

INSPECTION REPORT

ATKINSON ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Unique reference number: 108445

Headteacher: Mr M Hunter

Reporting inspector: C D Loizou
18645

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 194094

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Harrison
Date of previous inspection:	19 - 22 May 1997

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9736	J Brasier	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?
8006	J Watson	Team inspector	Geography Religious education	
2200	J Stirrup	Team inspector	Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3755	T Hulbert	Team inspector	English History	
8845	H Sumner	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a popular infant and junior school in the Benwell area of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The school has 383 pupils on roll between the ages of four and 11 years, which is above average in size. Most pupils live close to the school and there is a strong demand for places in the school's special educational needs (SEN) classes, which provide specialist provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum. The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then, there have been many staff changes, including the recent appointment of a SEN co-ordinator. Sixty per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Sixty per cent are on the SEN register, which is high, but includes the pupils admitted to the specialist SEN classes. Five per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is high compared to most schools. Less than three per cent of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school admits up to 60 four-year-olds into its reception classes every year. Initial assessments of the children when entering the school show that their attainment is well below the standards expected of children aged four years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. It has some excellent features. The pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school. The teaching is very good. By the age of 11, standards are below those expected in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards have been rising over the last four years in line with the national trend. The school has been successful in raising standards and at the same time maintaining its rich and broad curriculum including its range of extra-curricular activities. The headteacher and staff set high expectations and, as a result, all the pupils achieve very well. The school is extremely well led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. The teaching is very well planned, and is particularly effective in supporting those pupils identified with SEN, including those in the school's speech and language class and the communication class. Relationships are excellent across the school and the staff are particularly effective in improving the pupils' personal development. There are strong links with parents and the local community, who play an important part in the life and work of the school. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve very well and standards are rising. Standards in art and design are high. They have improved well in science and are now in line with those expected. Standards in design and technology and physical education are above those expected by the age of 11 years.
- The teaching is very good, well planned and organised and meets the needs of all the pupils.
- The children in the reception year receive a very good start to their schooling.
- There is excellent leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher, senior staff and governors regularly monitor and support the school. They set high expectations.
- The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum with very good links between subjects.
- There is a strong and effective art and design and information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum.
- The pupils with SEN are very well supported and taught. They are monitored closely and make very good progress.
- The school is successful in improving the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- Extend the school's assessment procedures more consistently to the foundation subjects (subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT).

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 May 1997 and has made very good progress since then, addressing all the issues raised by improving standards in English, mathematics and science, as well as in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has also been successful in improving the pupils' personal development as it has maintained its excellent ethos and commitment to the needs of all its pupils. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to reflect on what they learn and express their ideas and thoughts in a variety of forms such as in their writing, role-play and drama, as well as in the expressive and creative arts including art and design, physical education, dance and music. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved because the teaching is very effective with imaginative and varied use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. However, more could be done to extend the school's assessment procedures to other subjects so that the focus on providing a broad and rich curriculum maintains improvements in standards in all subjects. Significant improvements have been made to the ICT curriculum and resources and this has led to a rapid improvement in standards, which are now in line with those expected of seven and 11-year-olds.

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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	D	A
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E*	C	D	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

the lowest 5% of schools E*

(‘Similar’ in the table above refers to the percentage of free school meals and not the size of the school).

The children start in the reception year with a wide range of ability, but standards overall are well below those expected for their age. They make very good progress because the Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and taught. By the end of the reception year most of the children are likely to just fall short of the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning. Test results last year for seven-year-olds show a slight improvement in reading and writing standards, but standards were well below the national average, reflecting the very low attainment on entry of that particular year group. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved. Currently, reading, writing and mathematics standards are well below those expected and science standards are higher, but still below national expectations by the age of seven. These standards are greatly affected by the high proportion of pupils on the SEN register.

By the age of 11, standards in the national tests last year were below average compared with all schools in English and Science and well below average in mathematics. However, compared with similar schools standards were above average overall, reflecting the very good progress the pupils have made over time. This is likely to improve further this year with a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils targeted to exceed the expected levels for their age. English and mathematics standards are currently just below national expectations and science standards are broadly in line with those expected. Standards are rising in line with the national trend. The pupils with SEN, including those in the speech and language and communication classes, make very good progress because they receive very good support and are very well taught. The management of English, mathematics and science is excellent. The school has an effective policy for teaching higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics. This results in a good proportion of pupils in Year 6 being targeted as having the potential to reach Level 5 or above. Standards in ICT have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now in line with those expected by the age of 11 years. This is directly a result of improvements to the ICT curriculum, excellent

management of the subject and the much improved resources and training that the staff have undertaken. Standards in art and design are high and they are above those expected in design and technology and physical education. They are in line with those expected in music, religious education and ICT, but below expectation in geography and history.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes are very good. They try hard and enjoy learning, applying themselves very well to the tasks set for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils are very well behaved. This is helping to create an orderly, positive and supportive working environment. There was very little temporary exclusion last year.
Personal development and relationships	This is excellent. The pupils are independent and mature. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Older pupils support younger ones and the school operates a very effective pastoral house system that involves the pupils in helping to manage and improve the school.
Attendance	This is satisfactory and is rising in line with the national trend. There is very little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The teaching is very good overall and ranges between satisfactory and excellent. It has improved well since the previous inspection. Over 40 per cent of the lessons seen were of high quality. The quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, although more could be done to extend assessment consistently to all the subjects of the curriculum. The teaching is very well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers use assessment well in English, mathematics, science and ICT so that the teaching can focus on the pupils' learning and takes account of the progress made in previous lessons. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective, enabling a large proportion of pupils to achieve higher than expected standards for their age. ICT is very well taught across the school and good use is made of the school's excellent ICT resources. Pupils have regular access to the computer room and teachers have improved the way new technology is used to support learning across a range of subjects. Teachers regularly assess how well the pupils are doing and this is informing their planning, but not consistently in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT, where assessment is more established. Pupils with special educational needs receive very effective support in lessons and, as a result, make very good progress. The pupils in the speech and language and communication classes make very good progress because they are very well managed and taught.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good. There is a very good range of practical and relevant tasks and good opportunities for the pupils to use ICT. It is a rich and balanced curriculum that includes high quality art and design work

	and very good use of music, dance and drama as well as sports and games outside school hours.
Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils receive very good support. They are identified early and make very good progress. Provision for the pupils in the speech and language and communication classes is of a high quality.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A small number of pupils speak an additional home language. Good assessments of their needs are made and they are supported very well in lessons. The pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is excellent and is supported by a very good range of activities in school and outside school times. Excellent provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The pupils are also developing a very good understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very good level of care provided for all the pupils and there are very good procedures to assess how well the pupils are doing in English, mathematics, science and ICT. More could now be done to extend these procedures to other subjects of the curriculum.

Parents are very pleased with the range of work the school provides both in school time and after school hours. They are provided with regular information about the topics being covered and extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The deputy headteacher and senior staff work closely with him to monitor lessons and pupils' work. The management of the school is extremely well focused on improving standards and supporting all the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides excellent and very effective support. They work closely with the school and its staff and have a clear understanding of their role in managing and supporting the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is excellent because the governors and staff have established clear priorities in the school development plan. The plan is very well conceived. There has been a thorough process involving audits, monitoring and sharp evaluations of the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	This is very good. There are clear targets that are matched to spending priorities. The school manages its finances very well, ensuring best value for money when committing resources or spending school funds.

The school's accommodation is extremely well maintained and has improved, especially with the establishment of a dedicated room for ICT. Additional support staff, such as classroom learning assistants and SEN support staff, make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. The administrative staff are very efficient and always make themselves available to parents and visitors as well as managing the smooth running of the school and its finances. Lunch-time supervision is excellent and extremely well managed. Everyone associated with the school contributes to its excellent ethos and warm relationships.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and make good progress.• The teaching is good and sets high expectations.• They feel comfortable approaching the school and are kept well informed.• The school works closely with parents.• The school is well led and managed.• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.	

Parents think highly of the school and are pleased with the way the headteacher and staff are approachable and supportive. Inspectors agree with all the views expressed by parents. Many parents are delighted with the quality of the school's speech and language and communication classes. They are fully aware of the school's established reputation for its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the reception year, overall standards are well below those expected in speaking, reading, knowledge of letter sounds and mathematical development. Approximately 60 per cent of the children are identified as having special educational needs, which are mainly associated with language difficulties and speech. They have made very good progress in their personal development and show very good attitudes to learning, which is helping them to settle quickly into class routines. The children make very good progress throughout the reception year so that by the time they start Year 1, their attainment is just below the standards expected of children of this age in all areas of learning, except in physical development, where the children reach the standards expected by this age. The school has improved well on the standards found in the previous inspection.
2. The standards achieved by the majority of seven-year-olds in the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments were well below the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were below average. Standards appear to be too low, but the pupils are still developing their language skills well. The results are an indication of how difficult the pupils find the tests, as they have to read and interpret language that is not familiar to them at the age of seven. Consequently, very few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in the tests, reflecting the fact that nearly all the pupils are coming to terms with reading and writing independently. The test results in 2001 show improvement on the previous year, particularly in speaking skills, reading and mathematics, although standards are still well below average by the age of seven.
3. The pupils are making very good progress throughout their infant years, reflecting the very good teaching and focus on basic language skills as well as the development of numeracy and science. Classroom support provided by learning assistants is very effective as it is helping the pupil to learn basic skills. This is particularly effective in the very good progress made in speaking and listening. As a result, the pupils are beginning to understand what they read and, although the children do not reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the two years in the infant phase, a lot of groundwork has been laid so that the pupils are better able to cope with language, literacy and numeracy in the early part of the junior years. Inspection findings are similar to last year's test results as standards are well below those expected by the age of seven in reading, writing and mathematics. They are slightly higher in science, but are still below those expected by the age of seven.
4. Test results for 11-year-olds in the 2001 national tests show good improvement in English and mathematics and a slight dip in science. The results show that standards were below the national average in English and science and were well below average in mathematics. However, compared with similar schools standards were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. In English and science, a significant proportion of pupils exceeded the standards expected for their age, reflecting the strong focus that the school has placed on improving reading and writing skills. More importantly, approximately 60 per cent of the pupils taking the tests last year were on the SEN register and nearly half of these achieved the standards expected for their age. This signifies very good progress by the pupils in relation to their prior attainment.

5. Current standards for Year 6 pupils reflect this trend of improvement. Standards in English and mathematics are just below those expected by the age of 11 years. In science, standards are above those expected. The pupils are making very good progress in all three subjects. Using the school's accurate targets, standards are rising as more focused and targeted work is provided to ensure that a significant proportion of higher attaining pupils achieve higher than expected levels for their age. In every year group throughout the junior years, up to 60 per cent of the pupils are on the school's special educational needs register. Standards are improving well because of the very effective teaching; the close and accurate monitoring of pupils' performance in English and mathematics; the targeting of individual pupils so that teachers are best able to support and improve their performance; and the excellent management of subjects that enables the school to set challenging targets for all the pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The targets agreed with the local authority in English were exceeded in 2001 and those in mathematics were met. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
6. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected nationally by the age of seven and 11 years. The pupils make very good progress in ICT because opportunities are provided for them to learn basic computer skills now that the school has improved its resources. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection because new resources have kept up with the demands of new technology; for example, the establishment of a designated ICT room. As a result, the pupils now have very good access to computers, digital cameras, tape recorders and robotic devices, enabling them to make very good progress. Early indications are that standards will improve further and are likely to be above those expected when the impact of current good practice takes effect.
7. Infant and junior pupils make very good progress in mathematics, science, ICT and art and design. They make good progress in other subjects. Standards by the age of seven and 11 are well above those expected in art and design. They are above expectations in design and technology and physical education. The pupils reach the standards expected in ICT and music, but standards are below those expected in geography, history and religious education because the pupils' standards in reading and writing affects their work and progress in these subjects.
8. By the time pupils with special educational needs reach the end of Year 2 their attainment is well below what would be expected for their age. They do, however, make very good progress towards the targets set for them. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 their attainment is below what would be expected for their age. A significant number, however, make very good progress and reach the standards expected for their age in the national tests. The school supports and encourages these pupils very well and the identification of support for groups and individual is very effective. The provision made for pupils who are in the early stages of English language acquisition is good, enabling them to make very good progress in language development. This is having a very significant impact on learning and the progress that the pupils make in all subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Attitudes and behaviour are very good and the personal development of the pupils and relationships across the school are excellent. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The pupils very much enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic in lessons. They are welcoming to visitors and enjoy talking to them. Once in class they get down to work very well and show a genuine interest in what they are doing. This was particularly evident in a personal and social education lesson in which virtually every pupil had an interesting contribution to make on the subject of 'anger'. These

positive attitudes are due to the excellent relationships between teachers, classroom assistants, office and supervisory staff and the pupils - also the enthusiasm of teachers and their very good classroom management.

