

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

**FIRST SCHOOL**

Alnwick

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122280

Head teacher: Mrs C Shield

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Pullan  
30839

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 192974

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Howling Lane Alnwick Northumberland
Postcode:	NE66 1DJ
Telephone number:	01665 602850
Fax number:	01665 606991
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Canon Reverend M Haig
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
30839	Mrs A Pullan	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	How high are standards?
			Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
			English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
			Equal opportunities	What should the school do to improve further?
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12631	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	English	
			Geography	
			Music	
			The foundation stage	
15474	Mr J Fairclough	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			History	
			Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse (Education) Limited  
14 Enterprise House  
Kingsway  
Team Valley  
Gateshead  
NE11 0SR

Tel: 0191 487 2333

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>9</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>23</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Michael's Church of England First School is a voluntary aided school situated on the edge of a large housing estate in Alnwick. There are 186 pupils in the school - 97 boys and 89 girls. The school has recently undergone building alterations and there is now an attached nursery, which 48 children attend part-time. The majority of pupils come from the neighbouring estate but some pupils attend the school from outlying areas because of its religious affiliation and good reputation. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and these pupils do not have English as their first language.

Since the last inspection the number of pupils eligible for free school meals has decreased to 18 per cent and is now similar to most schools. When pupils start in the nursery their attainment is typical of most three year olds. The school has fewer pupils identified as having special educational needs than most schools although the number of pupils who have a statement identifying a specific educational need is similar to most schools.

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

This is an effective school. The head teacher leads and manages the school very well. Good quality teaching has resulted in a higher proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in writing and mathematics in the end of Key Stage 1 tests than most schools achieve. However, too few pupils go on to attain the higher levels in reading, writing and science. Pupils enjoy school and show good attitudes to their work. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The head teacher leads and manages the school very well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good and there are very good relationships in the school.
- There is a very good partnership between parents and the school.
- The school gets more pupils to the expected levels in writing and mathematics in the Key Stage 1 tests than most schools.
- Standards in art and design are good.

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

- The levels of attainment of those pupils capable of higher attainment.
- Standards of attainment in information and communication technology.

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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Since then some areas have improved more rapidly than others but, overall, the school has made good improvement against the issues identified in that inspection. The role of co-ordinators has been more clearly defined and opportunities have been given for pupils to be more involved in problem solving and investigative work. There are schemes of work in place for all subjects and co-ordinators are starting to monitor and evaluate standards in their subjects, although there is still improvement needed in this area. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. Support is appropriately targeted and monitored as to its effectiveness. The school development plan has improved but could still improve further. It does not sufficiently include how the school is going to improve standards by identifying targets or success criteria related to pupils' attainment. All issues regarding accommodation in the previous report have been fully addressed. In addition, other very good improvements have been made, such as the addition to the



school of the attached nursery and the development of the school grounds. The school has good capacity to continue to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the 2000 national tests for Key Stage 1, the school's results for the number of pupils attaining the expected level were above those of most schools nationally in writing, mathematics and science. Results in reading were similar to most other schools. However, too few pupils go on to achieve the higher level in these assessments in reading, writing and science. At this level the school attains below other schools in reading and writing, well below other schools in science but is similar to other schools in mathematics. The same is true when the school's results are compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals. Over time, the school has maintained standards in reading and writing but has improved standards in mathematics.

Standards in art and design are good. Pupils produce drawings, paintings and printing of high quality and these are well displayed throughout the school. Standards in information and communication technology are below where they should be, particularly in the areas of control, modelling and sensing. The school has recently improved resources in this subject but there has been insufficient time for them to have improved standards. In all other subjects standards are satisfactory with most pupils matching the expectations for their ages. Most pupils are in line to meet the required expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show good attitudes to school. They concentrate well on their work and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils understand the school rules, show respect for each other and take pride in their school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are very good. Teachers and pupils all get on very well with each other and there is a pleasant, harmonious atmosphere.
Attendance	Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good.

A strong feature of this school is the relationships between staff and pupils that makes the school a caring and welcoming place. Pupils show a pride in their school and look after the building and the newly altered grounds well. The school playground is a happy place with older pupils being conscious

and caring of the needs of younger ones.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Thirty seven lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory in 38 per cent of these lessons, good in another 43 per cent and very good in a further 19 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers organise and prepare their lessons very well so time is used effectively. All teachers control their classes very well and maintain high standards of behaviour. Support staff are fully involved in lessons and used effectively. Teachers show good subject knowledge in art and design but subject knowledge in the areas of control, modelling and sensing in the information and communication technology curriculum require development. The school is successfully implementing the national strategies of literacy and numeracy and pupils are taught the basic skills well in these subjects. Consequently, most pupils are making satisfactory progress. However, final sessions within these lessons are not effectively used to improve pupils' knowledge of their own learning or to inform the planning of future lessons.

Teachers use questions well to assess what pupils know and understand, however, assessment is not yet used effectively to identify the needs of all the pupils. The needs of pupils with special educational needs or lower attainment are well identified and work well matched to their ability. However, those pupils capable of higher attainment are not being given work that is sufficiently challenging and are not making the progress they should. This is because teachers rely too heavily on commercially produced schemes of work for the content of their lessons. These adequately match the needs of the majority of the pupils but do not provide work to extend or stretch pupils capable of higher attainment.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is enriched by visits to develop pupils' experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified early and well targeted support is provided.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There are very few pupils who have English as an additional language but they are well supported. As a result, these pupils now have a sound grasp of English and fully participate in all lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school places a great emphasis on developing pupils personally and socially. Teachers are very good role models and set good examples. The head teacher has very good relationships with pupils and provides a strong lead on moral development. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their work and their actions.
How well the school	The school has a strong sense of family and this creates a caring

cares for its pupils	atmosphere. Teachers know the pupils well and look after their individual needs.
----------------------	--

Parents are very supportive of the school. The school keeps them well informed about events and their child's progress. The school welcomes parents and parents feel happy about their partnership with the school. The school provides a variety of extra-curricular activities in sport and music and pupils are often involved in competitions with other schools.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher leads and manages the school very well. She has a very clear educational direction for the school but has also developed a strong team ethos among the staff. Co-ordinators have developed their roles since the last inspection but this area is still in need of further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are keen, loyal and supportive. They are involved in the school and are beginning to have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors are well informed but are not yet being critical enough by asking questions that challenge and probe the school's performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school uses data to identify areas for development but this is not yet used rigorously enough to identify the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very efficient and effective use of the money and support available, especially for pupils with special educational needs.

The very good leadership and management by the head teacher have resulted in the school making significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the standard of the accommodation and grounds. The head teacher has a clear understanding of how the school needs to develop further and at what pace it needs to make those developments. However, the school development plan does not adequately reflect the head teacher's knowledge and understanding of the school. There is insufficient detail as to how the school will raise attainment with specific reference to targets and how improvement will be measured. Finances in the school are very well managed. The school has recently had difficulty with funding and has had to rely on very prudent management and fund raising to effectively carry out improvements. Resources have improved but still require improvement in information and communication technology and design and technology. The school has a good understanding of the principles of best value and applies them well.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their child likes school.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel the school is approachable.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities the school provides outside lessons.</li> <li>• Parental links with the nursery.</li> </ul>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school helps their child to become mature and responsible.</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and feel they are right to be happy with the school. The school, however, provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that include music and sport and also give the pupils opportunities to go on school trips to widen their experiences. Parents have the opportunity to talk to the nursery teacher at the start of each session. However, children are taken to the gate at the end of these sessions so parents do not have the same opportunity for discussion or to share with their child the work they have done.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 When children start in the nursery class their attainment is typical of most three year olds in all areas of learning except mathematics where it is slightly below. As a result of good teaching in the nursery class and very good teaching in the reception classes, by the time children start Year 1, attainment in mathematics and personal, social and emotional development is better than most children of this age achieve. Steady progress is made in other areas of learning and children are very well prepared to begin the National Curriculum.

