

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST BENET'S RC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ouston, Chester le Street

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114244

Head teacher: Mr P Cunningham

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Pullan  
30839

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 193440

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Benet's Way Ouston Chester le Street Durham
Postcode:	DH2 1QX
Telephone number:	0191 410 5857
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father A Duffy
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
30839	Mrs A Pullan	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Geography	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			History	How well are pupils taught?
			The foundation stage	How well is the school led and managed?
			Equal opportunities	What should the school do to improve further?
9652	Mr C Herbert	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18819	Mr J Atkinson	Team inspector	English	
			Art and design	
			Physical education	
			Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	
20326	Mr P Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Benet's RC VA Primary School is an average sized primary school based in the village of Ouston near Chester le Street. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds with some pupils attending the school from surrounding areas due to its religious affiliation. There are 174 pupils on roll and there are significantly more boys than girls in Years 2, 3 and 4 although other year groups are more evenly balanced. An additional 51 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The attainment of children when they start in reception is typical of most four year olds. Twenty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, including 4 pupils with statements of specific need. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and two children in the nursery have English as an additional language. The school has recently undergone a period of significant staff change with very few of the current teachers being at the school at the time of the last inspection.

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

This is a good school. It is well led and managed by the head teacher and the governing body. The quality of teaching is good with very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above national averages by the end of Year 6. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good with very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes.
- By the end of Year 6, the school attains above national standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The attitudes, behaviour and relationships of the pupils are very good.
- There is very good provision for children in the foundation stage of learning.
- Pupils' spiritual development is very good.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not yet high enough.
- The management roles of the subject leaders and the deputy head teacher are not as effective as they should be.
- The quality of individual educational development plans for pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently precise.
- The quality of documentation identifying the school's future development is not clear and precise enough.

*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 April 1997. Since then it has made good progress. Although some areas identified in the last report still require improvement the school has made significant progress in the raising of standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. In particular, very good progress has been made in the number of pupils who now go on to achieve the higher levels in the national tests. In addition, the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The breadth, balance and standards of the curriculum have improved, particularly geography and history,

with the school adopting the nationally recommended guidelines. However, ICT requires some improvement. The quality of information to parents has improved and statutory requirements are now met in the governors' annual report. However, the school has not improved the quality of annual reports to parents about their child's progress and these are still unsatisfactory. The school now has good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching although the monitoring of curriculum development and longer term planning still requires improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	C	A	A
mathematics	C	C	C	B
science	C	D	C	C

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

Although not included in the above table, as no comparative data is available, the school significantly improved their results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2001. In English and mathematics a well above average number of pupils attained the expected level with over 50 per cent going on to attain the higher level. In science, an above average number of pupils attained the expected level with 47 per cent of pupils attaining the higher level.

The above table shows that in the 2000 national tests the school's attainment in English was well above that of most schools nationally and also well above what similar schools attained. In both mathematics and science the school's attainment matched that of most schools nationally. Attainment in science matched that of similar schools but mathematics was better. Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved steadily over the last four years matching the improvement in most schools nationally. For pupils sitting the 2001 tests the school set challenging but realistic targets, yet still went on to exceed them. For pupils sitting the 2002 tests the targets set are quite low and below what would be expected of these pupils based on their results when they were tested in Key Stage 1.

In the end of Key Stage 1 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, the school usually attains results similar to most schools nationally. In 2000, reading results dipped below this but have improved again in the 2001 tests. In the 2001 tests, results in mathematics have dipped but a significant number of pupils were absent for the test and this has adversely affected the results. However, the school consistently does not attain as well as similar schools in these tests and standards could be higher.

Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm the test results for 2001. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 and, by the end of Year 6, attain above expectations in English, mathematics and science. Standards in most other subjects are satisfactory and are above expectations in art and design. However, despite improvements being made in



ICT provision, standards in this subject are too low. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 1 and the standards of work seen are satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and try to do their best work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They behave well both in classes and on the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils develop mature and sensible attitudes. They have very good relationships with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance rates are above the national average.

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships are a strong feature of this school and make it a caring and welcoming place. They respond well to each other and to their teachers, reflecting the school's Christian ethos. Throughout the school, pupils show respect by listening carefully to their teachers and to each other.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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.*

Children in the nursery and reception classes are taught very well and this gives them a good start to their education. Both teachers have a very good understanding about how young children learn and provide activities that challenge and inspire the children to participate. During the inspection there were small numbers in both classes as children were only being introduced to nursery and school. This resulted in a high ratio of adults to children and this good support resulted in very good learning taking place.

The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. English and mathematics are taught well through the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to apply their literacy skills in other subjects but numeracy is not sufficiently used. The inspection took place in the second week of term and, despite only having them for a short time, teachers know their pupils well. This is as a result of sound assessments and information being transferred with the pupils as well as teachers using questioning well to ascertain what their pupils know and understand. As a result, teachers plan their lessons well and provide activities that cater for the needs of most pupils. Provision and teaching for those pupils with special educational needs but who do not have a statement of particular need would be improved if the targets and activities in their individual education plans were more precise and specific. Throughout the school, teachers are committed and enthusiastic. A strength of the teaching is the way resources are used effectively to make lessons lively and interesting. As a result, pupils are interested in their lessons and learn well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	On balance, satisfactory. The school provides a broad curriculum that is enhanced through visits to places of interest. However, ICT requires more time to be allocated to it.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There is good provision for those pupils who have been identified as having a statement of particular need. Provision for other pupils with special educational needs could be improved.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Two children require support for English as an additional language and they are well supported in school and through outside agencies working with the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and is a strength of the school. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Pupils knowledge and understanding of their local culture is sound but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school has sound procedures for child protection but not all staff are aware of them.

The school has recently undergone a change in organisation resulting in 4 classes in Key Stage 2 instead of 3. In addition, there are several new staff. As a result, the time allocated to particular areas of the curriculum and curriculum policies and guidelines are in the process of being reviewed. Most areas of the curriculum have developed in light of the school adopting the nationally recommended guidelines for subjects but insufficient time has been given to ICT resulting in standards being below where they should be. The school has improved its assessment procedures since the last inspection and these are now used to plan work that more closely matches pupils' abilities. Parents support their children's learning through homework and the school tries to work closely with parents. For example, consulting them over the new homework policy. There is no parent/school association and this restricts the opportunity for dialogue as few parents regularly attend meetings held by the school to discuss curriculum issues. The governing body still does not have a rigorous approach towards the monitoring of health and safety matters as identified in the last report.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led by the head teacher who has a clear picture of what the school does well and the areas that require improving. However, subject leaders and the deputy head teacher have insufficient management responsibility delegated to them. As a result, they are not as effective as they should be.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable. They are fully involved in all major decisions about the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school analyses test results and targets areas for improvement. The quality of teaching is monitored well by the head teacher and the literacy and numeracy subject leaders.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory. The school makes efficient use of funding and has

resources	provided additional staff to reduce class sizes and remove mixed age classes. The principles of best value are soundly applied to all spending decisions.
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The head teacher and governing body know the school well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, this is not reflected in the documentation the school produces. The school management plan is a very brief document that does not clearly and precisely describe how the school will improve or how any success will be measured in terms of improved standards. As a result, all staff do not yet share this clear educational direction, as new staff do not have documentation of sufficient quality to which to refer. The head teacher is very conscious of the workload of teachers. As a result, he has not delegated full management responsibility to subject leaders. However, this has resulted in subject leaders not being sufficiently involved in developing the school management plan or in spending decisions relevant to their subject. The head teacher maintains too much responsibility for subject areas with the result that some areas are not developing as quickly as they should, for example ICT. In addition, the deputy head teacher does not have a clearly defined management role. This has also resulted in an increased workload for the head teacher. The school's accommodation is good and well cared for. Resources in the nursery and English are good. All other subjects except history are satisfactory. History resources are inadequate but the school borrows from the local education authority to compensate for this. In the reception class resources require some updating and there are no resources for children's outdoor play.

#### **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>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• Their child likes school.</li> <li>• The school expects their child to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their child is making good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree with all the parents' positive views about the school. However, they do not agree with the parents' negative comments. The school provides a sound range of extra-curricular activities, which include sport, music, revision clubs and educational visits planned throughout the year. The school has tried to welcome parents into school but many meetings are not well attended. Parents have scheduled meetings with teachers twice a year but have opportunities to make appointments or discuss issues with teachers and the head teacher as and when needs arise. The school is well led and managed by the head teacher and the governing body.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 When pupils start the school in reception their attainment is typical for most four year olds. Children make good progress in the foundation stage and their attainment when they start in Year 1 is slightly above what would be expected. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science, and by the end of Year 6 attainment in these subjects is above what most pupils their age achieve. Although not included in the report, as no comparative data is available, the school significantly improved their results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2001. In English and mathematics a well above average number of pupils attained the expected level with over 50 per cent going onto attain the higher level. In science, an above average number of pupils attained the expected level with 47 per cent of pupils attaining the higher level.