10. Behaviour is very good. In the playground, behaviour is very good and very well supervised. There is immaculate behaviour in assemblies. Around the school and at lunch-time in the dining hall the behaviour is also very good; the pupils are polite to each other and have excellent relationships with the midday supervisors who are extremely good at organising the pupils at lunch-times. School property is treated well and pupils are appreciative of the splendid environment in which they work. In lessons, behaviour is also very good in all parts of the school, including the specialist classes for pupils with special educational needs. Temporary exclusions occur very rarely. There have been no racial incidents. Incidents of bullying are also very rare and parents believe that the headteacher and staff deal these with very well. The pupils show excellent respect for others' differences, feelings, values and beliefs.
11. Relationships are excellent. This is an extremely happy school and teachers and classroom assistants know their children well and enjoy working with them. Pupils are confident in speaking to members of staff about problems. Pupils help each other and give support. For instance, in a physical education lesson where pupils were asked to work in groups to illustrate various beasts in Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky' by producing their own sequences of movement, the level of collaboration was outstanding and the results highly inventive. The pupils fully understand the impact their actions have on others and show very good attitudes to other pupils as a result.
12. The personal development of the pupils is excellent. They have many opportunities to take on positions of responsibility or use their initiative, which they do with alacrity. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to seek the views of their peers and present them to their regular meetings. The councillors talk with pride about the impressive list of improvements they have brought about and the quality of the debate that occurs at their meetings. Pupils assist at lunch-times and help newcomers by adopting them as 'buddies'. The pupils raise money for the homeless and asylum seekers at Christmas, and the house system provides very good opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility and show their initiative. For example, during the daily breakfast club, pupils from Year 6 hear younger ones read. The pupils with special educational needs enjoy their lessons and show positive attitudes to their work. They respond to the encouragement and praise given by their teacher or teaching assistant. Year 1 pupils worked very hard under the skilful guidance of a teaching assistant who helped them during a weaving activity. SEN pupils are keen to succeed and benefit from the carefully targeted support they receive.
13. Attendance is satisfactory; a considerable improvement over the last inspection. If allowance is made for the absences clocked up while the school is waiting to take the many leavers off the roll, attendance is very close to the national average. Unauthorised absence is very low; an indication of the effort made to discover reasons. The school copes very well given the high mobility of pupils leaving and joining the school at different times of the school year. Lateness, however, is a problem, with some two or three per cent of pupils arriving late. The school day starts on time and there is good timekeeping throughout the day. The registration system is efficient.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The teaching is very good and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Forty-three per cent of the lessons seen were of high quality, either very good or excellent. Eighty-five per cent of lessons were good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Since the last inspection, the teaching has made very good improvements, especially its impact on raising standards, including standards in ICT. The school's stimulating learning environment provides very good opportunities to accelerate the acquisition of language skills. Teaching sessions are managed and organised very well. A close liaison between the class teachers, specialist teachers who work in the SEN classes, as well as joint planning with nursery nurses and learning assistants enables all the staff to have a very good knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs. Support teachers and learning assistants are deployed to best fit the pupils' needs as they arise in all lessons. High quality and culturally relevant displays, resources and visual aids are well used throughout school. Many resources are tailor-made by the staff according to the topic focus or individual learning needs of pupils.
15. As a result of excellent leadership, with very clear policies related teaching and learning, standards are improving, expectations are high and the work being planned for the pupils is very well matched to their capabilities. This high standard of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and their achievement. The teaching has improved very well since the last inspection, resulting in effective targeting of pupils, including those with special educational needs. More now needs to be done to extend the assessment procedures used in English, mathematics and ICT to other subjects so that teachers use consistent assessments across the school to inform their planning further. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, which enables them to have a clear idea of the learning outcomes of the lessons taught. These are shared with the pupils so that it is clear to the pupils what is going to be learned and what comes next.
16. The teaching in the reception year is very good overall with many excellent features. This high standard is strong feature of the school's provision. Seven out of ten lessons seen in the Foundation Stage were very good or excellent. One in five of the lessons seen were excellent and of all the teaching observed it was never less than good. The children learn to settle quickly to routines and make rapid progress in their personal and social development because adults respond very well to the children providing them with an excellent and structured curriculum with rich and stimulating activities. The adults work very hard to provide resources and plan activities for all the children that challenge, stimulate and evoke language. There are a few occasions, however, when some children would benefit from more direct supervision to engage them in spoken language. The nursery nurse provides excellent support, but is having to divide her time between three class bases. However, when lessons provide both the teacher and nursery nurse the children benefit from very effective support that enables them to make rapid progress in the acquisition of early language and numeracy skills. The children sing rhymes and count, follow shapes and choose to match shapes with numbers or pictures to letter sounds. During water play, they communicate with each other, sharing tasks, and talk about emptying, filling, splashing and building together. Very effective learning is taking place because adults are continually monitoring, assessing and supporting the children. An increasing number of children enter the school who are learning to speak English as an additional language. These children are fully integrated and well provided for. The staff are always on hand to support them and the school is adapting its resources to provide; for example, more bilingual books, tape recordings and other resources to support those pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition.

17. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Forty-three per cent of the lessons observed were very good or excellent. Over 80 per cent were good or better and very few (14 per cent) were satisfactory. The teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils in all year groups have work that is matched to their capabilities. The pupils respond very well to the teaching. They listen carefully to instructions and during class discussions they offer thoughtful answers and responses. They persevere with tasks; for example, when investigating friction in science in Year 2 or when doubling numbers to calculate different problems in mathematics in Year 1. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. There are clear rules and classroom routines that provide a secure learning environment for the pupils. The introductions to lessons make it clear what is expected and the learning objectives are always shared with the pupils; for example, in mathematics lessons where counting skills are reinforced regularly at the beginning of each lesson. However, in some lessons observed, teachers missed good opportunities to extend the pupils thinking further because the activities provided were sometimes too easy or not challenging enough. In a science lesson; for example, the introduction and planning were good, but the main activity and discussion did not extend the more capable groups of pupils when investigating plant growth. In a more effective geography lesson, the pupils were constantly being challenged as the teacher cleverly used an e-mail from 'Barnaby Bear' to evoke thoughtful discussion about comparing different places around the world with Newcastle and the local area. The most effective lessons in the infant classes set more challenge in the middle part of the lesson with demanding writing or mathematics tasks. Very good use is made of computers to support the pupils' learning, especially when timetabled to work in the ICT room.
18. In the junior classes, the teaching is very good overall, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Eighty-two per cent of the lessons observed were good or better, including nearly 40 per cent of the lessons seen which were very good or excellent. The teachers prepare challenging and interesting tasks that motivate and sustain the pupils' concentration, enabling them to work hard and persevere with the tasks set. In all of the lessons seen, there was a good structure so that time was provided for the pupils to ask questions and explain their methods; for example, in an excellent mathematics lesson where the teacher used ICT to support the pupils' understanding when calculating problems by interpreting what is stated in words into mathematical language. Year 3 pupils were successfully solving real life problems, by studying a piece of text that masked the mathematical problem so that they searched for key words to help them identify the function and solve the problem. In another excellent lesson, Year 5 pupils were taught to identify the value of digits in number up to and beyond one thousand. The teacher kept challenging the pupils, leaving the little time to work things out so as to encourage and improve their thinking skills. Consequently, the pupils were able to explain the methods they use to work out complex addition and subtraction facts presented as practical problems. The very effective teaching of problem solving in mathematics is helping the pupils to make very good progress in their science work and the effective use of language and the support provided by specialised staff is helping all pupils to improve their language skills. Overall, the effective teaching of basic literacy, numeracy and scientific skills is having a positive impact on pupils' learning in other subjects.
19. The teachers use good assessments to monitor the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and ICT. Effective marking of pupils' work with helpful comments to help the pupils improve or correct their work supports the teachers' assessments. Work is usually marked up-to-date and is clear so that the pupils know what they have to do to improve further. However, there is a lack of consistency in the assessment procedures applied to other subjects. Teachers keep good records having tested what the pupils know in English, mathematics, science and ICT and this information is used to prepare

coherent annual reports to parents about their children's progress. Individual learning targets are set for all pupils and these help to predict what levels the pupils will reach at each stage. Nevertheless, the same does not apply to other subjects where there is inconsistency across the school. In this respect the teaching is not being informed by assessment in subjects other than the core subjects listed above.

20. The school has done very well since the last inspection, especially in developing and improving the effectiveness of the teaching. A significant proportion of teaching was of high quality, most of which was found in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Art and design teaching is usually of a high quality and this is having an immediate effect on the standards achieved with some excellent examples of pupils' art and design work displayed around the school. The key features that set this standard of teaching apart from the rest are the pace, challenge and enthusiasm for the subjects being taught. In these lessons, resources are very well used to support and enhance the pupils' experiences. For example, in an excellent English lesson, Year 3 pupils were inspired by the enthusiasm of their teacher as they read poetry aloud and investigated the effects of words that had opposite meanings. In the reception year, a teacher assesses how well a group of children were doing with their reading as she evoked thoughtful and meaningful discussion about characterisation in the story being read. In other good and very good lessons seen, the pupils investigated how characters in stories are presented and described and their learning was enhanced by a thorough investigation of the text by scanning the words to determine which words and phrases expressed how the characters felt at the time. This led to some very good empathetic and descriptive writing.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers are sensitive to the pupils' individual needs. They plan individual and group work carefully and they use the information gained through detailed assessment of their progress in literacy and numeracy to plan the pupils' next stage of learning. For example, pupils with special educational needs in Year 4 worked with their group teacher to extend their understanding of the order of number. This was planned as a result of the teacher's assessments of the pupils' progress. Teacher pupil relationships in this setting were very good and this led to the pupils making good progress. Skilful teaching ensured that each pupil was challenged appropriately through careful use of questions appropriate to their current individual understanding. For example, a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs was challenged to count forwards to 30 whereas another more capable pupil was expected to count both forwards and backwards to fifty.

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

22. The school provides a very good curriculum for all its pupils. It is a rich, broad and balanced curriculum that is made relevant to the pupils through a variety of practical and engaging activities and experiences. The curriculum covers all the areas of the National Curriculum and the religious education syllabus adopted by the school. Although no pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum, it is modified to meet the needs of the significant number of SEN pupils in the school and those pupils based in the SEN classes for speech, language and communication.
23. The length of the school day is in line with national recommendations, with in the main, appropriate time being devoted to all subjects. The single exception is religious education where there is limited time allocated, making it difficult to respond fully and in more depth to all areas of the syllabus used by the school. The very good planning and training for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has ensured effective implementation of these two very important areas of the curriculum.

24. The curriculum provided for the reception children in the Foundation Stage is very good, and enables them to make very good progress in their Early Learning Goals as well as introducing and preparing them for the National Curriculum by the time they start Year 1. Reception children are organised into three class groups and the planning is excellent because it takes account of their abilities and progress so that teachers and support staff can meet the needs of all the children. However, some opportunities to improve speaking and listening skills in the reception year are missed if there is no additional classroom support.
25. Throughout the school, the strategies to ensure that all the pupils have equality of access to the planned curriculum and extra-curricular activities are securely in place. The school fully responds to the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The school is also responding well to current changes in the code. Individual education plans are very good, with pupils being provided with an appropriate curriculum that enables them to work towards identified targets for improvement. There is very good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are provided with a programme that gives priority to literacy and numeracy through the teaching of basic skills and access to all foundation subjects and religious education. The carefully organised arrangements for integration allow those pupils who are judged to benefit from a programme that gives priority to language development to do so by spending each afternoon session in the specialist speech and language class where all foundation subjects are provided.
26. The documentation for pupils with special educational needs is regularly updated, well organised and appropriately disseminated. The co-ordinator manages an efficient database covering the special educational needs register, the monitoring of individual educational plans and the notes of specialist guidance provided to other staff. The pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Careful collaboration between class teachers and teaching assistants ensures that progress is assessed systematically with the information gained used appropriately to set new targets in literacy, numeracy and social development. Annual reviews are well organised with sufficient notice being sent out formally to parents. These meetings, which are recorded in detailed annual reports, involve the pupil's teacher, the parent and external professionals involved in supporting the pupil. Parents are also provided with opportunities to discuss the progress in each subject with their teacher prior to receiving the pupil's record of achievement. Teachers' long, medium and weekly curriculum plans are very good and provide good guidance for the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers' plans are modified to respond to the needs of the pupils in the SEN classes, and throughout the school, to the pupils identified as gifted and talented. This ensures very good inclusion for all.
27. All subjects have a co-ordinator, often with a shadow co-ordinator in the other key stage. There are policies and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum, with subject co-ordinators, the headteacher and deputy headteacher monitoring the delivery of individual subjects as well as the whole curriculum. This is carried out through direct classroom observations, the collection of teachers' planning documents and a scrutiny of pupils' books.
28. The school has an overall curriculum policy that sets out its philosophy and rationale for the curriculum. There is a governors' curriculum sub-committee with linked governors for all subjects and SEN. The governors are involved in all areas of curriculum planning and regularly observe lessons in the classroom. Their findings are fed back to the headteacher and the full governing body.

29. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is actively promoted throughout the school. This area of the curriculum is delivered in discrete PSHE lessons, as well as being taught in individual subjects within the curriculum. The school governors have suitable policies for sex education and drugs awareness. These issues are dealt with in an active health education programme, with the support of the school nurse and the local police service. The school has achieved the nationally recognised Healthy School Award for the last four years.
30. The school has good links with both the neighbouring nursery school and its feeder high schools. Regular half-term meetings take place between the school and the nursery and high school. There are good curricular links with the high school with teachers often coming into the school to teach pupils. This ensures continuity through all stages of education.
31. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, both of a sporting and musical nature. These include football, basketball and fitness. It also has a choir and is introducing a small school orchestra. It also provides pupils with additional time to support their academic studies through an Early Bird Reading Club, mathematics club, ICT club and a homework club. A number of people from local churches as well as other organisations and agencies visit the school. Regular opportunities are also given for pupils to take part in a significant number of visits to places of educational and historical interest. The school also hosts a large number of visiting artists, musicians, and sporting coaches and gives pupils the chance to partake in a number of workshops, including an arts week and regular school productions. All these activities make a valuable and very positive contribution to the extended and enriched curriculum provided by the school. The school has successfully addressed all the areas for development identified in the previous report.
32. The school places a high emphasis on the personal development of pupils with special educational needs. Many opportunities are available for them to take responsibility including taking messages and helping in classroom duties. The teaching and non-teaching staff know these pupils well and cater for their personal needs effectively. For example, there are many opportunities for pupils to develop life skills and activities that require them to develop social skills by working together.
33. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. It is extremely effective in fostering these aspects of pupils' development, to which it accords 'top priority'. The wisdom of this is evident in the very good progress that pupils make in their personal development which is generally well below average on their entry to the school. Starting from a very low baseline, they become confident and committed learners with good levels of self-esteem because the staff value the contributions of every pupil. The ethos that produces these results is based on Christian beliefs and values, especially that all human beings are equal in the sight of God, however flawed they may appear to be. The implications for daily life are captured in the school prayer that pupils know off by heart. It calls for peace, contentment, love and community. The school aims for the fullest possible development of the children as thinking, feeling human beings, alert to the needs of others as well as their personal priorities.
34. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development draws on this Christian foundation, which becomes explicit in contexts such as the daily acts of worship and religious education lessons. Parallels are drawn between incidents in the life of Jesus and other religious figures, and the implications for life in the school, pupils' families, their locality and the wider world are considered. Hymns give praise and thanks, celebrating the joys of community and the wonders of the world. Short prayers end the

day in some classes and at least one class has a 'prayer tree' upon which pupils can hang cards expressing their deepest concerns. The pupils hear stories illustrating care and consideration for others and respect for those whose religious beliefs and ways of life are different from their own. Lessons for living are derived from the ways in which people's beliefs influence their behaviour towards others. On these occasions and in lessons generally, the pupils are taught to appreciate the less material aspects of life - the mysteries of music, the secrets of science, the magic of mathematics and the wonder of words in poetry and story writing. An especially striking example of the pupils' awareness of such intangible aspects of human experience was captured in a set of poems about colour, each class celebrating the qualities of one of them. The pupils' delight in colour was sensitively expressed in such lines as 'the crimson of Mars, spinning in space amongst the stars' and 'Vermillion, the colour of red hot lava'.