2 The school has very few pupils who have English as an additional language. These pupils have been in school for some time and have received good support from a teacher provided by the local education authority. As a result of this well targeted support these pupils have sufficient use and understanding of English to be able to fully participate in all lessons. The school also makes good provision for those pupils who have special educational needs or whose attainment is lower than would be expected for their age. These pupils are given additional support both in class and with work specifically targeted for them in withdrawal groups. This results in these pupils making good progress and attaining standards very close to what they should be for their age. However, the school does not specifically identify those pupils capable of higher attainment and provide work for these pupils that is sufficiently challenging. As a result, these pupils are not reaching the standards they should.

3 In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, the school's results for the number of pupils attaining the expected level were above those of most schools nationally in writing and results in reading were similar to most other schools. However, too few pupils go on to achieve the higher level in these tests in reading and writing. At this level the school attains below other schools in these subjects. The same is true when the school's results are compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals. Over time, the school has maintained levels of attainment in reading and writing. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are satisfactory. Throughout the school most pupils listen well. Many are willing to contribute in discussions because they know that what they say will be valued by their teachers, and respected by their classmates. Most pupils express a pleasure in reading and enjoy books. However, too few pupils sound out individual letters or look for clues in pictures to read unknown words. Often pupils guess the word and do not use clues in the text to correct their mistakes. As a result, pupils understand the main points of what they are reading but they lack confidence when asked what might happen next. The school has identified the need to spend more time on writing for a range of purposes. As a result, pupils write letters, accounts, diaries and stories. Most are developing a sound understanding of grammar and punctuation. However, pupils do not use their writing skills well enough in other subjects, particularly science, because of the frequent use of worksheets, which are linked to commercial schemes. The recent introduction of a whole school 'spelling challenge' has raised pupils' enthusiasm to learn spellings and is raising standards.

4 In the national tests for mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, the school's results for the number of pupils attaining the expected level were above those of most schools nationally. A similar number of pupils go on to achieve the higher level in these tests as in most schools nationally. The same is true when the school's results are compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals. Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have steadily improved since the last inspection when they were requiring some improvement and are now good. The introduction of the numeracy strategy, particularly the mental and oral sessions at the beginning of lessons has helped to raise attainment. Pupils are keen to offer answers to teachers' brisk questioning. For example, pupils in Year 4 wanted to show how well they had learned the seven times table. Pupils have a sound

understanding of mathematical concepts and apply them in other subjects, for example, geography where they gather information about a traffic count, for representation on graphs and tables. However, the majority of situations focus on a teacher guided procedure. Pupils skills in solving problems that require them to decide which mathematical method to use are not as well developed as their ability to answer questions where the method is very clear.

5 In the national assessments for science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, the school's results for the number of pupils attaining the expected level were above those of most schools nationally. However, too few pupils go on to achieve the higher level in these assessments. At this level the school attains well below other schools. The same is true when the school's results are compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals. Pupils have a sound understanding of science and standards are satisfactory. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to carry out practical investigations. For example, pupils in Year 4 made models of arms to show how the bicep and triceps muscles work. Pupils are enthusiastic about this subject and are developing their investigation skills well. However, most of these experiments are carefully guided by the teacher and recorded using worksheets. There are insufficient opportunities for higher attaining pupils to devise their own experiments or choose how to record their findings.

6 At the time of the last inspection standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were considered to be in line with expectations. However, the school has had great difficulty in securing resources such as personal computers with modern software and Internet access and these have only been in place since November of the current school year. As a result, standards are below current expectations. Now that adequate resources are in place the school is moving forward with purpose and, consequently, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Pupils are gaining confidence in the use of the new computers, lessons are well planned and ICT is timetabled for pupils to receive regular, skill-developing experiences. The school has only just gained funding to improve areas of the ICT curriculum that are undeveloped, such as sensing and control, and has plans to buy these resources for the next school year. There is also a need for the teachers to recognise the use of computers to support learning in other subject areas. For example, software such as CD-ROM knowledge bases to develop study skills in history. In addition, pupils' skills in using word processors to write directly into the computer and to develop relevant publications that use graphics and digital camera work, together with their own writing, are underdeveloped.

7 Standards in art and design are good. Pupils have many experiences of different types of art techniques. For example, printing, mosaics, clay work and sculpture as well as drawing and painting. The skills pupils develop, and the care with which they apply them, are above what would be expected for their age. Pupils have a sound understanding of the life and work of famous artists and understand how they have applied particular techniques to produce different effects. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, when studying printing pupils look at how other cultures use pattern and design, such as an Indian prayer mat or Roman mosaics.

8 Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects. The school is currently reviewing its provision in these subjects in consideration of the nationally recommended guidelines.

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

9 Pupils' good attitudes to learning, their good behaviour and their very good relationships are strengths of the school.

10 Nearly every parent who returned a questionnaire agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils enjoy school life and are willing to learn. They show an interest in lessons, co-operate well in group work and are appreciative of the work of others. For

example, in a Year 4 art and design lesson pupils were designing Indian prints. This involved working with a partner to share designs and materials. Pupils showed patience with each other in allowing each person to have sufficient time to prepare and carry out their work. They discussed well how to place their prints for maximum effect and readily told each other how good their partner's work was.

11 The behaviour in the school is good and there have been no exclusions. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They show appropriate respect for adults and a good level of self discipline when in school and in the playground. Older pupils show a good awareness of the needs of younger ones and take care not to play games that are boisterous near them. The school has recently developed a 'Quiet Garden' where pupils can sit, read or talk together. As this is still new, some pupils use it in a similar way to the playground but many pupils are beginning to value the opportunity for quiet reflection and use this area well. An example of pupils' very good behaviour was seen in physical education in Years 3 and 4. The activities involved throwing and catching balls. Pupils tried hard to be accurate with their throwing but, even when they missed, their behaviour remained sensible and appropriate.

12 There are very good relationships throughout the school. Pupils react very well with each other, with teachers and with other adults in the school. They are polite, courteous and talk readily to visitors. For example, pupils were very keen to explain why particular pieces of art work had been chosen to be displayed in the 'Sunshine Gallery'. Their animated talking demonstrated that they shared the pride of the person whose work had been displayed and were keen to produce a piece of work of their own that might be displayed. The staff provide excellent role models. They listen carefully to what pupils say and show that they value and respect pupils' work through the good displays. Consequently, pupils respect their teachers and relationships are very good. The tidy cloakrooms and absence of litter are evidence that the pupils are proud of their school and keen to keep it looking good.

13 Personal development is very good. Ninety-six per cent of parents agreed that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Teachers make time to listen to pupils, which helps develop their self-confidence. For example, when the morning register is called time is devoted to discussing with pupils the changing of their reading books and whether they enjoyed the story. In most classes all pupils are welcomed individually and have the opportunity to discuss any issues that they wish with the teacher. Pupils are willing to accept responsibility and carry out duties in class and around the school. Each class has 'monitors' who take it in turns to help the teacher set up equipment for a lesson and clear away at the end. The Year 4 pupils have special responsibility to look after the younger pupils at lunchtime by helping to promote good table manners. They are also responsible for ensuring playtimes end on time by checking the time and ringing the bell.

