessons with 17% being very good or better. Only 3% of teaching was observed to be unsatisfactory (2 lessons). Teaching in nursery and reception classes is particularly effective with 66% of lessons being very good or outstanding. The key strength of teaching in nursery and reception is in the way learning is encouraged through developing a real sense of curiosity and interest in learning. The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school and frequently very good in the upper juniors, where consistently high expectations ensure pupils learn well. English teaching is good overall. It is very effective in nursery and reception. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well with a good focus upon writing and spelling. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce accuracy in spelling unfamiliar words, and to develop literacy through other subjects. Teaching meets the needs of the least able well. Mathematics teaching is good and the national strategy has been implemented well. Although the most able pupils are taught well in mathematics, this is not always the case in other subjects. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always sufficiently high. Opportunities for pupils to research, investigate their ideas and solve problems for themselves are limited. Sufficient account is taken of the needs of boys and girls. Both learn and work productively in lessons. Pupils are managed very well. Teachers plan well and give good support. All pupils are involved

in lessons and feel positive about the work. Teachers' own subject knowledge in English and in mathematics is secure, but there are weaknesses in other subjects affecting their ability to provide pupils with appropriately demanding work

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision is very good in nursery and reception. Elsewhere, the school does not meet all the curriculum requirements in some subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are effectively supported. Their needs are well known and their progress monitored closely.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral development is very strong with opportunities for pupils to reflect on and debate moral and ethical issues. Cultural development is satisfactory. Although pupils have a good knowledge of their own heritage, their understanding of our multicultural society could be developed further. Provision is good for pupils' spiritual and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is very good support and monitoring of attendance and behaviour. The use of assessment to set targets and to address weaknesses could be better.

Good links are maintained with parents who are kept appropriately informed about their children's progress. Parents are very supportive of the school. The curriculum has recently been revised in order to help raise standards in literacy. However, revisions have squeezed the time available for some subjects. This has not been fully taken into account in planning for progress in some subjects, particularly in information and communication technology, art and design, religious education, and music. Some elements of the statutory curriculum in information and communication technology are not met.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher is successful in promoting a positive ethos that values pupils. The effectiveness of subject co-ordinators in promoting high standards and addressing weaknesses in their subjects is variable.
Aspect (contd.)	Comment (contd.)

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Apart from minor issues which the school is addressing, the governors fulfil their duties and are kept well informed by the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory procedures are in place to monitor teaching and standards. However, the outcomes of monitoring are not always well used by the school to address weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Extra grants given to the school are used very well.

The school has sufficient staff and ample accommodation that is generally used well to promote learning, with the exception of the school library. There are some significant weaknesses in provision of learning resources, particularly provision of high quality reading books. A history of serious weaknesses in the provision of information and communication technology equipment is just beginning to be addressed. Monitoring is not always well focused on identifying the underlying causes of weakness. When weaknesses are identified, they are not always addressed effectively. The principles of best value are appropriately applied with effective consultation on financial decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching. • Pupils' behaviour. • The attitudes and values promoted by the school. • The way pupils are supported to become responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broader range of extra curricular activities. • Better information on how their child is progressing. • More opportunities for pupils to bring reading books home.

Inspectors agree with parents on many of these issues. However, the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Although the inspectors feel pupils are given an appropriate range of homework, its use could be more consistent and the school could be doing more to encourage pupils to read at home. Information for parents is good overall but inspectors agree that more detailed information on what pupils can actually do and what they need to practise next would be useful for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

2000 National Curriculum statutory assessment tasks (SATs) results

- 1 Eleven year olds attained standards that were average for similar schools overall. They were below in English and in science but were well above average in mathematics. By the end of the infants, seven year olds attained standards in mathematics that were average for similar schools but below in writing and well below in reading. Similar schools to South Hylton would include those across the country where between 20% and 35% of pupils are known to be eligible for a free school meal.
- 2 The results can also be compared with the national average. In this comparison, South Hylton Primary School's results, taken overall, were below average. Although they were above for eleven year olds in mathematics, they were brought down by standards in English, which were well below average in both the infants and juniors. Standards in science were well below average for eleven year olds.

Trends in results

- 3 Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average overall. Although recent assessments indicate the majority to be reaching average levels on entry to the nursery, they show the range of ability as being average to below, with very few high achievers. This pattern is reflected in assessments undertaken over the last few years as children enter the reception class. Such assessments show a range of attainment but with very few achieving levels above those expected, with several achieving below and a small number achieving well below.
- 4 Standards have risen in national assessments (SATs) for both English and in mathematics since the last inspection in 1997. In English, the gap between standards for eleven year olds at the school and the national average has begun to close. Over the same period, standards in mathematics for eleven year olds have continued to rise above the national average. However, following a steep rise immediately after the last inspection, standards in science over the last few years have been constant, causing the gap between the school and the national average to widen. Standards at the end of the infants over the same period have been generally stable in writing and in mathematics but with a sharp upward turn in 2000. In reading, standards have fallen slightly in the seven year old assessments since the last inspection.
- 5 The difference between boys' and girls' results was not significantly different to that seen nationally. However, boys' results in English were below average and girls' results in mathematics were above that seen nationally and above that of boys in the school.

- 6 The school sets targets for improving the test results for eleven year olds. In 2000, the targets were met in English and were exceeded in mathematics by a considerable margin. The targets for 2001 are appropriate in English but are a little modest in mathematics based on results achieved previously. The school is set to exceed their targets for 2001.

Standards of work seen on inspection and pupils' achievements

- 7 Where attainment is below average on entry to the nursery, most children make at least good progress, and in some aspects, very good progress through the nursery and reception classes. They make up ground and achieve well. Most reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class, with some exceeding them. Children not only make significant gains in their use of language and understanding of mathematics, but they develop a curiosity and interest in learning which prepares them well for their progress through the infants. They learn to do things for themselves, to share and take turns, and to look after each other.
- 8 Standards attained by the time pupils leave the school represent good achievement in mathematics, where some make significant progress and achieve high standards. In English, although standards are lower than those attained in mathematics, they are broadly in line with those expected, reflecting the low starting point of some children on entry to the school and the satisfactory progress made overall through the infants and juniors. Pupils achieve well in writing but progress in reading is inconsistent and sometimes slow. Although they can read, both a lack of interest and weaknesses in the range and quality of reading books available for pupils to take home or to use in finding out information reduces the amount of reading some pupils do. It consequently affects the progress they make. However, recent initiatives in the school to try and boost reading are having a positive impact on standards in the lower infants.
- 9 Whilst standards in mathematics during the inspection match the high standards seen in SATs results at the end of the juniors, there are differences between SAT results in English and science and those standards seen on inspection. Standards observed during the inspection were higher than the previous year's SAT results for eleven year olds. In English, writing has clearly improved in response to the extra support and focus given to spelling and handwriting. Standards of written work seen during the inspection were not significantly different to those expected of eleven year olds. Standards in science were similar to those expected and reflect the work done to address weaknesses identified from the 2000 assessment results. Although some differences between girls and boys were seen in the 2000 results, the differences seen during the inspection were not significant with boys and girls achieving similarly.
- 10 By the age of eleven, pupils read with appropriate confidence, they locate information in reference books using the contents and index pages to find the information they require. Most read with meaning and use an appropriate range of strategies to identify new and unfamiliar words. However, few confidently talk about their reading interests or have the skills to research information from the library. Literacy standards are satisfactory. Many

write at length, punctuate their work effectively and present it well. In mathematics, older pupils have a good understanding of multiplication. They use this to solve problems and show a good understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Standards of numeracy are good. Pupils generally have quick recall of number facts. They count with confidence and use their knowledge well to solve problems.

- 11 By the end of both the infants and juniors, standards attained in design and technology, history, geography and physical education are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are developing a lively interest in the past, beginning to put their design ideas into practice with an appropriate knowledge of what will and will not work. They show an interest in maps and their own local environment. Where pupils are becoming agile and accurate when throwing and catching in physical education, they are not yet confidently evaluating their work or offering suggestions on ways the work of their friends can be improved.
- 12 Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected by the end of the infant and junior classes and have declined since the time of the last inspection. Younger pupils are beginning to type and save their work but have insufficient opportunities to use the computer to find out information or for programming instructions. In the juniors, although pupils enter information into a database, they lack confidence in how to use and analyse the data they have collected. Although beginning to use the Internet, they lack skill in researching for information and have limited understanding of how to use computer technology to control simple movements or measure changes in their environment for example monitoring changes in temperature.
- 13 In art and design and religious education, standards are below those expected by the time pupils leave the school. Although they are similar to those expected in music by the end of the infants, they are below by the end of the juniors. In all three subjects, time given is barely sufficient for teachers to cover the breadth outlined in the programme of work that has been planned. Consequently, teachers have to make choices and decide which parts to cover and which to leave out. This leads to pupils having gaps in their learning which affects their progress and achievement over time. In music, where pupils achieve well in singing, in other respects, for example understanding how to improve their own music by changing the instruments, the speed, volume and texture, they do not have the experience that you would expect to see. Pupils' achievement in this area is not significantly different between lower and upper juniors. Progress is therefore affected. In art and design, although there are some good examples of painting from direct observation and of the use of pattern in replicating Indian fabric designs, insufficient attention is given to building upon the skills and experience pupils have already had. The use of sketchbooks is inconsistent through the school, as is attention given to both drawing and pupils evaluating and improving their own work. The effect of this is to slow the progress made as they move through the school, limiting their overall achievement in the subject.

- 14 The progress and standards pupils achieve are inconsistent through the school, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Children respond very well and make significant gains in the nursery and reception classes where very effective teaching ensures that children's individual weaknesses are addressed. High expectations are maintained through the infants and juniors in mathematics, leading to pupils achieving well and being set challenging work. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress towards their learning targets. Most other pupils do equally well overall in relation to their starting point. However, progress is not even. Some teachers set high aspirations in English, particularly in the lower infants and in the upper juniors, which leads to all pupils making good progress. Elsewhere, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are inconsistent. Where pupils are set by ability for English, sometimes work provided for the most able is not significantly different to that provided for others. Although they complete the work, their progress could be greater. Sometimes, assumptions are made that pupils have the skills and experience they need to answer the problems and challenges set by the teacher. Occasionally, these assumptions are misguided and pupils do not have the skills or knowledge to complete the work to the quality expected. For example, in a design and technology lesson pupils were given the job of designing and making a bridge using paper. The challenge assumed they were already experienced and knowledgeable in how to use paper creatively to make a rigid structure. Many did not and their resulting designs were unrealistic and were of limited use in providing a blueprint for their model.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 15 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development especially relationships between each other are very good and a strength of the school.
- 16 Pupils like school and have very positive attitudes to their lessons and special events. They respond well to teachers and the values of care and respect promoted by the school. Pupils chat in a friendly way with each other, their teachers and other adults. When given the opportunity, they display appropriate levels of independence, show self-confidence and a good level of personal responsibility. Children in the nursery and reception quickly learn to do things for themselves. They show interest and a real curiosity in learning new ideas. Even the youngest cooperate and share equipment. They take turns and are supportive of each other. It is not unusual for children to applaud their friends when they answer questions or try hard. Older pupils chosen as monitors are proud to show that they can carry out their duties conscientiously. They help to support younger children in the playground and in the nursery and carry out a range of duties to help prepare for lessons and clear away afterwards. Extracurricular events and clubs are particularly well supported.
- 17 Pupils' personal development is very good. Staff have developed very good relationships with pupils and they provide effective role models. Pupils are praised and achievement is encouraged. Teachers intervene quickly and constructively when pupils require guidance. Pupils respond very well to this and show the same sensitivity and support to each other.