35. Provision for the pupils' moral development is closely linked to the growth of their spiritual sensitivity and is excellent. It finds expression in the excellent relationships that are seen throughout the school and in the passing moments when the behaviour of individuals in lessons falls below that usually present. These are relatively rare because the pupils absorb the values that the school's ethos projects through their daily application by all members of staff. Any miscreants are gently, but firmly reminded of the school's expectations for the pupils' consideration of others and that usually settles the matter. A 'positive behaviour circle group' is provided for pupils with behavioural difficulties. It has its own act of worship once a fortnight, with some pupils asking to join in. Most usually, the pupils treat others with the respect and consideration that they themselves are experiencing. Other opportunities for developing understanding include story telling which has a moral dimension. The happy, friendly atmosphere that results from this provision enables the pupils to give full attention to their learning which, in turn, enhances their achievements and commitment to further improvement. An achievement assembly showed how deep these values go in pupils' minds. There were no signs of jealousy. The occasion was filled with celebration of the success of the pupils who were honoured for personal contributions to the daily life of the school or for their commitment and success in meeting academic challenges of various levels of difficulty. The pupils' concern for others extends beyond people in their immediate environment to those in distress in distant countries. In geography, for instance, pupils learned about the desperate need for clean water in some African countries. The class summary read, 'the earth is thirsty, suffering all around us. Pray for God's children'. Nearer home, the presence of refugees and asylum seekers within the local community offer opportunities for the pupils to learn compassion for people who are in need.
36. Social development is very good. The pupils are encouraged in many lessons to work together in pairs and small groups and the school's programme of educational visits increases these opportunities. Often teachers specifically plan group activities such as in a design and technology project for Year 6 pupils who worked in small groups to design a hat for a particular purpose. Some chose to design a hat for skiing and their writing confirmed that they had reached agreement on choice of colours and appropriateness of materials to be used. In the SEN communication class for pupils with autism, the daily provision includes snack time where pupils are encouraged to socialise and acquire and improve their life skills. These experiences are strengthened when each week the pupils visit the local shopping centre to change books at the library, purchase supplies for their snack times and visit the café. Pupils are encouraged to carry out useful tasks including tidying library areas and the delivery of messages. The celebration assemblies are effectively used to recognise pupil's achievements, many of which have involved them in socialising with others.

37. Cultural development is very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures through a geography curriculum that covers the concept of distant places very well. Work displayed throughout the school shows that the pupils learn about the cultures of Africa, Japan, China and India as well as European countries such as France and Italy. The school has established firm links with an African village through contact made by the local university. Cultural development is strengthened through the opportunities the pupils have to work with visiting artists, actors and musicians and the annual Festival of Art is a celebration of the pupils' experiences in these aspects of work. Religious festivals are celebrated with teachers taking opportunities to use the knowledge and experience of pupils from ethnic minorities within the topics being delivered. For example, Year 5 pupils have studied belief symbols such as the Muslim star, Sikh Khanda, Buddhist wheel and Christian cross. Infant pupils visited a Japanese exhibition at a Newcastle art gallery with follow-up work in art and design using ICT. The immediate locality of the school is used as a valuable resource for pupils to find out about the history of Tyneside. Residents of the local area have visited school to talk about life in 'Old Benwell' and pupils use the local shopping centre regularly as teachers promote literacy, numeracy and life skills within the curriculum. All these make a valuable contribution towards the cultural development of the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. At the last inspection the quality of pastoral care was very good, and this continues today. Members of staff know the pupils very well and because of this a good quality of care pervades the school. The school is a safe environment with all the expected safety measures in place and safety inspections recorded. Child protection procedures are very good. The nominated person, the headteacher, is experienced in this field. He has good contacts and knows the local procedures. All the staff have been trained. The classroom support assistants carefully monitor any pupils identified with changing home circumstances. There is a weekly meeting of senior staff to discuss pastoral care issues, to make sure that all problem areas have been attended to. Welfare facilities are very good and children with health problems are identified to those who need to know. There are a good number of staff qualified to administer first aid.
39. Procedures for the promotion of attendance are good. Letters are sent home requesting reasons for absence if none has been provided and telephone calls are made every week if absences are still unexplained or otherwise causing concern. Rewards are given for over 98 per cent attendance and also for improved attendance. Each week the class with the best attendance earns five minutes of extra playtime. The impact of poor attendance or lateness on a pupil's education is stressed to parents at meetings and in parental interviews. The school has established good links with the local authority's education welfare officer who visits the school every week. She calls on families causing concern and arranges to collect the few pupils who are habitually late.
40. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. They flow naturally from the ethos of the school and its emphasis on sharing the values of caring for and respecting each other. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils are fundamental, as is the excellent provision for moral education. The very good teamwork amongst the staff leads to consistency and high expectations. Sanctions rarely need to be applied, but there is an inevitability about them, so that pupils have a clear choice of conforming or being sanctioned. They can, however, wipe out a sanction by demonstrating an improvement. Midday supervisors are regarded as part of the management team. They meet the headteacher twice a term for discussion and training. They are allocated to classes, report to class teachers about lunch-time behaviour and are invited to class

assemblies. Their contribution to the pupils' personal and social development is very significant and extremely well managed by the senior midday supervisor.

41. There are very good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour, through assemblies, in personal and social education lessons and by making a point of listening to pupils to hear their concerns and experiences. For example, a very good feature of personal and social education lessons is 'circle time' in which pupils sit in a circle and take it in turns to speak and share their experiences with each other. What is said is respected and not communicated outside the classroom. In these sessions there are many opportunities to explore the nature of oppressive behaviour, its consequences and its elimination.
42. There are very good procedures for supporting the pupils' personal development. Details of their social progress are carefully monitored and any concerns or adverse trends revealed are investigated and resolved. Mostly the support comes from teachers' close observation of the progress of their pupils and their keen interest in seeing them succeed. Teachers talk sympathetically about their pupils, especially the ones causing them concern.
43. Assessment and monitoring procedures of pupils' academic performance in English and mathematics at the time of the previous inspection were reported to be 'of a high standard'. This has been maintained. There are sound mechanisms in place for ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Assessment is well used to guide future planning, but more could be done now to extend this consistently to the assessment of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT. Regular contact with parents ensures that a range of information contributes to the monitoring process. This includes a record of achievement that is drawn up for every pupil at the end of each academic year and which helps to inform parents of possible attainment targets in the National Curriculum tests. Parents are pleased with the reports they get on their children's progress. Results from national tests and other assessment strategies deployed by the school, are used to inform target setting for specific pupils, to assess progress and highlight extra teacher input, specialist and other adult support. The school is now looking to fine-tune this to see if it is possible to extend the process to all the subjects of the curriculum. This has been partially successful in some other subjects; for example, in ICT, where regular assessments help teachers to improve the pupils basic ICT skills.
44. Data from National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science are presented in a form that makes it possible to compare results by age, class and gender using a variety of graphics. In Years 5 and 6, the school is trialling the idea of pupils having their individual targets at the front of their English and mathematics notebooks. In science, more could be done to improve ongoing assessments to supplement and build on the good end of year assessments of the pupils. There are detailed discussions between staff and pupils about their work as well as the progress being made. Marking in books is generally supportive and encouraging. In the foundation subjects (those subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT), co-ordinators are in the process of producing portfolios of pupils' work that are linked to the National Curriculum statements which describe what is expected of the pupils at each stage of their development. The school's assessment procedures contribute effectively towards raising the level of all pupils' achievement, especially in English, mathematics and ICT, but are not fully implemented consistently in other subjects. The provision made for pupils with a Statement for Special Educational Need is very good. Assessments and reviews of their progress are managed very well, helping the pupils to make very progress towards the targets set out in the individual education plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. Parents have very favourable views of the school, as they did at the last inspection. They believe its management is excellent and the teaching very good. They are pleased with the information supplied about the curriculum, with the values that the school promotes, the care taken of the children and the information they receive about their children's progress. The inspection team agrees with all of these views.
46. The well-developed and successful link with parents is very supportive of good learning and achievement. Parents, pupils and staff form a very effective partnership that makes a considerable contribution to the life of the school and to pupils' learning. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel well informed of their children's progress through clear lines of communication. The school is committed to the concept of teamwork and partnership with parents, outside agencies and the community.
47. Parents are pleased with the reports they get about their children's progress and with the information provided by the school about the curriculum. They are made to feel welcome in the school and know that they can talk to a member of staff when they need to. A number of parents provide valuable assistance in the classroom and support on educational visits. Parents have access to 'better reading' sessions, and this works in tandem with the pupils. The parent-teacher association is very active in organising regular social events and gives lots of support to the school. They also do things for self-improvement; for example, inviting visiting speakers, and as a consequence, build up their own cohesion as a team.
48. In the parents' questionnaire and in the meeting for parents, no significant concerns were raised. They say that the school does a very good job for their children and have nothing, but praise for the staff and governors. There was no unease expressed by the parents about behaviour, attitudes and attendance. They believe the teaching to be very good and effective. The inspection findings support the view of the previous report that the partnership with parents is very positive.
49. The quality of information provided for parents is good. There is a good prospectus and a very good annual report from the governors. Reports on pupils' progress to parents are very detailed, give a good picture of the pupil and include grades for effort, attitude and understanding, although there is little reference to National Curriculum levels in each subject. Targets are included, mostly good, but some do not express the target in a way that would enable the parents to help their child at home. More than two-thirds of parents attend the open evenings at which progress is discussed and this represents a very good turnout of parents.
50. The school is very approachable, teachers being available informally at the end of the school day and parents being made to feel welcome when they come into school. Family literacy classes are held in the school for families with a child in the reception classes. Another initiative is 'SHARE' sessions for the parents or carers of children in reception and Years 1 and 2. These consist of classes about aspects of education for these years, and they can lead to 'Open Learning' qualifications. During inspection week the topic was finger puppets. Parents can also learn about information and communication technology in the school.
51. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Parents support class assemblies and sports activity days and also help in the classroom; for example, with reading. The Friends of Atkinson Road (FAR) are very active. They provide valuable finance for the school and help to make school fun by

arranging events such as discos and providing playground games. Every Wednesday morning there is a meeting of the FAR, at which there is a speaker; for example, recently the subject was on the use and management of inhalers for asthmatic children. Members of the FAR also make items for sale in aid of their funds and run a bank for the children. Parents support reading and other homework activities well. They are fully involved in discussions about lateness or irregular attendance and are also informed of their children's successes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He works closely with the deputy headteacher and senior management team and together they are an excellent team. They set high expectations and lead by example. The headteacher, in particular, is much respected by the pupils, parents, staff and governors. He focuses and steers the work of the school to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Raising standards has been the main focus for development and, together with an effective senior management team; the headteacher continually re-appraises and evaluates the impact of the many initiatives that have been introduced since the last inspection. There has been very good improvement since then because the school is extremely well focused on improving learning, especially as a large number of pupils have special educational needs and an increasing number joining the school are learning English as an additional language. The personal commitment of the headteacher and his staff to the needs of the pupils is excellent. All the staff and adults who have day to day contact with the pupils, reflect the school's stated aims extremely well, ensuring that they support and are committed to maintaining strong working relationships and including all pupils in all activities. This commitment to an inclusive education is clearly reflected in all the work done in the school.
53. There is a very effective and coherent system of management. The headteacher and senior staff have a thorough grasp and understanding of how to measure and improve the effectiveness of the teaching. They assess how well the pupils are doing in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT, and this enables them to measure the impact that the curriculum, planning and teaching are having on standards. Co-ordinators monitor lessons and teachers' planning as well as pupils' work to assess how well they are doing in their respective subjects. The staff and governors are greatly influenced by the headteacher's effective leadership and enthusiasm to succeed and improve the school further. Consequently, the school has accurate and realistic targets for improvement with every pupil being monitored closely. Teachers are certain about what they are going to teach and for what they are aiming. Assessments are accurate in terms of the core subjects, but now need to be extended to other subjects. Curriculum co-ordinators prepare very good positional statements for their own subjects. These feed into a thorough audit of resources and staff training needs which feeds into the excellent school development plan. There is both a short-term and long-term plan which fully takes account of changing trends in the school roll or; for example, the fact that many pupils joining the school have specific learning or language needs. A thorough evaluation and analysis of all these factors informs the way that the school groups the pupils and plans its teaching. Resources have improved considerably since the development and extension of the building and the greatly improved access.
54. The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. They provide excellent support and help the headteacher to manage the school extremely well. Formal and effective monitoring procedures ensure that governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and senior staff and, as a result, have a very good understanding of the school's needs, strengths and

weaknesses. The governors visit the school and receive regular reports from senior staff. The headteacher prepares thorough reports to be presented at governors' meetings and very clear position statements prepared by the headteacher and co-ordinators keep governors fully informed. The governors' annual report to parents is thorough and very well presented. The school development plan is used very effectively to steer the work of the school. The process leading up to the production of the school development plan involves all the staff and governors, and is put together by the senior management team when deciding priorities for school improvement. The senior management team, together with subject co-ordinators prepare audits and action plans so that it is clear what is needed and what priorities need to be established. The school development plan involves regular evaluations with clear descriptions of who is checking progress against sharp and appropriate criteria for measured improvement and these all relate to raising achievement and standards across the curriculum. The school makes very good use of ICT to manage and support the school's organisation and administration.