14 Pupils' enjoy school, consequently, their attendance is good and is above that found nationally. However, the amount of unauthorised absence was above the national average last year. This was due to a number of parents taking pupils out of school for holidays. Most pupils are punctual and registration is completed quickly and efficiently before morning and afternoon sessions.

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

15 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers' planning has improved and they now clearly identify what pupils should learn in a particular lesson. The school has developed schemes of work for all subjects, from which teachers base their lessons. This is ensuring that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in a way that builds on previous learning. However, some teachers rely too heavily on commercially produced schemes of work with the result that pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to develop their independent writing in subjects such as science, because they are completing worksheets.

16 In the Foundation Stage, the nursery and reception teachers work closely together as a team with the support assistant. This ensures good learning opportunities for all the children, and a smooth transition for children into the reception class. Classrooms are organised well to allow children to make choices and to promote learning. This good provision, together with the overall good teaching, is having a positive impact on children's learning. Children who may require additional support are carefully targeted, work is well matched to their needs and they make good progress. Children capable of higher attainment are not so well identified so their work is not always sufficiently challenging, apart from in mathematical development in the reception class, where the teaching is very good and almost all children exceed the goals.

17 The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers teach these basic skills well and as a consequence these strategies are starting to raise standards. For example, in a lesson about correctly punctuating questions in Year 1/2, the teacher effectively used pupils' interest in owls to motivate them into devising questions about things they wanted to find out about owls. The teacher wrote down all their questions without putting a question mark at the end of them. These were then used effectively to emphasise the need for pupils to punctuate correctly so that a reader knows when a question is being asked. Most teachers select content for their lessons that motivates and interests the pupils. As a result, pupils listen well and are keen to be involved in the lesson and this promotes good learning. However, the end sessions of these lessons are not used effectively to reinforce or consolidate what pupils should have learned. Too often they are only used as an opportunity for some pupils to share what they have been doing with others. Consequently, pupils do not have as good an understanding about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve further as they should have.

18 Throughout the school a clear strength is the quality of relationships that teachers have with their pupils. Teachers show respect for their pupils and pupils respond well to this and return that respect. This is well developed by teachers who try to make learning not only interesting but also fun. These strong relationships mean that teachers always have very good control of their classes even in lessons that are exciting and involve pupils using potentially very messy materials or equipment that is not always easy to control. For example, many practical activities were seen that involved pupils modelling with clay, printing with black paint and sculpting with papier-mâché. Pupils used the materials sensibly under the careful direction of the teachers so that good results were produced. In physical education lessons in Years 1 and 3 pupils practiced throwing and catching balls to each other. Pupils' skills at this age are such that throwing is not always accurate so balls would often be wide of their target. This was a cause of much laughter but good control by the teachers ensured that both these lessons progressed well.

19 Teachers use questioning well to ascertain what pupils know and understand. In lessons, this informal assessment is used well to identify those pupils who may require additional support or help. Similarly, other assessments are used well to identify those pupils with special educational needs or lower attainment. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good at both key stages. Teachers know these pupils well and fully involve them at an appropriate level in all class activities. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants ensuring that they are fully aware of teaching objectives and that they can support pupils well. As a result, learning is good at both key stages and these pupils make good progress. However, this is not the case for pupils who are capable of higher attainment. In the main, they are given work similar to other pupils and this does not sufficiently challenge or stretch them. Consequently, they do not reach the standards of which they are capable.

21 Teachers in both key stages have a sound knowledge and understanding of most of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The teaching of art and science is good. In these subjects teachers provide many varied, practical activities that develop pupils' skills well. Pupils apply



themselves particularly well in these subjects. They produce high quality art work and show a good understanding of scientific concepts. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge in information and communication technology but the areas of control, modelling and sensing still require further development. The school has had insufficient resources for teachers to have developed this area, to date.

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

21 The school has made satisfactory improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection and provides a sound range of learning opportunities. Co-ordinators have responsibility for the development of their subjects and the school uses nationally recommended guidelines as schemes of work for most subjects. Teaching focuses on skills of research in subjects such as history, lessons are planned well with clear objectives and pupils with special educational needs now receive all parts of the school curriculum. Skills of literacy and numeracy are used regularly in other subject areas such as history, geography and science and the school delivers all parts of the statutory curriculum. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are taught the same curriculum as other pupils and usually receive support for their learning within the class group. On the occasions when they are withdrawn from class, they are taught the same lesson and meet similar challenges as other pupils at a level that is appropriate to their needs.

22 Assessment is not used well enough to sufficiently identify the skills that different groups of pupils need to learn. Consequently, it does not identify clearly which teaching has been successful or the future learning needs of the pupils. Short term planning is focused on activities rather than on learning objectives and how they are to be achieved. Reliance on nationally recommended curriculum guidelines without adaptation to meet the learning needs of all pupils, together with over-use of commercial worksheets restricts the challenge for higher attaining pupils. This results in too low a starting point for some topics in mathematics and repetition of worksheets across year groups in subjects such as science and history. Time allocations to subjects are not sufficiently tight as to gain maximum effective learning from each school day. This means that a long topic cycle is used to deliver one unit of history, geography and design and technology per year. Progression of learning is thus weakened due to the long time period between topics. The school has recognised this and is planning to review the cycle for the next school year. Some areas of subjects such as information and communication technology and design and technology are undeveloped. The school has been restricted in the development of these areas of the curriculum as a result of funding limitations but now has funds and plans in place to develop them.

23 Although a small proportion of parents expressed dissatisfaction about extra-curricular provision, inspection evidence found a good range of activities for the pupils that include music and art as well as sport. The school also organises a good range of visits and visitors in support of the curriculum. A visit to Beamish Country Life Museum supported study of the Victorians in history, a visit from 'Zoo Lab' supported science lessons and a visiting ensemble supported music.

24 The school reflects its aims to develop independent, confident, caring, responsible and self fulfilled members of society in all its work and so makes satisfactory provision for the personal, social and health education of the pupils. All pupils have equal access to school life and visitors, such as the local police liaison officer and school nurse, support health education and personal well being in accordance with governors' policies. The community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning with church visits and a rota of visiting clergy for a weekly assembly. A pianist from a local church supports the school well with accompaniment for school singing practice and the school choir. Links with the community are strengthened through joint projects such as a whole school trip to Bamburgh and a stall at Alnwick Fair. As a result pupils' sense of community is developed well.

Some teachers have made constructive links with the local middle school about the curriculum but there is no clear link within core subjects by subject co-ordinators and this reduces the accuracy of the focus, for teachers of the older pupils, on standards for the end of Key Stage 2.

25 Very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is founded in the school's Christian ethos of caring and developing its pupils as valued members of the community. Assemblies are used well to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and opportunities for reflection are frequent. For example, hymn practice was a high quality experience that involved pupils in a celebration of their singing. The leadership from the teacher offered encouragement, challenge and enthusiasm and the pupils responded with clear, accurate and joyful singing of beautiful tunes. A real appreciation of the beauty of music and development of the expressive qualities of their own voices was evident. The closing prayer gave thanks for the music and left pupils with an opportunity for quiet reflection on the power of their own voices. All teachers, but particularly the head teacher, are strong role models for pupils and this is reflected in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. For example, teachers listen carefully to what pupils say and expect them to listen just as well to each other. The school has very strong community links and these make a big contribution to pupils' awareness of social responsibility. For example, they contribute to the economy of an African village, support Christian Aid and have raised funds in support of new school buildings. They have close links with a nearby special school, conduct services in the local church and perform musical productions in the local theatre. Apart from this involvement in their own culture the pupils learn about other cultures in their geography, music and religious education lessons and they experience art of high quality through a school display of works by northern artists.

