

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DELVES LANE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Consett, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114047

Headteacher: Mrs S Haley

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Halford  
12908

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 May 2001

Inspection number: 192652

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Delves Lane Consett County Durham
Postcode:	DH8 1ES
Telephone number:	01207 503984
Fax number:	None
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Smith
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12908	Mr D J Halford	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
			English as an additional language	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements
			Geography	How well are pupils' taught?
			History	How well is the school led and managed?
			Religious Education	
9649	Mrs J M Smith	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22080	Miss J M Golightly	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			Special Educational Needs	
16761	Mr M P Hemmings	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Science	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			Information & Communication Technology	
			Design & Technology	
			Music	
			Physical Education	
			Equal Opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Delves Lane Junior School is a smaller than average school, with 146 pupils on roll, and it is maintained by the Durham County Education Authority. It is situated in Consett, County Durham, sharing a site with Delves Lane Infant and Nursery School and it serves its immediate area. The pupils come from a wide social background in an area where there is considerable material hardship. Many children enter the school with below average skills in important areas. Twenty-three per cent of the pupils are entitled to meals without charge, which is above the national average, and almost seventeen per cent of the pupils have special educational needs. This is below the national average. Almost five per cent of the pupils have statements of special educational need. This is well above the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

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

**This is an improving school with more strengths than weaknesses.** The school is well led by a newly appointed headteacher, who has been ‘acting headteacher’ for almost two years. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are well known and much has been undertaken to lead the pupils to achieve higher standards. Standards in English are generally in line with the national average, although pupils’ writing skills are below average. Standards in mathematics and science, whilst showing signs of improvement, are well below the national average. The pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and behave well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum is broad, balanced and appropriately planned to meet the learning needs of the children. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by staff and governors who have a strong commitment to the school.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their work in school. They respect each other, enjoy good relationships and behave well.
- The school promotes the pupils’ personal development well, especially in the areas of social and moral development.
- The school has developed a good partnership with parents.

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

- Standards in aspects of English, and standards generally in mathematics and science because they are below those expected for pupils aged eleven.
- The quality of teaching to ensure that teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve are sufficiently high.
- The quality of pupils’ written work.
- The quality of pupils’ presentation of their work and the consistency of teachers’ marking.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory levels of improvement since it was last inspected in March 1997. Much of the improvement has taken place within the last two years, despite the fact that there has been a substantial movement of staff. Teachers’ planning documents are now in place for all subjects and the school development plan is a good working tool to promote improvement. The role of the deputy head is now clearly defined and a new appointment is expected before the start of the new

school year. Standards in some aspects of English have improved. Pupils' listening skills are good, and they read well. Pupils' writing skills remain unsatisfactory. Standards in mathematics and science, whilst showing trends of improvement since 1999, are still too low and more work needs to be done for pupils to progress towards the national expectation in these subjects.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	E	E	E	E

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

In the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in the year 2000, standards of attainment were below the national average in English and well below the national average in mathematics and science. In comparison to similar schools, results in 2000 were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. However, the percentage of pupils gaining higher levels in the 2000 tests was well above average for English, and broadly in line with the average for similar schools in mathematics and science. Over time, there has been improvement in the pupils' standards of attainment in all three subjects, but the rate of improvement has been insufficient for the standards to meet the national average. There is evidence that girls perform better than boys, particularly in science. The school is aware of this and has plans to deal with it. The school is setting realistic targets for improvement, which are regularly reviewed. Pupils listen well, but their speaking skills are rather limited. Standards in reading are good, but standards in writing are unsatisfactory. This important weakness limits the pupils' written work across a range of subjects. The attainment of pupils currently in school is generally better than that reflected in the National Curriculum tests of 2000, especially in mathematics and science, where standards are below average. Standards are not yet as high as they could be, because: the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has not yet made sufficient impact on the pupils' learning: some teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve is not yet high enough: pupils' writing skills need further development and some worksheets do not provide sufficient challenge. The school has recently implemented setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy lessons, which are having a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

In all the other subjects inspected pupils' standards of attainment are generally in line with that expected for their age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. Most settle well to

	their tasks and concentrate on what they are asked to do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good in the classrooms, around the school and in the playground. This has a positive impact on their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils respect others and understand that their actions affect others. They are pleased to take responsibility and discharge it well.
Attendance	Although attendance rates were below average in 1999 the school's current attendance rates are satisfactory. Most pupils arrive punctually.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	N/A	N/A	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 satisfactory or better in 91% of the lessons seen. It is very good in 3%, good in 31%, satisfactory in 50% and unsatisfactory in 9%. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy, where 'setting' has recently been established and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. In almost all classes the teachers manage the pupils appropriately and use resources effectively. In some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve is not high enough. Good quality teaching is seen most frequently in Year 4 and in the group teaching of pupils with special educational needs. In the best lessons, teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and pupils' interest is maintained. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory teachers sometimes take too long with explanations, leading to some pupils losing interest in the lesson and thus learning opportunities are missed. Low expectations lead to work which does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Overall, insufficient attention is given to the presentation of pupils' work, and teachers' marking is inconsistent.

The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. Many children throughout the school are keen to learn, work with interest and want to do well. They show good quality listening skills, good levels of concentration and work independently when the opportunities arise.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned and all statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well and this enables pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory gains in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

language	
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, in particular the provision for pupils' social and moral development. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares appropriately for the pupils. Good provision is made to promote thoughtful and positive behaviour.

The school works well in partnership with parents. A significant number of parents are involved in the work of the school and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is providing good leadership. She is supported by senior staff and governors who are inexperienced but anxious to gain expertise and who are committed to moving the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities and support the headteacher well in establishing a positive direction for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is developing an understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the challenges it faces.
The strategic use of resources	The finance available to the school is allocated appropriately to the priorities it has identified. Governors are anxious to obtain the best value they can from the finance available to them.