55. There is a good mixture of experienced and well-qualified teachers and support staff. The latter are very effectively deployed, working in close partnership with teachers in supporting pupils' learning. Structured professional development interviews with the headteacher are used effectively in staff development. All teaching staff are trained in the techniques of classroom observation, taking notes and giving constructive feedback. Carefully targeted in service training has improved the quality of teaching. Co-ordinators are effective in their role and help teachers to be more rigorous in developing subject confidence and pupils' learning. The staffing for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The careful deployment of the special educational needs specialist, the deputy headteacher and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs are well supported individually or in groups in both class and withdrawal settings. The staff are well briefed on the role they are expected to play and they know the pupils individually and meet their needs effectively. There is very good communication between the professionals who work with these pupils. There are very good induction procedures for new staff and newly qualified teachers. These help the staff to fit in quickly to the routines and organisation of the school.
56. The co-ordinator for special educational needs was appointed to the school in January 2002. The co-ordinator is successfully developing the leadership role by building on the well-established practices that were inherited. The co-ordinator has already begun monitoring the provision for special educational needs pupils by checking the individual education plan targets, the activities provided and the involvement of outside agencies. The co-ordinator makes the professional assessment of each pupil identified on the school register and makes the professional link with support that can be accessed from outside the school. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Pupils can access a very good range of classroom resources. When withdrawn to specialist teaching areas for small group work, such as that for the Additional Literacy Strategy, there is good access to a range of suitable materials.

57. Resources are very well managed and subject co-ordinators check teachers' planning to ensure that there is appropriate work being done. The deployment of learning support staff has been very successful in helping them to provide highly skilled intervention programmes that involve teaching reading, writing and numeracy as well as inclusive support when working alongside the pupils with SEN. The school's finances are very well managed. There are very efficient and effective procedures to track spending and determine priorities for resources in the school's management plan. The small increase in the school's carry forward budget (seven per cent) has been assessed by the headteacher and governors and will largely be spent on the expected increase in salaries next year due to national recommendations and the expected shortfall in the budget share allocated to the school for this increase. Specific grants are used very well for their intended purpose and the headteacher and governors monitor spending closely. Governors and senior staff report on the effectiveness of spending and the priorities set in the school development plan. In this way the school is clearly committed to establishing best value when committing resources. The new ICT room; for example, is very well equipped and is having a large impact on raising standards in ICT across the school. Accommodation is very good and the pupils have good access to hard play surface areas, but there is no grassed field for major games so the school uses the facilities of a local secondary school. The cleaning and caretaking staff provide a healthy working environment in which staff and pupils work. Work on display in classrooms and in each of the three halls creates a stimulating learning environment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to build on the very good education provided by the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

improve the assessment of pupils' progress in all subjects of the curriculum by:

- ensuring that all teachers assess the pupils consistently and systematically in all foundation subjects;
- raising standards further in geography, history and religious education through careful assessments of pupils' progress that inform teachers' planning;
- extending the effective assessments made in English, mathematics and ICT to the subjects so that pupils are set clear targets for improvement in all the subjects of the National Curriculum.

(Paragraphs: 15, 19, 43-44, 53, 91, 110, 123, 128, 133, 146, 152 and 159)

THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CLASSES

THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CLASS

59. The special educational needs speech and language (SL) class provides for 16 pupils with speech and language difficulties. The pupils who are currently from the reception year to Year 6 are admitted from throughout Newcastle and most have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The staffing for the class is two specialist teachers, a speech therapist and a teaching assistant. The philosophy behind the provision is that the staff work together in a team approach with the pupils taught in a family setting. Both teachers cover all subjects and work throughout the week with all pupils. The class is divided into two groups with each teacher responsible for one of the groups at a time. Sometimes pupils are taught as a whole group with the teachers working as a team. The pupils' attainment is well below what would be expected for their age. However, these pupils, who benefit from the individual help provided, make very good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs).
60. The pupils' past work confirms that most of the teaching time is suitably allocated to a programme of literacy and numeracy. Each week the teachers prepare work to match individual needs. Although teaching input is usually to a group at the beginning of lessons, the pupils commence follow-up activities specifically matched to their learning needs and the targets identified on IEPs. A scrutiny of pupils' past work confirms that they make very good progress in writing and in knowledge and understanding of number. For example, a Year 3 pupil who lacked confidence when writing at the beginning of the school year was, by the following term, writing longer sentences and making increased use of punctuation. In mathematics, the pupil progressed from addition and subtraction of numbers up to 20 in the autumn term, to working with numbers beyond 100 by the spring term.
61. The quality of teaching in the SL class is very good. Teachers manage the pupils very well. They give priority to the teaching of basic skills within literacy and numeracy and they make very good use of the teaching assistant who makes a valuable contribution to the learning process. In a lesson that commenced with the pupils discussing recent news, the teachers asked questions clearly and skilfully, encouraged and praised pupils as they responded and led pupils forward to new understanding. Speaking and listening skills were promoted throughout the session and the pupils were eager to participate. The pupils behave very well with very little inattention or deviation from the tasks they are set. In a science activity, a blindfold game was used effectively to help pupils consolidate their understanding of scientific language such as 'predict', 'result' and 'dissolve'.
62. The curriculum provision is very good. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, the morning session being devoted to English and mathematics through a literacy and numeracy programme. The pupils access swimming by joining pupils from Year 4. There are very well planned arrangements for integration that allow those pupils who would benefit from main school provision to join another class each afternoon for the foundation subjects (subjects other than English, mathematics and science). This allows teachers in the SL class to offer in return, provision for some mainstream pupils to receive a foundation curriculum where language skills are promoted as the subjects are taught.
63. The personal development of the pupils is very good. There are many opportunities for the pupils to socialise with each other and to take responsibility. This includes the taking of verbal messages to the school office in an activity that is carefully planned

with the administration team. The pupils help in the class library and in classroom duties that help to promote social skills.

64. The documentation covering the assessment and recording of pupils' progress is very well organised, up to date and helpful to other professionals with whom the pupils have contact. Records are detailed, the pupils' IEPs are reviewed each term and targets are set for literacy and educational development. Long-term targets are set for the foundation subjects. When the pupils are taught the foundation subjects through the integration process, the class teacher responsible provides a detailed and coherent report covering science and the foundation subjects, the achievements made and the difficulties encountered. This process is an effective and appropriate sharing of professional knowledge. Annual reviews are formally organised and chaired by the headteacher with clear reports provided by staff. Parents also meet the class teachers each term to receive a progress report and their child's record of achievement. These cover achievement in all subjects, behaviour and punctuality and a comment by both the teacher and headteacher.
65. The SL class is funded well with very good teaching and pupil resources. There are sufficient materials to meet the individual needs of pupils, particularly for work within the literacy and numeracy programme. The classrooms are well resourced for other subjects. Pupils use two ICT workstations with Internet access. ICT experiences are regularly provided.

THE COMMUNICATION CLASS

66. The special educational needs communication class provides for eight pupils with autism, all of whom have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The pupils are currently from Years 1 to 6 and are admitted from across the city. The staffing for the class is one specialist teacher supported by a teaching assistant.
67. During morning sessions pupils are taught English and mathematics through a literacy and numeracy based programme. Some pupils access the provision of the neighbouring speech and language class when appropriate to their needs. During afternoon sessions the foundation subjects are taught. Some pupils are integrated into a mainstream class if it is felt the pupil's needs are best served in this way. The communications class teacher teaches all National Curriculum subjects. Most lessons commence with the input being made to all pupils. Individualised follow-up activities are prepared for each pupil with the teaching assistant playing an important supporting role.
68. The pupils' attainment is well below what would be expected for their age. However, these pupils, who benefit from the individual help provided, make very good progress in relation to the IEP targets set for them. The work is planned in collaboration with a speech therapist and is based on the 'stepping-stones' from the Foundation Stage programme for children under five. Good use is made of the locality of the school as a source of learning and promoting life skills. The pupils make a weekly visit to the local shopping centre to use the library and replenish food supplies for their snack times. They are well received at the local café, which is a useful opportunity for the pupils to be integrated into the local community. Inspection evidence shows that they are provided with a rich and varied curriculum and work on display included the study of 'night and day' in science and a visit to a garden centre to purchase seeds and gardening tools. These provided a valuable source of role-play activities within work planned to promote speaking and listening. The class is well resourced particularly in materials and equipment to promote speaking and listening.

69. The teaching in the communication class is very good. In a lesson where pupils designed seed packets using ICT all could make a seed packet and colour it and some could transfer text to it. The activity provided a good opportunity for pupils to progress in social and computer skills. In this well organised lesson the teacher began from an accurate record of the pupils' past attainment in ICT. The very good combination of effective teaching of ICT skills alongside a teaching assistant who provided sensitive support and who judged well the level of encouragement and persuasion necessary to individual pupils, resulted in a learning experience that pupils enjoyed and they made very good progress.
70. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. At times they are totally absorbed, on other occasions concentration spans are understandably short. Their personal development is very good with sharing and consideration for each other strongly promoted. In the daily snack time the pupils are encouraged to behave politely to one another. They are asked to select their choice of food from the menu that is passed around and they are expected to say the words when indicating their choices. The pupils practise manipulative skills such as pouring from a jug and they help in clearing up when snack time is concluded.
71. Good records are kept of pupils' progress and achievement against their individual education plan targets. The targets, which are written up on visible clipboards, are reviewed each term and include action points for literacy and numeracy. The deputy headteacher has a direct involvement in chairing the annual review meetings. There are clear communications with parents and good communications with other professionals involved in meeting each pupil's needs. Parents are very supportive and help with activities organised for the pupils to do at home.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	6	32	37	13	0	0	0
Percentage	7	36	42	15	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	383
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	227

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	235

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	61
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	66

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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
	2001	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	24
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	43	42	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (63)	67 (65)	73 (71)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	22	24
	Girls	19	23	25
	Total	38	45	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (57)	71 (63)	78 (63)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
	2001	28	28	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	17	22
	Girls	20	11	23
	Total	39	28	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (59)	51 (56)	82 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	20	24
	Girls	16	12	22
	Total	32	32	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (62)	56 (62)	81 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	312
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	21.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	342

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,000,402
Total expenditure	969,002
Expenditure per pupil	2,530
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,013
Balance carried forward to next year	72,413

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.9
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	380
Number of questionnaires returned	64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	27	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	33	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	41	5	2	0
The teaching is good.	71	24	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	31	3	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	25	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	31	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	40	5	2	11

Other issues raised by parents

The parents say that they choose the school because it provides a positive and supportive environment for their children. Many believe that this is a very good school where the staff work hard to provide a wide range of interesting activities and opportunities for all pupils. Many parents are delighted with the commitment of the staff and say that the school is popular with parents and has an established reputation in the area.