They feel secure with teachers and are able to approach them confidently and respectfully to exchange news, show work and ask for help. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They take notice of each other work co-operatively and show pleasure when they succeed. During the inspection the school welcomed many adult visitors to lead activities as part of the Science and Technology Week. Pupils were enthusiastic about these events and were polite and responsive towards the visitors.

- 18 Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good. In lessons boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds work together in a co-operative and friendly way. They support each other and share materials when necessary. They settle to their tasks well and are very attentive. Concentration is good. Pupils listen to the teacher and join in when necessary, offering sensible questions and suggestions. When work is difficult, they persevere, responding well to instructions and guidance. Although behaviour in lessons is never less than satisfactory, occasionally some pupils need careful management to keep their concentration and positive attitudes. When lessons do not sustain their interest, some have difficulty concentrating. They become restless and are not forthcoming when invited to contribute. Overall, pupils are confident when speaking in front of others and when receiving awards in the presence of the whole school and parents. They are well motivated to succeed and take pleasure in receiving praise for the effort they give. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way and are polite and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. Behaviour in the dining room and playground is very good, with all acting in a friendly and responsible manner and following the school routines without fuss. No bullying was seen during the inspection. The school has not excluded any pupil in recent years. The minority of pupils who need to be reminded about the expected standards of behaviour respond quickly to the guidance provided.
- 19 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?

- 20 Pupils are mostly taught in two parallel classes for each year group. In Year 3 English and in Year 5 mathematics they are taught in three smaller groups, organised by prior attainment, to enable smaller group teaching for the lowest attaining pupils in the year.
- 21 Overall, the quality of teaching seen in lessons is good. Ninetyseven percent of lessons are at least satisfactory. Teaching is good or better in 57% of lessons. It is very good in 12% of lessons observed and excellent in 4%. This picture is consistent with that at the time of the last inspection and thus the good quality of teaching has been maintained. This good teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In about 5% of lessons however, all in the juniors, the good learning observed was better than the quality of teaching. This is unusual and is due to teachers' planning underestimating what pupils could actually achieve. However, in the lessons themselves, pupils eagerly used the knowledge they already had to make progress which caused the teacher to rethink the level of challenge

involved.

- 22 Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good. It is never less than satisfactory but with a significant amount that is good or better, with nearly a quarter of all teaching being outstanding. Very good and excellent teaching is seen across all the areas of learning and in both the nursery and reception classes. Teachers have a very good understanding of their children and of the areas they are teaching. They build upon this knowledge well, providing timely support and questions to encourage them to think and develop independence and curiosity. Resources are used well and staff plan carefully to ensure that the activities and ideas capture the children's interest and allow them to make progress across all areas of learning. In the infants, teaching is at least satisfactory. It is good or better in nearly a half and occasionally excellent in literacy. Good teaching is seen in English, mathematics, history, geography and in physical education. Teaching in the juniors is mostly satisfactory or better. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. These were in a lower juniors music lesson and a geography lesson with the oldest pupils in the school. Unsatisfactory teaching arose either due to weaknesses in subject knowledge or a lack of challenge, both of which restricted the progress and achievement of pupils. Teaching is good or better in over half of all lessons in the juniors and very good in a small minority. Very good teaching is seen particularly in mathematics in Years 4 and 6.
- 23 The quality of English teaching in the infants is satisfactory and is occasionally outstanding in the lower infants. It is good in just over a half of all lessons in the juniors. Teaching in mathematics is at least satisfactory throughout the school. In about two thirds of lessons it is at least good with some very good teaching in Years 4 and 6. The consistency of a good structure and pace to lessons along with effective planning enables pupils to learn and to make good progress in mathematics
- 24 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented well. Teaching of the Year 3 'Catch-up' group in literacy is good and enables this group of pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Literacy lessons are well planned and structured. The teaching of letter sounds and their use in reading unfamiliar words is not as well developed and systematic as other aspects of literacy teaching but is improving, particularly in the infants, where teachers have implemented a new programme of teaching letter sounds. Teachers are effective in encouraging pupils' speaking and listening skills. They are particularly effective in getting pupils to argue points and discuss ethical issues in the older juniors. However, whilst teachers provide a clear focus upon literacy skills, they often miss opportunities to reinforce strategies to improve spelling and also do not give sufficient attention to developing literacy through other subjects. Occasionally short answers are too easily accepted in response to written questions and worksheets and accuracy in punctuation and grammar is not adequately reinforced
- 25 The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on teaching and learning across the school. Lessons are well structured with high expectations of pace and what pupils will achieve. This is having a positive effect on their learning in mathematics and

upon the progress they make, particularly towards the end of the juniors.

- 26 Three lessons were observed in information and communication technology during the inspection. Of these, a teacher from the Education Action Zone taught two. In these lessons, the teaching was good and made a good contribution to pupils' learning in information and communication technology. In the other lesson teaching was satisfactory. However, there is little evidence of explicit teaching of information and communication technology skills through the school, nor of its use across the curriculum. Thus pupils' learning in information and communication technology is restricted by the limited opportunities provided. Teaching in religious education is at least satisfactory and often better.
- 27 Although teaching of other subjects in lessons observed during the inspection was generally good, the evidence of teachers' planning, pupils' work and progress over time would indicate this teaching to be satisfactory overall, with variability dependent upon teachers' own subject expertise and confidence. Most teachers have suitable knowledge of the subjects they teach, although there are some weaknesses, for example, in information and communication technology, music and geography. Lessons are generally planned well with clear objectives for what pupils are to learn. These are shared at the start of lessons and ensures pupils are very clear as to what is expected of them in lessons. The teaching of pupils with special education needs is good throughout the school and as a result the learning of these pupils is also good. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well in some areas of the curriculum, for example, mathematics in the upper juniors, but this is not consistent in all subjects across the school. Occasionally, assumptions of what pupils can do are misguided, with some being given work that is too difficult for them to complete without help, or work that is too easy and lacking in challenge. Following a visit to the Sealife Centre, pupils were given the job of finding out information from a sample of brochures. However, the brochures were too difficult for some of the least able to read. Therefore, in working without support from the teacher, some were unable to complete the work. Time was wasted and they made little progress. In a history lesson observed, pupils were given a historical artefact and were to complete a worksheet answering questions about the object they had. However, the worksheet had limited space for pupils to respond and record their answers. It did little to encourage them to write at length or depth. Consequently, they completed the sheet, finished the task, but could have achieved much more.
- 28 During lessons, teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. They explain the work clearly and also provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and try out activities for themselves. Time, resources and support staff are generally used well and ongoing assessment in lessons is satisfactory. It is particularly good in mathematics through the upper juniors. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning is limited and restricts progress. Opportunities for pupils to follow up personal interests and research information in lessons are also limited. Teachers usually plan work that meets pupils' needs and generally uses assessment well. In one lesson observed, pupils needed to be confident in their knowledge of multiplying by ten in order to

complete the work in the lesson. Through the teacher's assessment, it became clear that some had difficulty and she quickly adapted the lesson to revise multiplication facts to improve their confidence before moving on. This ensured that they revised the skills they needed for the task and that progress was made. Pupils are managed very well. High standards of behaviour are expected, as are positive attitudes to learning and sustained concentration and interest in lessons. Homework is set. Good examples of work provided for pupils to do at home were seen during the inspection, including additional spelling and 'Quality Time' activity bags for parents to use with their children. However, the use of homework is inconsistent through the school. Opportunities for pupils to extend their reading skills at home are restricted by the school's arrangements for reading books to be taken home.

- 29 Pupils learn and often make good progress in broadening their knowledge, skills and understanding due to the good teaching in the school. Examples where pupils' learning is particularly effective are to be found in mathematics across the school and in English in the lower infants. Learning in mathematics is particularly effective for the oldest pupils in the school, where teaching ensures that they put good efforts into all aspects as they work at a good pace.
- 30 Pupils are interested and concentrate hard. However, opportunities for them to show independence in their learning are limited in both the infants and juniors in most subject areas. Considering the very effective way children in the nursery and reception are encouraged to take initiative and learn for themselves, this is a disappointment and leads to some pupils becoming too reliant upon the teacher to guide them and provide the interest and challenge. Feedback given to pupils in lessons enables them to identify how their learning and work can be improved. However, comments in pupils' books are inconsistent in the extent to which they identify what actions need to be undertaken in order to improve further.

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

- 31 The school provides a very good and well balanced curriculum for all the children in the nursery and reception, which ensures they make effective progress in all the areas of learning. For pupils in the infants and juniors, however, although a suitably broad curriculum is provided, some of the statutory requirements in the information and communication technology curriculum are not met and pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve the appropriate standards and cover the work expected. The curriculum overall therefore does not meet the statutory requirements.
- 32 With the exception of information and communication technology the school plans to cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and in most cases uses nationally recommended schemes of work to guide provision in each subject. However, the curriculum is not well balanced across the school. For example, planning for design and technology leads to some year groups having limited access to the subject

leading to an element of discontinuity through the school which affects the progress pupils make. Some subjects, notably music, art and design and physical education, do not have sufficient time available to cover the planned work in sufficient detail to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress and achieve the standards they should. The school has increased time available for English in order to raise standards. Whilst this has contributed towards the rise in standards in the juniors, it has had a negative impact in some other areas of the curriculum. The demands of the scheme of work in some subjects are difficult to meet in the time provided. Consequently, teachers have sometimes to pick and choose elements of the planned work to cover in depth. These decisions are not strategic and are largely left to teachers. It therefore affects the overall progress made by pupils in key areas of each subject.

- 33 Provision for the teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory overall. The National Framework for Literacy has been implemented well by the school, but poor library resources, as identified in the last inspection, still limit the development of reading for information and research. There is no systematic planning for pupils to develop their literacy skills across other subjects. Inconsistencies in the way pupils are offered books to read at home limits opportunities for parents to support their children, and to practise the reading skills pupils develop at school. Strategies for the teaching of numeracy are good and this has been effective in raising standards in mathematics. The national strategy for teaching numeracy has been implemented well.
- 34 Provision for those with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Class teachers develop individual education plans with specific targets for pupils to work towards. Arrangements to ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and an equal chance to achieve, are satisfactory. Where pupils of the same age are taught in different classes, teachers plan together to ensure that pupils are not left out and that all receive a similar experience. Some classes have large numbers of boys in them. However, teachers are careful to ensure that this does not lead to some groups being treated unfairly. They all have the same access to a full range of experiences and teaching methods. All are involved in lessons. However, the provision of a residential visit for older pupils does discriminate as places are offered on payment from the parent or carer. This visit is seen as contributing to the curriculum for physical education. However, some pupils miss out on the opportunity due to the cost. In Year 3, pupils benefit from additional funding for English which has allowed the creation of smaller teaching groups based on pupils' ability. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in their basic skills due to the smaller group work. The pace of learning for more able pupils reflects an absence of high expectation and challenge at times. Overall, the school makes very good use of a range of extra financial support which enables all but Year 4 pupils to receive additional help with literacy.
- 35 Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The school hosts a youth club and there is an active choir and woodwind group. Additional homework clubs, mathematics work and lunchtime activities are provided, along with opportunities for sporting activities

and gardening in the school's forest trail and meadow garden. Nearly all pupils participate in some extra-curricular activities during their time at the school. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors are regularly used in school and they make a valuable contribution to the curriculum. In history, for example, members of the community talk about their childhood in South Hylton. In personal and social education, the fire brigade and police work with pupils on safety issues, and in the school's science and arts weeks, many visitors are drawn in to enhance the curriculum opportunities for all.