The levels of staffing – both teaching and non-teaching – are satisfactory. The accommodation is clean and used appropriately. Learning resources are adequate and generally of appropriate quality.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like school.</li> <li>They are expected to work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>The teaching is good and the school is well led.</li> <li>The school works well with parents, who feel they can approach the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The range of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>Behaviour of pupils</li> <li>The school working more closely with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree that pupils like school, that the school is well led and that the school works well with parents. The inspection team feel that the pupils could make even better progress in their learning than they do. The inspection team do not agree with the negative points made. The pupils' behaviour and the school's working relationship with parents are strengths of the school. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 11 show that standards of attainment are below the national average in English and well below the national average for mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' results are broadly in line with the average for English, but well below the average in mathematics and science. The school has been rather more successful in raising the attainment of more able pupils, with the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (level 5) being well above the average for similar schools in English, and broadly in line with the average for similar schools in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points scores for all three subjects has shown improvement since 1998, but the overall rate of improvement has been below that found nationally. Improvement in English has been at a faster rate than that found nationally. The current pupils in Year 6 are attaining a higher standard of work than is reflected in the Year 2000 tests, especially in mathematics and science. However, levels of attainment are below average. Pupils' achievements, in relation to their prior learning are generally satisfactory as many pupils enter the school at the age of seven with attainment below the national average in important area of writing and science and close to the national average in mathematics.
2. Pupils' listening skills are good. They are attentive and listen well in almost all lessons and other occasions. They listen effectively to their teachers and their peers in a wide range of situations, including in assemblies and when singing. For many pupils, speaking skills are not so well advanced. Most speak clearly and audibly and are able to express themselves adequately, but they rarely explore the richness of expression and language in either their speech or their writing. In reading, standards of attainment, by the age of eleven, are above average, with the majority of pupils able to read accurately and confidently from texts which are generally suitable for them. Pupils are able to say why they have selected the book they are reading and why they have chosen it. They have favourite authors and know why they like them. Standards of writing are below average and remain so through the school. This is an important weakness and has a negative effect on pupils' work in a wide range of subjects. Written work is often badly presented and lacking in care. It is not always consistently marked, which does not aid the pupils' improvement. Much written work is undertaken through worksheets which do not always encourage written answers in sufficient detail and pupils have too few opportunities to write at length. The school has recently implemented some setting arrangements for literacy lessons and this is clearly having a positive effect on pupils' attainment, but the development is relatively new and has had insufficient time to be reflected in pupils' test results.
3. From the work seen on the inspection, the attainment of most pupils currently in Year 6 is below the national expectation in mathematics, but at a higher level than that reflected in the Year 2000 tests. By the time they are 11, most pupils are able to demonstrate that they are competent in the four rules of number and are able to identify prime numbers and multiples. For many, their mental agility is sound. Their knowledge and understanding of fractions and decimals and their skills in using them to solve problems is not as secure, and there is a limited knowledge of related mathematical language to be able to explain what they are doing. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of working collaboratively to solve problems. The way that teachers mark the pupils' work is not always effective in enabling

them to know what they need to do next to improve. As with literacy, the school has recently introduced setting arrangements for mathematics and early indications are that this is having a positive effect on the pupils' standards of attainment.

4. Pupils' standards of attainment in science are below average, but showing improvement on the 2000 test results. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory, although there is evidence of girls attaining higher standards than boys. The school is aware of this and is undertaking action to improve the standards of attainment of boys. As they pass through the school, pupils are able to learn how to use a wide range of scientific equipment but there are insufficient opportunities for them to work together with this equipment in structured, practical, investigative activities. Consequently, they are not effectively building up their skills in carrying out a fair test and, by the time they are eleven, their investigative skills are not suitably developed. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities that develop the skills of making evaluations and conclusions based on prior scientific knowledge. The pupils' standards of presentation are unsatisfactory, with teachers not having high enough expectations of what they can do.
5. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected by the age of eleven. Pupils show an ability to use word processing skills effectively and can present their ideas well. They are making satisfactory gains in their learning. Much of this progress can be attributed to effective use of a new computer suite which is effectively timetabled and appropriately used.
6. In other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, pupils' standards of attainment are generally in line with those expected for their age, although their work is often hampered by unsatisfactory writing skills and careless presentation.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for, especially in the setting arrangement which are being undertaken in literacy and numeracy. They are supported effectively and make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
8. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately in other subjects. Speaking skills are developed in assemblies and written skills are incorporated into the work in ICT. Numeracy skills are included in work in geography and history.
9. There are encouraging signs of improvement in pupils' attainment, particularly in basic skills, and the school has recently made positive improvements in its organisation to accelerate this improvement. It has set appropriately challenging targets for improvement, reviews them regularly and is anticipating achieving them.

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

10. The school has successfully maintained pupil's positive attitudes to learning and good standards of behaviour since the previous inspection. In the majority of lessons pupils respond well and behaviour is good. Across the school most pupils are eager to participate in lessons, answer questions and concentrate on their work. Pupils in Year 3 are able to work collaboratively during geography work that involves investigation, research and discussion with staff and peers. Lessons that are planned to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs, excite the pupils and they are keen to share and demonstrate their work. This was evident in a Year 5/6 special educational needs group where pupils were studying the characteristics of minibeasts in dry and damp habitats. During this lesson pupils worked in

small groups with school staff and parent helpers. Much of the lesson took place outside of the classroom within the school grounds. Their behaviour was very good and they acted responsibly adhering to the school code of conduct throughout. The interest and enthusiasm for learning continued into the extra-curricular programme provided by the school.

11. There is a small minority of lessons when the pace is too slow and subsequently pupils are restless and do not fully concentrate on their work. This was evident on a few occasions in some Year 3, 4 and 5 classes. During these lessons teachers did not have sufficiently high enough expectations of what the pupils could achieve and there was insufficient teacher/pupil interactive teaching. Pupils throughout the school do not always take sufficient pride in their written work and standards of presentation, including writing, are low.
12. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to experience responsibility. Year 6 pupils are very keen to be playground monitors and proudly wear the yellow bib of recognition. Headteacher awards are distributed for various reasons including good behaviour and improving work. As a result of improved table manners and good lunchtime behaviour, pupils can sit at a specially designated table in the dining hall that is attractively set out.
13. Pupils respond well to responsibility and the weekly paired reading session when lower and upper Key Stage pupils read together has a successful impact on personal development. Year 6 pupils speak with pride and enthusiasm about the school and believe that their experience prepares them very well for the transition to secondary school. They look forward to the proposed school council that is identified to commence at the start of the new academic year. The relationships between pupils and adults and staff working within the school are good. Pupils enjoy celebrating the achievement of others as was evident during a Year 3 geography lesson when pupils burst into spontaneous applause for one child who had completed a good piece of work.
14. The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils have respect for each other, staff and property. In most lessons behaviour is good and staff deal effectively and quickly with the few pupils who display, at times, more challenging behaviour. As pupils move around the school to different classrooms throughout the day they move sensibly with little direct adult supervision. The established structures, routines and sanctions are displayed throughout the school and in classrooms. Pupils know the expected standards of behaviour and recognise that there is a consistent approach adopted throughout the school. Pupils comment that incidences of bullying are very rare and that through PSHE lessons they have been taught how to deal with bullying should it occur.
15. Attendance is satisfactory. The attendance rate for the last school year was below the national average. This was due to the irregular attendance of two pupils who have now left the school. During this school year, attendance has improved and more rigorous monitoring systems of attendance have now been put in place. Most pupils are keen to come to school. Registration is taken promptly and lessons get off to a prompt start. The rate of exclusion is very low.