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

26 There are satisfactory procedures in place for child protection and promoting pupils' well being, health and safety but some weaknesses in supporting pupils' academic progress.

27 The head teacher takes the lead in setting the ethos of care, order and structure through daily assemblies. The standard of care provided by the teaching and non-teaching staff is good. The school has a suitable policy for child protection and all teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities. Necessary health and safety measures are in place and regular risk assessment inspections undertaken. At the beginning of each half term pupils are reminded about road safety.

28 The behaviour policy is in the process of being re-written. At present there are rules regarding playground behaviour and rewards for good behaviour in the dining hall. Any instances of bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour are dealt with promptly. Procedures to monitor attendance are sound. The school works in partnership with the Educational Welfare Officer to contact families when any attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern.

29 The support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The individual education plans for these pupils offer manageable short-term targets. Teachers and support assistants contribute to the process and are fully aware of the provision that is needed by these pupils. Review of success and setting of further targets takes place at intervals of half a term and this contributes much to the progress that pupils make.

30 The school's records of pupils' academic achievement are conscientiously maintained. All teachers keep records of pupils' achievement. Whilst these identify what pupils actually know, they do not identify what they need to do next to build progressively on their previous learning. For instance, teachers' reading records only indicate the books pupils have read, and dates when they have been heard reading. There is little assessment to identify what skills pupils need to be taught next. This contributes to a narrowing of achievement, which means that standards in reading are now matched

more closely to the national average than was reported in the last inspection.

31 Teachers use the results of assessments well to identify pupils with special educational needs, and pupils of lower attainment. They then plan to ensure that these pupils receive sufficient support in lessons to enable them to make satisfactory, and often, good progress. However, this is not the case for higher attaining pupils. This is reflected in the school's results in the national tests. More pupils are achieving the average levels expected for their age, but there are too few pupils achieving the higher level.

32 The school has identified assessment as an area for development. There have been whole school discussions about the purpose of assessment throughout this academic year. Teachers are now just beginning to assess what pupils know, understand and can do. This form of assessment is at a very early stage and teachers are not yet using the results to inform their future planning. As a result, there is a lack of challenge in many lessons, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Their needs are not being sufficiently well met.

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

33 The school's partnership with parents and the community is good and has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make in their learning. The supportive and positive views of parents about the school are reflected in the summary of the parents' questionnaires.

34 Parents agree that the school has high expectations of their children and they feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions. A number of parents and friends regularly help in the classrooms, escort pupils to swimming and on educational trips, and organise the school library. A small number of parents disagreed that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged the provision of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory with a range of activities, including sport and music, being provided.

35 The quality of information that parents receive about the school is good. The prospectus presents key information in a straightforward manner and parents are kept up to date with school affairs through regular newsletters and correspondence. Parents of nursery children receive a special booklet advising them how to help their children settle into school life. Pupils' annual progress reports give a very clear picture of their achievements and the areas for improvement. There are two parent consultation evenings offered for parents to have the opportunity to discuss their children's work and progress with teachers and these are well attended.

36 The parents support their children's learning at home by supervising any homework set for them and listening to them read. The reading diary provides a two-way communication between home and school and most parents enter appropriate comments. The majority of the parents have signed the Home/School agreement. The very active parents' association organises social and fund raising events and a considerable amount of money has been raised for the school.

37 The school has good links with the wider community as well as very close links with the parish. After a short service on Ascension Day the whole school together with parents and church members go on a visit to Bamburgh. The local clergy frequently visit the school and regularly take assembly. The school is very appreciative of the support they regularly receive from local businesses with regard to resources. There are close links to the local playgroup, which is based in a mobile classroom in the school grounds.

38 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the provision for their children. They are invited to review meetings and made aware of the content of individual education

plans so that they can better support their children at home. Overall, the partnership with parents enriches the school's work and has a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

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

39 The head teacher leads and manages the school very well. She has a very clear educational direction for the school that is shared by all staff. She is very committed and hardworking, leading by example. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. The head teacher has been instrumental in negotiating for additional funds that have dramatically altered the building. The nursery is now attached to the main school and is a bright, attractive addition. Classrooms have been decorated and new furniture provided. The school grounds have been improved to include a quiet area where pupils can sit and reflect or read.

40 The head teacher has developed an ethos of working together as a team in which the strengths of all staff are recognised and valued. This has been a very positive step and has been achieved by the head teacher carefully monitoring the quality of teaching and giving constructive feedback to staff. Staff now confidently identify their own areas for development as well as those of the pupils. Co-ordinators have improved the monitoring of their subjects and are gaining a sound understanding of the particular strengths and weaknesses within each subject. As a result, areas for development are clearly identified and agreed by all staff. Recently the school identified the need to improve pupils' writing. This was given a clear focus with the result that standards in this area have risen. Since the last inspection standards in mathematics have also improved. This is as a result of teachers being more aware of how to develop pupils' mathematical understanding through the use of the Numeracy Strategy. Co-ordinators appreciate that they need to develop their role still further. The school has clear plans as to how it will do this to include more opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the quality of work in their subject.

41 The school uses data to analyse its strengths and weaknesses but does not yet do this rigorously enough. This had been identified and is a targeted area for development. The school has a good understanding of how well it does in comparison to other schools, knowing that it gets more pupils than most schools to the expected level. However, it does not yet analyse data sufficiently to identify trends or patterns in the attainment of different groups of pupils, for example those capable of higher attainment.

42 Many governors are often in school and therefore have a good understanding of the day to day running of the school and the quality of teaching and learning. They are very supportive and keen to develop their role further. They meet regularly with the head teacher and staff to discuss the school's priorities for development. However, they are not yet being critical enough by asking questions that challenge and probe the school's performance. The school development plan does not adequately reflect either the head teacher's or the governors' knowledge of how the school needs to develop. Within the plan there is insufficient clarity about how the school will raise standards and how it will measure any improvement in terms of pupils' attainment.

43 Finances are very well managed. The school has recently had financial problems due to a lack of funding to meet its needs but prudent management and fund raising alleviated some of these difficulties. The school carefully monitors all spending and ensures that it is allocated to areas where it will have maximum effect. Governors have a good understanding of the principles of 'best value' and these are applied conscientiously to spending decisions.

44 Staffing levels are just adequate. The school has recently benefited from the government initiative to reduce class sizes and has had an additional teacher since January. This means that pupils are now taught in smaller groups enabling more teacher contact time. This is helping to improve

standards for those pupils who require additional support. Support assistants are deployed and used well. They are fully involved in lessons and this is helping to raise standards. The lack of a support assistant in the reception class has not been detrimental to the education of the children because of the high quality teaching they receive. However, it means that the teacher does not have as much time to spend with children developing all the areas of learning in the depth that the school would wish.

45 There has been very good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. Good records are now kept and updated regularly. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has time allocated in which to maintain the records and to identify individual education plans for each pupil on the register that will meet their learning needs and that can be achieved within a short period of time. However, teachers' own lesson plans tend to allocate support to pupils, rather than identify specific teaching strategies to meet the particular needs of individual pupils, and this does not give a clear focus to the support that is given.

46 The standard of the accommodation is good and has improved since the last inspection. All the previous health and safety issues have been fully addressed and the school is attractive, bright and cheerful. It is conscientiously cleaned and maintained to a high standard.