2 In the 2000 national tests the school's attainment in English was well above that of most schools nationally and also well above what similar schools attained. In both mathematics and science the school's attainment matched that of most schools nationally. Attainment in science matched that of similar schools but mathematics was better. Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved steadily over the last four years matching the improvement in most schools nationally.

3 In the end of Key Stage 1 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, the school usually attains results similar to most schools nationally. In 2000, reading results dipped below this but have improved again in the 2001 tests. In the 2001 tests, results in mathematics have dipped but a significant number of pupils were absent for the test and this has adversely affected the results. However, the school consistently does not attain as well as similar schools in these tests and standards could be higher.

4 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the national expectation. In both key stages pupils express themselves confidently and clearly. They listen carefully to their teachers, as well as to each other, and contribute maturely to group and class discussions. By the end of Key Stage 1 the standard of reading is good and the majority of pupils have a reading age that is expected of seven year olds. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good degree of fluency, expression and understanding when reading. By the end of Key Stage 2 the standard of reading is very good and the majority of pupils have a reading age well above that expected of eleven year olds. Pupils read from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are fully independent readers and the majority of these pupils read accurately and fluently with a good standard of expression. Attainment in writing is in line with the national expectation in Key Stage 1 and above the national expectation in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 progress is satisfactory with due attention given to handwriting, punctuation and spelling. By the end of Year 2 pupils' writing shows clear structure and the appropriate use of adjectives.

5 By the end of Year 6 attainment in mathematics is good. Very good progress is made in Years 5 and 6 with pupils working above expected levels for their age. The additional use of the 'Booster' class once a week for pupils in Year 6 positively assists pupils' attainment to higher levels. However, standards in mathematics are not high enough for pupils aged seven. Most pupils only work comfortably with numbers up to twenty and count in twos and fives accurately. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 work at levels expected for their ages. They have a sure understanding of place value, confidently

recognising thousands, simple fractions and the major differences between certain geometrical shapes.

6 The school has improved standards in science since the last inspection. Teachers plan and provide many opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of science and, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are higher than would be expected for pupils of the same age. For example, by the end of Year 6 pupils use their knowledge of fair tests to set up experiments and predict the outcomes.

7 By the end of both key stages standards in information and communication technology are below the level expected nationally, with most pupils lacking the ability to use spreadsheets or control software with confidence. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet and sending electronic mail in school only on limited occasions and personal research is difficult due to the low numbers of computers presently situated in classrooms.

8 By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment in art and design is above that expected of seven and 11 year olds and progress is good. Since the last inspection the standards in art and design have improved and the contribution of a local Beacon school has been influential in the development of the confidence and expertise of the staff.

9 Standards in all other subjects are satisfactory, with geography and history making good progress since the last inspection.

10 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the classroom and make steady progress. However, because the targets in their individual plans are not specific enough, teachers do not use them when planning lessons resulting in activities not always being well matched to needs.

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

11 Pupils show very good attitudes to school and to their learning and their behaviour in and around school is also very good. Relationships between all members of the school community are also very good. These aspects are a strength of the school and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The high standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained. Parents have very positive views about behaviour in school. This view was clearly reflected in comments made at their meeting and through responses to the questionnaire.

12 In the classroom the attitudes and behaviour of pupils was good in most lessons and very good or better in nearly half the lessons. There was no significant difference in attitudes and behaviour between the key stages. Similar standards of behaviour were observed in the playground, in the dining hall and around school. Pupils take pride in having their names entered in the 'Golden Book' and celebrating their good behaviour and effort in assembly. There was no indication of any unsociable behaviour whatsoever during the inspection. There have been no exclusions from school.

13 Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and show respect towards all members of the school community and a strong Christian ethos permeates all aspects of the day-to-day life of the school. There was no evidence of graffiti or vandalism in or around school. All pupils enjoy coming to school and participate enthusiastically in class activities. For example, in a reception class lesson all the children enjoyed passing different fruits around and describing their 'feel, smell and taste'. In a Year 3 literacy

lesson, pupils demonstrated obvious enjoyment in exploring language and they had the confidence to voice their opinions and initiate new ideas.

14 Pupils' relationships between each other and with adults are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in all aspects of school life and enjoy working and playing together. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were willing each other to succeed in their reading. In a Year 5 science lesson, pupils were making confident and enthusiastic responses when defining words such as 'soluble, solution and dissolve'. All pupils are consistently polite and well mannered towards their teachers and visitors. The very high quality of these relationships has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

15 The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are satisfactory. Pupils act as monitors and carry out class responsibilities. The school is considering the setting up of a school council and this will give pupils further opportunities to get involved in school life. Pupils are very much aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and make generous donations to a variety of charities such as 'CAFOD' and 'Cry in the Dark'. This has a positive impact on their personal development.

16 Attendance rates remain good. They have improved slightly since the last inspection and are now above national average. The level of unauthorised absence is below national average. Pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly.

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

17 The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved since the last inspection and is now good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is very good and some excellent teaching was also seen. Teachers plan thoroughly and clearly identify what pupils should learn in a particular lesson, although this could be improved for those pupils who have special educational needs. The school has adopted all the nationally recommended guidelines for subjects and teachers are beginning to base their lessons from these. The school has recently altered its provision from 3 classes to 4 classes in Key Stage 2 and all these classes only have single age groups. This means that teachers can more easily plan work that ensures pupils develop their knowledge and skills in a way that builds on previous learning. The school now needs to develop policies for all subjects in light of the new guidelines to help teachers in the delivery of these subjects.

18 In the foundation stage, the nursery and reception teachers work closely together as a team with the support assistants. Teachers in the foundation stage have a very good understanding of how young children learn. The very enthusiastic and lively teaching captures the children's full attention and they listen carefully. For example, the teacher in the nursery read a story to the children with such expression and involvement that the children sat and listened enthralled. Planning in the foundation stage is very detailed and this ensures good learning opportunities for all the children, and a smooth transition for children into the reception class. The nursery and reception classrooms are very bright and attractive and extremely well organised and prepared. They present a good balance of teacher directed activities and ones that pupils choose themselves. This very good provision, together with the overall very 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, they are well supported by classroom assistants and they make good progress.

19 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 Year 5 lesson pupils confidently read 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat' using intonation and timing well to make the reading expressive. 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. For example, in Year 2 pupils had to write the instructions about how to make a 'Mustard Sandwich' for the lighthouse keeper's lunch.

20 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. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1 the teacher blew bubbles for the pupils to count during the mental activity. These strong relationships mean that teachers always have very good control of their classes. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6, pupils moved around the classroom collecting equipment and setting up experiments. They then conducted the experiments working collaboratively. Throughout the teacher remained in firm control of the class but relationships had been developed so that pupils clearly understood the teachers' expectations of their behaviour.

21 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 and those pupils capable of higher attainment. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs could be improved at both key stages. Pupils who have a statement identifying a particular need are well supported by classroom assistants and make good progress. However, the individual education plans for other pupils with special educational needs do not sufficiently identify targets for these pupils so teachers do not always provide activities at an appropriate level.

22 Teachers in both key stages have a sound knowledge and understanding of most of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. In these subjects teachers provide many varied, activities that develop pupils' skills well. Pupils apply themselves well in these subjects and produce high quality work. 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 OR STUDENTS?**

23 The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is very good. Planning is suitably based on the six areas of learning and appropriate links are made with the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. Very good attention is given in planning to ensure a smooth transition to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

24 The curriculum for pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 is broad and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. However, some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have not yet been fully resolved. For example, there is still insufficient time devoted to ICT. Insufficient links are made between subjects, particularly with ICT. As a result, pupils do not develop their ICT skills well enough, nor do they identify suitable opportunities to use computers and other equipment to support their work. For example, in mathematics and science little use is made of database interrogation to



compare results. The school makes good provision for the pupils' health education through the science curriculum. Some opportunities are provided for pupils' personal and social education in older year groups when relevant social, moral, emotional and health issues are discussed at length. Sex education and raising awareness of drugs issues are dealt with sensitively by staff and the school nurse as pupils progress through the school.

25 There are now policies and schemes of work in place for most subjects. However, many of these are old and are being reviewed as they do not yet incorporate the recently introduced government guidelines. This means that staff new to the school do not have a current school policy on how to teach some subjects. The school is aware of the need to review the time given to the teaching of each subject in order to balance the curriculum more evenly. For example, at present pupils in Year 6 receive more than the nationally recommended time for music with two 'sessions' on one day. As a result, this reduces the amount of time they can spend on other subjects, for example, ICT.