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

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 91% of the lessons seen. It is very good in 3%, good in 34%, satisfactory in 34% and unsatisfactory in 9%.

17. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory, overall. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented, and the school has recently started to set pupils, by ability, for these lessons. This is having a positive effect on pupils' standards of work but they are not yet sufficiently established for this improvement to be reflected in the national test results for eleven-year-olds. The teaching is often good where pupils with special educational needs are well supported in these sets. Younger pupils are taught effectively by a teacher who encourages them particularly well and enables them to use their understanding thoroughly and take their knowledge forward.
18. Teachers' planning is detailed and comprehensive. It has improved from the position reported when the school was last inspected. Class groups are generally managed in a satisfactory manner despite the fact that teachers regularly move between groups and many teach in rooms which they do not regard as their 'class base'. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory.
19. Where teaching is at its best, often in Year 4 and amongst the groups of pupils with special educational needs, pupils are clear about what is expected of them and what they are to learn. Their interest is clearly maintained, and given the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good listening skills, the best progress is made in these lessons. In the small number of lessons where teaching shows unsatisfactory features, some teachers take too long with explanations, pupils' interest wanes and learning opportunities are missed. Sometimes, ineffective management of pupils leads to the pace of the lesson being significantly reduced.
20. There are two areas where teaching across the school shows some weakness. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve is not always high enough. There is a heavy reliance on worksheets which do not always present sufficient challenge to pupils in what is expected of them. In writing, for example, where the inclusion of single word answers into pre-printed sentences does not promote sufficient opportunities to improve pupils' writing skills. Equally, teachers' marking is not sufficiently rigorous or consistent. Positive comments are often written on pieces of work which are poorly presented and insufficiently challenging. Few written comments help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and thus raise their standards of attainment.
21. Pupils' developing literacy and numeracy skills can be seen in work in other subjects, although the quality of pupils' writing remains unsatisfactory, and this has a negative effect on the pupils' finished work. However, many pupils read well and show satisfactory basic number skills. This combined with their positive attitudes to the work they undertake and their good listening skills leads to the quality of their learning being satisfactory, overall.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs shows good features. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of the pupils' needs and individual education plans are used effectively to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress.
23. The school has an appropriate policy for homework, which is set to consolidate pupils' learning. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the amount and the range of work undertaken at home, and the inspection findings are that the provision is satisfactory.

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



24. There is a satisfactory curriculum that meets all statutory requirements and the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school implements the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies appropriately, which is helping to raise standards in English but has not yet had time to do the same in mathematics. The provision for information and communication technology has been greatly improved since the last inspection, with the creation of a computer suite in which all children have weekly sessions to improve their basic skills in using computers. This has led to children achieving better standards in the subject and they are now satisfactory. There is satisfactory provision to support the children's personal, social and health education and they have many opportunities to relate to people in a variety of situations, so that they learn to respect the values and beliefs of other children and adults. This provision for social education is enhanced by a wide range of extra activities, such as visits to places of educational interest and visitors to school from a variety of backgrounds, which is an important factor in promoting the good relationships to be seen throughout the school. Within the science curriculum, the children are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and learn about how medicines are drugs that can be helpful but are dangerous when misused. The school provides for sex education in a sensitive manner, with the support of the school nurse, that emphasises family values within a caring community. The children are given a variety of responsibilities as they pass through the school and this has a positive effect on their personal development. They also have opportunities to take part in 'Circletime' activities, in which they sit in a circle with their teacher to talk about any worries they might have and such issues as the importance of caring for others, which effectively supports their personal development. The school is successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to the curriculum. This is helped by the setting arrangements for the Literacy and Numeracy lessons, by which the children are taught in groups of similar ability. This is seen by the school as a major initiative to ensure that the aptitudes, abilities and individual needs of all children are met. The provision for children with special educational needs is good, with effective procedures in place for the early identification and assessment of these children. The individual education plans give appropriate targets, which are broken down into small steps to enable children to make sound progress in their learning and achieve in a satisfactory way. The needs of the children in Year 6 are met through the use of 'Booster' classes in which they are split into two ability groups and work each week on preparation and revision for the National tests for eleven year olds.
25. The school's planning procedures have been improved since the last inspection and all subjects now have suitable guidelines to better ensure continuity and progression of learning, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, teachers are provided with appropriate information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught, so that they are able to give work that suitably builds on children's prior learning.
26. The provision for extra curricular activities offered to children is good, with a wide variety of clubs that include football, netball, recorder group, choir, cross country and computer club. All children are also given the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of educational visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. They make good use of trips to Eden Camp in Yorkshire, when studying World War 2, and Beamish Burn to deepen their understanding of topics covered in science. To support their work in English, the children are able to visit theatres in Newcastle and Sunderland to see productions of Shakespeare's plays. There is also a residential stay at Winmarleigh Hall in Garstang for children in Years 5 and 6 to help develop their personal and social skills.

27. The school has made productive links with the community, especially the local church, which makes an effective contribution to children's learning. The vicar visits the school on a regular basis to lead assemblies and to take religious education lessons for children in Year 6. There are visits from the community policeman and representatives from the fire service to talk and work with the children on such topics as road safety and the awareness of the dangers of fire. There are opportunities for parents and members of the local community to come into school to watch a concert at Christmas and musical productions at other times of the year. The school choir visits the home for elderly residents and the town centre to sing carols. The children are actively involved in raising money for a variety of charities, including 'Help the Aged' and a local children's hospice, which enables them to gain a good understanding of the needs of others. The school makes good use of the facilities at the local Village Hall to develop the children's physical skills, as was seen when children in Year 6 were using the all weather surface during a cricket lesson. There is suitable liaison with the local secondary school, with teachers working closely together to ensure that children in Year 6 are effectively prepared for when they transfer.
28. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, being particularly strong in the moral and social aspects.
29. The children's spiritual development through the curriculum and acts of collective worship is satisfactory, with children having opportunity to quietly reflect in assemblies and at other times of the day in classrooms. Spirituality is also promoted through links with the local church, with the vicar coming into school on a regular basis to take assemblies and to work with children in Year 6 during their religious education lessons. The experiences that children have access to in science, music, drama and art play a helpful role in developing this aspect of their school life. In assemblies, there is effective use of music to heighten the mood of spirituality. All teachers greatly value children's ideas and efforts and this is shown by the way that all children are encouraged to make contributions during lessons and by the attractive displays of children's work throughout the school. The school's provision for moral development is good and, as a result, it is a friendly community in which children clearly know right from wrong. There is a simple, but effective behaviour policy, that is consistently applied by all staff. The policy is based on positive encouragement and all children are aware of the awards and sanctions that the school uses. This awareness is helped by the fact that the children are actively involved in drawing up the rules for classrooms and the yard. Moral themes are an integral part of the school ethos and feature in many aspects of the curriculum. "Circletime" activities are used well to promote good moral values, with children being able to discuss issues such as the impact of their actions on others. The staff set good examples and work hard to promote a sense of fairness among children and are successful in teaching them to be tolerant of each other.
30. There is also good provision for the children's social development and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together with respect and tolerance. Children listen to and respect the opinions of others, as was seen during the introductions and round up sessions of most lessons. They are encouraged to work collaboratively, as was evident in a physical education lesson when children in Year 6 were helping each other to develop their cricket skills. Children are able to take on a variety of responsibilities as they move through the school, such as acting as monitors, taking registers to the office and passing messages to members of staff. The good opportunities for children to take part in extra curricular activities, including school trips and residential visits, effectively supports their social development. The provision for children's cultural development is satisfactory. They learn to appreciate aspects of their own culture by visits to museums and art galleries and also to