- 36 The curriculum is enriched by very good links with the Local Education Authority, local high school and with other primary schools in the area. Involvement as part of a local Education Action Zone is bringing significant support from business and the community. In addition to the provision of extra resources, the school benefits through close links with other schools and higher education institutions. It not only draws new ideas and experience into the school but has provided a good platform for South Hylton to share its own successes.
- 37 Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Personal, social and health education is planned by two co-ordinators in the school and is based on the National Curriculum framework. Appropriate policies on drugs and sex education are fully implemented. Personal, social and health education is taught through different subjects of the curriculum with some aspects of the work taught in specific lessons. A good balance between the two is maintained. The quality of provision is reflected well in the positive behaviour and attitudes of pupils in the school.
- 38 Since the last inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved. It is now good. Pupils have the opportunity to celebrate and reflect on a range of experiences in class, in the celebration assemblies and in collective worship which fully meets legal requirements. Good links are made to religious education. The quality of worship seen during the inspection was very good and made a strong contribution to the spiritual life of the school. Poetry and music play an important role in developing pupils' spiritual awareness through pupils being encouraged to listen and reflect upon what they hear and the messages they convey. There is a strong community spirit in the school with pupils and staff identifying closely with the community. This is seen through the way the school is respected, free from vandalism and litter. There is deep respect for the school by all those around.
- 39 Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils know right from wrong and follow the school rules well. They are aware of the consequences of their actions and the possible impact their actions will have on others. They are encouraged to make informed and responsible choices and to take part in ethical debates, for example, whether animals should be kept in zoos. An atmosphere is created that encourages pupils to be kind and respectful of each other and show an awareness of the needs of others. Pupils respond very well to this, behaving well and caring for each other and the school environment.

40 Provision for the social development of pupils is good. Members of the community work in the school and pupils fundraise to support a variety of charity events, for example, the Red Nose Day appeal. Some opportunities are created for pupils to develop their own team working. A Year 3 class spent a day on team building and problem-solving exercises to encourage them to work together. All pupils have the opportunity to work in a variety of pairs and groups. Some have responsibilities in school, for example, helping in the nursery and carrying out duties in the lunch hour. In the nursery and reception, children are encouraged to take responsibility in their own learning and to follow their own interests and curiosity. However, opportunities for pupils in the infants and juniors to exercise similar responsibilities are limited. There are some school visits and social activities out of school hours, including residential experiences for pupils in Year 2 and Year 5/6 and a youth club. These are run by staff and show a real commitment to the school and pupils. The contribution these activities make are significant as they also reinforce the community role of the school.

41 The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils have the opportunity for outings to museums and galleries. School concerts take place with the local high school and at the Civic Centre. Pupils attend celebrations of the church year in local churches. These are planned with the Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches. Elderly residents support history work and the school uses professional actors to role play the lives of important people in the past, for example Florence Nightingale. This provides a good insight into pupils' own heritage. Arts and design weeks, which take place every two years, allow pupils to work with artists and designers. However, the explicit use of materials, ideas and resources from other cultures to support the curriculum are limited. Limited opportunities are created to develop a multicultural understanding in classroom music and art and design lessons. Work in religious education however, does develop pupils' understanding of different cultures. Teachers use examples in religious education to promote a real understanding of some aspects of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42 Overall, the school takes good care to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Attendance and good behaviour are promoted very well and good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on added responsibilities, for example encouraging them to take care and responsibility for younger children at play and lunchtime, acting as monitors and preparing for assemblies. However, support and guidance to provide for pupils' educational needs could be further developed. Those with special educational needs generally receive good support in lessons. Additional time is given to them through 'Catch up' sessions. Whilst good advice and support in the classroom is provided for most, the setting of individual targets for pupils to raise their achievement is underdeveloped. The marking of work and giving feedback to pupils on what they need to do next in order to improve is inconsistent in quality across the school.

43 Parents confirm that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her

best. Staff are conscientious in maintaining very good relationships with pupils and encourage pupils to get along well together. They encourage pupils to do their best. Staff are vigilant in their care for those who are known to need extra attention and look on pupils as individuals, helping them accordingly. Pupils are supervised 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 has developed an appropriate policy to manage arrangements for child protection following Local Education Authority procedures. Staff are aware of appropriate responses they should take if concerns about a pupil's welfare arise. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education that provides a safe forum for pupils to express their views, feelings, and to learn skills to use to look after themselves. Their personal development is enhanced by events such as celebration assemblies, which highlight and reward significant achievements and gives recognition to those who offer help in, for example, the classroom and in the dining room. Significant observations of pupils' personal development are included in annual reports for their parents. These provide a good means of boosting pupils' self-esteem. The school maintains a good working relationship with outside agencies for additional support and advice when necessary.
- 45 Local authority procedures for health and safety have been adopted by the school. A governor has recently taken an active role in this aspect of school life and regular reviews of safety are carried out. However, the school does not yet formally draw up an annual assessment of risks involved in the many school activities or identify a clear programme to take remedial action where health and safety concerns are known. However, where minor issues of health and safety were reported during the inspection, these were dealt with effectively and immediately by the school.
- 46 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are clear and expect pupils to be well behaved at all times. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Pupils know whom 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. Very high standards for behaviour are set in lessons. Good behaviour is rewarded and pupils know the sanctions they will receive if their behaviour does not meet the high standard required. Staff provide very good role models for pupils in the way they speak to and support each other. Non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors, make a significant contribution to good behaviour and standards during breaks.
- 47 The monitoring of pupils' attendance is very 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. This ensures that reasons for absence are notified and recorded promptly, with support being provided for pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.

48 The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Pupils are assessed each year and their progress monitored closely by the headteacher. This assessment is used well to identify groups of pupils who need extra support and contributes towards the good progress made. However, it is not used by teachers to set all pupils with targets for improvement. Assessment in other subjects is inconsistent. The school has begun to implement regular assessment and a system for recording pupil progress in science and in information and communication technology but this is in the early stages of development and its impact in helping to raise standards has been limited. Assessment in the remaining subjects is underdeveloped. However, the school is aware of this and is beginning to identify a whole school approach to assessing the National Curriculum foundation subjects in order to improve standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 49 Parents have very positive views of the school. They find staff helpful and caring. Parents are particularly pleased with the atmosphere in school and feel welcome at any time. They are satisfied with the good standards of behaviour maintained by the school and that any issues raised by parents are swiftly and reassuringly addressed. Parents are generally satisfied with the information that they receive from the school, but would welcome more specific information about their children's strengths and weaknesses and the progress they make. They would welcome more information about how they could help their child at home and greater opportunities for their children to bring reading books home.
- 50 Good quality information is provided for parents about the life of the school. The school brochure communicates the attitudes and values that the school promotes. It emphasises the crucial role that parents can play in helping their child to succeed. However, the prospectus and the annual report to parents from the governing body do not contain all of the information which parents are entitled to receive. For example, there is no information in the prospectus to enable parents to compare the results of national tests with the achievements of pupils in other schools. The governors' annual report to parents does not keep them informed about progress made on issues raised in the last inspection. Written reports to parents on pupils' progress give clear information on how well their child is doing and includes good information on academic progress and personal development, particularly skills achieved in English and mathematics. Targets are included to explain what needs to be done next, but these are often too general and do not provide sufficient detail for parents to use when supporting their children's work at home. Formal opportunities are provided for parents to consult teachers each term and at other times as necessary. Parents are consulted if problems arise concerning their child, with a view to home and school working together to help the child.
- 51 The school welcomes parents into the school. They feel able to approach teachers easily on an informal day-to-day basis and all parents attend consultations with staff. Several parents work in classrooms on a regular basis, listening to readers, helping teachers with a range of classroom duties and acting as additional supervisors during educational visits. There is an active parent teacher association that meets regularly. This dedicated group

organises a range of fundraising and social events which contribute positively to the life of the school through the purchase of resources. The school misses valuable opportunities to involve parents more fully in supporting their children through homework. Although the school has a policy to provide all pupils with weekly work to do at home, there is variation in the amount and variety of homework set throughout the school. The school policy on homework is not implemented consistently by all teachers and is unclear to parents. This also includes the policy of pupils taking books home to read. Parents are unclear what the school policy is. Where some are eager to take reading books home, others have little opportunity and are not actively encouraged.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 52 The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides the school with strong leadership and direction. He has successfully sustained the very positive atmosphere described in the last inspection and managed a difficult financial situation leading to reductions in staff to reflect falling rolls. Together with his senior staff, he has successfully established a good focus upon raising attainment in English and mathematics, which is proving successful. All teachers are involved in the decision-making process in the school and subject co-ordinators have clear responsibilities to support staff and monitor the quality of work in their subject. They provide an annual review of their subject for governors. They work hard but their impact upon improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subject is variable and unsatisfactory in some areas. During the inspection, two senior members of staff in the school were absent and it is not possible to evaluate their role.
- 53 The school has been in a difficult financial position over the last few years due to falling rolls which have affected the ability to fund developments at the school. However, weaknesses in the school's planning for improvement have exacerbated problems and have contributed to the lack of progress made on some important issues raised in the last inspection. The school sets appropriate aims and values, and works to implement these across the school. Although the school's improvement plan attempts to support the further development of these aims, it has been organised on an annual basis and has lacked vision over a longer timescale of how the aims and longer term priorities for the school are to be addressed. Each year, the school identifies priorities for development in all subjects and aspects across the school. Although this ensures all subjects are included, it often leads to too many priorities to manage and fund effectively. Often the timescale for implementation of the development is too short for its impact upon standards and quality to be fully monitored and evaluated. The school attempts to link financial support with these planned developments. However, as funds are often tight not all the initiatives are funded effectively and therefore planned initiatives do not always take place. Two key development priorities arising out of the last inspection have suffered through this. Progress in information and communication technology and development of the school library have been limited over the last four years. The situation is further complicated by the existence of several development plans, including one for the Education Action Zone. The school's planning process does not help prioritise areas for development that may

need sustained effort over several years to have an impact upon the school's work. Equally, some targets and action plans are focused too heavily upon what actions are to be done rather than the standards and quality that are being sought. Consequently, actions can be implemented successfully but their impact upon standards and quality is limited. However, the school has recognised the need to plan for development over a longer timescale to ensure that enough time is given to affect standards.

- 54 The governing body is very supportive of the school and is appropriately involved in its management. There is a clear committee structure and most statutory requirements are met. However, weaknesses in the information and communication technology curriculum mean that provision falls below the statutory requirement, and the governing body does not publish all the information that it is required to do for parents. Governors are kept well informed. They receive an annual analysis of SATs results and have the opportunity to ask questions about them. The chair of governors has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors have an active role in evaluating school development and receive reports on progress from each subject coordinator. They see their role as supporting the work of the school in promoting the academic and social welfare of pupils. They take their responsibilities seriously and are involved in agreeing the school's budget and spending decisions following full consultation as part of their approach to ensuring best value.
- 55 The school uses staff working groups to develop new initiatives. Any interested teachers are invited to be members of these groups. This has the benefit of ensuring that all are fully involved with developments and have a shared responsibility for their progress. It is also intended that this will ensure that progress is made regardless of the absence from school of individuals. However, in reality this does not always happen. Working groups cease to exist when their aims have been achieved and there is sometimes no long term support and development for staff to ensure the initiative is implemented consistently. In some cases, whole school policies and ideas have been developed and implemented. However, once in place, they have not been consistently applied by all, for example in the provision of homework, sending reading books home and in the marking of pupils' work. There are also examples of staff absence holding up progress in some areas particularly in the monitoring of teaching.
- 56 The monitoring of new developments and teaching is understood by the school to be important and satisfactory procedures are in place with detailed records kept. However, monitoring records often indicate what was seen, or a brief account that discussion took place. They seldom contain any evaluation, detail of strengths and weaknesses observed, or suggested points for action and improvement. There is little evidence of how weaknesses are revisited and how progress is evaluated the next time around. Though monitoring pupil assessment and through talking with staff, the school management do have an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in some areas. Sometimes these are addressed well by the school, for example improvements in handwriting. However, this is not always the case. Several subject coordinators do not have a firm knowledge of standards or the quality of provision in their subject and have a limited role in monitoring

and supporting improvement.