26 The school has correctly given literacy and numeracy high priority. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is very good and for numeracy it is good. In literacy, pupils have well planned opportunities to work in small groups to extend and develop relevant vocabulary. Although there are good opportunities for pupils to develop specific vocabulary to support their knowledge in some subjects, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. However, numeracy skills are well taught during the numeracy hour. Both strategies are contributing effectively to the continued rise in standards of English and mathematics by giving effective support to teachers' termly planning.

27 The overall provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, especially when considering the number of newly appointed teaching staff. However, the inspectors do agree with parental concerns regarding the limited pre-match training given to the coaching of the football team prior to competitive fixtures being played. Visitors to the school, planned visits to different museums along with a residential trip to Middleton in Teesdale for pupils in Year 5/6 make a good contribution to the curricular opportunities offered. These activities make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

28 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies are held daily with well-planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their contribution to the life of the school and their families at home. In assemblies pupils are given the opportunity to share their good work, for example during the inspection a pupil read out a poem about an animal whereas another talked about the construction of an African facemask. Throughout the year all the main festivals are celebrated in assemblies. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to reflect upon a range of musical experiences as they enter and leave the school hall. Once a week one class attends Mass in the school. The use of prayer boards in respective classrooms give suitable opportunities for pupils to empathise with others' feelings and to learn, respect and value a range of concerns. All lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to listen to each other's opinion and all contributions are valued by pupils, in response to the high expectations set by teachers. Works of art feature highly in the curriculum giving well planned opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of beauty, form, colour and texture. For example, the very good range of artwork displayed in the school hall. High expectations of pupils' behaviour in the classroom and as they move around school is matched by expressions of praise and other rewards. For example, their name appearing in the 'Golden Book' prominently displayed in the school entrance area.

29 Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong through assemblies in the school hall and school rules, which pupils have agreed. As a result, they understand the value of good behaviour and respect for one another. Reinforcement is given by way of teacher praise and encouragement. For example, pupils are identified as the 'Star of the Week', and this is fully supported by a system of merits and certificates, which are celebrated collectively in assembly. Pupils are actively encouraged to apologise and make amends when actions cause friendships to falter. All teachers act as good role models, treating all pupils with respect through relationships and a sense of fairness. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities for discussing a variety of issues that raise moral questions. For example, in Year 6 when reading the 'Diary of Anne Frank'.

30 The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school is a well ordered, caring community that actively promotes a harmonious environment encouraging strong relationships between pupils of differing social backgrounds. For example, in the nursery this enables boys and girls of different cultures to relate well and enjoy one another's friendship. Planned extra-curricular activities and residential activity, to which many pupils respond positively and show enthusiasm, further support pupils' social development. Some of the older pupils fulfil positions of responsibility by placing chairs in position in readiness for assembly, enabling them to contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility through collecting for local charities, for example, St Cuthbert's Care and Children in Need. However, their social development would be better if there were more planned opportunities for pupils to show initiative, develop personal responsibility and contribute to school life.

31 The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The religious education programme gives pupils some knowledge and understanding of other cultures through their study of different faiths, but displays, resources and music do not adequately represent the cultural diversity of the world in which the pupils are growing up. The present planned arrangements to enhance multicultural education through most subjects taught are unsatisfactory. All pupils have well planned opportunities to visit local museums and places of interest, for example the local library, Roman Wall and Tynemouth. All these have a positive impact on pupils' interest and learning. Through work in history and geography and an increasing use of technology, for example the Internet and CD-ROM information retrieval, pupils' awareness of cultures is encouraged. However, at present regular planned use of ICT to support pupils' work in these subjects is unsatisfactory.

32 The school has developed good links with the community and there has been an improvement since the last inspection. Numerous visits are made to local places of interest such as Beamish Museum, Durham Cathedral and Newcastle Airport. In addition, pupils carry out conservation work in a local woodland area. All these visits are clearly linked into the curriculum and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. In particular, an effective partnership has been built up with the Durham Business Education Executive and a local Beacon school. The latter provided very good art support in school by working alongside pupils and teachers.

33 A number of interesting visitors come to school. They include the Seagull Theatre of the Gorge and the Youth Mission Group. The pupils enjoy these visits and they also make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

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

34 Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide satisfactory care for its pupils. This level of care is underpinned by the very good knowledge that staff have of their pupils and the high quality of relationships which exist within the school community.

35 This satisfactory level of care must now be enhanced by the implementation of a more rigorous approach towards the monitoring of health and safety matters by the governing body. Procedures for all aspects of health and safety should be reviewed and governors need to ensure that the risk assessment, which was referred to in the last inspection report, is implemented and that regular formal inspections are carried out on a regular basis. A number of other issues were discussed with the head teacher and they should be considered as a matter of urgency. Effective arrangements exist for first aid and the majority of the staff are qualified. Procedures for Child Protection are satisfactory and the school has adopted the local authority guidelines. The head teacher is the designated person. The governing body should now ensure that the appropriate information is included in the staff handbook and that all staff have knowledge of those procedures. The supervision of pupils at lunch and in the playground is effective and midday assistants are seen as an integral part of the school family.

36 Overall the school's policy for special educational needs embraces the principles of the Code of Practice. However the arrangements for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs are limited by the weak administrative procedures. This means that the Special Needs Register is not properly maintained and therefore the individual education plans for some pupils are missing. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a combination of withdrawal for individual and group support by learning support assistants and appropriately differentiated work by class teachers. However the targets in some IEPs are too vague to be of help in teachers' planning and

consequently the tasks set are not always fully matched to the needs of pupils. The quality of the learning support assistants and the good quality of teaching for pupils with statements of special educational need are strengths of the school. These strengths are reflected in the positive attitudes and collaborative approaches of pupils with special educational needs. Therefore, the provision could be further improved by improving the administration of special educational needs, by being more consistent in setting targets that are specific and measurable and by planning the curriculum to take account of the range of pupils with special educational needs within each class.

37 The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. The school has high expectations for the behaviour of its pupils based on mutual respect and consideration for all members of the school community. This has a very positive impact in that pupils have a very good idea of right and wrong. The procedures to monitor and promote attendance are satisfactory. The school produces effective computerised monthly figures but it needs to ensure that published figures are accurate.

38 The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Staff know pupils very well and are able to provide personal support with activities both in and out of school.

39 Procedures and systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall and have improved since the previous inspection. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science assessments are undertaken regularly and teachers keep good records of pupils' progress. The results of tests and other assessments are carefully analysed and the information is used to set suitable targets for individuals and groups of pupils. This has been a positive contribution to the continual improvement in these subjects over recent years. The school has begun to monitor the progress for individuals against national and local standards and this has helped to raise expectations. During the year the head teacher reviews and discusses with individual pupils levels achieved and future targets to improve attainment. However, there are only limited assessment procedures in ICT and no formal procedures are in place for the other subjects of the curriculum.

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

40 The school continues to promote itself satisfactorily to parents. However, the responses at the parents' meeting and to the questionnaire were very different. Comments at the meeting were generally positive but in response to the questionnaire there were a number of concerns. For example, almost 40 per cent of responses signified that parents thought that they did not have good links with the school. Additionally, 18 per cent of responses signified that parents felt that they were not well informed about the progress that their children were making in school and 21 per cent considered that the school was not approachable. These points of concern were investigated during the inspection and discussed with parents in school but, with the exception of the quality of annual reports, they could not be corroborated.

41 Although no parents were observed helping out in class during the inspection there is clear evidence that parents, grandparents and friends were involved with pupils in the planting of the school garden. Some others provide effective help in the library. Two parents, who started as classroom helpers, have now qualified as classroom assistants and make a valuable contribution to school life. Many parents enjoy attending class assemblies and Masses. The Friends of the School Association is currently in abeyance but parents provide generous sponsorship for their children in class-based events.

42 The information produced by the school for its parents is satisfactory overall. Newsletters are informative and give parents details of school events and activities. Additionally, they inform parents of the topics that their children will be covering each term. Since the last inspection the school has invited parents into school to discuss improved communication but there was a poor response. Staff are available to speak to parents at the start and finish of each school day. The quality of annual reports on progress is unsatisfactory and the school has not addressed the comments made at the last inspection. The school should now rectify this deficiency as a matter of urgency.

43 The school invites parents of pupils who have special educational needs to attend reviews concerning their child's progress. These are well attended and parents have the opportunity to be involved in discussion about the contents of future individual education plans.

44 The support provided by parents and carers to homework is good and it makes an effective contribution to their children's learning at home.