theatres in Sunderland and Newcastle to see productions, for example, of Shakespeare's plays. They also have had opportunities to work with visitors that have included music groups playing brass and string instruments. Books have been carefully chosen to ensure that the environment reflects the valuing of different communities. However, the school recognises the need to more effectively prepare children for life in a culturally diverse society by such methods as inviting people from a variety of faiths to visit school and talk about their beliefs to develop the children's understanding and tolerance of other people's religious convictions and cultural traditions.

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

31. The school cares appropriately for the children, with all staff working together to provide a happy and supportive learning environment in which each child is valued, treated with respect and made to feel special. It is obvious that the children feel secure and are able to grow in confidence as they progress through the school.
32. There are satisfactory procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and she liaises in a suitable manner with local agencies and attends any necessary meetings. All staff are aware of current practices and ensure that they keep abreast of any changes in this area of school life. Throughout the school, all adults have a good personal knowledge of the children that they work with and, as a result, are able to cater well for individual needs. The procedures for accidents, emergency evacuations from the building and risk and safety assessment are all well established in the school. Several of the staff are qualified first aiders and parents are quickly notified if their child feels ill. The midday supervisors are alert to what is happening in the playground and take suitable care of the children. There is suitable use made of visitors from medical backgrounds, to support children's' health and welfare as part of the school's personal, social and health education provision.
33. Children with special educational needs are well cared for, enabling them to take part in all activities. Their progress is closely monitored and recorded, so that the work they are given effectively matches their learning and personal needs. Any concerns that teachers have about individuals are followed up sensitively, with parents being consulted and kept fully informed of what is happening.
34. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour, with the children being involved in drawing up the school rules, which are consistently applied through the school. There is a clear system of sanctions and rewards and parents are involved at an early stage in cases of inappropriate behaviour. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good and it is made apparent to everyone in the school that bullying is not acceptable. Children are aware of the teachers' high expectations of them in terms of behaviour and there is much emphasis placed on rewarding positive behaviour. Any instances of roughness or unkindness are discussed in class and this helps to reinforce the importance of care and consideration for others. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory, though the school still does not follow up unexplained absences promptly enough.
35. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the procedures for assessment and record keeping, which are now satisfactory, and can be used by teachers to decide children's levels of attainment and set work accordingly, especially in English and mathematics. The use

of assessment to set targets for improvement are at an early stage and the school sees this as a priority area for development. Assessment information for children with special educational needs is used effectively to plan future work. There are also suitable systems in place to monitor the achievements of different groups of children, which means that the school is effective in meeting the needs of children of different abilities. The procedures for monitoring the personal development of children are mainly informal, but never the less satisfactory. The teachers work closely together as children pass through the school and the good exchange of information means that their individual personal needs are effectively met. There is close liaison with the local secondary school, with teachers from both schools working together to ensure that children in Year 6 are well prepared for when they transfer to this school.

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

36. Parents strongly support the school. The parents' questionnaire reveals the confidence which parents have in the school's work. Parents particularly appreciate the approachability of staff and the way that their children are expected to work hard. Parents at the parents' meeting held before the inspection said that they valued the growing sense of partnership between them and the school. Parents feel at ease when they need to approach the school and appreciate the responsiveness of the school to any concerns or suggestions they might have. The creation of a parents' room where meetings can be held is one example of the school's responsiveness to parents' suggestions. Parents particularly value the way in which the school contacts them to give good news about their children and not just when there are concerns. The good partnership between school and parents helps the pupils' learning.
37. The only concern which a significant minority of parents voiced through the parents' questionnaire is the amount of homework given. The inspection found no evidence to support this concern. There is a well established homework routine. The school provides homework diaries for parents to sign and in which they can make comments. It also holds a homework club every week to support children who have difficulties with homework.
38. Communication between home and school is good. The well illustrated prospectus and regular newsletters keep parents up to date with events in the school and other matters which concern them. The prospectus does not include attendance rates and does not therefore comply with statutory requirements. Parents value the parents' evenings held to discuss their children's progress and these are well attended. However, there are shortcomings in the annual written reports for parents. Reports on numeracy and literacy are often vague; they do not consistently provide a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Reports on other subjects briefly describe the curriculum covered but do not relate specifically to children's progress. Brief helpful targets are given for numeracy, literacy and science.
39. The school encourages parents to support their children's work at home through its regular homework routine and by providing all pupils with reading bags and homework diaries. The school has held meetings to inform parents about the literacy and numeracy strategies, and the meeting held for parents of Year 6 pupils about the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was well attended. The headteacher describes the support which many parents give to the school as "brilliant". Several parents, parent governors and a grandmother give valuable and regular help in the classrooms with group work and practical activities. Parents also help with after school clubs. There is an active "Friends of the School" association which holds social and fund-raising events and has raised money for the library and to buy video cameras.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership. After an extended period as 'acting headteacher' she has been appointed to the permanent position very recently. She is supported well by senior staff and a clear education direction has been established. Gradual improvement in pupils' standards of attainment have been established. The headteacher has the confidence of the governors, many of who are inexperienced, but anxious to gain expertise and take the school forward. The governors are developing an appropriate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively.
41. Priorities for improvement are accurately identified and the school' development plan is a useful document. It is appropriately costed and contains clear criteria against which the school can monitor its improvement. There are clear and appropriate targets for action identified.
42. The management of special educational needs is effective. Provision for pupils is good. Individual education plans are appropriately in place and the progress towards the pupils' targets is effectively monitored. Procedures for the identification of pupils' special educational needs is good. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are fully implemented. All these procedures enable pupils on the special educational needs register to make satisfactory progress in their learning.
43. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are good. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is regularly monitored. There is an awareness that boys do not perform as well as girls in some important curriculum areas, notably in science, and the school has established systems to review this situation carefully and take appropriate action. The school set appropriate targets for improvement and has good procedures to see that they are met. Where subject coordinators are established in their roles, they have a clear picture of the needs of their subject, but recent staffing changes have meant that some staff are coordinating some subjects temporarily and in these circumstances their overview is not thorough.
44. Governors have an appropriate understanding of their role in school development planning. There are at present only a small number of working sub-committees, but these are effective in ensuring that statutory requirements are met. The development of a wider range of sub-committees is needed as the governing body become more experienced and confident in their actions. The school has appropriate aims and a good level of commitment to improvement. Relationships in the school are good and all the pupils are provided with equal access to the full range of opportunities provided. Pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated by all.
45. The school finances are controlled effectively and allocated appropriately to those areas which have been identified as priorities. A number of long term staff absences have meant that the school budget has until recently had very little flexibility. It is only now developing a degree of flexibility for governors to exercise some leeway in how the funds may be used. However, when opportunities have arisen the governors make every effort to ensure that they gain the best value for the money they spend.
46. The accommodation provides a good quality learning environment for the pupils. It is particularly good in the upper corridor, where carpets and good quality displays add much to the creation of a good leaning environment. Improvements have been made to the lower corridor, but these have yet to be completed. The building are maintained to a high standard of