47 The school has improved resources since the last inspection but limited finance has necessitated that much of this has been through fund raising. Resources for most subjects are adequate. The school has recently ordered equipment that will develop the ICT provision in the school. However, resources in design and technology are limited so pupils do not have sufficient access to construction kits. In English some additional books are required to enable older pupils to develop and extend their reading skills and some reading scheme books are ready for replacement.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48 The governors and staff of the school should now:

A. Improve levels of attainment for those pupils capable of higher attainment by:

- i) using assessment effectively to identify those pupils capable of higher attainment; (Paragraphs 19, 41)
- ii) using assessment to match work more effectively to the needs of those pupils; (Paragraphs 19, 22, 30)
- iii) setting sufficiently challenging targets for the attainment of those pupils; (Paragraphs 16, 19, 31, 32, 51)
- iv) reducing teachers' reliance on commercially produced schemes of work and worksheets for the content of lessons and, thereby, matching content more precisely to pupils' specific needs. (Paragraphs 15, 22, 65, 73, 76)

B. Improve standards of attainment in information and communication technology by:

- i) providing sufficient resources to cover all areas of the ICT curriculum particularly, control, modelling and sensing; (Paragraphs 20, 97)
- ii) improving teachers' subject knowledge in these areas; (Paragraphs 20, 97)
- iii) planning for the coverage of these areas. (Paragraphs 22, 97)

The following, more minor, areas for development should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

A. Increase the effectiveness of the last part of lessons in order to:

- i) improve pupils' knowledge of their own learning; (Paragraphs 17, 66)
- ii) inform future planning. (Paragraph 17)

B. Improve resources in design and technology and English. (Paragraphs 22, 69, 87)

The school has already identified these issues as areas for improvement.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	43	38	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48	186
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
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 1*

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	25	20	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	18	19	19
	Total	42	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93% (88%)	96% (97%)	98% (91%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	18	19	19
	Total	42	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93% (85%)	98% (91%)	98% (100%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	156
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	19

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
--------------------------------	----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000 - 2001
----------------	-------------

	£
Total income	336,369
Total expenditure	347,547
Expenditure per pupil	1,486
Balance brought forward from previous year	688
Balance carried forward to next year	-10,490

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	86

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	38	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	37	7	1	0
The teaching is good.	73	24	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	39	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	28	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	30	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	37	0	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	82	16	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	24	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	41	10	2	9

Written comments were also received that indicated a few parents' had concerns about links with the nursery.

## **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**

49 There have been considerable improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection when the outdoor provision limited the physical development of children in the nursery. An extension has been built to the school. This has provided appropriate outdoor provision and enabled the nursery to be moved into the school building. The nursery and reception teachers work closely together as a team. This ensures good learning opportunities for all the children, and a smooth transition for children into the reception class. Classrooms are organised well to allow children to make choices and to promote learning. This good provision, together with the overall good teaching, is having a positive impact on children's learning.

50 There are good links with the parents of children in the Foundation Stage. Parents are welcomed into the nursery at the start of sessions, and into the reception class at the start of the day. They are encouraged to choose books with their child to take home and share. There are regularly meetings with parents where the progress of their child is discussed. Information is provided about how parents may support their child's learning at home. However, at the end of nursery sessions children are escorted to the yard to meet their parents. There is no opportunity, at this end of the session, for parents to come into the nursery and share with their child what they have been doing. This is the only point on which the inspection team agrees with the comments of some parents that links with the nursery are not good enough.

51 Children are assessed on entry to the nursery, and to the reception class. Nearly all the children achieve broadly average standards in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development on entry to the nursery, although standards in mathematical development are slightly below average. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children have achieved well and attained the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. This is through good teaching in these areas of learning, where children who may require additional support are carefully targeted. This targeting is not so effective in challenging the higher attaining children, apart from in mathematical development in the reception class, where the teaching is very good and almost all children exceed the goals.

52 The children enter the nursery class with broadly average skills in personal and social development. They make good progress in both classes, and by the time they leave the reception class they are achieving above the expectations of the early learning goals. Children are consistently encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. All adults working with the children are good role models for the standards of courtesy and respect for others, which they expect from the children. As a result, the children in both classes work and play together well. They share resources and take turns. Children are polite and considerate to each other and to adults. For example, during outdoor activities in the nursery, a child riding a tricycle stopped and said "Excuse me, please" to another child who was rolling a hoop across the pathway. The adults ensure that the equipment and resources are easily accessible and children are encouraged to take responsibility and become independent. In the nursery, children are expected to put on aprons for practical activities. In the reception class, children are encouraged to work independently. For example, higher attaining children worked without adult supervision to complete a mathematics task.

53 In both classes, the majority of children speak clearly and talk confidently to each other and to adults. They listened attentively to stories, and were enthralled by stories, which were very well read by the nursery nurse and a volunteer. There are good opportunities for children to use

headphones to listen to taped stories. Parents support sharing books with their child at home, and many make comments in the children's home reading book. In the reception class, a volunteer regularly hears individual children read and she records relevant information for the teacher. The support of parents and volunteers is valued by the teachers, and supports children's learning very well. In the reception class, very good teaching strategies promote children's recognition of the sounds of letters of the alphabet. Children enjoy playing the 'robot' game, where they verbally spell simple words using the sounds of letters. They also form letters correctly when writing the words they have spelt. All the children want to be good 'robots' and get it right! Children are encouraged to write using a range of papers and writing tools in the writing areas. In the reception class, children have written recognisable words, about their class assembly. Others are beginning to write simple sentences independently. For example, "I ate lots of ceycs (cakes)". Children take turns taking home "Lily" (the toy lion) and they write a diary of what they and Lily did. The teacher shares the diary with the class. All the children listen intently, and the child whose diary it is, is extremely proud! Children are beginning to be aware of writing for different purposes. One child was very excited about the 'thank you' letter she had received from a classmate for attending her birthday party and taking a present.

54 From the nursery onwards, children have good opportunities to practice counting and to learn mathematical vocabulary. The nursery nurse taught children well to count numbers up to five, when they were printing numbers onto plant pots. Most of the children recognised the numerals. She developed this learning well with a larger group of children: they enjoyed singing number rhymes. Children filling containers with dry sand talked about the containers being 'full' and 'empty'. The teacher encourages mathematical activities when children are acting out roles in the 'picnic' area by asking questions such as, "How many sandwiches will you need?" or "How many plates have you got?". All children in the reception class count to 10, and many count well beyond. Children use mathematical language confidently. For example, using the terms 'add' and 'equals' correctly. Higher attaining children complete simple addition sums up to 10, and they usually write numerals correctly.

55 Children build on their general knowledge well in the nursery. They investigate floating and sinking, and they fill, and empty, containers using water and dry sand. Children are learning how plants grow, and know some grow from seeds. In the reception class, children build well on this knowledge. Some explained what a shoot of a plant is, as "The first bit that comes out of the soil". In both classes, the children use the computer with confidence, and control the mouse without adult supervision. In the nursery, children know the safety rules when using the workbench. They put goggles on, use the vice to secure wood, and then enthusiastically hammer a nail into the wood. Children have a good sense of how things join together and they persevere. For instance, when felt would not stick to a box with glue, a child used sticky tape, and when this would not stick lengthwise, tried crossways. In the reception class, children match words to names of parts of the body. They know what is appropriate clothing to wear on a sunny or wet day. They keep a daily weather chart and recognise when it is sunny, cloudy, warm or raining. One child said "It was spitting on to rain when I came to school".