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

45 The head teacher leads and manages the school well. He is committed and hardworking, leading by example. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. The head teacher has been instrumental in the raising of standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science to a high level. In particular, very good progress has been made in the number of pupils who now go on to achieve the higher levels in the national tests. This is a result of the head teacher and the Year 6 teacher setting pupils very specific targets and monitoring their progress towards those targets. In addition, they have provided after school revision clubs for pupils in Year 6.

46 The head teacher, local education authority, numeracy and literacy co-ordinators have monitored the quality of teaching well. From this monitoring areas for development have been identified and, consequently, the quality of teaching has improved. The school has recently undergone a significant change of staff. This has necessitated the appointment of new staff, most of which have been newly qualified teachers. The school supports these teachers very well on a personal level. However, as some of the school's documentation is not completed or up-to-date these teachers do not have the benefit of the full information about the school or pupils that they should have. For example, the staff handbook is not completed so new staff do not know about child protection procedures. Many subject policies are out of date so new teachers cannot refer to them about how the school would like these subjects delivering and information about pupils with special educational needs is not sufficiently precise and clear.

47 The breadth, balance and standards of the curriculum have improved, particularly geography and history, with the school adopting the nationally recommended guidelines. However, the monitoring of curriculum development still requires improvement. For example, the school still does not allocate a sufficient amount of time to ICT but, in some classes, music has too high a proportion of time.

48 Data is used well to analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses and from this identify areas for development. Staff and governors have a good understanding of how well pupils achieve in comparison to other schools, knowing that more pupils reach the expected level than in most other schools. Data is also analysed to identify trends or patterns in the attainment of different groups of pupils, for example those capable of higher attainment. This data is then used to set targets for future attainment. This has been

developed and refined recently to produce more accurate targets as they were previously set a little too low.

49 The head teacher is developing an ethos of working together as a team in which the strengths of all staff are recognised and valued. 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. However, this information is not used sufficiently to inform the School Development Plan. The head teacher does not yet involve all staff sufficiently in the development of this document. As a result, although the head teacher has a clear educational direction for the school all staff do not yet share this. Co-ordinators appreciate that they need to develop their role still further. They have not been given responsibility for a budget in their subject area and this has restricted how it has been developed.

50 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 fulfil their roles well. They meet regularly with the head teacher to discuss the school's priorities for development and progress made. However, 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 continue raise standards and how it will measure any improvement in terms of pupils' attainment.

51 Finances are well managed. The school carefully monitors all spending. Governors have a good understanding of the principles of 'best value' and these are applied conscientiously to spending decisions.

52 Staffing levels are adequate. The school has recently benefited from the government initiative to provide more classroom support. This is helping to improve standards for those pupils who require additional support. Support assistants are deployed well. They are fully involved in lessons and this is helping to raise standards.

53 Improvement is needed in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Records are kept and updated regularly but the clarity of information regarding pupils' targets in their individual education plans is not satisfactory. As a result, teachers' lesson plans tend to allocate support to pupils, rather than identify specific teaching strategies to meet the particular needs of individual pupils. The head teacher currently has too heavy a workload. He is the co-ordinator for special educational needs and he also co-ordinates design and technology and ICT. In addition, the deputy head teacher has no clearly defined management role and responsibility. This lack of delegation has resulted in some areas of the school's development not making the progress they should. For example, the monitoring of the whole curriculum, the production of the school development plan, completion of documentation and development of ICT. The head teacher and governing body should now look at how some of these roles and responsibilities could be delegated to other senior members of staff.

54 The adequacy of accommodation is good and very good for the teaching of English where there is a spacious library. In addition to a hard surface playground the school benefits from an extensive grassed playing area. The school is well maintained and very clean due to the hard working caretaker and cleaning staff.

55 Resources for the nursery are very good. There have been improvements in the English resources and these are now good. However the resources for history are

unsatisfactory and there are still very limited materials to promote an awareness of cultural diversity. In all other subjects resources are satisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56 The head teacher, staff and governors should:

1. Raise standards in ICT by:
  - making sure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to work with computers to experience all aspects of the ICT curriculum especially control, modelling and sensing;
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to use electronic mail and the Internet;
  - using ICT more effectively to support pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum.  
(Paragraphs 24, 107, 109, 110, 111)
2. Improve the management role of key staff by:
  - improving the effectiveness of the role of the deputy head teacher;
  - delegating to subject leaders all management aspects of their subject;
  - involving staff more fully in the development of the school management plan.  
(Paragraphs 49, 53)
3. Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
  - making sure that the targets in their individual education plans are precise and detailed;
  - making sure that staff of those pupils identified as having special educational needs know the contents of their individual education plans.  
(Paragraphs 36, 53)
4. Improve the quality of documentation that identifies the school's future development by:
  - clearly identifying all the main areas for development in the school management plan;
  - ensuring that the targets in the school management plan are specific and measurable;
  - matching finances to the areas of development identified;
  - updating curriculum policies in light of recent government guidelines;
  - sharing the school management plan with staff.  
(Paragraphs 25, 46, 49, 50)

The following, more minor issues, should also be taken into account:

1. Prepare pupils for living in a multicultural society. (Paragraph 31)
2. Provide resources for outdoor play for children in reception. (Paragraph 68)
3. Improve the quality of reports to parents. (Paragraph 42)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	6	22	18	0	0	0
Percentage	8	12	44	36	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	174
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	27

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	8	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	10
	Girls	8	8	7
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79% (90%)	89% (86%)	89% (93%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	17	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89% (86%)	84% (97%)	95% (86%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	12	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	21	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91% (81%)	87% (67%)	100% (76%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	20	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87% (67%)	87% (81%)	91% (52%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	174
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	24.8

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	318,379
Total expenditure	321,715
Expenditure per pupil	1,650
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,389
Balance carried forward to next year	9,053

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	98

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	50	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	49	5	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	57	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	16	4	0
The teaching is good.	37	54	8	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	62	13	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	44	18	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	48	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	16	45	35	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	23	45	19	8	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	57	7	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	10	28	22	28	12

## **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**

57 The school's provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. Children start at the nursery in the September of the year in which they are four. They attend either a morning or an afternoon session of the nursery class. Children transfer to the main school in September of the year in which they are five. The school has very good induction procedures both for the nursery and the reception class. Children are introduced to each class in small groups over a period of weeks. They start with the oldest children first and this gives teachers time to thoroughly get to know each child before another group starts. It also helps to develop the excellent relationships that were seen in both classes. Teachers use this time effectively to establish classroom routines with the children and also to carry out assessments so that future work can be matched to children's needs. The induction of children into the school works well and includes the nursery nurse transferring to main school for a while so that children feel secure by having an adult with them that they know very well. Before they transfer to main school, children visit the reception area often and join in some of the activities with the reception children. As a result, they settle in very quickly. As the inspection took place in the second week of term, a group of eight children was mainly seen in the nursery and a group of 11 in the reception class, with different groups attending mornings and afternoons.

58 When starting in the nursery, for the majority of children, their attainment in all areas of learning is typical of most three year olds. However, the children seen in the nursery during the week of the inspection were the oldest from that year group. As a result, attainment seen by those children was better than would be expected for most three year olds and is not representative of the school's spread of attainment. Children make good progress throughout the foundation stage with most attaining the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they start Key Stage 1.

59 Teachers and support assistants in both the nursery and reception class work well together. They make time to plan together so that knowledge and skills introduced in the nursery are built upon in the reception class. Planning is very thorough with good use made of the recommended guidelines for the foundation stage. As a result, children receive very good experiences of all the areas of learning.

60 Teaching in the foundation stage is very good and some excellent teaching was seen in both the nursery and reception class. Teachers and support assistants work very well together to support children's learning. This good level of adult support means that children receive adult intervention with their activities when it is needed and helps them to make good progress. The children are eager to learn and often achieve well when working with an adult. Teachers in both classes have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They present children with a very good balance of teacher directed activities and activities children chose themselves. This develops children's independence in learning very well. The teacher in the nursery has worked closely with outside agencies in preparation for two children who have English as an additional language. Signs around the classroom are in English and Japanese. Both teachers are extremely well organised and prepared. They provide stimulating activities for children that capture their attention and hold their concentration for quite long periods. For example, in the reception class the teacher provided a variety of musical activities for the children to develop their understanding of rhythm. Children concentrated fully for over 30 minutes because of the enjoyable activities and the engaging, enthusiastic teaching.