- 57 Accommodation in the school is good. The school has been very successful in developing the building and school grounds to support the curriculum. The building is well maintained and displays help create a good learning environment. However, the library is often used as a teaching space and therefore this reduces access for pupils wishing to research information. Accommodation in the nursery and reception is used very well to provide a broad and balanced range of experience through which children learn. However, access to outdoor play for the older children in reception is restricted. Arrangements for the induction and mentoring of staff are good and there are good links with the providers of Initial Teacher Training. The implementation of performance management is satisfactory. All teachers have job descriptions and staff have access to appropriate professional development.
- 58 Falling rolls have created budget difficulties in recent years and a challenge to the school in the management of staff. The school has implemented good strategies that have addressed the budget issue and reduced the number of teachers whilst ensuring that there is still appropriate match of teachers to the requirements of the curriculum. In addition, it has been very successful in attracting additional funding from a variety of providers including the Education Action Zone and a government funded regeneration project. However, financial constraints have made it difficult to address poor resources identified in the last inspection and this has continued to have a negative impact on the curriculum. Most subjects with the exception of mathematics and science, are under-resourced. Library resources are poor. A very limited range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books are available for pupils to use and take home. The current range for use outside the taught literacy lessons does little to motivate pupils and develop a genuine interest in reading. Although the school has suffered through a lack of information and communication technology equipment in the past, a good range of equipment has been recently purchased to improve provision. However, there is still a need to develop the range of software to support information and communication technology learning across the curriculum. Additional grants provided to the school, including funding for the lunchtime and homework clubs, additional support in mathematics and English, and financial support through the Education Action Zone initiative have been used very well for the purposes they were intended. They provide a significant boost to the school and contribute positively towards the school's strategies to raise standards. Day-to-day administration is good. Procedures are clear, well known and effectively implemented.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 59 In order to raise standards and improve quality, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- i) raise standards in information and communication technology through:
- ensuring the statutory requirements are met in full and all pupils have sufficient access to the full range of information and communication technology programmes of study.
 - ensuring that information and communication technology is planned for and used effectively in all subjects.
 - providing sufficient resources including computersoftware to meet the needs of pupils.
[12, 58, 120, 122, 123, 126]
- ii) improve achievement in reading through:
- improving the range and quality of books and reading resources for pupils to take home.
 - raise pupils' motivation and interest in reading for pleasure.
 - improving both the resources and use of the school library for pupils to research for information to support their learning across subjects.
[8, 10, 33, 58, 78, 79]
- iii) raise standards in religious education, art and design and music through:
- ensuring a greater balance of time between subjects to enable all programmes of study to be covered in appropriate depth.
 - improving planning for progression within subjects over time.
 - implementing a consistent approach to assessing achievement and progress.
 - monitoring the quality of provision and progress made by pupils.
[13, 32, 48, 100, 102, 129, 130, 138]
- iv) improve the impact of monitoring standards and quality on addressing weaknesses and improving achievement through:
- improving the rigour of monitoring teachingand the quality of provision across subjects and the impact upon standards.
 - making more effective using of the outcomes of monitoring to plan the school's priorities for development over an appropriate timescale.
 - ensuring that effective support is provided to address weaknesses that arise and improve quality.
 - ensuring that agreed policies and practices, particularly in relation to the marking and assessment of pupils' work, are consistently applied by all.
[42, 55, 56, 82]

Minor Issues

- Publication of information for parents.
[50, 54]

The numbers in brackets relate to the main paragraphs of this report where these issues are mentioned.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	13	42	38	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for parttime pupils)	18	318
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	109
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	92

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.2
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	28	20	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	22
	Girls	16	16	18
	Total	32	32	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (65)	67 (60)	83 (63)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	19	18
	Girls	14	17	16
	Total	28	36	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (70)	75 (68)	71 (72)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	23	28	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	17	15
	Girls	19	24	23
	Total	31	41	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (57)	80 (78)	75 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	12
	Girls	14	19	15
	Total	22	29	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (54)	57 (57)	53 (63)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	281
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	18

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	640,472
Total expenditure	641,094
Expenditure per pupil	1,811
Balance brought forward from previous year	4
Balance carried forward to next year	-618

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	336
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	38	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	35	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	7	4	4
The teaching is good.	67	27	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	47	10	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	23	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	25	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	63	28	0	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	46	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	36	17	5	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 60 The school organises provision for the youngest children in the school through separate nursery and reception classes. The school admits up to 56 fulltime children each year into reception but is currently undersubscribed. Falling rolls in recent years have affected nursery and reception particularly and have led to a reduction in the number of classes in reception. Although most children begin school in the nursery, a small number transfer both to and from other schools at the beginning of the reception year. Nursery provision is offered as part-time placements for either morning or afternoon sessions. At the time of the inspection, 35 part-time children attended the nursery and 32 fulltime children were in the reception class.
- 61 Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average overall. Although recent assessments indicate the majority to be reaching average levels on entry to the nursery, they show the range of ability as being from average to below, with very few higher achievers. This pattern has been reflected in assessments undertaken over the last few years when children enter the reception class. Such assessments show a range of attainment but with very few achieving levels above typically expected, with several achieving below and a small number achieving well below. Whilst the level of attainment is below average at the beginning of the Foundation Stage, most children make at least good progress, and in some aspects, very good progress through the nursery and reception classes. They make up ground and achieve levels that are in line with those expected by the end of reception, with some children exceeding them. Provision is very good and is supported by a very effective team of teaching and nursery support staff, ensuring children get a good deal from their time in the nursery and reception. Children not only make significant gains in their knowledge and use of language, but also develop a curiosity and interest in learning which prepares them well for their progress through the infants.
- 62 Due to falling rolls and consequent low class sizes, accommodation for nursery and reception is good, spacious and ample to provide for most areas of learning. However, the reception class has limited access to regular and planned outdoor play restricting opportunities for children to refine and develop their physical play. The nursery and reception are well staffed and supported by a good team of helpers and work experience students, who provide a significant support to the teachers and ensuring children have a high level of adult contact. This is well planned to encourage children to talk and develop their language skills. The quality of teaching is very good with nearly a quarter that is outstanding both in nursery and in reception. The key success is in the way teachers build upon their knowledge of the children, providing timely support and questions to encourage them to think and to develop independence and curiosity. Resources are used well and staff plan carefully together to ensure that the activities and ideas capture the children's interest and allow them to make progress across all the areas of learning. Assessment is used very well to plan activities that meet the learning needs of children.

Where weaknesses in children's speaking and listening skills were identified in the last inspection, the development of these became a key focus within all the activities provided. Additional assessment has recently been introduced as part of a local initiative, but staff are as yet unsure how this is to be used to support themselves and children or how it will link with the very effective assessment systems already in place.

- 63 The many strengths outlined in the previous inspection have been sustained and the quality of teaching has improved further. Where some older children were seen to be reluctant to initiate conversations, the school has been working hard to address this issue and has done so with success.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 64 There is a broad range of ability on entry to the nursery, with some children lacking in confidence and not being used to having to share with others. However, good progress is made by many children, with some making very good progress through the nursery and reception classes. Almost all children reach the expected level described in the Early Learning Goals for children at the end of the reception year, with many achieving beyond.
- 65 The very effective provision and quality of teaching throughout the nursery and reception is the key factor in this success. Teachers and nursery nurse support staff carefully plan situations that require children to share and play together. They talk and play alongside them showing how to take turns and how to be fair to each other. Adults also reinforce good behaviour and attitudes by giving praise when somebody shows kindness and consideration. Through the very calm and supportive environment created by all those who work within the nursery and reception classes, children are encouraged to be calm and respect each other's feelings and ideas. It is not unusual for older children to applaud when their friends try hard or answer questions, for example, in counting up to 20 for the first time or reading a new or unfamiliar word. A real enthusiasm for learning is encouraged. Even young children show interest in the activities created for them including planting seeds, tending the garden and looking after the flowers. Two young children willingly tended the garden, removing weeds and sharing the simple garden tools they had. They learn to be independent very quickly. Teachers are very skilled at encouraging children to 'have a go' and to try new things without leading or over-directing what they have to do. This was particularly successful when young children lacked confidence and were very hesitant in using a climbing frame and crawling through a barrel. The adult gave much encouragement and advice with genuine praise when they achieved their goal. This overcame the lack of confidence and encouraged them to try again.
- 66 Levels of concentration are particularly good as children reach the end of the reception year. Where teachers begin to prepare children for the structure of literacy and numeracy lessons, children show very good levels of concentration, listen well and respond with enthusiasm to the questions and problems provided by the teacher.

Communication, language and literacy

- 67 Most children will achieve the expected level by the time they leave the reception class, with some working beyond. Progress made by most children is consistently good with some children making significant gains in their understanding and use of language over the time they are in the nursery and reception classes. Spoken language, which is identified by the school as often being weaker on entry to the nursery, is developed very well through the very good and outstanding teaching. This is a key strength of the school's provision. Some very young children lack the confidence to speak and offer ideas, often using isolated words and phrases to attract the teacher's attention, and concentrating only for short periods. However, teachers work closely with them, talking and asking questions, engaging in conversation and creating many opportunities for them to talk with each other and share their feelings and ideas. Consequently, they experiment with and develop conversations with teachers and with each other. In playing in a flower shop, young children take the role of shop keeper and customer, buying and selling flowers, asking prices and talking with growing confidence and imagination 'What kind of flowers would you like? Are the flowers for your auntie? Is she poorly?' A constant focus is given to encouraging talk either through discussing what they have seen, or talking about issues in the classroom for example, 'how much the butterflies or tadpoles have grown', and 'why that might be the case', develops a real confidence and widening vocabulary among children.
- 68 The very good range of opportunities for using language and books is developed well through the reception year. Books, games and displays encourage an interest in words and in children finding out. Most children show interest and use the displays and books to find out information following a visit or to explain what happens as tadpoles change into frogs. They confidently handle books. They make good progress and listen very well to stories and books that are shared. They recognise words and phrases, talk confidently about the author, title and illustrator of books, and even understand the value of looking at the blurb on the back of a book to find out what the story is about. Good progress is made in children's knowledge of letter sounds and also in their writing of their own names, simple messages and speech bubbles as part of a class story. Good use is made of the 'Talk Talk' homework bags, which are valued by children and parents as a way of sharing books and language at home. Indeed, the links between home and school make a significant contribution to the progress made. The class mascot 'Doggun' is regularly taken home by children. His adventures whilst at home are written down by the parent and these are then read to the class on 'Doggun's' return. It not only values the link with home but also the use of writing to communicate messages and stories.

Mathematical development

- 69 Children make good progress and most are on line to meet the expected level by the time they leave the reception year. Some are clearly working beyond this and show advanced understanding of numbers and readily solve simple number problems. This is a direct consequence of the very effective teaching and provision in the nursery and reception that responds well to children's interest in mathematics and challenges their understanding.

This is particularly the case in the reception class where time is organised well for mathematics and children are effectively organised into teaching groups to provide work that is well matched to their ability and ensures they achieve well.