56 The development of the outdoor play area for the nursery class has been a major factor in helping the children to make good progress in the development of their physical skills. They run, jump, balance and climb. Children control wheeled vehicles with awareness of the safety of others. Children in the reception class do not often use the nursery outdoor area. This arrangement does not impact on their progress in physical development as they use the school hall, and other outdoor areas. They build effectively on previous learning and develop confidence, using space in the hall creatively. They are taught to respond to music imaginatively. Children practice skills such as throwing and catching balls.

57 In both classes children use a wide range of materials to create interesting collages. They are encouraged to paint. Good incidental teaching took place in the nursery, when the teacher asked children to choose whether they wanted to paint their pictures with the paper positioned 'landscape' or

'portrait'. The children understood what these terms meant. By the end of the reception year, children confidently select, and mix two colours of paint, to make another colour. They know the names of colours, and explain that mixing red and yellow makes orange. Children enjoy making their own music and singing well-known songs and action rhymes. Children in the reception class join in singing in assemblies and during hymn practice. The children enjoy role-play activities. They use the available resources well, and good teacher intervention skilfully encourages the development of language and mathematical skills.

## **ENGLISH**

58 The last inspection reported that standards in English were in line with the national average at that time. Standards in reading were reported as often high. Since then a higher percentage of pupils reach the national average level, but not enough pupils are reaching the higher level. Standards in reading are now closer to the national average.

59 In the national tests last year, the school's results in reading were in line with the national average, and above average in writing. However, the school's performance at the higher level for both reading and writing was below average. This is because the school does not identify well enough those pupils who could attain higher. Lessons provide insufficient challenge for these pupils. The school supports pupils with special educational needs, and lower attaining pupils, very well. This has a positive impact on standards because a higher proportion of pupils are reaching the average level. Pupils in Year 4 are in line to achieve the expected level by age 11.

60 Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Throughout the school most pupils listen well. Many are willing to contribute to discussions because they know that what they say will be valued by their teachers, and respected by their classmates. When pupils are invited to share their work they usually talk confidently. Pupils have regular opportunities to speak in front of different audiences. For example, when they present their 'class' assembly to the whole school. There are also whole school 'productions' to which parents and members of the community are invited.

61 Standards in reading are satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils recognise the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They know how to use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information in books, using an index. Older pupils use dictionaries, and thesauruses. They understand how the library works and they know how to locate specific books, whether for information or for pleasure. Pupils enjoy choosing library books and show an enthusiasm for reading, but few pupils name a favourite author. Teachers' reading records only monitor books pupils' have read. They do not specifically identify what skills pupils' need to develop. Consequently, although too few pupils sound out individual letters, and group them together to read unknown words or look for clues in pictures, teachers' have not identified how they will develop these strategies. Many older pupils do not take notice of punctuation when they read. For example, they read '...and trotted alongside Lucy' instead of '...and trotted alongside. Lucy ...'. This also has an impact on their understanding of what they read, and only higher attaining pupils confidently predict what might happen next.

62 Standards in writing are satisfactory. The school has identified the need to spend more time on writing for a range of purposes. As a result, pupils write letters, accounts, diaries and stories. In Year 2, pupils use capital letters correctly, and use full stops most of the time. Although they often write short sentences, pupils use descriptive words well, for example when writing an account of the visit to the school by 'Zoo Lab'. Spelling of commonly used words is usually accurate. Older pupils use a range of punctuation to make their writing lively and interesting. They draft some of their written work, such as when writing their own humorous poetry. However, teachers often mark this drafted work, and pupils simply copy out the corrected work. Pupils do not use their writing skills well enough in other subjects, particularly science, because of the frequent use of worksheets, which are

linked to commercial schemes. The recent introduction of a whole school 'spelling challenge' has raised pupils' enthusiasm to learn spellings and improved standards.

63 Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the school. Younger pupils are beginning to develop a 'joined up' style with letters correctly formed. In Year 4, most pupils have mastered a neat, presentable, fluent style. Pupils generally take care with the presentation of their written work, which is set out neatly.

64 The basic skills of English are taught well. Teachers identify learning intentions and expected outcomes for their lessons. They use questioning techniques well to challenge pupils and promote their learning. For example, in a lesson in Year 4, the teacher sometimes asked questions and waited for volunteers, but at other times directed questions at a named pupil. This had a positive impact on their learning: they all concentrated well because they did not know when they might be asked a question. Pupils are managed very well in lessons and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. This has a positive impact on learning. Teachers plan carefully to use classroom assistants, and volunteers, effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. This ensures that they make good progress in lessons.

65 Teachers rely heavily on teaching from a commercial scheme. This results in activities not always being well matched to the abilities of pupils in their class, particularly those pupils capable of higher attainment. Too often these pupils complete exactly the same comprehension exercises as the rest of the class. Teachers do expect higher attaining pupils to complete more questions, but this does not provide sufficient challenge or promote new learning well.

66 Teachers do not use the end part of lessons well enough. Pupils are not encouraged to consider how well they have worked and what they have achieved. As a result, too often they do not know whether what they have done in a lesson is good enough. Teachers miss this opportunity to check how well pupils have learnt, or to use this information to plan future lessons, which build progressively on pupils' previous learning.

67 Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported well. This ensures they make good progress.

68 English is managed well. The head teacher and the co-ordinator have identified appropriate areas for development, aimed at raising standards and providing appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils. These include introducing the teaching of reading skills to small groups of pupils of similar ability, and assessing more closely what pupils know, understand and can do.

69 Resources for English are barely adequate. The school relies heavily on loans of books from the School's Library Service. There is an insufficient range of fiction to enable older pupils to develop and extend their reading skills. A number of reading scheme books are well-worn, and ready for replacement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70 Standards in mathematics have steadily improved since the last inspection when they were requiring some improvement. They rose significantly and were above the national average in national tests for the year 2000 and were also above the standards achieved by similar schools. This reflects the way in which the school has developed the quality of teaching through the use of the Numeracy Strategy and the careful planning of lessons. However, performance at the higher levels of attainment was close to, rather than above, that achieved nationally and by similar schools and this indicates a need for greater challenge for pupils capable of higher attainment.

71 Inspection findings support this position. A small group of higher attaining pupils are currently taught in the Year 3 class and are thriving on the increased challenge in their work. They find fractional parts such as one third of 21 and three fifths of a rectangular shape. Multiplication and division is performed with numbers to 100 and addition and subtraction of three figure numbers is accurately calculated. By the end of Year 4 pupils attain inline with what is expected for their age. For example, they learn their seven times table and practice shopkeeper's methods for giving change from £5 or £10 for amounts such as £3.57 as well as mentally adding amounts such as £1.58, £2.47 and £0.48 by accurately collecting largest values first to total £4.53. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress as a result of sensitive support that is managed well to include these pupils in the full mathematics curriculum. Withdrawal groups are used at times because they offer the pupils a better chance to concentrate and take a greater part in the learning activities and learning is good in this situation. A small group of pupils in Year 1 were given additional support and were confident in counting objects to 50 and generating a sequence of odd numbers by counting in two's from 1 to 19. Their learning was good as they correctly arranged a mixed up sequence and identified missing numbers from the sequence. As a result of this good provision there are few pupils at the lower levels of attainment.

72 Good teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 with some very good teaching in Year 4. No teaching was less than satisfactory. The teaching in Key Stage 2 has improved a lot since the last inspection. The teaching is benefiting from the structure of the Numeracy Strategy and the improved planning that is now in use. Lessons have a sense of purpose and pupils are confident. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to offer answers as well as useful observations about their learning. For example the majority of pupils in Year 4 had enthusiastically learned the seven times table for homework and were quick to offer accurate answers to the teacher's brisk questioning. They listened well to a careful explanation about mental addition of money and worked well in pairs to develop their method, support one another with constructive discussion and challenge themselves to add larger groups of money values with accurate answers. Younger pupils in Year 2 benefited from well-directed questions that encouraged them to think about a variety of ways in which to deal with subtractions such as 24-7. Various approaches were identified from simple 'counting back' to breaking up the numbers in ways that stepped accurately from 24 to 20 to 7 or from 24 to 10 to 7.