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

61 Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well provided for. In reception, circle time (children sitting in a circle all with the opportunity to speak when it is their turn) develops well children's understanding of the need to take turns and to listen to others. Most children exercise a degree of choice relating to the wide variety of activities across all areas of learning on offer at one time. For example, after the initial group teaching sessions children choose which activity they would like to experience. Children are becoming familiar with the nursery routine and how to access the resources they need, so move confidently from working with sand or water to painting, to building with construction bricks. Most children are comfortable working alone, alongside each other or with adults. For example, one boy sat alone while he finished his colouring and other children played at catching a ball with the teacher. The adults provide good role models and relationships are very good. For example, during snack time staff ensure that they always say please and thank you. These sessions are used well to promote the understanding of sharing things with others, for instance fruit, bread, biscuits or crisps, and patiently awaiting their own turn. Good role-play areas encourage the children to play co-operatively whilst making sense of their world. For example, in the house corner children willingly take on specific roles, such as being the mum, dad or child, so that they can play together in situations they feel comfortable and familiar with. Throughout the foundation stage staff constantly build children's confidence and self-esteem with the good use of praise. Children are encouraged to attempt new activities or to improve on what they have done previously. Whenever a child is seen making an effort staff are quick to praise and explain what that praise is for. Consequently, children enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

62 The staff rightly set a high priority on the development of early speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. They provide many opportunities for children to practise their speaking and listening within all activities. Most children are beginning to listen carefully and, by the end of the foundation stage, their speaking skills are well developed. For example, when describing good or bad things that have happened to them one child stated '*When I got my new bed we put a cushion down the side in case I bumped myself*'. The teachers constantly talked to the children about what they were doing and encouraged them to join in the conversation. Most children were very enthusiastic and joined in readily.

63 All children in the small nursery group enjoy listening to stories and are eager to share books with each other and with adults. The teacher read the stories very well and this motivated the children to join in. For example, children were enthralled when the teacher read a story about how Foxy lost his tail. They followed and understood the story well so that if the teacher suddenly stopped the children would supply the missing word. Good questioning at the end of the session allowed the teacher to assess how much children had recalled and understood. Most children know many rhymes and action songs by heart and join in enthusiastically – particularly '*Old MacDonald's Farm*'. In the reception class children learn to identify rhyming words and to describe characters in a book. The teacher used a very exciting method to teach the children the rhyme about '*The Queen of Hearts*'. Children had to identify the words that rhymed but also say why the knave was naughty. As a reward they baked jam tarts.

64 Children make good progress with their writing skills. Many opportunities are given for pupils to write at their own level. For example, paper and pens are always available in role-play areas where children can write down notes and messages for each other. By the

end of the nursery children make good attempts at writing recognisable letters and most write their own name independently. In reception, pupils start by asking the teacher to write for them. They then copy the teacher's writing. By the end of the foundation stage all children write simple words correctly and most children independently write short sentences with spellings that are recognisable. For example, *'Th puppy is ol cleen'*.

### **Mathematical development**

65 Children in the nursery and reception class daily join in stories and rhymes that develop their understanding of numbers. For example, in the reception class a lesson began with the children singing *'Five Currant Buns In A Baker's Shop'* showing sound understanding of the first stages of subtraction. In addition, many activities are provided that give children the opportunity to explore mathematical concepts. For example, in the sand and water children fill and empty containers and develop a sound understanding of more and less and wet and dry. Most children in the nursery make good attempts at sorting objects by shape or colour with many children already knowing the names of most colours. A group of children playing outside with trucks and gravel used sound mathematical language when talking about what they were doing, saying that the truck was full or empty. In the reception class children have a daily numeracy lesson and mathematics is taught well with activities that engage the children's interest. For example, children had to count out cubes and make a model from them or play the *'Monster Match Game'*. By the end of the foundation stage most children order numbers to 50 correctly by counting in 10s and calculate simple sums. For example,  $3+5=8$ . Whilst working in role-play situations teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use plastic coins. This develops well their money recognition and, by the end of the foundation stage, most children recognise and name all coins.

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

66 Many children enter the foundation stage with a sound knowledge and understanding of the world about them. Teachers develop this knowledge well. For example, in the reception class the teacher asked children about their favourite fruits. She linked this very well to a story she had read to the children *'Handa's Surprise'*. The teacher encouraged the children to discuss which senses they used when deciding which fruits they liked. Children were then given the opportunity to try a variety of fruits and describe what they liked or disliked about them. Most children recognised an apple and a banana but very few knew a melon or a kiwi fruit. However, all children were able to describe which fruits they liked or disliked and used words such as hard, prickly and juicy. Teachers in the foundation stage have tried to create an environment that will stimulate and develop children's curiosity. For example, in the nursery the teacher buried some plastic insects in compost. The children had to find the insects and try to name them. The children's faces lit up with delight when they found the bugs and many feigned disgust at the creepy insects. In the nursery, children often have the opportunity to experiment with food. For example, during snack time they prepare their own bread and butter snack.

67 The children's computer skills are satisfactory. They use the keys and the mouse well to operate the cursor in simple programs that enable them to practise counting and matching skills. In the reception class children manipulated the mouse well to select clothes for *'Dressing Ted'*. They were also introduced to a *'Roamer'*. Children had great fun learning how to program the robot to move forward and backwards at their command.

### **Physical development**

68 The children in the foundation stage have regular opportunities to explore a range of activities in outdoor play and they also have regular time for physical activities in the hall. For example, children in the nursery improved their co-ordination skills by batting balls fastened to a line in the nursery grounds. In the reception class children enjoyed a lesson in the hall where they showed they could skip, hop and jump in response to instructions. In addition, children in the nursery have access to wheeled toys which they thoroughly enjoy using. However, there are no resources in reception for children to experience outdoor activities and the teacher has to try and compensate for this with sessions in the hall. The children's development in this area is restricted, as the hall does not have large apparatus for the children to climb. This hampers the development of children's confidence in performing activities above ground height. Children handle equipment safely and enjoy their physical activities. They use their manipulative skills in practical situations to make models using construction kits or play dough. In the reception class this was linked very well to a lesson on fruits and children had the opportunity to model various fruits from play dough. Most show sound control and are developing satisfactory co-ordination over time. Children's attainment in their use of their bodies and using equipment is satisfactory and their use of small physical skills such as cutting, sticking and holding a pencil are also well developed by the end of the foundation stage.

### **Creative development**

69 By the time they reach the end of the reception year, the children's attainment in creative development matches those expected for their age. Children are enthusiastic and keen to take part. There are opportunities for them to regularly paint. For example, nursery children paint recognisable pictures about themselves and children in reception paint pictures in the style of Turner. They use a range of materials to learn about texture and create pictures, collages, prints and patterns. For example, when learning about fruits children in reception used fruits cut in half to discover what patterns they made when they used them for printing.

70 Children regularly experience singing activities. In the nursery they memorise counting and action songs and learn to sing them tunefully. A very lively and stimulating lesson in the reception class gave children opportunities to use percussion instruments. Children named many instruments, for example, cymbal, drum, wood block and tambourine. Most remembered the maracas because of a slogan the teacher had taught them '*Don't go crackers with the maracas*'. They confidently chose which instrument they wanted to use to keep the rhythm of the song whilst the teacher played the guitar. Children loved this activity and tried very hard to perform correctly and sensibly.

### **ENGLISH**

71 Standards in English are in line with that expected for seven year olds and well above average for eleven year olds. Standards in Key Stage 1 have been variable in previous years but the results in 2001 show that there has been an improvement in standards of reading. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are well above the national average with the vast majority of pupils achieving level 5 in reading. Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 in writing, including handwriting, and in the overall standard of teaching. Pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress when given additional support in classrooms. However, other pupils identified as having special educational needs do not have sufficiently detailed individual education plans and teachers and support assistants are unaware of the pupils' targets when working in small groups on structured learning programmes.



72 Standards are high for a number of reasons. Firstly, the literacy strategy has been successfully implemented under the positive leadership of the English co-ordinator and this has helped to raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. Secondly, the assessment procedures have been improved and lead to pupils' progress being carefully tracked with targets being set to enable them to reach the next level of attainment. Thirdly, there are many opportunities provided by other subjects, such as history, religious education and science that promote writing skills for a wide range of audiences.

73 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the national expectation, which is both a strength of the school and an improvement since the last inspection. In both key stages pupils express themselves confidently and clearly. They listen carefully to their teachers, and to each other, and contribute maturely to group and class discussions. In the literacy hour, pupils listen intently to stories, poems and biographical texts. They are very willing to ask and answer questions and are enthusiastic about contributing their own ideas. In Key Stage 1 many opportunities are provided for skills to be developed; for example Year 2 pupils were precise in discussing the specific instructions on 'How to make a mustard sandwich'. In Key Stage 2 pupils' skills are developed further and they respond well to the planned opportunities for expressing opinions about events and characters; for example when Year 4 pupils speculated about the feelings of individual characters in the novel 'The Butterfly Lion'. These skills are particularly enhanced when there are appropriate links with other subjects; for example Year 6 pupils discussed the life style of L.S. Lowry and how this influenced his paintings. A good level of subject specific language is displayed in many areas of the curriculum; for example in Year 2 art and design where pupils discussed the feelings evoked by the work of Jackson Pollock and in science where Year 5 pupils could clearly explain the processes of evaporation and condensation. There is limited use of drama across the key stages to support the development of speaking and listening skills and is an area the school could develop further.