- 70 Where younger children in the nursery recognise the dots on dice and confidently count up to six, effective questioning and support from the teacher encourages confidence in counting beyond. Older children confidently take turns in simple board games, add numbers together and recognise numerals up to ten. Many are confidently able to count to 20 and back to zero. They continue counting on a sequence of numbers from different starting points e.g. from a starting number of 7 or 11. When given a simple number problem counting up to and beyond ten, some are able to count on one or two more to find the answer and are beginning to understand the idea of taking away. A few children are very confident in calculating using numbers, confidently counting up in twos and threes. They have a good grasp of pattern, with some recognising and creating their own repeating patterns. Whilst younger children in the nursery are already using mathematical words e.g. tallest and shortest to order bunches of flowers in the florist shop and decide which vase would be the most suitable, older children confidently order a series of objects by size and talk confidently about simple shapes using their names eg. triangle and rectangle, also explaining what is special about them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 71 Most children are on line to reach the standard expected by the time they leave reception. They make good progress and are developing a good understanding of living creatures and the conditions required to enable them to grow. Teaching is good and provides a good range of interesting activities which develop their interest in the world around them. Children are encouraged to look closely at changes they see. In looking at changes as a butterfly begins to emerge from a chrysalis, children explain what is happening and carefully describe what they see. Encouraged by thought provoking questions including 'What can you see happening? Why is it changing? What might happen next?', children confidently look at the detail of what they see and begin to predict and explain why things happen in the way they do. Older children generally have a good knowledge of healthy eating and, in response to the Dental Hygienist, identify foods that are good for teeth. Following a visit to a wildlife park, older children showed an interest in finding out more. They investigated why feathers float and began to make links with the different birds they had seen. In exploring sand and water activities, children confidently explain their knowledge of different materials, for example, by explaining why dry sand behaves differently from wet and which to use when building a sandcastle. Some older children confidently explain the simple lifecycle of a frog using books and pictures. Most are beginning to use simple computer programs to practise their counting, with valued support from an adult. They are beginning to recognise some of the geographical features in their environment, recognising different habitats and talking confidently about the conditions needed to attract butterflies and different birds.

Physical development

- 72 Children make satisfactory progress overall through the nursery and reception years. Progress is greater in the nursery but is restricted in reception through the limited access to regular outdoor play. Most pupils are on track to meet the expected level as outlined in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory in reception, it is particularly effective in the nursery and results in pupils gaining confidence and improving agility. Through careful encouragement and the provision of a broad range of experiences to practise their skills, most move with confidence and use space well to avoid collisions, and climb simple equipment safely. They handle small tools, including pencils, brushes and gardening forks or trowels, accurately. They do this well and are gaining a real enjoyment for physical activity.
- 73 The nursery outdoor play area is well organised to provide regular opportunities for children to practise and improve their physical skills using a range of equipment to promote climbing activities, small games and the use of simple gardening tools. As children move into reception, the same regular opportunity for outdoor play is limited as is opportunity to use the hall space for physical play. However, many older children catch and throw with accuracy, with some confidently throwing and catching bean bags with one hand. Most make appropriate use of the space around them when running but the physical skills children already possess in reception are not consistently built upon by the teacher.

Creative development

- 74 Children make good progress in many aspects of their creative development and most are on line to achieve the appropriate standard by the time they leave reception. Very good progress is made in children's imaginative play as a direct response to the very effective teaching and provision for children to play in role and develop their own imaginative stories. The provision of shops, home corners, and the encouragement given to draw children together and play out their ideas and games not only develops their language but fires the imagination. Young children use their imagination and share their stories. Where their play focuses upon a shop or home corner, this is quickly developed. The children's pretend calls on a telephone are immediately answered by an adult in the room who then adds a new idea into their play.
- 75 Children paint and express themselves well with colour, explaining what they are painting and why they have chosen the colours they have. Some older children paint flowers with good attention to the detail they observe. A good range of materials are provided for children to paint and create pictures and models. Adults support them through questioning and suggesting new ideas. Children talk about their pictures with real enthusiasm, describing what they have done and why. Good progress is made in aspects of music. From a very hesitant start, with children lacking confidence, they soon begin to join in with actions to accompany simple songs and join in the singing of rhymes. They show enthusiasm and older children join in well with the singing of songs in whole school assemblies, maintaining interest and singing in tune.

ENGLISH

- 76 Overall standards of attainment in the year 2000 national assessments for seven and eleven year olds were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. This suggests that standards have not improved since the previous inspection, and that they have actually fallen in the infants and are lower than they were at the last inspection. However, this is not the case. The school has been working to improve standards in English and there has been a steady upward trend in the national assessments for eleven year olds over the last few years. This has generally been in line with the national trend of improvement in recent years but only recently has the gap begun to close. Standards of attainment in English have been significantly below those in mathematics since the last inspection. However, the school has provided a clear focus for the development of English. This would appear to be working and standards observed during the inspection were higher than the results of the year 2000 national assessments and were broadly in line with those expected by the age of eleven. The school sets targets of improving the attainment of eleven year olds. The school met its year 2000 target. The target set for 2001 is appropriately challenging when considering previous attainment. The school is on track to exceed this target.
- 77 Although standards are broadly in line with those expected by the age of eleven, there is variability in the standard of work and achievement of pupils across classes and through the infants and juniors. Additional support and a focus upon teaching letter sounds to help pupils identify new and unfamiliar words in Year 1 is having a significant impact upon achievement in reading, with some pupils already achieving at the level not expected for most pupils until the end of Year 2. However, in Year 2 which is not part of the same 'Reading Recovery' programme, progress slows down, leading to satisfactory achievement by the end of the infants. Progress is good through Year 3 but again slows in Year 4 before a significant improvement towards the end of the juniors. By Years 5 and 6, pupils are attaining standards that are broadly in line with the national expectations. Progress varies due to the quality of teaching, expectations of what pupils can achieve, and also teachers' confidence in teaching literacy. Although progress is uneven, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, benefit and are now making good gains due to greater confidence in planning, and greater consistency in following agreed policies, for example in handwriting. Teachers are responding well to the additional support and the good range of programmes being implemented by the school, including the National Framework for Literacy. In the infants, pupils are good listeners and they are confident in speaking and asking questions. By the age of seven, they use a range of vocabulary effectively to explain and express themselves to others. They speak clearly and many show growing confidence in their explanations to others. This is good and shows very good progress over the time they have been in the nursery and the school. On entry to the nursery, speaking and listening skills are often quite low and the school has been implementing many initiatives to address this issue.
- 78 By the age of seven, approximately two thirds of pupils read with accuracy but only the

most able confidently discuss the plot and characters of the stories they have read in any detail. Good progress is being made in lessons in the lower infants, supported by the introduction of effective strategies to improve pupils' knowledge of letter sounds. However, progress in reading overall is limited, as pupils are not always able, or encouraged, to take reading books home. They are not reading with sufficient frequency or developing a love and genuine interest in reading. Where they are keen to read in school, many are still not developing the confidence and fluency in their reading. It is significant that the most able readers are often those who have access to a variety of books at home. In finding information, all but the least able seven year olds use the contents page, index and dictionaries effectively. They understand alphabetical order but use a limited range of strategies to read new and unfamiliar words. High standards are achieved by the end of the infants. However, the good quality handwriting practice is not readily applied into other work. Basic sentence punctuation is used correctly by most pupils but this is inconsistent. However, whilst focused writing in English lessons is usually punctuated well, this is not always the case in other subjects. Most pupils can write to convey meaning and they know the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Many are beginning to write about events and visits they have experienced. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe what they did.

- 79 After a steady start in the lower juniors, the pace of progress quickens, with older juniors showing considerable progress and achieving well in all aspects of English. By the age of eleven most use Standard English effectively. They are confident and fluent speakers who know how to use a good range of vocabulary to best effect. They are all aware of the need to consider the needs of the audience in their choice of vocabulary and they present information well. Most are also good listeners, following instructions well. They are good at questioning the ideas and responses of others in a mature manner, for example in their discussions and debates on issues including the rights and wrongs of keeping animals in zoos and building a new metro station with the obvious environmental implications. By the age of eleven, pupils are also reading with appropriate confidence. Even those identified as lower attainers read with general accuracy. They read fiction and nonfiction, and understand how to use the blurb to find out about a book. Most read with meaning and find information from the text to answer questions. Able pupils can identify answers to questions that require them to make deductions and infer meaning from the books they read. They understand how authors build expectations and set the scene. However, in searching for information, more able pupils have not learned how to scan the text to quickly locate the information they need. All use an appropriate range of strategies to identify unknown words, but the use of phonics is weaker. Some pupils also show weaknesses in reading with expression and interest, reading without due attention to the punctuation of the text. Most pupils know how to find and make use of information from non-fiction books. However, they have very little opportunity to develop the skills of locating information in the library or independently researching information drawn from a wide range of sources. Few confidently talk about their reading interests or have a good knowledge of the work of different modern authors. They do not talk freely about their reading outside school. Few regularly take books home to read. Although they read with accuracy, the lack of regular practice and reading for enjoyment outside school, limits

their achievement. They have little opportunity to use information and communication technology as part of this process.

- 80 Writing produced by the oldest in the juniors indicates that pupils have made good progress. Pupils write at length and their extended writing is well sequenced and demonstrates an interesting development of ideas. Pupils make good use of punctuation and are able to write in a variety of different styles. Some good examples of debate on ethical issues including discussion on the rights and wrongs of keeping animals in zoos are demonstrated. There are also good examples of drafting and redrafting work in order to improve the quality. Pupils have a developing sense of writing for a range of audiences and they make good use of vocabulary to create atmospheres. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were given a picture of a room and asked to create a sense of atmosphere by using alliteration. Handwriting is generally good, particularly in English, but the quality is not sustained in writing across other subjects. Pupils are developing appropriate strategies to improve their spelling but there are weaknesses as spelling rules are not consistently applied into their writing in other subjects or consistently reinforced by teachers.
- 81 The school has formed a view that additional lessons in English will raise standards and to some extent recent progress indicates that this has been beneficial. However, literacy skills developed in English lessons are not consistently applied in other subjects. Opportunities are missed to use the context of other subjects to reinforce and develop literacy and both spelling and handwriting skills. The school should consider whether literacy delivered over a broad and balanced curriculum would have more impact than time spent on handwriting and spelling which is done out of context.
- 82 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. During the inspection it ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Most teachers know how to develop pupils' speech, reading and writing skills and are confident in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons are well prepared and planned so that they meet the needs of most pupils. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met effectively through implementation of good individual education plans and work designed to specifically meet the needs of pupils in all classes. Whilst the needs of the least able are consistently well met, the needs of the most able are not, with the pace and challenge in some lessons not fully taking account of their previous learning. Teachers manage pupils and organise activities very effectively. Good resources, often made by teachers, and well paced lessons make good use of time. An excellent lesson was seen in Year 1 where a well chosen nonfiction book was used to help pupils learn how to use nonfiction. Teachers mark work conscientiously. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent through the school. Whilst a policy has been agreed, this is not consistently applied. Some marking provides good feedback and identifies the next steps pupils need to take in order to improve their work. This is effective, but is not consistently applied. Homework is provided, but again this is inconsistent between classes. Where it is used, it provides good support in reinforcing work undertaken in class. Very good support is provided by support assistants and through the additional literacy support provided for the least able. However, there is

the need for literacy to be more formally developed across the curriculum and through planned opportunities for pupils to use the library and information and communication technology for research and the development of writing skills.

- 83 The management of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers are well supported and resources well organised. Governors and other adults are effectively used in supporting reading and planning is monitored well. However, the monitoring of the subject has, due to illness, not been sufficiently rigorous and the inspection has identified some weaknesses in marking which does little to help pupils improve their work. The monitoring of spelling has recently replaced classroom observations and this has meant that some weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed. A range of assessment data and evidence is collected to demonstrate progress, but this evidence is not used to set targets for individual pupils.

MATHEMATICS

- 84 Overall, the attainment of pupils in mathematics is in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. The results of national tasks and tests in 2000 were slightly below those found nationally, although they were in line with similar schools. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard however was above that nationally. Other than a dip in 1999, the school's results in mathematics have continued to improve over the last three years in line with the national trend.
- 85 Standards in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000 were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils exceeding expectations was well above that found nationally compared to pupils' prior attainments. Girls' attainment in mathematics is significantly ahead of the average performance of girls nationally. Standards have risen significantly over the last three years. In 2000, the school easily exceeded its target for mathematics. Based upon previous successes, the target set for 2001 would appear a little modest and the school is on track to exceed this.
- 86 Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment in mathematics through the infants and juniors is broadly in line with national expectations, but rises significantly in Year 6 and is above the standard expected by the time pupils leave the school. Therefore, standards by the end of the juniors are similar to those identified in the 2000 national assessments for eleven year olds. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school and achieve well by the time they leave the school. Standards in mathematics by the end of the juniors have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- 87 By the end of the infants pupils write sums accurately using the signs to show addition, subtraction and equals. They use appropriate mathematical vocabulary with gaining confidence to describe what they are doing. They understand tens and units and can explain the significance of the tens column when adding or taking away. Some higher attaining pupils show an understanding beyond this and confidently count in hundreds and

thousands. Pupils recognise the link between addition and subtraction sums and use an increasing range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. They round numbers to the nearest ten and confidently halve and double numbers to calculate the answer. In lessons, they show a growing awareness of direction with some giving instructions to each other involving clockwise and anti-clockwise turns.

88 Pupils show a steady gain in knowledge and skills through the juniors and achieve very well in Year 6, where very effective teaching ensures they make very good progress in their final year at the school. In Year 3 they round numbers up and down to the nearest 100 with confidence. Some confidently apply this well to problems using money. In Year 4 they improve their knowledge of multiplication tables and recognise relationships between different times tables, for example they can see that answers to questions from the six times table will be double those of the three times table. In looking at shapes, there is a deepening understanding of reflection and symmetry, with pupils exploring different ways of plotting reflections on paper. By the end of Year 5, pupils apply their knowledge of multiplication well using two and three-digit numbers to solve real problems relating to costs. Their progress continues to gather pace in Year 6 with pupils recognising the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Some use this knowledge very well. In drawing shapes, they calculate and draw angles in regular polygons with accuracy to the nearest degree, with the most able showing a good knowledge of positive and negative numbers and the importance of using brackets in their mathematics work to help find the answers in simple algebra. However, pupils are not sufficiently using and applying their mathematics skills to solve problems in other subjects, for example measuring changes in the environment and recording them in graphs and charts, scaling down pictures and applying their geometry skills in their design work. Similarly, the use of information and communication technology is limited and opportunities missed for pupils to combine their mathematics and information and communication technology skills.

89 The quality of teaching in mathematics is generally good. It is consistently satisfactory or better and occasionally very good, particularly in the upper juniors. The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly in the daily mathematics lessons is having a positive effect on pupils' progress in mathematics. Regular practice of quick mental mathematics each day is sharpening their speed at recalling number facts and encouraging their use of key mathematical vocabulary. Teachers show a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics and how to teach it. They plan lessons thoroughly with clear objectives. Pupils understand what it is they have to do and what they are to learn each lesson. They can talk about what they have learned and can explain this confidently to the teacher. Work is very carefully planned using the Framework provided by the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are generally confident in teaching the subject, mostly have high expectations, and keep a good pace in their teaching. This ensures that pupils make good progress and learn effectively in lessons. They build on the ideas and skills they have already learned. In addition to the effective teaching of basic numeracy skills, teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to apply these in solving problems, in work on shape and space and in handling information. Teaching, particularly towards the end of the juniors, has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is particularly

the case for able pupils. Support staff are carefully deployed in those lessons where they are available. This helps the learning of those who find mathematics more difficult and who need the extra support. Time is used well in lessons and pupils are kept actively involved. Resources are simple, but well matched to the requirements of the lessons. When teachers recognise that pupils are finding an aspect difficult, they spend time to make sure pupils understand. This ensures that pupils are secure in their learning. The ends of lessons are well used to assess what pupils have achieved and to check progress against the objectives for the lesson.

- 90 The effective teaching they receive ensures that pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. Confidence is built through giving praise and through using pupils to demonstrate to one another and by careful matching of questions to meet pupils' individual levels of skill and confidence. As a result, behaviour is generally good in lessons and pupils gain through a sense of progress and achievement.
- 91 Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work together and to apply their mathematics to real life problems.
- 92 The subject is well led and managed, with good support for staff in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Implementation has been monitored and information used to develop approaches further. Teachers analyse test results and use this information generally well to provide further teaching of those parts which pupils find difficult. This has been used well to establish extra support for the least able and to identify very high achievers in Year 6 who would benefit from extra challenge. There is further scope for the use of mathematics in other subject areas, and in particular, for links between information and communication technology and mathematics to be developed.

SCIENCE

- 93 Standards of attainment seen during the inspection are in line with those expected nationally by the end of both the infants and juniors as they were at the time of the last inspection. In the 2000 national assessments for eleven year olds, the school achieved standards well below the national average and below that of similar schools. However, the school has taken steps since September 2000 to improve the provision of science and address weaknesses identified through these assessments. This has worked well. Some gains have been made and pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving standards that are similar to those expected. Attainment in the 2000 teacher assessments for seven year olds was well below the national average and below that of similar schools. However, the school has introduced a new scheme of work which has been providing greater coverage of the knowledge required. Standards are now broadly in line with those expected by the end of the infants.
- 94 Younger pupils in the infants have a good knowledge of living things and recognise that plants and animals are alive and need nutrients and certain conditions in which to thrive. They carefully make comparisons and are knowledgeable about the needs of living things

and how to look after them. Most are familiar with the differences between materials and have an appropriate knowledge of the areas they study. However, they often lack the skills to carry out investigations without support. Information and communication technology is not used well during lessons.

- 95 In the juniors, pupils learn how to investigate and carry out simple experiments for themselves. Younger pupils investigate shadows to see how light travels. They work well in pairs sorting objects into transparent, translucent and opaque. They show a good understanding. Most are able to explain how a shadow is formed. When investigating for themselves, they readily find out new ideas and show real curiosity in wanting to know why things are as they are. In observing a group of pupils in Year 3, they investigated shadows to see what would happen to the shadow as the object was moved away from or closer to the screen. They understood why the shadow became large and could explain this in relation to the movement of the object from the light source. They understand the terms transparent, translucent and opaque and transfer this knowledge when talking about other objects e.g. glass, greaseproof paper, trousers etc. They can record their information clearly and accurately on a table and in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They often have additional support and benefit greatly from this, often achieving well. Progress is satisfactory for most other pupils. They work hard and respond positively to the work and achieve appropriately.
- 96 As pupils progress through the juniors, they widen their scientific knowledge. Where pupils in Year 4 investigate the environment of the school grounds including the school nature garden and infant and junior playgrounds, they show a good knowledge of the different habitats around the school. They identify habitats with confidence and classify them correctly into larger and mini or micro habitats. They take digital photographs with growing confidence and come into the classroom to view their recordings on the monitor to review what they have seen and done. Older pupils continue to develop their investigations and collaborate well with each other. They gain experience in posing scientific questions that can be investigated. They compare their investigation (do the tallest people have the longest thighbone?) with their original predictions and use their results to make further predictions and hypotheses.
- 97 Teaching throughout school is satisfactory overall. It is good in some classes. Where it is good, teachers use scientific vocabulary well and are skilful in questioning pupils to extend their understanding. They use their assessment of pupils' ability and interests well to plan challenging tasks, giving other pupils the opportunity to design their own test, and measure and record their findings independently. Teachers plan with and deploy learning support staff appropriately to meet lesson objectives. Very effective use is made of time with all pupils working at a good pace. Pupils are encouraged to complete timed tasks carefully and with confidence. They show interest and work productively in lessons, sharing equipment and working well together.
- 98 The school has introduced a nationally recommended scheme of work to guide provision and progression through the school. This was implemented in September 2000. It has

already helped address previous weaknesses which affected the standards achieved. Its implementation has ensured that topics are taught consistently across all year groups. Teachers' planning is drawn out of units from the scheme but could take further account of the skills and ideas pupils need in order to make progress. Teachers' short-term planning does not identify outcomes for the gifted and talented pupils in class. As a result, more able pupils do not always make the necessary progress and could achieve more, particularly in their application of information and communication technology, to aid their investigations and presenting the outcomes of their work.

- 99 The co-ordinator has had a positive influence in improving science provision in school. The organisation of a school Science and Technology Week was well organised to contribute to a greater understanding of science and had a good impact on pupils' learning. Activities during the week have brought the pupils immediate enthusiasm and motivation for science. A good audit of resources has been undertaken and the co-ordinator has begun to implement a programme of monitoring provision and standards. Resources for science are adequate but there is a need for greater investment in information and communication technology equipment to support the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

- 100 Standards in art and design are below those expected for pupils by the end of both the infants and juniors. Standards are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. Since that time, the National Curriculum has been revised and the school has responded to the national focus upon literacy and numeracy skills through the implementation of national strategies. This has increased the time and focus given to these subjects but has also reduced the emphasis upon art and design. Limited time to cover all the programmes of study in depth has led to teachers having to make choices in which elements to cover. Consequently, this has affected progress and pupils' achievement. Whilst they achieve well in elements of the subject, in others they don't and therefore do not meet the standards expected of eleven year olds.
- 101 By the age of seven, pupils paint and draw the things they see from first-hand experience, for example, painted and paper sculpture flowers, portraits and gargoyles made from dough which are linked to a church visit, and pencil drawings related to the work of the artist Escher. They explore some ideas, including experimenting with paper cuts and folds and they use a range of materials, including paint, pencil, collage and textiles. However, there is little evidence of work from imagination or of reference to the work of other artists. Pupils make limited progress in their drawing skills due to few opportunities given for them to review, evaluate and improve on their ideas and the quality of their work. This applies to most pupils, including those with special educational needs, and leads to some underachievement, particularly of the highest attaining pupils.
- 102 There is limited progress through the juniors. Pupils in Year 3 have good skills in some areas. They make sculptures using various materials, showing reasonable skills in the way they use and join different materials. They show a good understanding of pattern and

replicate this in their work, gradually building up more complex and repeating patterns and making some reference to patterns in Indian fabrics they see. Good progress is made in Year 4, where sketchbooks show pupils developing ideas, which are then developed into drawings, models of chairs and in their design of wedding invitations. Here, pupils apply their imagination well to produce original work. They paint imagined views from the classroom in 20 years time and decorate masks showing exaggerated human features. Older pupils use textiles well to tell stories and experiment with art and design using the computer. By the end of Year 6, many understand pattern, carefully painting patterns and shapes that fit with each other. In one Year 6 class there is careful drawing to illustrate perspective and in the other, some detailed paintings of flowers from close observation. During a lesson in Year 6, pupils mixed and applied paint effectively in copying pictures by Van Gogh and other artists. However through the juniors, there is little progress in pupils' use of sketchbooks, in the quality of their drawing, or in the application of art techniques into their own ideas and work. There are few opportunities for pupils to evaluate, change and improve their work and little reference to the work of artists from the wider world. There is no difference in the rate of progress of pupils with special educational needs, but some able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in order to refine and improve their skills. They therefore underachieve.

- 103 In lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good. Teachers have suitable knowledge and explain the art techniques well. Lessons are carefully planned and organised. Pupils have access to a suitable range of resources and materials. They have positive attitudes. In lessons, teaching mostly meets the needs of all pupils well. Those with special educational needs are included effectively and good feedback is given to the higher attainers. Teachers maintain pupils' interest and this results in them working well in lessons, showing interest and working productively.
- 104 Pupils respond well in lessons. They use tools and materials well to communicate ideas and understand the stages involved in the processes they are using. They explain to their peers what they have done so far and what they intend to do next. On occasion opportunities for evaluation are limited by the pace and timing of the lesson. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and behaviour is generally good. However at times they become over-excited or restless, particularly during long explanations by the teacher.
- 105 Although teaching is generally strong, it is weaknesses in the art and design curriculum that restricts progress over time and results in standards that are lower than they should be by the time pupils leave the school. They inhibit the development of skills over time and provide restricted coverage of the full programmes of study. Whilst planning for individual lessons is effective, planning of what pupils are expected to learn over time is inconsistent. As a consequence, not all skills and techniques are taught systematically, thus preventing pupils from making suitable progress. Checking on progress and the quality of art and design in the school is limited and consequently actions to bring about the necessary improvements are not in place. However, the coordinator has a good understanding of these issues and plans to work with staff to assess to look at progress and improve teachers' skills of assessment in the subject. This will support greater

consistency in assessment and a greater consensus on the progression of skills and techniques being taught. Links with other subject areas, in particular the use of information and communication technology, could be better. Teaching about the work of artists, particularly those from non-European cultures is limited, as is the use of related resources, and opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they learn. The contribution that art and design makes to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is therefore restricted.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 106 Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with those expected at the end of both the infants and juniors, and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils are developing their design and making skills and use opportunities to test and evaluate their products. In making moving pictures in Year 1, pupils understand the terms lever and pivot when making pop-up cards. They create plans for their designs which they then follow when making models and they evaluate the products well, suggesting how they might be improved. Pupils in Year 2 work well together in making masks but have few opportunities to develop their own ideas due to the limited choice of materials offered. In Year 3, pupils explore the components required to make moving toys using a pneumatic system. They evaluated their constructions well in order to test whether they were stable enough for the completed model. When investigated, they then used this information well to create a final design for their toy. Older pupils in the juniors investigate ways of strengthening paper and use this knowledge to build a bridge that can be later tested for strength.
- 107 Teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally good where greater emphasis is given to pupils demonstrating their models and identifying what works well in the design and what can be improved. These ideas are then incorporated into their design plans. Teachers use the Local Education Authority scheme of work as a model and provide a suitable range of activities through the school, which develop skills and knowledge in using a variety of materials, including food. They design and make sandwiches and soups, build torches, musical instruments and moving toys. Opportunities are planned for testing and evaluating products. Teaching captures pupils' interest and usually provides good opportunities for them to investigate and work together. This helps maintain their enthusiasm and supports their learning through allowing them to find their own solutions to problems.
- 108 Links with information and communication technology are limited. Pupils in Year 3 have used the Internet to research boxes when investigating packaging but there is currently no provision for using the computer to support pupils' work in controlling movements in their models in Year 6.
- 109 Pupils work hard in lessons. They show an interest in their work, taking care with materials and using tools carefully. Where opportunities are provided they cooperate

well together. All pupils make sound progress and achieve appropriately, with little difference in the progress made by different groups.

- 110 At present design and technology is taught in blocks of time across the school and this sometimes creates lengthy gaps when pupils are not taught the subject, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6. This was evident in one Year 6 lesson where the pupils were unable to draw on previous knowledge of structures to support them in their bridge making task. This imbalance affects the consistency of progress over time and restricts achievement.
- 111 The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about the subject and supports other teachers when this is required. She manages the resources well to ensure these are sufficient to support the scheme of work. Although the scheme of work includes opportunities for assessment and links with information and communication technology these are currently not being used and this is an area in need of development. The co-ordinator has no regular opportunity to monitor teaching. The policy is currently in need of revision to reflect changes that have taken place at the school.

GEOGRAPHY

- 112 Standards in geography are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both infants and juniors. They are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Young pupils are developing their understanding and knowledge of places and the use of maps. In Year 1 they examine photographs to compare and explain some of similarities and differences between South Hylton and a seaside town. They confidently identify different geographical features in a landscape. In Year 2, pupils place landmarks on a map of their own locality and compare features on a map with those on an aerial photograph. Older pupils in the juniors use six figure grid references with some confidence to identify the course of the local river. They confidently use geographical terms such as meander, deposition and erosion to describe the river. This is taken further with pupils in Year 6 looking beyond the physical features on the map and using their knowledge and experience to deduce whether the map or photograph is the oldest, explaining their reasons. This shows appropriate progress over time, with most, including the most able, achieving appropriate standards. Their skills in researching and investigating environmental changes are also developing. Pupils in Year 2 can point out some of the danger spots in their locality, in Year 4 they explain why the playing field is an unsafe environment and offer suggestions for improvements. The oldest pupils in the school give careful consideration to the benefits and disadvantages of building a new metro station in their locality, arguing their case and debating the issues.
- 113 In the majority of the lessons teaching is mostly good, with well selected resources being used effectively. In the one lesson observed where teaching was unsatisfactory, teaching did not focus sufficiently on the main objective of the lesson, and pupils were given too many short tasks to complete without sufficient challenge to engage them in geographical enquiry. This restricted the progress made and led to some not achieving as well as they could. Teaching makes good use of the local environment to develop pupils' geographical knowledge and to encourage children to debate relevant issues. Good links are made to

persuasive writing. For example, in literacy, pupils discussed writing letters about the condition of the playing fields. Pupils work well in lessons and are interested and involved in the activity. All pupils make equally satisfactory progress in lessons. They handle resources carefully and are eager to contribute to topics under discussion.

- 114 Some good use of information and communication technology was made during the inspection when pupils took the digital camera on their fieldtrip, using it to record their findings. Staff and some pupils make use of the Internet as a resource and effective use was made of an aerial photograph of the school taken from the Internet in one lesson. However, little use is made of information and communication technology as an aid to communicating work in geography through pupils making presentations to others on an aspect of their work.
- 115 The co-ordinator for the subject is very knowledgeable and offers good support to other teachers when required. She has built a useful collection of resources including maps, plans and aerial photographs. Further development of books and information and communication technology resources is still required. A national scheme of work is used to provide the framework for geography planning over time and this is to be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of the school. Currently no formal assessment system is in place to assess pupils at the end of a topic or at the end of the infants or juniors. This is an area in need of development. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning and looks at work, but opportunities for her to check the quality of teaching in the subject have been limited.

HISTORY

- 116 Standards in history are broadly in line with those expected by the end of the infants and juniors. They are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils are developing their understanding of the passage of time, confidently talking about events that were in the past, the distant past and in the present day. In Year 1, pupils discuss holidays in the past and make good comparisons with holidays today. Older pupils in Year 5 relate their work on Aztecs to the equivalent period of time in British history, making the connection between voyages of exploration and the destruction of the Aztec civilisation. Pupils in Year 6 show their understanding of changes that have taken place over time. When questioning a school visitor who was taking the role of Florence Nightingale about her life and work, they show a knowledge of some of the changes that have taken place in health care over time. Younger pupils show interest and curiosity, asking questions in handling and discussing holiday souvenirs. They describe why some objects were older than others by making comparisons with how they looked and the materials they were made from. Pupils in Year 3 examine and discuss artefacts related to ancient Egypt and some are growing in confidence to explain why they think the object is genuine or a replica. Satisfactory progress continues, with pupils in Year 5 achieving well and using written information about Aztecs to make deductions about the life of an Aztec boy, selecting the relevant information they need and justifying their answers using the evidence available. The oldest pupils act out the part of a parent or a child in drama, showing empathy with the situation families were in. Satisfactory progress is made over time, with progress and

the achievement of pupils in lessons being generally good, reflecting the quality of teaching and interest created for pupils.

- 117 Pupils show positive attitudes to their work in history. They behave well and participate enthusiastically when given the opportunity to work together with others. All pupils make equal progress in lessons. Although some opportunities are provided for using information and communication technology for finding out information, these are too infrequent. The use of information and communication technology is not yet a central part of pupils' experience and therefore too many are not developing the confidence and understanding to use the computer to research independently.
- 118 Teaching is at least satisfactory and in the majority of lessons good or very good. In the infants, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their sense of chronology by presenting them with many opportunities to make comparisons between the present day and time in the past, using a range of well chosen artefacts, inviting visitors to talk about their lives and providing stimulating displays to encourage interest. In the juniors, pupils are taught about specific periods of time in history and are encouraged to investigate the past through examining artefacts, interpreting information about the past and empathising with characters from history. When questioning Florence Nightingale, pupils made good use of their previous knowledge to ask interesting and perceptive questions. This lesson also built on pupils' literacy work when they used a letter written by Florence as the reading activity.
- 119 The co-ordinator has only recently taken on responsibility for history as well as geography and is now working hard to develop the links between the two subjects. A nationally recommended scheme of work is used to provide the framework for planning through the school. Currently no assessment at the end of a topic or at the end of the infants or juniors takes place and this is an area in need of development. Resources are currently being reviewed and more information books and computer software are required to support teachers and pupils. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning and work but there is no formal opportunity for her to check on the quality of teaching in history so, as co-ordinator, she has limited knowledge of how it is taught and how pupils learn.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 120 Standards in information and communication technology are below the national expectations for pupils by the end of both the infants and juniors. Pupils have limited opportunities to use computers and the school does not meet statutory requirements for the delivery of programmes of study for information and communication technology. Standards are lower than those reported in the last inspection and unsatisfactory progress has been made in dealing with the issues since that time.
- 121 By the end of the infants pupils use the computer to write their names and to create stories and pictures. Younger pupils in the infants write stories on the computer using lists of words for support. They collect and enter data and information into the computer to

make graphs and use the information to answer questions. They give instructions and programme a robot to make it move forward and backwards. However, pupils are not using the computer sufficiently to find information from different sources or in exploring real and imaginary situations or building on their understanding of using the computer to give instructions in order to make things happen. They have some understanding of basic computer processes such as saving their work, but have insufficient opportunity to practise these skills. Progress is therefore affected and some are not being challenged by the work and are underachieving.

- 122 Progress through the juniors is inconsistent. By the time pupils leave the school they enter data into a branching database, use spreadsheets and display charts and graphs. They present information using some features of a word processor and search for information using the Internet. Where the opportunities arise pupils enter instructions into a programmable floor robot with a sequence of instructions to achieve desired effects. They discuss their own use of the computer and describe some ways they are used outside school. Pupils have too few opportunities to present work effectively for different audiences or combine information from different sources including CDROMs, documents, pictures or to use email to communicate. Gaps in provision lead to pupils missing out and not being secure in how to use a database to organise and interrogate information, or to use models or simulations for investigations. Pupils' understanding of how the computer can be used to control and monitor changes in the environment is limited. Pupils are introduced to the Internet but they are not taught the skills of searching efficiently for information. Consequently, pupils are not developing the breadth of skills and knowledge that is expected by the age of eleven. Progress is patchy and many underachieve.
- 123 A limited number of opportunities are provided to use information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. Pupils in Year 3 use the Internet to find information for their design and technology project on boxes. In Year 6 they value the opportunity to find information for history and geography. In Year 4 good use is made of the digital camera to record and display findings when undertaking geography and science fieldwork. However, these opportunities are not part of an organised programme to ensure that information and communication technology is used to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. In some subjects, for example, music, very limited software is available and therefore teachers are unable to use information and communication technology effectively in their lessons.
- 124 Insufficient teaching of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching. The coordinator made effective use of a set of laptop computers and interactive whiteboard to teach the children how to use a spellchecker in one lesson. When working with a programmable vehicle, other pupils listened carefully to instructions, worked with interest and enthusiasm and co-operated well in small groups. All pupils made good progress in the lessons seen, showing interest and enthusiasm for the tasks but progress over time is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in provision through the school.

- 125 Unsatisfactory progress in information and communication technology since the last inspection is due to the lack of an effective subject development plan which clearly identified the priorities for development linked carefully to an adequate budget to properly resource the subject. This has resulted in an uncoordinated approach to the use of the various sources of funding. The school's falling rolls and financial difficulties have added to the problems in recent years.
- 126 However, progress has been made in some of the areas identified. Teachers' confidence has improved through training which covers basic computer skills and through their involvement in a nationally funded training programme. Resources have improved, all classrooms are now networked together and some computers have Internet access. A nationally recommended scheme of work has been adopted and a whole school scheme has recently been introduced to assess pupils' progress. However, insufficient progress has been made in developing the areas of control and modelling and pupils do not receive their entitlement to the full programmes of study. There is insufficient software to resource the scheme of work in place and to use information and communication technology to support other subject areas.
- 127 The school has a better than average computer:pupil ratio of 1:8, with sufficient resources to create an information and communication technology suite. It is now in a good position to move the subject forward. A new information and communication technology development plan is required to ensure that this future development is managed effectively. The existing policy is due for revision as it currently does not incorporate an agreed policy on using the Internet and email.
- 128 The co-ordinator works effectively on a day-to-day basis, supporting staff and managing equipment. However, his effectiveness in bringing about improvements to the information and communication technology curriculum has been limited and this needs to be specifically addressed in the revised development plan. A system of recording pupils' progress has recently been introduced for information and communication technology. It is in the early stages of development and needs further work to ensure that teachers have a good understanding of how to assess pupils' capability. Monitoring of teaching in information and communication technology is currently not carried out due to the lack of opportunity to release the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues in classrooms.

MUSIC

- 129 By the end of the juniors, where standards attained by pupils are in line with those expected nationally in some aspects of the work, there are a number of important gaps where pupils are not quite reaching the standard they should. Attainment overall is therefore below that expected by the time pupils leave the school. This is lower than that seen at the time of the last inspection. However, changes in the National Curriculum and inconsistencies in teachers' knowledge of the subject have affected progress made by

pupils. Standards attained by pupils at the end of the infants, however, are in line with those expected of similar aged pupils.

- 130 The quality of pupils' singing is good and they achieve well. In wholeschool singing sessions, they sing tunefully and maintain the melody well. They have been well taught and pay close attention to the rhythm of the songs they sing. In assemblies, many older pupils are able to sing a descant or musical round, maintaining their melody against a contrasting tune. This they do well. Most make good progress in singing. Where younger pupils show a general interest and enjoyment, this is developed well by the coordinator, who encourages pupils and sets a high standard through his work in leading singing with the whole school and also with the choir. Many respond very well to this and show a real interest in singing. In other aspects of work, younger pupils are developing a good understanding of rhythm. They clap different rhythms in response to symbols and mostly keep in time. By the end of the infants some pupils are beginning to match patterns on cards with simple tunes that go up or down and recognise changes in the music they hear. Progress made by pupils through the juniors, however, is inconsistent in lessons and is too slow in some respects. Insufficient attention is given to pupils' understanding of how different musical sounds can be combined to create contrasting effects. When listening to music or creating their own musical ideas with instruments pupils are not confidently making links between the music and the effect changes in volume, speed, and the use of different instruments will have in improving the work. Consequently, whilst some achieve well in singing, they are not showing the good level of achievement in other aspects of their work.
- 131 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from good to unsatisfactory. Not all teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject. Where it is weaker, this leads to undemanding work being provided for pupils, with the teacher lacking the knowledge to build upon the pupils' responses and improve the quality of their work. Consequently the pace of learning slows. Although pupils always show interest, the pace at which they work is sometimes a little slow. In practical work, too few musical instruments are sometimes provided, resulting in too many pupils having to sit and listen rather than practise the ideas for themselves. The school is trying to implement a nationally recommended scheme of work to guide progress through the school. However, time given to the subject in the juniors is barely sufficient to cover all aspects of this work in the depth required. Consequently, some parts are not taught in the depth required which leads to gaps and affects the progress pupils make.
- 132 Resources have improved since the last inspection. The school now has an appropriate range of tuned instruments. However, software to support the use of computers in lessons is very limited and consequently does little to promote information and communication technology through the subject. A good range of extra music activities is provided and well supported by pupils, including a choir and tuition on flutes and clarinets. The coordinator provides good support to teachers in planning lessons but has limited opportunity to work alongside teachers who lack confidence and expertise. Where this has happened in the past, he has been very successful in raising teachers' confidence and

improving the quality of work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 133 Due to the nature of the inspection week and the special focus given by the school to science and technology, few opportunities were available to observe physical education lessons. From the evidence of lessons observed through the week and through talking with staff and looking at planning, standards are average and similar to those that would be expected by the time pupils leave the juniors. Standards in the last inspection were observed to be good by the end of the juniors. Although good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in sport outside the school day, time for physical education lessons and use of the hall during the school day is restricted and this inevitably reduces opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and build upon earlier learning. This slows the overall progress made by pupils through the school and affects their achievement.
- 134 Towards the end of the infants, pupils show a good understanding of the need for exercise. Many know why it is good for them and they can describe how they feel both before and after physical activity. They have a good sense of safety and run into spaces, changing speed and direction as they run to avoid collisions with others. They listen well to instructions and respond well to the teacher. Most make reasonable progress and are appropriately agile. They jump and land safely, with some combining simple movements, for example running, jumping into the air, landing on one or both feet and then changing direction and repeating the sequence. Opportunities for gymnastics, dance and games are planned for all pupils. In using small physical education games equipment, pupils generally make steady progress after leaving reception. They throw and catch with increasing accuracy. Some catch a ball at speed and return it accurately to the sender. By the end of the infants, however, few confidently suggest improvements to the work of those around them or look at how they can improve their own work. They seldom initiate new ideas and are restricted by limited opportunities being provided for them.
- 135 Through the juniors, pupils are introduced to a broader range of sports and physical activities. They swim, and take part in football and netball and a range of gymnastics and athletic activities. Some older pupils are introduced to outdoor and adventurous activities through a residential visit that includes climbing and orienteering. However, pupils are charged for the activity and therefore some pupils do not take part due to the cost. The school is aware of this inequality and is planning to provide alternative provision for those who are unable to take part in a residential experience. Most pupils make reasonable progress through the juniors. Their throwing techniques become more accurate and powerful as they develop physically and many easily apply the skills they are taught into their own work. At lunchtimes, some older pupils devise their own games, agree their own rules and organise themselves without the need for direction from an adult. This is good and shows developing responsibility. However, in lessons observed, the pace of learning was sometimes a little slow with too great an emphasis upon practising skills in isolation and not developing these into simple games where pupils could apply these techniques whilst moving, finding space and controlling their own movements. Pupils

receive appropriate opportunities for swimming in order that they reach the appropriate standard and understand about water safety by the end of the juniors.

- 136 Few lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching that was seen was satisfactory. Teachers were secure in understanding the techniques they wished to teach, but frequently missed opportunities to encourage pupils to apply these skills into games or to reflect upon and improve their own work. Occasionally, too long was spent talking and demonstrating what was wanted with limited opportunities for pupils to practise, refine and improve their ideas. This led to some older pupils lacking enthusiasm and losing interest at times.
- 137 The school has adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work to guide teachers in planning for progress through the school. However, limited time for physical education and restrictions on the use of the hall do make it difficult for all aspects of the subject to be covered in appropriate depth. The school is very aware of this and the newly appointed co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done. Although there is limited opportunity to monitor the quality of physical education through the school, she has already identified key priorities for development and has begun to develop good links with other schools and community groups to improve provision, particularly for problem solving and outdoor activities. There is an appropriate range of resources to meet the needs of the curriculum but a greater balance between the use of the hall and school field is required to ensure sufficient opportunities are provided for physical education throughout the year.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 138 It is not possible to make an accurate assessment of standards in the infants as only one lesson was seen and there was very little evidence in pupils' work of standards attained. In the juniors, three lessons were observed and overall the attainment is below that expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and newly published levels of attainment. This appears to indicate regression since the last inspection but this is not the case. The new Sunderland Agreed Syllabus requires several world religions to be studied in some detail while the previous syllabus had a mainly Christian focus. Pupils have not yet acquired the fundamental knowledge of world religions to allow them to meet the required standards. The new syllabus has been in place for less than two years and time for religious education in school has been limited as the school invested greater time and effort into improving standards in literacy.
- 139 However, within this context pupils are making good progress and achieving well. Year 2 pupils are able to discuss the lifestyle of a Buddhist monk. They understand the meaning of meditation, its links to Buddhism, and of the things that make people happy in different parts of the world. Older pupils make good progress in their knowledge of Islam. They are able to explain prayer, and the dress, artefacts and preparation required for prayer. During a lesson observed, pupils made clear progress in their understanding of pilgrimage, but their achievement is limited overall. Although they develop a good knowledge, they initially struggle to understand the meaning of belief and commitment. By Year 6, pupils

are beginning to use Islamic terms correctly. They know the Five Pillars of Islam and they are beginning to understand the symbolism in the design of a mosque. These pupils also have some knowledge of Sikh traditions. Pupils work with interest and enthusiasm. They display empathy and sensitivity to a variety of people and traditions.

- 140 Teaching is satisfactory and often better. This is because thorough planning enables teachers who are insecure in the subject, to be confident in the management of lessons. Teachers also ensure that most of the lessons relate to the pupils' own experience. Good use is made of artefacts and video material to support learning. However, little use is currently made of information and communication technology. Teachers are careful to develop the two religious education attainment targets relating to knowledge and understanding and to empathy and awareness of the impact of faith on life style. They usually have high expectations of the pupils. This ensures the challenge and pace of learning provides pupils with a sound understanding of the information and ideas they are taught. Work is not matched specifically to the abilities of different groups of pupils but they do help and support each other, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress in lessons.
- 141 The subject is well led and managed by the humanities co-ordinator, who is not a religious education specialist. However, she has enthusiasm and is working hard to improve her knowledge and skills in this area. She ensures that all teachers are well supported for religious education and her work with the Local Education Authority brings new ideas to the teaching of the subject. A good example of this is the work being done on religious education and thinking skills.
- 142 Religious education resources in school are limited but of good quality, and use is made of resources borrowed from a local resource centre. Resources are used well in lessons and in some excellent displays around the school. The subject is monitored by the co-ordinator, who follows the school policy, which has a specific focus for monitoring each term. This is useful but it lacks rigour as, to date, no religious education lessons have been observed. Sunderland has recently produced an assessment framework for religious education related to the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this will be implemented this year for the first time. However, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to consider how the assessments will be used to raise standards and improve provision across the school.
- 143 The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Teachers refer to religious education topics in collective worship, develop themes in displays around the school that relate closely to cultural development and link moral and social issues to personal belief where it is appropriate.