73 Although the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, there is a need to offer still more challenge for higher attaining pupils. Work is set at different levels within all lessons but the basis for much of the work is commercial worksheets. This limits the potential for challenging higher attaining pupils. Assessment procedures are in place but they are not yet being used effectively to identify the skill development and learning needs of all the pupils. Too often the assessment focuses on the correct completion of an activity or task and this limits awareness of the learning potential of pupils. The teachers now include a number of opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics to investigate relationships and to gather information for representation on graphs and tables, particularly in subjects such as geography, but the majority of situations focus on procedure. As a result, pupils do surveys about the colour of eyes, or traffic count, but do not appreciate the power of the process and its potential for identifying 'real' facts and answering 'real' questions. There are few opportunities for pupils to begin with a complex problem to which they have to make decisions about which operation will work towards an answer.

74 Mathematics is managed well. The results of national tests are carefully analysed and areas for development identified. Resources have been improved to ensure that they are adequate for the full delivery of the curriculum. This has resulted in standards in this subject rising.

## SCIENCE

75 The school has improved the quality of teaching in science since the last inspection. Teachers plan and provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment. As a result, pupils have a sound understanding of science and standards are satisfactory. In the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, many more pupils in this school attained the expected level for their age than in most other schools. However, fewer pupils went on to attain the higher levels in these tests than would be expected.

76 Since the last inspection the school has planned most of its science lessons with the help of a commercially produced scheme of work. This initially proved quite effective in supporting teachers with their planning. However, teachers now have a good knowledge of science but are still overly reliant on this scheme. As a result, lessons cover all the necessary areas of the National Curriculum at a level suitable for the majority of pupils but are not sufficiently challenging for those pupils capable of higher attainment.

77 Teachers make science lessons interesting and stimulating. Pupils experience many practical activities that motivate and interest them. For example, when learning about how muscles work pupils in Year 4 felt their own muscles as they moved through a series of activities directed by the teacher. They then made a model of an arm to show how the biceps and triceps work and how muscles work in pairs. Whilst assembling the models pupils were given individual opportunities to measure their strength using scales that measured in Newtons. Pupils were very enthusiastic about this activity but very good relationships and good classroom management ensured high standards of behaviour at all times.

78 A good variety of activities and brisk pace to lessons ensure that pupils develop their knowledge well whilst maintaining their interest. For example, in Year 2 pupils discussed the characteristics of living things which led to the fact that living things reproduce. This then progressed to the idea that some animals produce offspring that look like them whilst others do not. For instance, puppies look like dogs but tadpoles do not look like frogs. To assess what pupils understood they then completed an exercise to match parents to offspring.

79 Science is managed well. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the amount of experimental and practical experiences the pupils are given. These many practical experiences are developing pupils' knowledge and skills well. For example, pupils in Year 1 construct simple circuits whilst by Year 4 pupils can devise an experiment to show that light cannot travel round corners. However, most of these experiments are carefully guided by the teacher and recorded using worksheets. There are insufficient opportunities for higher attaining pupils to devise their own experiments or to choose how to record their findings. This has been identified by the co-ordinator and the current science curriculum is under review to see how it can be altered to provide more challenging activities.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

80 Standards in art and design are good. The subject is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who ensures that pupils have many experiences of different types of art techniques. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this means that pupils are well taught with activities that stimulate their interest as well as develop their skills. For example, throughout the school pupils experience different aspects of printing. Pupils in Year 1 use fabrics to print sky and grass as the background to painting daffodils. They closely observe the detail of the daffodils and produce accurate drawings. Pupils in Year 2 use sponges very effectively to print landscapes that include hills, trees and fences. Techniques are further developed in Years 3 and 4 where pupils make their own block print and produce repeated patterns onto materials that they have dyed themselves using wax resistance. Also in Year 4, pupils are able to combine different printing techniques to produce very good pictures. For



example, they use hessian to print sky, the edges of card to produce the effect of grass and then impose a flat print of an elephant on top. These skills, and the care with which pupils apply them, are above what would be expected for their age.

81 Art and design is taught well through the development of particular skills and teachers effectively link the work of famous artists to a particular technique. For example, when learning about printing pupils study the work of William Morris whereas when working on collage they will study Rousseau. In this way pupils develop a sound understanding of the life and work of famous artists but also see how particular techniques can be applied to produce different effects. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, when studying printing pupils look at how other cultures use pattern and design, for instance an Indian prayer mat or Roman mosaics.

82 Pupils' work is highly valued by teachers and this is shown by the quality of display throughout the school. Teachers take great care to ensure that the time and effort that pupils put into their work is matched by displaying pupils' work to achieve maximum effect. The school has developed a "Sunshine Gallery". This was once a dismal corridor that has been painted sunshine yellow and examples of pupils' work, from all age groups, are framed and displayed like an art gallery. This gives pupils the opportunity to view and value other pupils' work and pupils are very proud when their work is displayed there.

83 Pupils enjoy art and design lessons and look forward to them. This is mainly because teachers make lessons stimulating and interesting. For example, pupils in Year 1 used papier-mâché to make masks. This was a very messy activity that the pupils thoroughly enjoyed. They had to share a balloon to cover with the papier-mâché but they showed good co-operation in working together and sharing materials. In Year 2 pupils had great fun using clay to make a tile. They very carefully manipulated the clay to make it soft, rolled it out and plied it into shape. They showed very good concentration as they carefully imprinted a pattern onto the tile and were very proud of their finished results.

84 The school has on permanent loan the "Through The Looking Glass" exhibition of paintings. These are paintings in a variety of styles by various professional artists. This valuable resource greatly enhances pupils' knowledge of other artists. This makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85 There was no teaching of design and technology during the inspection and samples of pupil's work were not fully representative. As a result there was insufficient evidence to judge standards of attainment, teaching or learning. There has been some improvement since the last inspection since the school now uses nationally recommended guidelines and planning shows a full range of curricular opportunities for the pupils.

86 Teachers follow a lesson planning structure that is based on design, plan, make and evaluate and this is clear from the analysis of pupils' work. Pupils make moving picture books in Year 1, glove puppets in Year 2 and money containers in Years 3 and 4. There was also evaluation of purpose in labelled drawings of vehicles by Year 2 pupils. The quality of the small amount of work that could be evaluated was good. Stitching of purses was effective and secure, designs were attractive and the work showed pride in the product.

87 Although plans show all areas of the design and technology curriculum will be taught there are some areas that are not fully developed. Pupils have some experience with food preparation and have worked with different materials but these opportunities are infrequent. Resources for design and

technology are insufficient; little evidence could be found of pupils using a wider range of materials or using construction kits to learn how mechanisms can be used in different ways. Financial restrictions have prevented the better development of resources but timetabling that teaches design and technology for one term out of three and uses the same topic for consecutive year groups does not support the progressive development of pupils' skills in this curriculum area. The school is aware of the timescale for the delivery of the curriculum and is planning to introduce topics on a half term rota in the next school year.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

88 Standards in geography are satisfactory and likely to meet expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The school now uses the nationally recommended guidelines for geography.

89 In Year 2, pupils are aware of the contrasting physical features of where they live. For example, some pupils talked to each other about "You live out in the country don't you?", and "I live in the town". They are aware of other countries in the world, and know that Australia is the country furthest away from their own. In Year 4, pupils are aware of some of the similarities and differences between their own country and the village of Chembakolli, in India. They recognise that houses have smaller windows in Chembakolli to keep them cooler. This is an improvement in progress since the last inspection, when it was reported that, in some instances, older pupils were learning the same information as younger pupils.

90 Teaching is satisfactory overall, although good, and very good teaching was seen in Years 3 and 4. These teachers show they have good subject knowledge, which they share with their pupils. This impacts well on pupils' learning and, in the lessons seen, pupils were interested and eager to join in discussions, sharing their ideas with their classmates. However, scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that worksheets are frequently used in other geography lessons. This limits opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils effectively. Planning for lessons identifies effective support for pupils with special educational needs, and for lower attaining pupils. This ensures that they make good progress.

91 The school makes good use of visits to the local area. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have done a traffic survey, and they are considering how to improve safety in their locality. Teachers make good use of pupils' knowledge in other subject areas, when appropriate. For example, pupils have made graphs of the results of their traffic survey.

## **HISTORY**

92 Standards in history are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and likely to meet expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The school now uses the nationally recommended guidelines for history and teaching focuses on the skills of research as well as on factual knowledge.

93 Analysis of pupils' work shows a wide range of experience for the pupils and opportunities for comparative writing, interpretation of information, documentary writing and research of factual information. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 write documentary accounts of Neil Armstrong's moonwalk and compare the life of Grace Darling with conditions in the present time. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 study the Victorians as part of their class curriculum whilst working with Year 3. They work at a good level of attainment and clearly do not find the challenge of work at a higher level too great. However, the school does not have clear guidelines about what these children will learn in Year 4 as they have covered the Year 4 curriculum in Year 3. Good attainment is evident

and a wider variety of skills are used but there is still duplication of some elements.

94 The co-ordinator for history has improved resources and developed the subject since the last inspection. A visit to Beamish Museum and the use of literacy in historical writing support pupils' learning in the subject. Planning is monitored and some observation of lessons has taken place but assessment opportunities are not used well to identify pupils' learning needs. The cycle of topic planning has been on a two-year basis with one term per year for history and this does not support continuity of learning in the subject. However, the school has clear plans to move to a cycle that delivers history through two separate half term topics per year. Resources do not include CD ROM databases that would support historical research and make use of skills from information and communication technology.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

95 At the time of the last inspection standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were considered to be in line with expectations. Since then curriculum expectations have moved forward and the school has moved forward also. However, there has been great difficulty in securing resources such as personal computers with modern software and Internet access and these have only been in place since November of the current school year. As a result, standards are below current expectations.

96 Now that adequate resources are in place the school is moving forward with purpose and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Satisfactory teaching is resulting in pupils gaining confidence in the use of the new computers, lessons are well planned and ICT is timetabled for the pupils to receive regular, skill-developing experiences. Good teaching was seen in Year 2 where the teacher was prepared well to develop pupils' understanding of questioning methods in order to retrieve information from files of information. The lesson maintained the attention of all pupils as they followed the 'Decision Tree' routine that uses properties of shape to identify one specific shape. This process was then demonstrated by the computer as it correctly identified a fruit that had been chosen by the pupils. Pupils in Year 1 were guided through the gathering of information about favourite colour of cars and put the data into the computer to demonstrate that it would accurately draw graphs. Pupils in Year 3 followed teacher instruction to access an Internet site that gave them information about their work in other subject areas. Opportunities for pupils to practice this skill on a rota basis of pairs during the week, was then organised.

97 Pupils' hesitancy in keyboard skills demonstrated a lack of regular 'hands on' experience with computers. The lack of sufficient hardware is still restricting learning opportunities for the pupils since there are only two machines per class and access is therefore limited. The school has only just gained funding to develop areas of the ICT curriculum that are undeveloped, such as sensing and control, and has plans to buy these resources for the next school year. However, there is also a need for the teachers to recognise the use of computers to support learning and for pupils to have opportunities to access software in support of their learning in other subject areas. For example, pupils require more access to software such as CD-ROM knowledge bases to develop study skills in history. Also, pupils' use of word processors to compose directly onto the screen are limited. Similarly, pupils do not combine text and graphics often enough, for instance by illustrating their writing using photographs taken with a digital camera.

98 At present the school is without a co-ordinator for ICT due to promotion but the head teacher is well aware of the skills that will be needed by the soon to be appointed co-ordinator in order to take the subject forward.

## **MUSIC**

99 Standards in music are satisfactory. Pupils sing tunefully in assemblies with attention to pitch and rhythm. They enjoy singing, and performing actions where appropriate. When pupils volunteer to accompany singing by playing percussion instruments, they maintain the beat correctly. During hymn practices, pupils learn about the life of the composer of the week (the music played as an introduction to assemblies). For instance, pupils learnt about where Vivaldi was born, how long he lived, and the name of the music being played. This makes a positive contribution to the music curriculum.

100 Music has improved its position in the curriculum since the last inspection. It is now taught using a commercial scheme, which provides good support for those teachers who lack music expertise. As a result, teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress not only in singing, but also in learning musical vocabulary. In Years 3 and 4, pupils explain the terms ‘graphic scoring’ and ‘staff notation’. Displays in some classrooms show how pupils record their own musical compositions.

101 There are good out of school opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents. Some pupils are learning to play the recorder, and the school choir performs at concerts in school, in the local Church and sometimes in the local community. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn to play the guitar through tuition provided by the local education authority. These opportunities support, and enrich, the curriculum well.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

102 In physical education pupils make steady progress and attainment is at least in line with expectations for pupils’ ages. During the inspection only games and dance lessons were seen, however, scrutiny of teachers’ planning shows that all areas of physical education are covered. Teaching of physical education is satisfactory and some very good teaching was seen in Year 3.

103 Teachers use a commercially produced scheme of work to provide lessons that build upon previously taught skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 passed a ball to each other that includes a ‘bounce’ making it easier to catch, whereas pupils in Year 3 passed a ball to each other from standing, kneeling and lying positions. Staff use pupil demonstration and questioning effectively, and pupils are encouraged to improve their skills. Staff act as good role models, dressing appropriately and showing an enthusiasm for physical education. As a result, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and most respond well to the challenges presented.

104 Pupils thoroughly enjoy these lessons, as most are challenging, conducted at a brisk pace and fun. They understand the need to warm up before activities as the teacher reminds them often what the purpose of the activity is. For example, explanation was given about what would happen to muscles if the body was not sufficiently warmed up and stretched before beginning an activity. Pupils co-operate very well in these lessons, working sensibly in pairs. For example, when sending and receiving a large ball, pupils in Year 3 tried to throw accurately so that their partner would be able to catch it. Pupils find these lessons fun. Much laughter and giggling was heard when pupils in Year 1 tried to use bats to hit a ball backwards and forwards to each other. They tried very hard but their skills were such that the ball frequently missed the target. Very good management of pupils by the teachers ensures that these lessons, whilst fun, are well controlled with the pupils showing very good behaviour.

105 The school provides extra-curricular activities in football and netball. Pupils understand the need for rules and play games with a good sense of fairness and competition. Pupils are proud to represent their school. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to learn to swim but the local swimming pool has recently had to be closed for repairs. The school is monitoring the situation to

provide an alternative venue should this become necessary. However, the older pupils in the school have had swimming lessons. Many have already achieved the national expectation for 11 year olds so the school feels confident that other pupils will also reach this required standard.