74 By the end of Key Stage 1 the standard of reading is good and the majority of pupils have a reading age that is expected of seven year olds. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good degree of fluency, expression and understanding when reading. Many of these pupils are already independent readers and would benefit by having more opportunities to read a wider range of books beyond the reading scheme. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress. Teachers have a record of the books that pupils read and they are listened to regularly at home and at school. When reading, pupils use picture or contextual clues appropriately, are building a comprehensive sight vocabulary and use their understanding of letter sounds to attempt unknown words. By the end of Key Stage 2 the standard of reading is very good and the majority of pupils have a reading age well above that expected of eleven year olds. Pupils read from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are fully independent readers and the majority of these pupils read accurately and fluently with a good standard of expression. Pupils read for pleasure, can justify who is their favourite author and are able to review books critically taking account of aspects such as character and plot. The significant improvement in the range and quality of books that pupils are exposed to is a critical factor sustaining the pupils' appetite for reading.

75 Attainment in writing is in line with the national expectation in Key Stage 1 and above the national expectation in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 progress is satisfactory with due attention given to handwriting, punctuation and spelling. By the end of Year 2 pupils' writing shows clear structure and the appropriate use of adjectives. Pupils in Year 2 were able to re-tell a fairy tale and were imaginative in their ideas and use of words. Pupils are secure in their construction of sentences and have extensive practise in the structuring of

stories. They write for a wide range of purposes and use topic work to provide opportunities for extended writing; for example Year 1 pupils write an imaginative 'Rain Forest Story' in response to their topic on habitats. In Key Stage 2 progress is good and sometimes very good. Pupils make good use of dictionaries and thesauruses to support their spelling. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils are able to plan and redraft written work including stories, drama scripts, narrative, poetry and letters. Pupils have a thorough grounding of poetry and there were some very good examples of pupils' own poems in addition to the critical reviews of the poetry of Walter De La Mare by Year 6 pupils. Some of the work is of a very high standard; for example the stories of Year 6 pupils responding to the title of 'Mystery Solved' showed a very good use of descriptive writing. Pupils write in a range of styles, pay good attention to punctuation and employ specific techniques such as the use of similes and alliteration; for example, Year 5 pupils write persuasive letters to a newspaper highlighting the treatment of sharks. Pupils' use of written language through other subjects is very good; for example, in religious education, pupils write their own prayers and in history vivid accounts of a day in the life of a lead miner.

76 The quality of teaching is good. All teachers have a secure subject knowledge, teach with enthusiasm and confidence and as a result the implementation of the literacy hour is good. This has led to pupils having positive attitudes towards their work and having an obvious enthusiasm for English. Good teaching is seen in lessons, which are thoroughly prepared, and imaginative resources are used to captivate pupils' interests and motivate them to work hard and concentrate for a sustained period. Pupils show interest in their lessons, behave very well and respond enthusiastically to every aspect of English. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils and, as a result, pupils participate willingly in discussions. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and learning, give supportive feedback and set targets for pupils to help them make progress. Teaching has a good balance of class, group and individual work and whole class lessons are enhanced by skilful questioning which encourage pupils to focus on the subject, clarify and extend their thinking and reinforce their knowledge. Most pupils are able to work both independently and collaboratively and this leads to very good relationships with each other.

77 The subject leader provides good leadership and management, has a thorough overview of the subject and has established clear priorities for its future development. There are good formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the teaching of English and literacy throughout the school. Further improvements can be made in three ways. Firstly, by providing opportunities for teachers to observe and model the best practice in and outside of the school. Secondly, by using the targets as set out in the individual education plans of all pupils with special educational needs to inform the planning of learning activities and tasks. Thirdly, providing more time for listening to individual readers in Years 1 and 2.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78 Results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been close to the national average compared to all schools since 1998. When compared to schools with a similar social background, results for pupils in Year 6 reflect levels of attainment that are below expectations. In the 2000 national tests pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieved standards broadly in line with national expectations, which reflects on the findings of the previous inspection. However, when compared with results achieved by pupils in the 2001 national tests attainment for Year 6 pupils has risen dramatically to well above national expectations with over 50% attaining the higher level. Results for pupils aged seven indicate a similar picture to the previous year with results being broadly in line

with national expectations, depressed in 2001 by the large proportion of pupils absent and failing to undertake the test. Inspection evidence indicates that very good progress has been maintained in Year 5 and Year 6, but standards in mathematics are still not high enough for pupils aged seven.

79 When pupils start in Year 1 they have a good grasp of mathematics, as observed during a practical counting session involving the adding of pairs of numbers to make twenty. Most pupils work comfortably with numbers up to twenty and some well beyond to fifty; counting in twos and fives accurately. The Year 1 lesson observed was excellent; a rapid mental session was followed by a range of appropriately challenging group tasks with lower attaining pupils effectively supported by additional adult support. Challenging questions motivate pupils' interest and they clearly enjoy the added attraction of counting soap bubbles expertly blown by the class teacher before they burst. As observed in Year 1, teachers make good use of the plenary session to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done.

80 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 receive satisfactory teaching with pupils working at levels expected for their ages. Pupils have a sure understanding of place value, confidently recognising thousands, simple fractions and the major differences between certain geometrical shapes. Teaching for pupils in Year 5 and 6 is good, with pupils working above expected levels for their age. The additional use of the 'Booster' class once a week for pupils in Year 6 positively assists pupils' attainment to higher levels. In Year 5 the teacher sets very clear targets, using the 'clock' to generate pace working against predetermined time intervals. The use of numbered cards during the mental 'warm up' involves all pupils and assists assessment of pupils' knowledge. Lessons are carefully planned based on the pattern of the National Numeracy framework. Confident subject knowledge assists the rapid pace of the lesson and clear instruction gives much well directed support. As a result, pupils make very good progress in their overall numerical ability.

81 Pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and mental activities in particular. The quality of written work in books is good. During practical activities involving games pupils work with enthusiasm, working well with other pupils when required, knowing what they are expected to do and making great efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are nearly always well behaved and on occasions behaviour is exemplary, which enables them to concentrate well and make considerable progress.

82 Mathematics is not used sufficiently in other subjects. There is very limited evidence of pupils being given opportunities to deepen their understanding by regular planned use of information and communication technology to support work in mathematics. Analysis of pupils' work shows that most work is directed too closely by the class teacher, failing to give higher attaining pupils an opportunity to devise their own investigations and problem solving techniques. Written work in pupils' books indicates a formal recording of answers to questions, thus restricting a more practical approach that uses a range of methods and solutions related to every day life.

83 In most classrooms displays reflect a range of appropriate mathematical language and often in the very good lessons this is shared with pupils to further develop their language skills. In most lessons, as observed in Year 1, very good use is made of support staff who are aware of the teachers' intentions and provide additional help, especially for pupils with special educational needs.

84 Leadership of the subject is good and has had a positive impact on raising standards. The school benefits from a teamwork approach and commitment to raise

standards. The well planned monitoring of teaching quality and learning has clearly identified areas for development. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is good, reflected in the standards achieved by pupils in Year 6. Resources have been developed well to broaden the range of material available to support pupils and staff during practical sessions. Assessment information is also well used to inform medium term planning and to decide which areas of the curriculum will need reinforcing. Marking gives praise to pupils and the very best examples inform them how to improve their work.

## **SCIENCE**

85 The school has improved standards in science since the last inspection. Teachers plan and provide many opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of science and, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are higher than would be expected for pupils of the same age. In the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, more pupils attained the expected level for their age than in most other schools. However, no pupils went on to attain the higher levels in these tests. This was not the case in the 2001 assessments. More pupils attained the expected level with many more than going on to attain the higher level than had previously. In the Key Stage 2 tests in 2000, a similar number of pupils attained the expected level as in other schools nationally, but fewer pupils attained the higher level than would be expected. However, the 2001 test results show that more pupils this year attained the expected level with nearly half going on to attain the higher level.

86 The quality of science teaching is good and teachers make science lessons interesting and stimulating. Pupils experience many practical activities that motivate and interest them and this helps them to learn well. For example, when learning about their senses in Year 1, pupils ate different flavours of crisps and smelt different fruits and vegetables with their eyes closed to try and guess what they were. Pupils were very enthusiastic about these activities but very good relationships and good classroom management, that included the support assistant working with a group of pupils, ensured high standards of behaviour at all times.