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

72. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is in the three reception classes. The curriculum is based on the appropriate areas of learning and provides the children with a very good range of learning opportunities. Some aspects of the teaching and planning are outstanding and are particularly effective in providing a wide range of challenging and focused experiences to promote the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The planning is excellent because the three classes are organised so that each teacher takes responsibility for different areas of learning each week and then this is rotated. In this way the children can be grouped according to prior learning and progress. Assessments are sharp and inform teachers' planning extremely well. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children with learning difficulties, including those with special educational needs, are very well managed and catered for. An increasing number of children join the school who are learning English as an additional language. The school has immediately responded to this by ensuring that the children receive the appropriate support, including some bilingual resources, so that the children soon settle into routines and make the same progress as other children.
73. The attainment of most children when they first start the reception year is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection and is well below that expected of children of this age. This is confirmed by the school's initial assessments. The teaching is very good with some excellent features and this has a very positive effect on children's learning. As a result, by the time they move into Year 1 they have made significant gains in their learning and their attainment is just below that expected for their age.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. The children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority. This ensures that the children make very good progress and are on target to reach the Early Learning Goals before the end of the reception year. Relationships are positive and the children obviously enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers, immediately becoming involved in the range of activities available to them. They are eager to learn new skills and put effort and concentration into their tasks. Emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong. The children respond well to the rules and routines of school life. The children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as role-play and outdoor play. They can work independently for sustained periods of time and respond positively to challenging tasks, such as writing their own sentences or improving their letter formation. There are well-planned opportunities for the children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of their own uniqueness and the wonder of the world around them. Lessons progressively build on this as children consider their own place in the family and the importance of friendship and being kind to each other. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

75. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is very good and ranges from good to excellent in the reception classes. As a result, the children achieve very well towards the Early Learning Goals. By the beginning of Year 1, approximately one third of the children will reach the standards for their age in communication, language and literacy, but most will reach standards below those expected for their age. Approximately one in four of the children are identified with learning difficulties and a significant number have speech and language difficulties on entry to the reception year.
76. Communication, language and literacy are given a very high priority and the children are provided with a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend their language skills. Emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the adults in order to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. The children listen very attentively and follow the teachers' or other adults' instructions as they explain; for example, what the cover a book says or what the characters are doing in the story. The children enjoy listening to well-told stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. Considerable emphasis is placed on children sharing conversations with adults and challenging questions and comments are used very effectively to promote their thinking. Excellent adult interaction encourages the children to make choices. For example, when a group described what happens to the 'ice balloon' when you stir it in water. When an adult engages the children in meaningful conversation that relates to the tasks they undertake, this evokes thoughtful responses from the children, 'Do you think that is a good idea, what else could you do?' and this develops the children's thinking skills. The importance of using language to develop ideas in structured play situations, such as the 'Travel Shop', encourage the children to use imaginative vocabulary as they create their own dramatic situations. One child said, 'I'm going to a hot country on a plane', and then picked up the imitation phone and, flicking through some holiday brochures, asked another child to pack some 'dressing up clothes' ready for the holiday. They are learning to use language effectively to express feelings or persuade each other to take on a particular role, such as which family member will make the morning coffee or who will sit in which comfy chair.
77. There are a few missed opportunities to interact with children in these situations in order to extend their vocabulary and clarify their thinking. This occurs when the nursery nurse is not available to a particular group or there is no additional adult supporting the lesson in one of the three reception areas. When activities are interesting children are becoming confident speakers who enjoy sharing conversations with adults and friends. In one 'talk and tell' activity, the teacher encouraged the children to talk about the robotic device called a 'Roamer' as part of their ICT lesson. Throughout the reception year there are clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes and individual name cards to develop early reading and writing skills. The children can recognise their names and make very good attempts to write their own names. The children are encouraged to make marks on paper as they work in the role-play 'office' or make 'appointments'. In some lessons children explore sounds, letters and early writing when using an interesting writing table. They draw detailed pictures and are beginning to write simple sentences and make books about family events and topics using familiar letters, sounds and words. Emphasis is placed on the learning of sounds and the 'sound of the week' with the effective use of a commercial scheme to develop the children's understanding of sounds. More formal structured activities, such as group reading or writing, develop the children's early reading and writing skills well.
78. The three classes have been prepared for each area of learning. The excellent planning means that each of the three teachers manages one or two areas of learning each week. Because the children are grouped broadly by ability and maturity, the staff are

very adaptable to their learning needs. There are very comfortable book corners and library spaces that promote a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. They are often seen choosing a book to 'read' to themselves or to share with an adult and are becoming very confident readers of simple texts. They understand about authors and illustrators and higher attaining children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. All the children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a very positive effect on their progress in learning to read. There has been good progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Mathematical development

79. The teaching of mathematics is very good. The children achieve very well, but most will not reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. Approximately one in three children will achieve them well before the end of their reception year. Teachers and support staff provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. The children learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations, such as when sorting and counting how many passengers there are on the 'Red Bus' which is conveniently displayed at eye-level on an easel for the children to add or remove characters as they count up or take away. The staff use number rhymes well to reinforce the children's understanding. They also plan relevant games using practical and hands-on counting activities for the children. For example, in a lesson of high quality, the teacher threw a beanbag to each child and asked them to count on or back from a point on a number line. Together with number rhymes, songs and games, these effectively develop the children's ideas of early addition and subtraction. Problem solving is developed as the children work out directions and positions when making models.
80. In all classes the children have very good opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through the excellent planning of topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. The children quickly develop an understanding of numbers beyond ten and about one in three are becoming competent with numbers up to 50 and beyond. Children respond positively to challenging tasks involving 'big' numbers and higher attaining children take great pride in being able to count backwards and forwards to 30 using a 100 square to help them. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with two and three-dimensional shapes, small toys or emptying and filling containers in the water play area. Activities reinforce the children's understanding of number because there are many opportunities provided for them to choose materials and objects to count, compare and sort. The children particularly enjoy choosing jigsaw puzzles to match, sequence and arrange in order. Clock faces are used well to introduce the duration of time and reinforce the children's counting skills as they point to each number on the clock face.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. In this area of learning, the teaching is very effective. As a result, the children achieve very well, but most will just fall short of the expected Early Learning Goals. Excellent ICT is used to reinforce the pupils' understanding of new technology and spatial awareness as they explore with the robot called 'Roamer' how best to program it to move in certain directions. The natural curiosity of the children is enhanced as staff encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences. Early scientific skills and knowledge are developed as children excitedly explore how ice melts or how plants grow and what makes them grow best. Their observation skills are developed very well as they use magnifying glasses to identify different parts of a plant. The children look on

in awe as they see how much their seedlings have grown. The children in one lesson learned to appreciate their senses as they made 'Braille Writing' using sand, glue and paper. One child told me, 'This is how blind people read'.

82. The children's observational skills are developed as they carefully examine the differences in materials and record their findings in an appropriate way. The celebration of festivals such as Christmas, Divali and the Chinese New Year help the children to develop an understanding of their own culture and that of other faith systems. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. There are very good examples of children having well planned opportunities to develop their skills of designing and making. Through model making using a range of materials, reception children create their own puppets, models, vehicles and designs and confidently explain how they made them. The children work independently to cut, fold and join a range of materials. The computer and 'Roamer' are popular choices and many children are competent in using the computer mouse and different programs to support their learning. Construction toys are used very well to encourage the children to design and make their own models, to discover how things work and how to improve on their work. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Physical development

83. Very effective teaching ensures that the majority of children will meet the Early Learning Goals before they move into Year 1. The teaching is very good and planning is excellent. Children's natural exuberance and energy is catered for very well. A very well planned and imaginative outdoor play area provides children with daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. Confidence and skill are exhibited as children balance, climb and swing on the very good equipment available. There is a range of wheeled toys that children manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and planned obstacles. They incorporate these into their dramatic play situations. A topic on their bodies helps the children to develop an understanding of the importance of exercise to ensure good health. Structured physical education lessons for reception children are very well organised to promote their development. In these lessons, the children are taken to a hall that has large climbing apparatus, mats, benches and ladders that are arranged to form obstacles. The children develop very good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond well to the apparatus. Most children display a suppleness and agility, as they become more aware of their own bodies. Very good teacher intervention encourages the children to improve their skills as they balance and move through, over and under the obstacles. Consequently, they make very good gains in their skills in a short time. Emphasis is placed on developing children's independence and skill when handling tools and malleable materials and they are becoming competent as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care. There has been good improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Creative development

84. The teaching is very good and ranges between good to excellent. The children achieve very well and the majority will just fall short of the expected standards by the beginning of Year 1. A significant number achieve the Early Learning Goals for creative development before the end of their reception year. The children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. The staff provide children with a very good range of opportunities to use their imagination. Exciting dressing-up clothes encourage children to take on a range of different roles. One minute the children are 'home makers', 'doctors', 'nurses' and 'office workers', the next they have become a fairy tale character. A good range of musical instruments are set out for the children to

experiment with and to compare sounds. Songs and rhymes help to develop the children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. The staff provide materials with interesting textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. Their understanding of colour is developed well as the children mix their own shades of paint to create pictures of teddy bears, family portraits, houses, shops and vehicles, all containing interesting detail. Malleable materials, such as play dough, sand and water are available for children to explore on a daily basis. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

85. Standards in English have improved well since the last inspection although they are still below the national average for seven and 11-year-olds. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 showed that standards, compared with schools in similar contexts, were well above average. Standards in speaking are weak. Test results for English have risen steadily over the past four years at a faster rate than the national trend. Inspection findings in the Years 5 and 6 lessons suggest that these improvements in standards are likely to continue.
86. Pupils entering the school tend to lack confidence in speaking and have limited listening skills. Reading skills are also underdeveloped and many pupils are unable to hold and control pencils sufficiently well to allow them to write clearly. As the result of very effective teaching, they are able to make good progress in the infant classes. By the age of seven, the pupils are listening well and are speaking in class and assemblies with much greater confidence and clarity. Handwriting is improving well and higher attaining pupils use correct letter shape and size in most of their work. Good progress is made in reading and by the age of 11, most pupils are reading with fluency and confidence. They can find their way around non-fiction texts and know how to use the library. Lower attaining pupils still find it difficult to read aloud with fluency, but have little difficulty in finding information on the printed page.
87. The enthusiasm of the teachers is infectious. Consequently, the pupils respond eagerly to work on the rhythms and patterns of language. In one Year 2 lesson, this took the form of short songs that developed the sound patterns and rhythms of phrases and sentences. Year 6 pupils had developed insights into the patterns of language in Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' through work with a visiting theatre group. Throughout the school, pupils learn to respond to extended vocabulary. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils understood and could create alliteration and use this together with metaphors to describe personal characteristics. In another lesson, they listened carefully as the teacher explained how the abbreviations of 'i.e.', 'e.g.' and 'NB' came from Latin words. By Year 6 the pupils are confidently using link words such as 'however', 'although', 'because', 'in spite of', to introduce comparisons and contrasts. By the time they are 11, most pupils have developed controlled handwriting although keeping letter sizes and shapes consistent is still difficult for some.
88. Displays and the pupils' workbooks provide strong evidence of a very wide range of reading and writing activities. Writing ranges from the telling of stories to the creation of sensitive poetry. The pupils experiment with word order, rhyme and rhythm. They write letters for various purposes, describing events, people and places and in one display combined these styles in a mock newspaper based on the school and its news. Children's literature is well represented and is often linked with other areas of the curriculum. An example in the Year 2 classes used the story of Roald Dahl's 'James and the Giant Peach' to introduce studies of mini-beasts and models of weird

creatures. There is good use made of computers. Much final draft work is word-processed and many pupils are able to import artwork to combine text and graphics. In lessons, individual pupils were seen using ICT programs that developed their awareness of grammatical structures while in Year 3, pupils were creating Mother's Day cards that also involved combining graphics and text.

89. A particular strength is the attainment of those pupils who are supported by specialist staff. The school goes to great lengths to integrate these pupils. Even when they leave part of a lesson for additional literacy work, they are welcomed back in time to report their successes with the rest of the class. There is an air of encouragement and this extends to the pupils themselves. When one lower attaining pupil shared his success in writing in rhyme, the other pupils were delighted and broke into spontaneous applause.
90. All the English teaching seen in the school was good or very good and some lessons were excellent. It resulted in interested pupils working very hard and enjoying their lessons. Much of the teaching followed the pattern recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. Such lessons start with clear aims so that the pupils know what they are going to do and learn. The pupils often work from a teacher selected 'big book', sharing their understanding and enthusiasm. This leads to work that supports spelling or helps the pupils to learn new words. The pupils then work on their own or in small groups leaving the teacher and classroom assistants to concentrate on targeted individuals who have been identified with special educational needs or have specific learning needs that will help them to reach their attainment targets. This approach encourages independent learning. Towards the end of lessons, pupils collect and share with each other the different tasks they have been undertaking. One Year 4 pupil; for example, used this time to extend his understanding of indexes, contents pages and glossaries in non-fiction books. An average attaining group successfully placed a range of books into a rank order according to how easy it was for a reader to find information. This work was then confidently and clearly shared with the whole class.
91. Teachers record in detail the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and speaking. Work is carefully marked and pupils are each given progress targets that are reviewed each half term. Limiting these to three targets at any one time helps the pupils to focus on particular skills. However, as they learn, all children tend to make progress in fits and starts. For this reason, their individual targets need to be drawn from a wider range of skills and knowledge, including some related to speaking and listening. Although teachers set targets for writing these are not always specific enough to help higher attaining pupils. Teachers are strongly committed to meeting the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and much money and energy has been spent making this a real success in the school. However, there is still room for further improvement to build on the good work being done. The staff know that there are aspects of English, particularly extended writing like longer stories, play scripts, narrative writing and performing arts such as drama and public presentations, that require a different structure of lesson. The teaching needs to include these additional approaches where they best meet pupils' learning needs. The development of reading is well monitored. As well as each class having its own set of books, pupils are encouraged to read regularly and borrow books to take home. The books are colour coded and pupils understand which selections they should be choosing from. They are encouraged to read widely and there is a good selection of plays, poetry and information books. Pupils record their reading and this is checked by their teachers. Parents are encouraged to become involved. There are opportunities for concentrated reading in classes and this time is used well by teachers to support pupils who need extra support.