cleanliness by the caretaking and cleaning staff. There are an adequate number of teachers and classroom support assistants in school. Some are employed on a short term basis as another senior management post is about to be allocated. The quality of learning resources is generally satisfactory. The school has recently established a computer suite which is due to be fully resourced by the start of the new school year. The school grounds, which are shared with the neighbouring Infant and Nursery school, are extensive. They contain a good number of hard play areas together with a large grassed area for games and recreation.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In order to improve further, the Governors, headteacher and staff should takes steps to improve:-
- (1) Standards in aspects of English, mathematics and science because they are below those expected for pupils aged eleven.  
(paragraphs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 24, 43, 48, 52, 59, 62.)
  - (2) The quality of teaching to ensure that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sufficiently high.  
(paragraphs: 11, 20, 56, 60)
  - (3) The quality of pupils' written work  
(paragraphs: 2, 6, 11, 21, 49, 52, 76)
  - (4) The quality of pupils' presentation of their work and the consistency of teachers' marking  
(paragraphs: 3, 4, 11, 20, 52, 60)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

39
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	34	54	9	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	Y3- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	146

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	32
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	5
Number of pupils on the school’s special educational needs register	N/a	25

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### ***Attendance***

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.4%
National comparative data	5.2%

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2%
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 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	18	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	14	10	14
	Total	26	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (51)	58 (56)	71 (54)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	12	13
	Girls	11	13	15
	Total	18	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (61)	66 (54)	74 (49)
	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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	146
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	1	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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	28.8

#### **Education support staff: Y3– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	653

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a

Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 / 2000
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	£
Total income	290243
Total expenditure	274622
Expenditure per pupil	1685
Balance brought forward from previous year	8041
Balance carried forward to next year	23662

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate 53.4%**

Number of questionnaires sent out	146
Number of questionnaires returned	78

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	1	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	45	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	51	5	4	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	56	19	1	0
The teaching is good.	45	45	6	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	42	6	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	32	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	53	9	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	1	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	36	5	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	46	13	1	5

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

### **ENGLISH**

48. In the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in the year 2000, standards of attainment were below the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining the expected level was broadly in line with the average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level, whilst below the national average, was well above the average for similar schools. The trend in the school's past results in English shows improvement, particularly since 1998, where the rate of improvement has been at a faster rate than that seen nationally. The overall standards of work seen amongst the current Year 6 pupils indicates that pupils are attaining broadly average standards.
49. There is a significant difference between pupils' reading and writing skills. Standards of attainment are generally good in reading, but unsatisfactory in writing. The school knows that there is variation in pupils' standards and has identified the need for further development in writing, but much needs to be undertaken in this area.
50. Pupils have good listening skills and use them well. This contributes positively to their learning in a wide range of lessons and other activities. Pupils' speaking skills are sound, but not as good as their listening skills. This is a similar picture to that reported when the school was last inspected. The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to speak, in lessons and for example, in celebration assemblies. The pupils make good use of these opportunities but tend to use a minimum range of vocabulary. Many express themselves in a limited way and do not fully explore the richness of the language. Pupils are generally confident speakers in groups, in class discussions and in conversations with visitors, but they rarely elaborate on the basic ideas they wish to communicate.
51. In reading, pupils are given an appropriate range of text to develop their skills and understanding, and standards are generally above average. This is a similar position to that reported when the school was last inspected. Many pupils are confident readers and read with expression and understanding. Younger pupils read well, can talk about the text they are reading and have good strategies to identify unfamiliar words. They know which authors they like and some can list their favourite texts. Older pupils are often able to appreciate more demanding texts which they read with interest. They can talk about them effectively. They are able to use the classification system in the school library and have a good understanding of how to access the fiction and non-fiction books. The school operates a 'shared reading' time when older pupils read alongside younger ones. Many of the younger pupils enjoy this and the older pupils are aware of this.
52. Given that reading standards are good it is disappointing that writing standards are unsatisfactory. They are unsatisfactory in terms of quality, style and presentation. This represents a weaker position from when the school was last inspected, and writing was described as 'satisfactory, but rarely better'. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils have too few opportunities to write at length for differing audiences and purposes. This is a similar lack of provision to that reported on the last inspection. Whilst pupils are developing a

good range of understanding of words they are rarely able to put these developing skills into written form. Equally, given that many pupils express themselves briefly when speaking, they have relatively few chances to use their growing vocabulary. Much of the pupils' written work is undertaken in response to printed worksheets, a substantial proportion of which require short, often single word answers. All these elements contribute to pupils' lack of appropriate development in writing. Where pupils do write in exercise books their standards of presentation are weak and many take insufficient care in ensuring neatness and accuracy in copying vocabulary exercises. Handwriting is not uniform, with pupils of a similar age using different styles and quality of presentation. The whole area of writing is one which requires urgent development, particularly since it has a direct link to virtually every subject area taught in school.