87 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 6 pupils discussed how to set up a fair test to see if sugar dissolved faster depending on the heat of the water. A good question and answer session led to pupils collecting the equipment they thought necessary and carrying out the experiment. Pupils behaved sensibly and worked together collaboratively. As a result, they developed their experimental skills well but very good teacher knowledge also developed the idea of saturated solutions as well as what they were trying to find out.

88 Science is managed very well. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of pupils and staff and how to develop the subject. Many lessons in Key Stage 2 are taken by the science co-ordinator so that good use is made of her expertise. 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 conduct simple experiments to design a raincoat for a toy, show how heat alters some materials and discover which force makes some things move. In Year 2, experimental skills are developed further by carrying out experiments to see whether water, lemonade or tomato-juice freeze; what makes toy cars go faster and how to construct a simple electrical circuit. Year 3 pupils conduct surveys around the school to identify what things are made from and why, know how to keep warm or cool and how heat alters some things but not others. By Year 4, pupils have

developed a sound understanding of fair tests and test different materials and papers for strength, flexibility and whether they are waterproof. The school is currently combining a commercially produced scheme of work with the nationally recommended guidelines for science. This is ensuring that pupils experience good coverage of the science curriculum. As a result, by Year 5 pupils are starting to devise their own experiments; for example, to see if air has weight, incorporate buzzers and switches into circuits and know that most plants and animals are adapted to survive in a particular habitat. As a result of good curriculum coverage and teaching by the end of Year 6 attainment is better than would be expected for their age. Pupils use their knowledge of fair tests to set up experiments and predict the outcomes; for example, which carrier bag is the strongest or how much water a plant uses. Good revision in Year 6 prepares pupils well for the statutory tests and this is helping to improve results.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89 By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is above that expected of seven and 11 year olds and progress is good. Since the last inspection the standards in art and design have improved and the contribution of a local Beacon school has been influential in the development of the confidence and expertise of the staff.

90 From the early years pupils participate in an impressive range of activities requiring them to observe with sensitivity. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to mix a range of primary colours and draw and paint well from direct observation and readily discuss how to improve their work. Pupils use a range of media to represent their ideas and observations and pay good attention to detail in shape and colour, as seen in Year 1 shape pictures in the style of Kandinsky. Pupils gain inspiration from examples of famous artists and they successfully experiment with colour and paints and use brushes to see the different effects that may be produced; for example Year 2 pupils created sunflower collages following a study of Van Gogh and imaginative paintings in the style of Jackson Pollock. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to confidently use a wide range of materials, including charcoal, pastel, fabric and paint. Following the visit of a specialist teacher to introduce the pupils to the work of Miro a very good range of skills and techniques were developed. For example, Year 6 pupils found objects around the school and made a sculpture to represent rock musicians. Pupils in Year 4 drew good self-portraits in the style of Picasso and Year 5 pupils created imaginative collages in the style of William Gainsborough. The work on Islamic prayer mats by Year 6 made good links with their topic in religious education.

91 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and explanations and demonstrations are used effectively to develop understanding and teachers skilfully convey instructions to groups and the whole class. Resources and artefacts are well used to stimulate and sustain pupils' interest; for example the range of books to support the Year 4 work on African masks was impressive. This led to pupils showing considerable enthusiasm and enjoyment. Their behaviour and maturity when handling equipment is good. Where teaching is good, for example in Year 2, the teacher has a good subject knowledge, high expectations and uses space and resources very effectively. As a result pupils are conscientious, remain on task for sustained periods of time and persevere to complete their work to a high standard.

92 The curriculum co-ordinator provides good, enthusiastic leadership and has effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress. Resources are good and easily accessible. The school takes pride in the pupils' achievements and their work is celebrated

throughout the school in professional and imaginative displays that reflect the school's ethos and commitment to high quality work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93 Pupils are generally making satisfactory progress in both elements of designing and making throughout the school and standards for pupils aged seven and eleven match age expectations. This is an improvement on the judgement made during the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection week because of timetables. However, evidence was gained from scrutiny of displays, reviewing teachers' planning and discussions with pupils.

94 Scrutiny of a display relating to the development of slippers and their subsequent manufacture undertaken by last year's Year 6 pupils reflects a sound understanding of the designing, making and evaluating process. In their work on food technology in Year 5, pupils understand the consistency of various types of bread and their uses. Pupils' knowledge of the importance of design is further developed in Year 6 when, with the support of specialist staff, they generate their own bridge designs using tightly rolled paper to make columns fixed together to form triangular structures. Appropriate links with science and numeracy are made when bridge sections are tested for strength by hanging calibrated weights from strategic points until the bridge collapses. Pupils enjoy the competitive element of the lesson, working in groups, sharing ideas and tasks that include costings of manufacture before the actual 'test' to find the strongest structure. At the beginning of these lessons pupils are encouraged to make their own designs, identifying and evaluating problems as they proceed.

95 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and tasks generally matched to the level of the pupils' abilities. Pupils are eager to become involved. For example, in a Year 3 lesson concerning the taking apart of familiar packaging to identify the different shapes used and the need for gluing tabs, pupils listened attentively and most followed instructions carefully. Behaviour is generally very good and pupils share their equipment sensibly and safely. The highlight of the lesson was the very efficient manner in which the clearing away was undertaken as this highly practical session produced an abundance of waste paper that was collected by pupils with the minimum of disruption.

96 At present the subject is managed by a caretaker co-ordinator. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced, but the overall scheme of work has not been updated in line with recent government guidelines. Pupils focus on initial drawings rather than carefully evaluating the finished article and then modifying the design. Though some form of informal monitoring of pupils' work does occur, there are no formal assessment procedures established for the subject. As a result, work in some lessons is not matched to individual needs, for example in Year 3 where some pupils' cutting skills are less well developed. This has a negative impact on learning for the lower attaining pupils. The school has not yet introduced the element of control technology, although it is aware of the need for it and plans do so in the near future.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97 In the last inspection standards in geography, by the end of Key Stage 2, were below where they should be and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Since then good

improvements have been made. Pupils now make steady progress and, by the end of both key stages, standards are as expected for seven and 11 year olds.

98 The subject is well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Areas for improvement have been clearly identified. The school has adopted the nationally recommended guidelines for the subject and this ensures that pupils now receive good coverage of the programmes of study for geography. The co-ordinator also identified resources as an area for development and more resources have been bought. However, this improvement has only brought resources to an acceptable level. The co-ordinator has clear plans for the further development of the subject, particularly the use of ICT, but is restricted in this development because she does not have an indication as to her budget allowance.

99 Teachers have a sound knowledge of geography and teaching is satisfactory. This results in pupils being interested in the subject and they learn at a steady pace. In Year 1, pupils collect data about the school grounds and building. They draw simple plans and maps of the school and their classroom. Much of the work they undertake at this young age is of a practical nature and this develops well their understanding of their place in the world. In Year 2 they develop this understanding of their place further. They understand which countries make up the British Isles and use atlases to locate and name the major cities. Basic skills for studying geography are developed by pupils being given opportunities to collect data about the area and conduct surveys; for example, about local traffic. An area of strength in geography is the amount of first hand practical experiences the pupils receive. In Year 3, pupils study the local area. The skills they have developed in Years 1 and 2 are further developed by taking a 'locality walk' and drawing their own maps of the area. They study transport by making tally charts. Information is gathered from books and questionnaires given to local people. The information is then used to produce a guidebook of Ouston. Their knowledge of their own locality is then widened further when they compare Ouston with Tenby.

100 By Years 4 and 5, pupils understanding of geography has widened to include places such as Kenya. They study Kenya to find out about its climate, economy and living conditions so that they can compare them to their own and understand how influences such as climate affect the way of life. Map work is developed well. Pupils use 2 figure co-ordinates to study a map of Sunderland and locate given features. They carry out investigative work about the weather and carefully use instruments to record the weather over time. By the end of Year 6 pupils have developed their geography skills well. The previous work is built on through more in-depth studies of specific areas of the world such as Europe and India. Pupils devise their own research questions and use globes, atlases and brochures to good effect to find the answers. The use of ICT in geography is at an early stage but is developing well. Most topics have CD-ROMs of information for the pupils to interrogate and they have had the opportunity to access the Internet to find information.

101 The school is now well placed to develop this subject further.

## **HISTORY**

102 In the last inspection standards in history, by the end of Key Stage 2, were below where they should be and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Since then good improvements have been made. Pupils now make steady progress and, by the end of both key stages, standards are as expected for seven and 11 year olds.