92. In all the teaching seen the teachers and the support staff were enthusiastic, knowledgeable and had a very good relationship with the pupils. Excellently prepared lessons were always interesting and often great fun, as when work on rhythm and alliteration developed into a short piece of tongue-twisting singing. In general, there was work suitable for pupils at all levels of attainment in every lesson. The target groups and individuals received particularly good support from teachers and support staff.
93. Good progress is made by the pupils and this is especially strong when pupils receive individual support in school and when they are further encouraged at home. One Year 6 pupil described how she 'discovered' the pleasure of reading in Year 4 when her mother bought her books to stop her moping around the house after a close friend had moved away. A significant barrier that affects the test results at the end of Year 6 is the large proportion of pupils who move in and out of the school, often several times, especially in the junior years. This means that many pupils do not get an opportunity to build on the carefully designed programme of learning provided by the school.
94. English in this school is a total experience. In formally timetabled English, a carefully designed scheme of work results in good progression. Within this, all adults have access to the pupils' learning targets and the school office is even forewarned so that pupils from the SEN Communication class, which provides for pupils who are autistic, can be encouraged to deliver messages accurately. The school itself is covered in displays that use and extend language in many forms. Every classroom and corridor uses explanatory labels to extend vocabulary and explain the work. Assemblies are used to give pupils performance opportunities and to reward and encourage speaking, listening and writing skills.
95. Every opportunity for enrichment is used to enhance the pupils' use and understanding of English. For example, a digital camera was used to take photos and feed them onto computers. One by-product of this ICT lesson was a set of digital photos of pupils' faces. These were then used in an English lesson to consider what words best describe the different facial expressions and what feelings might lie behind these expressions. The many sensitive pieces of writing about feelings and characters were then displayed along with the original pictures. There are many other similar examples of exciting language work. All this is very well planned. Money has been wisely spent on the very good and well-stocked library and other reading areas that are bright, welcoming and well stocked with fiction and non-fiction texts. Short sets of readers and non-fiction books are available, as are larger sets for whole class reading. Teachers' planning and marking is monitored regularly and effectively. The subject co-ordinator has very good relationships with the receiving secondary school. Performance evidence is collected from many sources. These include the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs,) optional SATs and a range of reading tests. This information is closely analysed, not just in respect of general patterns of progress, but for any information it may hold about targets for individual pupils. Planning is meticulous and is widely shared, so that there is a whole-school philosophy in which the same values run from the reception year through to Year 6. This sense of common purpose is only possible because of the very high professional competence of the teachers and excellent leadership in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

96. Standards in mathematics are improving well. They are currently well below those expected at the age of seven and just below the standards expected of 11-year-olds. There are a number of factors that have an impact on pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests, especially at the age of seven. These include the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, the large number of pupils who start with very low attainment in mathematics when they start school and the higher than usual number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the beginning of each key stage. However, the very good achievement made by the pupils in relation to their prior attainment is testimony to the high quality of the teaching, the very good mathematics curriculum provided for the pupils and the excellent management of the subject.
97. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and this is having a significant impact on standards. The 2001 results for 11-year-olds show that the large majority of Year 6 pupils last year made very good progress and, compared with similar schools, attained the expected level for their age. A large number of pupils on the SEN register achieved very well and over one half of these managed to improve by two National Curriculum levels from the time they started in the junior years. Over the last three years mathematics standards have improved, from well below average in 1998 to current standards which are close to reaching national expectations. An increasing proportion of pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age. This indicates improving standards at a similar rate to the national trend. The school is well on course to achieve its attainment targets and to meet its challenging targets agreed with the local authority for this year.
98. Inspection evidence shows that attainment by the time the pupils are seven is well below that expected, but the pupils have made very good progress from Year 1. They are developing their understanding about numbers and how to calculate. They can count accurately backwards and forwards in ones and are beginning to understand the language of subtraction; for example, Year 2 pupils in a very good lesson were observed using doubling techniques to calculate doubles and halves of numbers up to twenty. In another very good lesson, the parallel Year 2 class demonstrated a very good understanding of the two-times table and the pupils were able to use the correct mathematical vocabulary to write out their calculations before working out doubles, halves and addition facts. Very early in the school year the pupils have grasped that to subtract you start with the largest number and then count backwards. Some pupils also use other methods; for example, counting on from the lower number or taking away from the larger number. Their recorded work shows that they are making very good progress in learning to tell the time and comparing weights of objects and volumes of liquids using non-standard measures. The pupils can recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties and are aware of symmetrical shapes. The pupils are beginning to grasp the essential elements of practical problems, but, when working unaided or independently, their limited language skills mean that they struggle to interpret what is expected or how to convert problems set out in words into mathematical problems. This largely accounts for the difficulties the pupils face when undertaking National Curriculum tests at the age of seven.
99. By the age of 11, the pupils have made very good progress in all aspects of mathematics. They quickly learn to apply their knowledge of mathematics and numbers to solve real-life problems and to use the correct number operations. A large number of pupils, up to 40 per cent in some classes, are identified with learning difficulties in mathematics and language development and are on the SEN register. Consequently, standards are just below those expected for their age by Year 6. The pupils gain a very

good understanding of shapes and their properties and appropriate units of measurement. They are learning how to handle data on graphs and charts very well. Their progress is a result of the large majority of very good teaching they receive in the junior years. The pupils are developing enthusiasm for mathematics due to the high degree of motivation from their teachers and higher attaining pupils in particular are developing their work effectively. In an excellent Year 5 lesson, the pupils were learning to partition numbers up to 1000 and beyond to help them to work out how to sort out the value of each digit in the number and then go on to calculate addition, subtraction and multiplication facts with large numbers. In other lessons seen the pupils to check their answers using very good techniques that enable them to arrive at reasonable estimations of large numbers to help them check how accurate their calculations are. In Year 3; for example, the pupils arrive at their answers using the three-times table and then check, using a number square and then double check using their understanding of odd and even numbers. In this way the pupils are developing their problem solving skills very well as they investigate problems presented in sentences, eliminating the unnecessary words from statements to establish which number operations are necessary as well as the function and objectives of the problem. In the very good Years 5 and 6 lessons seen, the pupils could quickly identify the key words in a problem and then move on to the number operations involved. By Year 6, the large majority of pupils can round numbers to the nearest decimal place and use effective mental techniques to identify how close they are to an accurate answer when calculating using long multiplication and division.

100. The pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics, and behaviour in lessons is very good. The pupils are attentive and respond well to their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and make very good progress. All pupils are expected to participate in the activities provided. Learning assistants are deployed to provide very effective support for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers and support staff plan together and use effective checking and assessment systems to ensure that all the pupils are making sufficient progress. The pupils respond very well to adults and know their own targets because the objectives of the lessons are always shared with them.
101. The pupils are learning to use mathematics in other subjects. For example, in science lessons where the pupils record their investigations using charts and matrices, as in Years 5 and 6 when investigating the properties of insulation by timing and recording relative temperatures then recording these on a chart. Years 1 and 2 pupils use simple block graphs and charts to illustrate different types of healthy food. When using information and communication technology (ICT), the older pupils are able to use simple spreadsheets to record and set out numbers to calculate totals or present facts using charts and graphs. ICT is very well used to support mathematics. The pupils present their mathematics work very well because high expectations are set by teachers.
102. Teaching and learning are very good. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and lessons are well structured in three parts with an introduction, different activities depending on the pupils' abilities and discussion time. Mental arithmetic is used appropriately to check for pupils' understanding. A strength of most lessons is the good use of an introduction to clarify the learning objectives and teachers' planning. Teachers and support staff make careful assessments of what the pupils have achieved. When lessons are very good or excellent there are more challenging activities that are very well matched to the pupils' abilities and they make very good progress as a result. Where lessons are good or satisfactory there are differentiated tasks, but these sometimes lack sufficient challenge to extend the pupils'

thinking, although reinforcement of previously learned skills and understanding are addressed well.

103. In the excellent and very good lessons observed, the activities in the middle part of the lesson were very challenging with time provided for the pupils to learn from their mistakes and self-correct. Teachers allowed sufficient time for small groups of pupils to go over their work and homework was very well used as a basis for discussion. In good lessons, the planning and delivery are good and teachers explain the objectives of the lesson clearly to the pupils. However, in the middle part of the main activities set for the pupils there is some work that could have been more challenging. Although these lessons have minor shortcomings compared with the high quality lessons observed, the main activities vary in their ability to challenge and extend the pupils' thinking further through more problem solving and investigations. The most challenging part of every mathematics lesson tends to be the class discussion and whole-class plenary where the pupils are questioned and their mental arithmetic skills are developed. However, the middle part of some lessons observed tended to set less demanding worksheet activities; for example, matching answers to sums by connecting the two with a line. In all the lessons observed, teachers are alert to any inattention and soon bring the pupils back on task; for example, by ensuring that they complete their task after a set time.
104. Resources are very good and are accessible to the pupils. There is a very good range available for all strands of the mathematics curriculum. Teachers make very good use of small white boards, number lines and flash cards to support the pupils during numeracy lessons using the recommended teaching methods in the Numeracy Strategy. The pupils use individual white boards to record and show their work and for younger pupils in the infant classes, number lines are used very well to demonstrate the relative position and size of numbers. For older pupils, as in Year 6 lessons seen, the number line can be very challenging. Here the teacher asked the pupils to count in decimal places by demarcating tenths and hundredths using coloured areas of a metre stick. Assessment procedures are being used effectively to record what the pupils have learned. There is excellent leadership of the subject with clear educational direction and very good use of evaluations of teachers' planning. The subject co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The management of the school has secure arrangements for the co-ordinator to monitor lessons, support staff and work alongside colleagues to establish best practice. This is evident across the school, as the techniques used by teachers in numeracy lessons are consistently applied and consequently very effective in aiding pupils' learning. The mathematics co-ordinator sets realistic and accurate attainment targets, based on an understanding of the difficulties that SEN and some bilingual pupils face in the early years of school. The co-ordinator has an excellent understanding of the mathematics curriculum and keeps excellent records of pupils' work and teachers' planning to help the staff to evaluate and moderate standards across the school.

SCIENCE

105. Standards in science have improved dramatically over the last few years. The pupils make very good progress and the National Curriculum test results confirm that standards are rising in line with the national trends. Results vary from year to year, reflecting a number of variations in the composition of pupils in each year; for example, in some years the proportion with SEN is very high compared with other years. Test results were below the national average for 11-year-olds in 2001, but are now broadly in line with the national average in the current year. The great majority of these older pupils are achieving the levels of skill in scientific enquiry methods, knowledge and understanding which are nationally expected for the age group concerned. Around one third of the pupils exceed this level. This is the direct result of the high quality of the

provision for learning in science and the very positive responses of the pupils. It compares very favourably with the attainment usually seen in schools in broadly similar circumstances and is very creditable, given the fact that a very significant percentage of the pupils have SEN of one type or another.

106. The standards the school achieves by the time pupils are seven are less satisfactory. Records show that the school's performance, as measured by teacher assessments, was well below the national average for schools in 2001. Although below the level nationally expected of the age group, the weakness lay less in pupils' investigative skills rather than in their knowledge and understanding of life and living processes, the properties of materials and of physical processes such as the behaviour of sound and electricity. However, the school's results demonstrate that by the age of seven, very few pupils are likely to exceed the standards expected for their age, but in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school, they have made good progress. Also, a large number of pupils who join the school in the reception year have communication and language difficulties that greatly affects the progress they make in all subjects. The school's expectations of pupils in this age group are rising. Increased emphasis on the development of their knowledge and understanding, together with continued stress on investigative approaches to learning have lifted pupils' achievement, with overall attainment now approaching the average for schools nationally. The basic impediments to pupils' further progress are their low levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy, although good, sometimes very good, progress is being made in these areas of learning. The situation is significantly helped by the pupils' very good attitudes towards learning, the very good quality of the science curriculum and well-informed teaching.
107. Standards in the current Year 2 match national expectations for the age group with a small minority, approximately one in ten, of pupils either exceeding or falling below them. Teaching in the infant classes ranges from at least satisfactory to excellent, with particularly skilled teaching in Year 2. For instance, very good lessons on physical forces were observed. They led to very good progress in knowledge and understanding being achieved by almost all pupils, a significant number of them with special educational needs. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers provided very good demonstrations of forces in action; for example, one teacher clearly demonstrating the complexity of pushes and pulls involved in the apparently simple business of making a banana sandwich. Another teacher used a well-chosen collection of ramps to demonstrate the force of friction on the ease and speed of movement. The pupils were highly motivated and showed good recall of previous work on the force of gravity, jumping up and down, desperately trying to stay up as long as possible. Throughout, teachers put a high emphasis on the nature of fair testing so that nearly all pupils are aware that only one variable can be changed in any one experiment if causal connections are to be discovered. This understanding is reinforced and used to very good effect in junior classes. The pupils also draw effectively on their background knowledge about living things and the qualities of materials.
108. The pupils achieve very well over their years in the junior classes. A key to their success is the extensive use of experiments of various kinds to secure their knowledge and understanding in the required areas of learning. For instance, the pupils were observed carrying out experiments to find out whether or not the insulation of a cold object keeps out the heat. The initial question was stimulating, capturing their interest immediately. Would an overcoat on a snowman preserve or reduce his length of life? Pupils recorded their predictions and, to keep the experimental process manageable, carried out the necessary experiments using ice-pops. They measured the rate of melting, recording their findings in a systematic manner. One pair of pupils used a computer sensor that produced an on-screen graph of the melting rate. Conclusions were drawn from the evidence and linked back to the accuracy, or not, of the

predictions. Ice pops were then eaten, either to celebrate or to console. The lesson finished with a quick reading of an amusing verse about the Second Law of Thermodynamics, but most pupils had already discovered that it is the heat that does the travelling and that insulation inhibits its progress. Other topics are not neglected, with pupils studying nature phenomena ranging from the solar system to micro-organisms, and investigating the behaviour of sound and the structure of the food chain.

109. Teaching of this calibre is not lost on these pupils, although many have special educational needs. The overall quality of teaching of science to these older pupils is at least good and is usually very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and set high expectations. Their management skills are also very good. Lesson planning is of a high quality. Boys and girls are equally motivated by the learning opportunities provided. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are effectively drawn into the learning process by the teachers, together with support staff when these are available. All pupils provide a helping hand, supporting each other and pointing out significant features in the experiments and assisting with entries on recording charts, so that good progress towards knowledge and understanding is made in spite of language limitations.
110. Leadership of the subject is very good, leading to a balanced curriculum and good lesson planning, including the very effective emphasis on enquiry approaches to learning. The curriculum also carries a strong focus on health education, supporting learning in aspects of personal and social education. The use of ICT is being systematically enhanced, with a digital microscope currently on order, for instance. There is good use of community resources; for example, learning is supported by visits to parks, an oil refinery and the acclaimed Discovery Museum, among other places of scientific interest. However, the ongoing assessment of pupils' progress, with its potential for finer tuning of learning opportunities, is not yet sufficiently developed. The school is aware of this and is in the process of investigating alternative strategies to supplement information derived from the detailed scrutiny of standard assessment task results. The application of this latter type of information has already led to a major change in the structuring of the curriculum. The curriculum is now covered by the end of Year 5 so that, in Year 6, it takes the form of revision. This enables the school to capitalise on pupils' increased skills in literacy and numeracy. Together with guidance on how to analyse tests questions, this organisational change has significantly enhanced the pupils' performance relative to expectations for their age and the school's standing in terms of standards in relation to the national average.