53. Pupils' attitudes to their work in English are good. Their good quality listening skills add positively to this. Pupils are generally well behaved and attentive in lessons. They show respect for each other and regularly appear pleased at each others success. There are many occasions when they show an ability to concentrate well over sustained periods of time.
54. In general, pupils show satisfactory overall levels of achievement in English. They enter the school with good levels of reading and listening skills, but with below average speaking skills. They have below average skills in writing by the age of seven. They make appropriate progress in all areas except in writing, where insufficient progress is made.
55. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and has recently been 'setting' pupils for literacy lessons. In order to broaden the experience of the teaching staff, teachers have been deployed to teach literacy (and numeracy) to groups of pupils who are not always in the teachers' class or year groups. The literacy strategy is having a positive impact on the pupils' progress, but it is rather early to reach a considered judgement on he success of the setting arrangements. Early indications are that the school feels positive about their impact. Increased opportunities for pupils to write at length needs to be added into the current arrangement.
56. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall, and is often good. It is particularly for the younger pupils in the lower set. The group contains a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and their teacher knows them well and encourages them skilfully to constantly try their best. They respond to her particularly well, recall the content of past lessons and are pleased at the new skills they develop. This good provision enables them to make satisfactory gains in their learning. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in literacy lessons, but teachers do need to maintain sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can actually achieve and develop greater consistency in their marking of pupils' work. Where teaching is good, teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and the structure and pace of the lesson is well maintained. Pupils retain an interest throughout and show a keenness to be involved in their learning. Good lessons provide appropriate challenge to the pupils, who generally respond well.
57. The subject is led satisfactorily by the headteacher. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has identified areas which need to be developed further. A good programme of monitoring of teaching and learning has been established but it has yet to bring about sufficient improvement in pupils' writing and presentation skills.

58. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, and information and communication technology is used appropriately since the development of the school's computer suite. Pupils' basic literacy skills are used well in other subjects, although the pupils' unsatisfactory writing skills present some limitations.

## **MATHEMATICS**

59. In the national tests for children in Year 6 in the year 2000, standards of attainment were well below average. They were also well below average when compared to the performance of children in similar schools. However, the percentage of children reaching the higher levels was broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Over time there has been improvement in standards but the rate of this improvement has been insufficient for standards to meet the national average. The attainment of children currently in Year 6 is better than that reflected in the National Curriculum tests of 2000, though it remains below average. The school has recently started setting arrangements for numeracy lessons and this is having a positive effect on the children's learning. The satisfactory implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is also having a positive effect but has not yet had time to sufficiently raise standards.
60. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the attitudes of children to their learning are good. Throughout the school, the teachers' planning is thorough, with clear learning objectives linked to a variety of interesting activities for children to carry out. Teachers prepare their lessons well and employ effective classroom management and organisational methods. There is an emphasis on using practical activities to teach the basic skills for children, as was exemplified in a very good lesson for lower ability children in Year 3. In this lesson, they were able to use a variety of coins to effectively develop their understanding of how to solve problems involving money. The motivating teaching enthused the children to make very good progress in these skills. In another good lesson for children in Year 5, the teacher used questioning very effectively to develop the children's ability to use addition in money problems involving decimals. Within these lessons, as in most others, the children listen attentively to their teacher whilst explanations are being given and are eager to answer questions. They use mathematical resources, which are adequate and readily accessible to staff and children, with care and show enjoyment in much of their mathematical work. In the small number of lessons in which teaching is unsatisfactory, the teachers took too long over their explanations, which led to children losing interest and becoming restless. The pace of these lessons was slow, with little direct teaching and low expectation of what children were capable of doing. In general the teachers do not have high enough expectations of the way children present their work and, as a result, standards of presentation are poor. The school is targeting mental agility work at the beginning of lessons as a means of improving children's ability in responding quickly to number facts. There is also an intention to better develop children's ability to explain their strategies for working out answers to problems. By the time they are 11, most children are able to demonstrate that they are competent in the four rules of number and are able to identify prime numbers and multiples. Their knowledge and understanding of fractions and decimals and their skills in using them to solve problems is not as secure, and there is a limited knowledge of related mathematical language to be able to explain what they are doing. There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop the skills of working collaboratively to solve problems. The way that teachers mark the children's work is not effective in enabling them to know what they need to do next to improve. There is appropriate use made of homework to further develop children's learning in mathematics. The teachers make suitable use of information and communication technology to enhance children's work in mathematics but the school has

identified the need for a wider range of software to improve this aspect of the subject. The progress of children with special educational needs towards the individual targets set for them is satisfactory, as a result of work being carefully matched to their abilities. Children show that they are able to make suitable use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, as seen in science where children can accurately take temperature readings from a thermometer.

61. There is a satisfactory curriculum, with the children being offered a variety of relevant and interesting activities. Planning, which shows much improvement since the last inspection, follows the framework for the National Numeracy Strategy and is effective in ensuring continuity and progression of children's learning through the school. Since the last inspection, the school has also improved its systems for assessing and recording individual children's attainment and the progress they make in mathematics as they progress through the school, and these are now satisfactory. The school is beginning to analyse assessment information to set targets for improvement in mathematics for groups and individual children. Currently the subject is suitably led by the headteacher, who has a clear view as to how the subject is to be developed in order to raise attainment further. Monitoring of the mathematics curriculum is effective in enabling the school to identify and set targets for improvement. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

62. The national test results for eleven year olds in 2000 were well below average, in terms of national and similar school comparisons. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher grades in the tests was broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Over the last few years, standards have been rising steadily but not at a fast enough rate to reach the national average. The attainment of children currently in Year 6 is better than that reflected in the National Curriculum tests of 2000, though it remains below average. The school is aware that the girls consistently perform better than the boys and is currently exploring ways of improving how well the boys do.
63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the attitude of children to their learning is good. The teachers show secure subject knowledge that enables them to use questioning effectively to find out what children understand and can do, before they begin their activities. There are suitable classroom management and organisational methods that ensure that the children have a satisfactory work rate. Teachers are able to suitably explain to the children the purpose of the activities and, as a result, they have a satisfactory understanding of what is expected of them. This was evident in a lesson for children in Year 4, on learning about the different parts of a flower. In this lesson, the teacher provided the children with a good range of resources that effectively developed their understanding of the idea being taught. Good resource provision in a Year 3 lesson led to the children developing their awareness of the variety of the kinds of seeds that are to be found in different kinds of fruit. Within both these activities, the children were suitably taught the basic skills of making close observations and of recording their findings in different ways. In these lessons, as in all others, the children's attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour good. They enjoy their work and respond with interest and enthusiasm.
64. As they pass through the school, children are able to learn how to use a wider range of scientific equipment but there are insufficient opportunities for them to work together with this equipment in structured, practical, investigative activities. Consequently, they are not effectively building up their skills in carrying out a fair test and, by the time that they are

eleven, their investigative skills are not suitably developed. There are not enough opportunities for children to be involved in activities that develop the skills of making evaluations and conclusions based on prior scientific knowledge. The children's standards of presentation are poor, with teachers not having high enough expectations of what they can do. Throughout the school, there is some use of children's skills of using information and communication technology to enhance their work, and this is an area for further development. Children make suitable use of their numeracy skills to take measurements, including temperature readings from thermometers, during their experiments on insulation. The progress of children with special educational needs is satisfactory, as a result of the well-structured support that they are given. They are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills and, as a result, children are able to make effective contributions to class discussions during science lessons.

65. The curriculum that is offered to the children is satisfactory but lacks sufficient opportunities for them to be involved in structured practical investigative activities. The scheme of work is effective in ensuring continuity and progression of children's learning through the school and shows improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for monitoring children's academic performance and the use of assessment information to plan future work have also been improved, and these are satisfactory. There are suitable procedures in place to analyse the optional and statutory test results to identify areas of weakness and then set targets for improvement. There is suitable leadership of the subject that takes a leading role in setting priorities to address any identified weaknesses. The interior accommodation is spacious for practical activities and there are large outdoor-grassed areas for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. The present provision for science shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

66. By the time they are eleven, pupils standards of attainment in art are in line with those expected for their age. They achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress in their learning. This is a similar position to that reported when the school was last inspected.
67. Most of the lessons observed involved pupils sketching using a wide range of pencils appropriately. Pupils in Year 3 were given clear instruction of how to estimate the proportions of a face and sketch it accurately. They made good attempts, although some found the task too challenging. A small group of pupils in Year 5/6 sketched a landscape, using small panels attached to the window to focus their attention accurately on the part of the landscape to draw. They tried particularly hard, with a good degree of success. They were developing a clear sense of perspective and used good shading techniques to distinguish the various types of fields they could see covering the landscape. Pupils in Year 5 used their sketch books to draw a preliminary illustration of a storm-swept boat, from which they would later worked on a larger scale collage. Again, pupils worked well, using pencils accurately and in an appropriate manner to produce different textures and light and shade to their drawings. No pupils were observed painting, although work displayed on the walls indicated that pupils' brushwork was largely appropriate for their age.
68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching. Pupils were given clear instruction on how to produce particular effects in their drawing. In the good lessons, teachers were confident in their own artistic skills and gave good advice to pupils, who were happy to experiment and produced good results. There was some unsatisfactory teaching seen, but the weakness related to ineffective management of the pupils, by an

inexperienced teacher, rather than a specific weakness in the teaching of art. In fact, in this particular lesson, the guidance given to the pupils on how to assess the accurate proportions of a face, was good.

69. Pupils generally show positive attitudes to their artwork. They are willing to listen, follow guidance well and are willing to experiment until they produce the effects they desire. They work well individually and in groups, show interest in their activities and concentrate effectively on their tasks. This was particularly seen in the work of Year 5 pupils who worked together well to produce some large collage work. Displays around the school are used well to make the school bright and welcoming, particularly so in the upper corridor. There are relatively few displays demonstrating the pupils' fine painting skills, where thin brushwork is required.
70. The subject is currently coordinated by a teacher who is in charge temporarily. She has an interest in the subject and some good personal art skills. Subject coverage is adequate and it receives an appropriate allocation of time. More could be undertaken to familiarise the pupils with art from other cultures, although the overall provision is satisfactory. Resources for learning are adequate.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

71. As only one lesson was observed, judgements are based on the scrutiny of teachers' planning and children's work, and talking to staff and children. By the time that they are 11, most children attain average standards and have made satisfactory progress through the school. This shows significant improvement since the last inspection, when provision for the subject was judged to be unsatisfactory.
72. There is not sufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on teaching but other evidence indicates that there is a suitable emphasis given to developing children's making and designing skills. The teachers plan their lessons in a satisfactory way and ensure that children have a variety of suitable technological resources to use. Children are given the opportunity to develop their skills in using a range of materials and tools and to develop their ability to evaluate their work and make modifications as it progresses. In the lesson for children in Year 4, the teacher used questioning in an effective way to enable them to discuss the features that would make a good purse. Their attitudes to learning were positive, their behaviour good and they were keen to talk about their work in design and technology. They were able to work co-operatively, allow others to express an opinion and listen to their advice. Children in Year 4 show an appropriate ability to design and then make chairs out of paper and card for their favourite story characters. In Year 6, the children demonstrate an appropriate understanding about the fitness for purpose of products, when testing a range of materials to see if they are suitable for making sandals. In general, some teachers need to have higher expectation of the quality of the children's finished product. The curriculum is satisfactory, being broad and balanced with a scheme of work that suitably supports progression and continuity of pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and do not enable teachers to track the progress of children as they go through the school. The co-ordinator appropriately supports and advises colleagues and there are adequate resources that are suitably stored.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

73. Pupils attain standards which are in line with those expected for their age. They achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Those pupils with special



educational needs are supported well and this assists them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is a similar position to that reported when the school was last inspected.

74. Pupils in Year 3 are introduced to maps and plans by producing a colour coded plan of their classroom. They use their developing map reading skills well in a lesson where they look at weather patterns around the world. Atlases and travel brochures are used effectively to support the pupils' learning in a lesson where learning is good. Pupils in Year 4 gain a knowledge of the different materials used in house building, and through work on pollution, they are encouraged to look after the environment. Pupils in Year 5 have been undertaking some work on river formation and contrasting landscapes. To bring much of this work to life, they have recently visited Bamburgh and are comparing the town to Delves Lane. Some pupils find difficulty in identifying clear differences between the two locations. Pupils in Year 6 have undertaken moiré detailed work on the formation and the course of a river. They are aware of the concept of erosion and can explain how meanders are formed in rivers. They undertook some detailed comparison of three mountains, identifying differences of height and climate. Good links were made with literacy in the nature of the work undertaken, in the form of a comprehension exercise, and ICT in the presentation of the completed task.
75. Pupils listen attentively in geography lessons and the vast majority show positive attitudes to their work. All pupils show a willingness to work collaboratively, for example in the Year 3 task on weather, and the older pupils, working in groups at the ICT task. They consistently show interest in their work and an ability to concentrate when asked to do so.
76. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are generally clear about what it is the pupils are expected to do and lessons are well resourced, with atlases and brochures to use and appropriately challenging worksheets. Pupils do not appear to have many opportunities to write at length in work in geography, and this would be helpful to develop the pupils' writing skills. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the observation of lessons in geography.
77. The geography coordinator has held the post for some time and is reviewing the present documentation to match it against the published guidelines. She feels well supported by a staff which is enthusiastic to promote the subject. The curriculum provision is supported by a wide range of visits, including visits to Beamish which are undertaken by most pupils, and an outdoor pursuits visit to Winmarleigh. The school has on one occasion taken pupils to Spain. The coordinator is conscientious and enthusiastic. The subject is well resourced and effectively delivered.

## **HISTORY**

78. History and geography work is covered in alternate terms and during this term no history was being undertaken. Judgements are based, therefore, on the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, teachers' plans and wall displays.
79. Pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress during their time in school. This is a similar position to that reported when the school was last inspected. Pupils enjoy their work in history. For example, pupils in Year 3 talk with interest and understanding about Roman soldiers. They know that Julius Caesar was an influential Roman general, and they can describe part of a soldier's uniform with a good degree of accuracy. Older pupils have an awareness of aspects of daily life in Ancient Greece, know some famous buildings and can talk about the principles of a

democracy. Pupils in Year 4 have made a good quality corridor display on Tudor times, and pupils in Year 5 have made good use of census materials from 1851 identifying families in Roman times. The school's work in history is supplemented by a programme of visits, to the Roman Wall, for pupils in Year 3 and to Eden Camp for older pupils.

80. Although it was not possible to observe any teaching of history, it is clear that over time the subject is covered effectively and the pupils accurately recall what they have done. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately integrated into the activities in history and they are keen to show visitors items of their work which is on display. The subject coordinator is currently in temporary charge of the subject and is not able to monitor the work undertaken beyond the review of teachers' plans. Nonetheless she has an appropriate overview of the work undertaken. Resources for the teaching of history are adequate, but would be improved by the inclusion of a wider range of artefacts for pupils to handle and discuss.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

81. Most children are making satisfactory progress throughout the school and, by the time they are eleven, are reaching the expected standards, which shows significant improvement since the last inspection when a key issue was to raise standards in the subject. This is a direct result of the creation and effective use of a computer suite and teachers being trained to improve their subject knowledge and expertise.

82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the attitudes of children to their learning are good. Each teacher is now timetabled to use the computer suite for at least one lesson a week to teach children the basic skills of the subject. Lessons are well paced, so that children have time to reflect on what they have learned and what they are to do next. Planning is detailed and effectively matches the abilities of the children, which is enabling them to suitably develop their basic skills across a variety of computer programmes. They are successfully learning how to enter information onto spreadsheets, as was seen in the work of children in Year 6 on investigating which was the favourite food in their class. Children in Year 4 can use the computer to amend, replace, delete and improve text, while in Year 5 they have produced pictures and images using a graphics programme and then added text. They are also beginning to use information communication technology (ICT) to support their work in other subjects. This was seen in a geography lesson for children in Year 6 when they were using computer-generated questions to find out about Mount Blanc, Mount St. Helens and Mount Everest. In another lesson for Year 5, the children made good progress in their ability to open and use a publishing application to write an article. They are taught how to use a digital camera and the photographs that they take are incorporated into the school prospectus. The children's attitudes to learning in ICT are positive and when working in pairs on the computer they collaborate well, which supports their social development. They treat equipment with respect, are well behaved and show interest and enjoyment in their work. The school is aware of the need for teachers to better use the skills that the children have learned in the suite, when back in the classroom, and is in the process of exploring ways of providing more classroom based computers to support this.

83. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by the computer club, whose members have been able to visit Derwent College to experience going online on the Internet. There is suitable management of the subject by a co-ordinator who has produced a scheme of work that is effective in ensuring continuity and progression of children's learning through the school and which shows improvement since the last inspection. The assessment procedures are

satisfactory, with children being able to put comments about the progress that they make into their own individual booklets.

## **MUSIC**

84. Due to timetabling arrangements, there was opportunity to observe only one lesson and, consequently, there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on standards attained or the quality of teaching in the subject. The subject was reported to be satisfactory in terms of provision and pupils' attainment when the school was last inspected. From the evidence available, it is evident that children are enthusiastic in singing and, by the age of 11, they are confident when performing in front of an audience. In the lesson for children in Years 5 and 6, the teacher was well prepared and ensured that the music was well chosen to effectively challenge all the children to do their best. She had high expectations of their behaviour and of what they could do, and consequently, they made suitable progress in learning how to sing a song to taped music. In assemblies the children sing tunefully, enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment. They are given opportunity to learn how to play the recorder and to take part in the school choir and a range of musical performances, such as at Christmas and at the end of the summer term concert at the Consett Methodist Chapel. The subject helps to foster links with the community by the school choir visiting the home for elderly residents and the town centre to sing carols at Christmas. Monitoring of standards and progress in the subject is at an early stage of development and the school is aware of the need for this to be further improved. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources are adequate to support the demands of the National Curriculum in the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

85. As only two games lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching or the overall standards achieved in the subject.
86. In the two lessons on developing cricket skills, the planning was thorough, with clear learning objectives linked to suitably challenging activities. The teachers set good examples by dressing appropriately and, as a result, were able to demonstrate techniques in an effective way. In these lessons, the children were able to show suitable throwing and catching techniques and collaborated well in small group situations. Their attitude to learning was positive, showing enjoyment and enthusiasm in their activities. Children with special educational needs are fully involved in physical educational activities and they also make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to all the children. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory, with the co-ordinator having developed a scheme of work that successfully ensures continuity and progression of learning. Recording and assessment procedures are underdeveloped, which means that teachers do not yet have a clear view of children's attainment in the subject. There is a good programme of extra curricular activities that effectively develops the children's physical and social skills. The school makes good use of the facilities at the local Village Hall to develop the children's physical skills, as was seen when children in Year 6 were using the all weather surface during a cricket lesson. The current provision shows that the school has maintained the standards reported in the last inspection and has made satisfactory improvement since then.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

87. Only one lesson in religious education was observed during the course of the inspection and so judgements are made from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work and wall displays, together with an overview of teachers' plans.
88. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is in line with the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress in their learning. This is a similar position to that reported when the school was last inspected.
89. Pupils gain an appropriate understanding of the principle festivals and beliefs of Christians and they are able to talk clearly about the major landmarks in the life of Jesus. They know of particular times in history which have been important in the development of the Christian faith. Some Year 4 pupils, for example knew of the important role of King Henry VIII in the establishment of the Church of England. Pupils are also introduced to the important elements in the beliefs of people whose culture is different from their own. Again, pupils in Year 4, know that Hindus worship many gods, and that they can worship in the Temple or at home. In the lesson observed, the pupils handled good quality artefacts and had a clear understanding of their purpose and significance. They knew what each artefact represented; that one identified the name of God in Hinduism and that a Diya lamp represented the presence of God. Wall displays indicated a good range of opportunities for pupils to explore other faiths, and pupils were readily willing to talk about them.
90. As only one lesson was observed, there is insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching, but the lesson was well resourced and well organised. Taped music, playing throughout in the background, created a very positive atmosphere in which the pupils were at ease in their learning and they responded well.
91. The subject is coordinated well by a teacher who has held the responsibility from part way through the current year. She is capable and enthusiastic and has a clear plan of action. She has produced long and medium term plans of good quality, linked closely to the LEA Agreed Syllabus. She has compared this effectively with the nationally published documents on the RE curriculum. She has obtained good quality artefacts from the LEA to complement the school's adequate resources and is producing 'skill ladders' for staff to use in the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus.
92. The RE curriculum contributes positively to the school's good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Equally, a positive contribution is also made by the school's acts of collective worship, although these would benefit from a sharper focus when the main priority is singing, and more definite periods of reflection in prayer.