103 The subject is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator and standards have improved by adopting the nationally recommended guidelines for the subject. This ensures that pupils have full coverage of the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. In addition, teachers now have higher expectations of pupils and lessons provide activities that match the needs of all pupils. The co-ordinator has clearly identified how the subject needs to improve further and resources have been identified as in need of improvement. Resources are currently unsatisfactory. The school has no artefacts to help with the teaching of history although they do borrow from the local education authority to compensate for this. However, this does have a negative impact on some lessons. For example, in a lesson in Year 1 the teacher was developing pupils' understanding about toys now and toys long ago. The teacher had to rely, mainly, on pictures and posters to show pupils the differences. Although pupils developed an understanding of the differences; for example the use of plastic and porcelain for the making of dolls, their knowledge would have been better developed with more first hand experiences.

104 The teaching of history is satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. They show an interest in their lessons and for the subject, applying themselves to their work and learning at a steady pace. Teachers have a sound subject knowledge and, in Key Stage 1, they try to make history very relevant for younger pupils. For example, in Year 1 they study history through looking at how they themselves have changed over time. They then develop an understanding of how things change over time by recalling how they have developed from babies to where they are now. Teachers then develop this well by providing pupils with opportunities to study and understand how particular peoples' lives have influenced how life has developed. For example, they study George Stephenson and compare the use of vehicles today with his inventions. This is developed further in Year 2 with the study of the Victorians. Good use is made of the local Beamish Museum and pupils develop a sound understanding of life then and now.

105 In Key Stage 2, pupils begin to study other civilisations. For example, the Vikings, Romans and Ancient Greece. Work is well presented in books and all topics are given good coverage ensuring pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. Literacy is used very well in this subject with teachers giving pupils many opportunities to express their knowledge and understanding through different types of writing. For example, pupils in Year 6 carried out research and wrote factual information about the Greek gods and what they did. On another occasion they wrote 'A runners thoughts' as if they were running in the Olympic games. Pupils' historical skills are developed well. For example, pupils in Year 3 used books to research the Viking way of life showing a good understanding of longboats, how they were built and what they were used for; in Years 4 and 5 pupils used census material to find out about life in Victorian times while in Year 6 pupils looked beyond events to try and form some reasons as to why they happened and who the main people involved were.

106 The school is now well placed to develop this subject further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

107 By the end of both key stages standards in information and communication technology are below the level expected nationally, with most pupils lacking the ability to use spreadsheets or control software with confidence. In discussion with pupils in Year 6 they recall using the Internet and sending electronic mail in school only on limited occasions and that personal research is difficult due to the low numbers of computers presently situated in classrooms. However, the school has already identified this as an area for development and a well-planned subject development plan supported by the arrival



of new computers will address this area. Pupils were using no other information and communication technology equipment other than computers in the classroom during the inspection. As a result, many pupils' standards of attainment are lower than the 'generally satisfactory' level stated in the previous inspection report. Year 6 pupils have developed confidence in word processing skills for example in literature, but pupils lack the ability to control movements of programmable toys and to use data handling sheets to extend required information.

108 By the end of Year 2, most pupils rearrange items displayed on the monitor screen by using the mouse and keyboard with expected skill and understanding. Other pupils' skills are lower than expected for their age and they are hesitant when reading menus and controlling the cursor's movements. In a Year 3 lesson observed, almost all pupils had limited skills of changing print size and manufacturing bold headings as headline statements. This lesson clearly identifies their previous low level of involvement with menus and keyboard skills.

109 By the end of Year 6, most pupils have sufficient keyboard and mouse skills to communicate, retrieve and display stored information. Pupils in Year 6 are building satisfactorily on previous achievements through planned skill development when using the computer to word process work. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that most pupils from Year 5 onwards combine text and pictures to present their work, giving thought to an audience. However, in discussion with pupils in Year 5, they could only recall limited access to computers in the previous school year with no knowledge of spreadsheets to support work in mathematics. It is obvious they are developing a good awareness of how useful the computer is in learning about other subjects, but not in a consistent way.

110 For most pupils progress over time has been unsatisfactory in the past due to the insufficient amount of opportunities for them to use computers. Nevertheless the quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection is satisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress. Behaviour is very good and pupils use equipment sensibly, concentrating for long periods. Most teachers give sound instructions for the basic skills of word processing. Pupils value the drafting of ideas, for example, work displayed on 'New Beginnings' and personal reviews of life in school, illustrating a sound range of word processing applications. However, the method of training the whole class seated on a carpet viewing one monitor is not the most effective strategy or use of time as most of the pupils seated at the rear of the group are unable to see the use of keyboard or text on the screen. This resulted in the class teacher having to repeat the instructions again when the pupils commenced work by themselves or in pairs.

111 Recent attendance by teaching staff on national training courses has had a positive effect on raising subject confidence and expertise. The developing systems of pupil assessment observed in Year 6 are not consistent across the school. This hinders pupils' rate of progress and hampers higher achievement considerably. The school is aware of the need to implement a coherent approach to progression of skills to ensure consistent coverage of all the required programmes of study. At present the monitoring of standards and teaching is unsatisfactory.

112 Management of the subject is ineffective. Nevertheless the priorities identified by the school are appropriate and, when implemented, should further raise the profile and standards in the subject. The school has identified the software and equipment necessary to develop the use of information and communication technology in all subjects.

## **MUSIC**

113 Few lessons were observed during the inspection, limited evidence was available and no taped or video work was presented for analysis therefore no overall judgement on pupils' attainment and progress in music could be made. Information was gained from talking to teachers and scrutinising their planning, which shows that most pupils are on course to meet expected standards in singing.

114 As pupils have not had sufficient work on composing and playing instruments together they have not made enough progress in these aspects of the subject. Pupils in the school have satisfactory singing skills and willingly join in the songs and hymns during hymn practice.

115 The quality of teaching observed is satisfactory. When the teacher has secure subject knowledge and expertise lessons are interesting and pupils are fully involved in music making. When the pace of lessons slows pupils become restless and the adult in charge spends too much time managing behaviour and too little time teaching musical skills. Singing sessions consist of practising previously learned songs and learning is unsatisfactory at these times. Pupils lack the acquired musical skills; knowledge and understanding that would help their personal development, which would be gained through well-planned, interesting lessons.

116 Music appears a low priority in school. This unsatisfactory situation is due to a lack of an agreed policy and scheme that incorporate new government guidelines. There are many missed opportunities for pupils in assembly to listen to and appraise music. Management of the subject is not as effective as it could be; nevertheless the subject co-ordinator has sound subject knowledge and has correctly identified the school's needs. The school has a reasonable collection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. There is at present no planned in-service training for teachers and no system for monitoring or assessment of pupils' work or implementation of the curriculum. The subject makes some contribution to the development of literacy through the reading of words for hymns and songs. Opportunities to introduce music from other cultures are missed and there are very limited visits from musicians to enrich the curriculum. There are not enough opportunities to support pupils' learning through the use of information and communication technology.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117 By the end of both key stages pupils are attaining standards that are in line with what is expected for pupils of their age. They experience a broad and balanced curriculum through a good range of physical activities. All pupils have a thorough understanding of the relationship between exercise and health and fitness.

118 In Key Stage 1, pupils travel and balance well when moving across the floor. They perform simple skills with agility showing good control of their movements when running, walking, skipping, hopping and changing directions. In gymnastics, pupils combine a sequence of movements but need to pay more attention to starting and finishing positions. In Key Stage 2, pupils have good levels of co-ordination and are agile and balanced in their movements; for example Year 3 and 4 pupils are able to balance using different parts of the body and then link a sequence of movements. A strength is that pupils make perceptive evaluations of their performances and are keen to refine their ideas in response

to suggestions for improvement. Pupils in Year 3 have regular swimming lessons and the standard is good. Most pupils are able to swim the recommended 25 metres by the end of Year 6. In Year 6 pupils' skills in dance are developing and they construct a sequence of movements in response to a piece of music.

119 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The best teaching is characterised by secure subject knowledge, an emphasis on pupil demonstrations, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the effective use of available resources. This leads to pupils' enthusiastic responses, good standards of concentration and positive attitudes to their work. For example, Year 1 pupils were disciplined and focused when travelling around the hall. All teachers prepare their lessons well, have good relationships with pupils and communicate their enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers use praise appropriately to motivate pupils, which ensures that pupils are prepared to persevere with tasks and practise their skills. For example, Year 6 pupils were inhibited at first when dancing but quickly grew in confidence and made good progress. Teachers make effective use of the hall, dress appropriately for the subject and are conscious of health and safety matters. Consequently pupils show an appreciation of the importance of warming up and relaxing after exercise. The quality of pupils' relationships is good and results in pupils co-operating well in pairs and being sensitive when evaluating each other's performances.

120 The current policy statement and scheme of work ensure that teachers are aware of the skills to be taught in each term and that pupils are provided with activities in an appropriate sequence that builds upon their previous learning. The accommodation, resources and storage facilities are satisfactory. Physical education makes an effective contribution to the social and health development of the pupils as well as promoting the importance of fitness.