ART AND DESIGN

111. At the time of the last inspection the art and design curriculum was judged to be a strength of the school. This inspection has shown that the work produced by both infant and junior pupils continues to be of a high quality and exceeds that found in most schools. Standards are high and the pupils make very good progress.
112. By the end of Year 2, the pupils can use a broad range of materials to illustrate their work in other subjects. They have been taught a number of manipulative skills that they use confidently to produce work in both two and three-dimensional forms and, during the inspection; for example, Year 1 pupils were practising their weaving skills using frames they had successfully made in the previous lesson. The pupils enjoyed this activity with all of them, including those with special educational needs, making very good progress. By the end of the session all had made a woven pattern in either paper strips or a mixture of wool, foil and plastic film. Through very good teaching and targeted support to pupils with special educational needs the outcome was work of

better quality than would be expected for their age. Work on display in the infant and junior halls and on the corridors and stairways of the infant department, confirms the high standards that pupils regularly achieve. When studying mini-beasts in science, the pupils have given good attention to detail in paintings of a centipede, dragonfly and stick insect. Following a visit to a Newcastle gallery to see Japanese art they made Japanese scrolls and, having accessed the Internet to study the work of the artist Mondrian, they produced patterns in the artist's style. The pupils have illustrated their impressions of characters in stories they have been told. For example, they interpreted the story of the 'Iron Man' by Ted Hughes through both the use of paper and foil and on a computer using art software. Following the reading of the story of Roald Dahl's 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', the pupils have made well detailed and proportioned clay figures.

113. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, continue to make very good progress in the juniors. By the end of Year 6, their appreciation of art and design has been appropriately extended and their use of materials, techniques and colour selection has become more sophisticated. The pupils have used art to convey their dreams of being a pop star, going to a theme park or sipping a cool drink on warm summer days and represented such ideas in colour wash paintings combined with crayon techniques. These skills are developed well and by the end of the junior years pupils have advanced their skills in their selection of colour and application of tone to faithfully reproduce the delicate shades of an amaryllis plant in observational work using pastels. The school's commitment to providing pupils with opportunities to work with artists has positively contributed to the raising of standards in art and design and the display areas of the school are used well to show the finished results. Some pupils worked with a sculptor to make hessian wall coverings; others worked with an artist in residence to learn printing skills using a roller and oils that resulted in the production of high quality monoprints.
114. The teaching of art and design is very good. The displays of completed work throughout the school show that pupils have been provided with very good teaching in order to produce such high quality work. Art and design teaching continues to be a strength in this school. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the art techniques being taught, lessons are very well organised, pupils are well managed and resources are easily accessible. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher provided specific instructions on how the pupils were to build on their previous work when handling delicate tissue paper and then demonstrated the technique clearly to the pupils. This resulted in all pupils, including those with special educational needs, making good progress when they developed 'blurry images' based on the theme of 'a dream'. In earlier work, now displayed in the junior hall, a teacher had used photographs taken with a digital camera of pupils in a physical education gymnastics lesson. Pupils could then trace the shape of the human form when preparing to create a sense of movement in the art and design work that followed. Teachers continue to provide junior pupils with knowledge and understanding of well-known artists and they learn about local painters as well as those with national recognition. Year 6 pupils were effectively shown how famous artists have created facial expression in their paintings and they were provided with large images of well-known paintings to develop their own ideas. All the pupils, including those with English as an additional language, achieved results that evoked good discussion of the impact of colour in conveying thoughts and ideas.
115. The pupils enjoy art and design lessons and they approach their work with a high degree of creative effort. They work well together and are interested in each other's achievements. The teachers provide them with very good opportunities to discuss finished work in a positive way and how to compare different approaches within the same theme. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils used very good printing techniques and

worked in groups to produce a group printing block. This required them to collaborate, to listen to alternative suggestions and to respect each other's opinions. The teacher and teaching assistant intervened very well, providing very good support to individual pupils, without interfering with the discussion that developed.

116. The art and design curriculum, which fully meets statutory requirements, has developed well since the last inspection. In lessons, the pupils are taught specific art skills. Art is developed within topics that cover more than one subject. This results in a rich mixture of art and design experiences that are clearly enjoyed by the pupils. Each year the school holds a festival of art with opportunities for pupils to work with visiting artists teaching particular skills. This has helped the school to maintain its high standards and has provided very good opportunities for pupils of all levels of attainment including talented pupils to achieve well.
117. Since the last inspection more use is now made of ICT with pupils regularly using art and design and graphics software packages to develop their design skills. A digital camera has been effectively used to help pupils to improve their observational work particularly when the school premises are used as a starting point for drawing and painting. The pupils also use the Internet to research the styles of famous artists.
118. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has started to provide guidance and support to other teachers by first ensuring that the planning of lessons in this subject reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject co-ordinator has plans to begin monitoring lessons and the work produced by the pupils throughout the school to help teachers to develop their artistic skills further. The management of the subject is good.
119. The quality, quantity and range of art and design resources are impressive. Whereas most of the art and design teaching takes place in classrooms, the pupils can develop their skills using clay on potters' wheels in a technology room. Their finished work is fired regularly in the on-site kiln. Together with a very good range of art papers the art and design store includes paint, pastels, printing equipment, inks, clay, and fabrics for collage, weaving and embroidery. There is a good range of posters featuring the work of well-known artists. The use of the teaching assistants' excellent skills contribute greatly to display work in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. The majority of pupils achieve standards that are above those expected by the age of seven and 11 years. The above average attainment evident at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. The relatively limited teaching time available to the subject at that time has been improved by the application of design and technology to elements and topics that cover a wide range of other subjects. For instance, younger pupils designed and made collage decorations to decorate a banner with a seaside theme as part of their work in art and design. Older pupils used a commercial kit to construct a complicated cardboard version of the human body to support their learning in science. Year 6 pupils used the Internet in their ICT lesson to inform their designs for carnival hats, part of a project on producing and evaluating a range of hats to serve different purposes.
121. The pupils achieve well and reach good standards because of good quality teaching that is based on a clear understanding of the design and technology process, although not all phases of it are present in every learning activity provided for the pupils and the evaluation of products in terms of their suitability to purpose is not consistently stressed. However, some very good teaching was observed. For instance, a lesson

for seven-year-olds included a significant emphasis on the importance of the link between design and purpose as they examined the features of a variety of toy vehicles, learned about their key components and considered how their own model vehicles might be constructed from wood and card. Suitability to purpose, including the quality of construction, be they cars or heavy lorries, is the criterion that will guide the evaluation of their model vehicles when completed. The topic was part of a consumer study, inspired by the story of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. Pupils had already designed 'The factory' building and its production lines. Overall, pupils are provided with a good variety of opportunities to design and make items for different purposes using a wide range of materials including food, textiles, card, wood and clay.

122. Well-planned, stimulating assignments and the excellent management of pupils by their teachers ensure that pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good progress in design and making skills and learn how to use the relevant range of tools safely and effectively. This includes pupils with special educational needs. For instance, pupils in the SEN language and communications classes design and make Easter cards with pop-up chicks and puppets of different types, including finger walking spiders to support story telling. They also learn how to measure and combine ingredients to create jam tarts, pizzas and savoury snacks. The pupils across the school show high levels of interest and creativity. Unfortunately, the fragmented arrangements for the delivery of the subject reduce opportunities for younger pupils, especially, to experience the application of all aspects of the design and technology process to each assignment, but the majority of older pupils begin to realise that their own work draws on the same procedures as the man-made world around them. This learning is reinforced by visits such as one to a pizza parlour and another to a nationally known superstore, famous for its emphasis on furniture design.
123. The subject co-ordinator provides enthusiastic and effective leadership. The subject policy has been updated and the school's scheme of work reflects national guidelines. The quality of teachers' planning is regularly evaluated, especially for the clarity of learning objectives for lessons. Consequently, support is provided for the staff when required. The pupils' progress is monitored, although the assessment procedures currently in place are underdeveloped and are not sufficient to inform teachers' planning. The school has already recognised this as an area requiring improvement and possibilities are under consideration. Resources have been audited and are continually updated. A general purposes room, with access to cooking facilities, is available for use when learning assignments demand facilities additional to those available in classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY

124. During the inspection, it was possible to see five infant and one junior lesson. From looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning, policy and planning documents, photographs, displays and holding discussions with pupils and staff, it is evident that most pupils in all year groups, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, although standards are below those expected by the age of 11 years. This represents a very good improvement from the previous report.

125. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing a simple geographical vocabulary and can use words like 'bay', 'mainland' and 'environment' and know the difference between physical and human features. In discussing their work on islands, pupils can define 'island', and describe the features they are drawing. Some pupils can refer to compass points and locate the northern and southern parts of an island. They know that life on the island of Coll is not like life in Newcastle. The work with Barnaby Bear, Katie Morag and Tom's travels round the world, is an imaginative and creative way of introducing pupils to; for example, ideas like routes, forms of travel and the concept of place. Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to say something in the language of the country that Barnaby is visiting. By making extensive use of the local area and beyond, pupils are aware of the richness and diversity of their local and regional environment. All the experiences in geography make a strong contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The quality of the pupils' presentation is good.
126. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' geographical understanding is further developed through; for example, revisiting the local environment and comparing it with a village in India. By the end of their time in the junior school, pupils have an awareness of concepts like weather, settlement, economic activities, environmental impact, sustainability and land use. Knowledge and understanding of climate in other countries is addressed by a study of world weather in Year 3. A continuous theme of what is in the news runs throughout the junior school. This; for example, encouraged pupils to look at how the recent foot and mouth epidemic affected tourism. Pupils also extend their map reading skills through engaging in an orienteering exercise. In a discussion with junior school pupils, about their work in geography, they spoke with both confidence and knowledge on what they had been studying.
127. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. In the best lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge is reinforced by brisk pace, challenge and sensible allocation of time to the different activities, including an imaginative use of ICT in which the pupils received an e-mail from Katie Morag. They responded to this with interest and excitement.
128. Although the subject co-ordinator was only appointed to her post this term, she demonstrates that she has a sound grasp of the role, whilst seeking to maximise the impact of geography within the school's curriculum. She is aware of the importance of monitoring teachers' plans as well as the quality of teaching and learning. There is already in place a three-year plan, a positional statement and an improvement plan, all of which ensures good subject management. Much work is done to inter-relate with other subjects. 'Big Books' on Katie Morag and Barnaby Bear are being used to develop skills in literacy. The computer is also being used to good effect. The co-ordinator is well supported by good and very good quality teaching in the school. Assessment takes place through diagnostic marking against the objectives for each lesson, but these are not consistent across the school to have a lasting effect on teachers' planning. Work is differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils and there is not an over-reliance on literary skills. Good quality resources linked to the scheme of work support the subject. All of the points raised in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully.

HISTORY

129. It was only possible to observe teaching in junior classes during the inspection, although lessons took place in Year 1, but conversations with teachers and pupils and the detailed displays provided a clear overview of the work and standards in the infant years as well. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below those expected. By the time they are seven, pupils have a very good grasp of time and chronology and make good progress, but standards are below those expected. They can talk about time order and

have a good memory of things they have studied; for example, toys, famous people and the visits they have made. Their written work lacks the expected range of vocabulary because of their limited language and writing skills. By Year 6, good progress has been made and standards of work on display are at national expectations. However, these displays arise from the best work from within classes and the work in pupils' books is not of the same standard and is below expectations by the age of 11 years.

130. Attractive displays in the infant classes show the range of work done. Clever use was made of class photographs to teach time order, starting with 'yesterday, today and tomorrow'. These built into timelines of increasing length and complexity. By Year 2, the pupils have a good understanding of many aspects of life 'then and now'. Links with the Discovery Museum in Newcastle results in good use of genuine objects from the past. One Year 1 classroom has an interesting and well-labelled display of household objects from Victorian to modern Britain. Visits are well used, with pupils going to museums and Wallington Hall. The latter has a superb dolls' house and this is well linked with work on the history of toys through time. A much-loved teddy bear was used to develop a display of artwork and links with President Edward (Teddy) Roosevelt's favourite toy bear.
131. The same cross-curricular links exist in junior work. The school has decided to cover the history syllabus in a rolling four-year programme. Each year the whole of the junior phase will study aspects of one core unit. This year all pupils will study the 'invaders'; for example, the Romans, Saxons, and Vikings. The strength of this approach is that displays in the school all involve the same theme so that pupils have access to a range of work and good use can be made of educational visits. This term the pupils enjoyed half a day working in school with a visiting 'Saxon woman'. They were able to dress up, design brooches and generally get a feel for aspects of Saxon household life. Because of the strong focus on class displays, the record of work in pupil's books is less good and not all the pupils are able to demonstrate satisfactory progress. The division of topics into segments means that individual pupils do not always have the opportunity to develop a wide enough range of history skills. For this reason, and the fact that teachers' assessments in history are not as sharp as those in, say, English and mathematics, standards seen in individual work by the end of the junior years are just below the standards expected for their age.
132. All the teaching seen was good and pupils were very interested in their work. Teachers are carefully prepared and have good subject knowledge. This means that they can add helpful examples and illustrations, especially when working with individual pupils or small groups. Year 3 pupils took part in role-play in which a Saxon village moot court had to decide how to deal with three rascals. Pupils learned a lot about the Anglo-Saxon system of justice and were able to think and talk about the quality of evidence. They could explain why some types of crime were more important in the past and how this was reflected in the punishments. In Year 5, pupils were very busy finding out about the ways that Saxons dressed and how they lived. Lower attaining pupils were reconstructing buried treasure by reassembling pieces of pictures of artefacts. Higher attaining pupils were looking up information from a good variety of books and information sheets. One class used information from a CD-ROM. Another was so busy with interesting books that pupils decided to wait for the next lesson to use the computer. At the end of each lesson, pupils shared with each other what they had found out. The more self-assured gave good presentations at the end of which they confidently answered questions fired at them by the other pupils.
133. A clear scheme of work based on the units recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is some monitoring of teaching and the subject co-ordinator is always ready to give

advice, especially about the use of local study sites such as the Roman exhibitions and museum at Segedunum (Wallsend). Learning in history is often supported through work in other subjects; for example, in the making of models of Elizabethan houses as part of a design and technology project. Display work is a strength in the subject and history is well represented throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to research at home and, with parental help, many extend their knowledge. There are good planned links through ICT. Marking and teachers' assessments in history are not as effective and more needs to be done to identify individual history progress targets to make these known to the pupils. Resources are generally good, books and other reading materials are bright to look at and interesting to read. In classrooms, these are well displayed so that pupils are encouraged to read them, both for pleasure and for research. Good use is made of artefacts and visits although the increasing cost of transport is forcing the school to cut back on the number of trips it can plan.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are in line with those expected at the age seven and 11, and are improving rapidly with some current work being done by older pupils in junior classes that exceeds the standards expected. The new computer suite came into full use after the last inspection. This, together with excellent management of the subject and substantial staff training, has had a very positive impact on standards and the pupils' achievement in ICT. There has been very good improvement in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. Pupils are achieving very well and making very good progress. Pupils usually work in pairs in the ICT room and this is helpful to pupils with special educational needs, who also make very good progress. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language make very good progress and are adequately supported.
135. By Year 2, the pupils can use the keyboard and mouse with confidence to operate drawing programs and access games, stories and information. Year 1 pupils were observed using a graphics program with confidence to draw and label pictures of plants as part of their science topic. The pupils had clearly been taught very well and had acquired the necessary skills to draw pictures by controlling the computer mouse. They can correct their own mistakes and are increasingly becoming confident with computers as they load and save their work. By Year 2, the pupils can control a programmable robot and make it move in different directions. By Year 6, the pupils can search the Internet for relevant information on a specific topic and also retrieve information from CD-ROMs. The pupils were observed using a sophisticated multimedia-authoring program to refine and present information specially for a presentation about 'Plant Growth'. Again this was linked to the pupils' science topic and the teacher incorporated some challenging tasks for the pupils who were required to edit and refine their presentations so that they attracted the attention of a younger audience. The pupils responded very well to the challenge and knew that much of the design should involve colourful and varied illustrations with carefully chosen text that appeared on the computer screen accompanied by sound effects. Younger junior pupils in Year 3 demonstrated very good competence designing 'Mother's Day Cards' using a graphics program. They can combine text and graphics to produce colourful and very professional looking cards using images imported from a file and are then able to copy, repeat and rotate these to produce different effects.

136. Pupils have very good attitudes to ICT. They enjoy working in the computer suite and also using the machines in their classrooms. The youngest children in the reception classes are making a good start and also have access to the ICT suite. The pupils behave very well and they respect the equipment and all take pride in the work they complete and print out.
137. The teaching is very good. The school has an interactive whiteboard on which to demonstrate to the class, and teachers use this extremely well to ensure that all pupils can see what they are demonstrating. There has been a systematic and very well co-ordinated training programme for all the staff and their confidence is increasing as they use the facilities. Consequently, there is now some very good expertise within the school. Very good links are made with other subjects such as English, mathematics, science, geography, history and design and technology.
138. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. She has a thorough knowledge of the ICT curriculum and has the necessary expertise to lead and co-ordinate staff training. The last inspection was critical of ICT and the standards achieved by the school. Since then the co-ordinator and staff have improved standards rapidly and ICT is now a strong feature of the school's curriculum. An effective scheme of work is in place. The recording of pupils' work on computer files is well established and this forms the basis for assessing skills and progress. Resources are very good and are fully utilised.

MUSIC

139. It was only possible to observe a limited number of music lessons during the period of the inspection. These lessons, however, plus an examination of teachers' planning documents and singing during assemblies, indicate that pupils make good progress in their music skills and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age by the time they are seven and 11 years. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the SEN classes make good progress in music in relation to their prior learning and achieve well over time. The subject has improved well since the last inspection when singing was judged to be unsatisfactory. Music provision is now good.
140. Pupils in Year 2 can produce their own simple compositions based on the theme of 'Weather' using untuned percussion instruments. Pupils recognise the symbols for different types of weather and are able to use these in a graphic manner in order to record their own musical scores. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected.
141. Pupils in Year 3 have a simple understanding of ostinato – an underlying rhythmic pattern in music – and are able to follow the teacher in a number of clapping activities. Pupils listen to and appraise the theme from the film 'Mission Impossible', and clap out its rhythmic pattern. Good singing was observed in this lesson with pupils learning a new song, a 'calypso' and accompanying themselves with clapping activities. Opportunities will be given at a later date for pupils to accompany themselves with percussion instruments. The good progress in singing in this lesson was helped by the teacher's personal enthusiasm for the work in hand and the good working relationship with pupils.
142. The progress made in a Year 4 lesson was enhanced by the specialist knowledge of a visitor from the local music service with pupils engaged in both singing and the playing of penny whistles. Pupils displayed satisfactory singing skills as they sang 'Frère Jacques'. They recognised the pulse of the song and were able to sustain it in their singing. Pupils will be given the opportunity to sing this song as a round in a later lesson. Pupils demonstrated good fingering skills as they played penny whistles and

were able to read numerical notation to support them in their playing. The pupils displayed positive attitudes towards their work in this lesson, and worked with real interest and enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 4 displayed sound graphic reading skills as they explored the use of untuned percussion instruments to support a West African market song 'Gura Mundi'. Pupils experimented with and explored the use of a number of instruments to support the song and used symbolic notation to write down their 'score'. All pupils were given the opportunity to make an active contribution to the lesson and to explore the musical instruments. There was a very good element of inclusion for all in the music playing.

143. Imaginative compositional work was observed in Year 6 as the pupils created original lyrics made up from chants and shouts heard in the playground and sang them to the tune of 'Tomorrow' from the musical 'Annie'. Pupils took pride in the songs they had produced during the period and were keen to present them to their friends at the end of the lesson. Music was used to good effect in the mixed-age SEN language and communication class as pupils explored the dynamics of a piece of Indonesian music played on a gamelan. Pupils were given the opportunity to explore the gamelan. The subject was delivered in such a manner as to not only develop their music skills, but also to enhance and promote their language and communication skills.
144. The quality of teaching in music throughout the school is good. Teachers plan, organise and resource their lessons well. They provide pupils with the opportunity to respond to both elements of the music curriculum, listening and appraising and composing and performing, although opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise the music of accepted great classical composers is somewhat limited and is an area for further development. Good opportunities are given for the pupils to consider music from other cultures and traditions. The school also benefits from the services of a specialist music teacher from the local support service who contributes to teachers' development and knowledge in the subject as well as teaching directly in the classroom. The pupils meet as a whole school in order to engage in singing practice. Singing is now well taught, with the two leaders in the subject placing appropriate emphasis on breathing technique, articulation and projection, and the sensitive interpretation of lyrics. Pupils sing in a tuneful manner and with enthusiasm.
145. The school offers specialist teaching in violin, brass and woodwind. It also has a very popular choir who sings both in school and the local community. It is currently working towards the creation of a small orchestra. The school gives the pupils the chance to take part in a number of music workshops, with the 'arts week' carried out last year focussing on music. The subject is used to good effect in other subjects and areas of school life. For example, in some classes the pupils sing out their responses at registration times or use music when involved in number work in mathematics. Junior pupils also learned songs from the war years when engaged in their history work on the Second World War.
146. The subject is well led by two well-informed and enthusiastic key stage co-ordinators who have been influential in the raising of standards in music in the school. There are no formal or consistent procedures in place to assess music standards across the school. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development and the overall ethos of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Pupils make good progress in their skills in physical education in both key stages and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the time they are seven and 11 years. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the SEN language and

communication classes make good progress in relation to their prior learning and achieve well over time. Standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection when they were deemed to be satisfactory. This is due to the increase in staff training, with the result that teachers are now more confident and able in the delivery of the subject. The school has also benefited from an increased number of visitors who come into school to coach various elements of the physical education curriculum.

148. Whilst it was not possible to observe all elements of the PE curriculum within the period of inspection, teachers' good planning for the subject indicates that pupils are given the opportunity to make good progress, and to work towards developing all the skills and knowledge required in the subject. In Year 2, the pupils were seen to be making good progress in basic gymnastic skills as they focussed on jumping skills and moving through the air in different shapes and styles. The lesson was extremely well planned, with the teacher linking the idea of take-off, propulsion through the air and landing with the pupil's work on forces in their science lessons. Good cross-curricular learning is taking place.
149. The pupils in Year 3 displayed good dancing skills as they considered a given number of words associated with the theme of 'Water' and used this knowledge to create their own dances. They were given the opportunity to extend their skills as they added words of their own in order to give additional stimulus to their work. The work was further extended as pupils added flowing ribbons and acquired a simple knowledge of rhythmic gymnastics. Pupils in a second Year 3 class were also observed making good progress in their skipping skills as they worked both independently and in pairs in creating a skipping routine. As in all other lessons, the pupils displayed an effective understanding of the importance of physical activity in a healthy lifestyle.
150. The pupils in Years 4 and 5 attend the local swimming baths where qualified instructors give good support to pupils, with the result that the large majority of them fulfil the expected swimming requirements by the end of Year 5. The good progress made in the single swimming lesson observed was enhanced by the pupils' good self-discipline in the pool. They listened with interest to the coaching points and clearly focussed on the skills to be developed.
151. Good dance was once more observed in two lessons in Year 6. In one lesson, the pupils used the poem 'Jabberwocky' as a stimulus for their work. In this, as in all PE lessons, the large majority of pupils displayed positive attitudes towards their work, although occasionally a small minority of pupils wander off task when they are not directly involved with practical activities. In a second Year 6 lesson, the pupils used various elements of a football match, kicking the ball, throwing in, dribbling and so on, as a stimulus for a piece of dance. As with other dance activities, pupils were prepared to listen to other peoples' suggestions, explored and altered their ideas, and finally arrived at a well-structured piece of work. Good collaborative learning took place with the pupils refining their skills through repetition.
152. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced, with teachers sharing lesson objectives with the pupils. Teachers focus on health and safety issues and provide appropriate warm-up and warm-down activities at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers give good individual demonstrations of the skills to be learned, and provide opportunities for the pupils to demonstrate good practice. Praise is well used to promote the pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their abilities. The final part of lessons is used in an effective manner to review, share and celebrate by showing what has been learned in the

lesson. There are no formal or systematic arrangements in place to assess and record how well the pupils are doing and this is left largely to individual teachers.

153. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator ensures that teachers' plans are monitored for consistency and progression. There is a policy for the subject and a useful scheme of work that guides teachers in their planning. Resources for the subject are good. The school has access to three halls and a local authority-owned playing field.
154. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities including football, hockey, basketball and athletics. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take part in inter-school competitions and a local swimming gala. The school benefits from additional coaching activities from individual football and basketball clubs in the area. The schools' commitment to promoting physical activities and school sport is reflected in its receipt of the Active Mark Gold Award from the Sports England organisation. With its emphasis on interactive work and team building skills the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

155. During the inspection, it was only possible to see two Year 6 lessons. Other evidence was collected from workbooks, discussions with pupils and staff, planning documents, photographs and displays. The pupils' attainment in religious education throughout the school meets that required by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. All the pupils make good progress and there has been very good progress in the provision for religious education since the last inspection.
156. Pupils in the infant classes are introduced to the idea of 'Special Things'. This leads them into thinking about special people with whom they come into contact, both at school and at home. Through looking at 'mum', as a special person in their lives, they then give thought to Mary, as the special mother of Jesus. The unit of work finally contemplates the uniqueness of all people in the eyes of God. From Year 1 onwards, the pupils hear stories about the early life of Jesus, and look at moral values, artefacts from different world faiths, festivals, sharing, celebrating and helping. Story and drama are used well where appropriate.
157. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils make a prayer tree, look at the Hindu festival of Holi, learn about the Koran and the five pillars of Islam, study the ministry of Jesus and consider the work of the Salvation Army. In the lesson on the ministry of Jesus, pupils understood the story of 'The Good Samaritan' and the meaning of the word 'evangelical'. From this, they went on to think about people in their own lives whom they could help. On looking at the role of the Salvation Army today, the pupils extended their understanding of homeless people and others in the community who could benefit from their outreach work. They also know about some of the ways in which the Salvation Army collects money. Both of these lessons generated much discussion and interest. In this way, religious education contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
158. Teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good and is good overall with many very good features. Teachers know what they are doing, are confident and well prepared with difficult and challenging material and they teach the pupils to value and respect people, their faiths and customs. Lessons are carefully planned and clear teaching points are made. Good questioning skills enables the pupils to reflect on what they are learning. Lessons have pace, and interesting discussions are sensitively managed. The school has established good links with the local vicar and now wishes to extend

this to include different places of worship, with the view of taking pupils to visit them. High quality displays add to the pupils' learning.

159. Good and effective leadership by the co-ordinator ensures that the curriculum for religious education is well supported. Good use of the budget makes sure that resources are available to support the teaching. There is a clear understanding of the aims of the subject and how to develop it further. The 'achievement descriptors', which are set out for each year group, help with both planning and assessment, but these have yet to be fully and consistently implemented by all teachers across the school. Words such as 'show', 'demonstrate' and 'identify' suggest a variety of assessment techniques that can act as a useful assessment tool for teachers to inform their planning further. Teachers are encouraged to create situations that foster reflection, imagination and creativity. The positional statement and the improvement plan highlight the appropriate points for development. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection.