

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **EASINGTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Easington, Peterlee

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114231

Headteacher: Mrs C Simpson

Reporting inspector: Mr L Garner  
25507

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 194271

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Easington Village  
Peterlee  
County Durham

Postcode: SR8 3BP

Telephone number: 0191 5270259

Fax number: 0191 5270259

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend N P Vine

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25507	Mr L Garner	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11368	Ms K Lee	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?
25350	Mrs P Kime	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Religious education Foundation stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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Bench Marque Limited  
National Westminster Bank Chambers  
Victoria Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset TA8 1AN

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a smaller than average, Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. There are 109 pupils on the roll compared with a national average of 243. The pupils come from a white ethnic background and no pupils speak English as an additional language. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, and this is about average for primary schools. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, signifying more serious learning difficulties, is higher than the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is around ten per cent which is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is above average.

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

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The very good relationships mean that pupils are eager to do well. Standards in some subjects, such as science, are good. In others they are not as high as they should be, but they are getting better. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well in science.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Because of consistently good teaching, children get a good start to their education in the reception class.
- The good social, moral and pastoral care contributes to the good attitudes pupils show to school life. Pupils generally behave well and, in the classes for the youngest and oldest pupils, very well.
- The school promotes a strong sense of community which encourages a strong partnership with parents and the very good relationships amongst pupils and between children and adults.

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

- The standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics by the time they leave school.
- The standards pupils achieve in religious education, information and communication technology and geography.
- The quality of teaching in two classes to achieve a more consistent standard.
- The provision the school makes to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

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

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

Although the overall improvement during the last three years has been unsatisfactory, the school is now making rapid strides forward. It has improved its provision for its youngest pupils by establishing the foundation stage well. There has been improvement in the way pupils with special educational needs are catered for. A good and improved system to assess pupils' work has recently been established. However, partly because of the time taken to set up these improvements, standards have slipped in some subjects. Standards in English and mathematics are not as good as they were at the last inspection. Standards in religious education have not improved because little has been taught in some classes recently. Funding to improve information and communication technology has only recently been made available, and so the school has not been able to keep up with developments in the subject. However, assessment is already beginning to pinpoint the areas for development, and the senior managers of the school and school governors are aware of what needs to be done and are committed to improve standards. This awareness means that the school now has the capacity to improve.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                    C

below average            D

well below average       E

Care needs to be taken when looking at these comparisons. This is a small school with small year groups where the performance of one or two pupils might seriously affect the comparative scores.

The table shows the results of the Year 6 pupils tested in summer 2000 because this is the latest year for which national comparisons are available. It shows that results in English and science were below the national average and well below those of similar schools. Results in mathematics were in line with national averages but below those of similar schools. School information indicates that the results for the year group which took the tests in summer 2001 will be similar in English and mathematics but much better in science where all pupils attained the expected level (Level 4) for their age. In both 2000 and 2001 Year 6 groups contained a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs.

The pupils in the present Year 6 are likely to achieve better results. This is because they now receive consistently good teaching and the assessment procedures are beginning to identify gaps in their knowledge.

Results in the 2000 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 were in line with the national average in reading and writing but below standards seen in similar schools. Standards in mathematics were above the national average and in line with those seen in similar schools.

School records and observations during inspection show that pupils are now generally achieving satisfactory standards in English, mathematics and science.

Standards in religious education, information and communication technology and geography are not as high as they should be when pupils leave school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils want to do well, they usually work hard in lessons and many attend extra-curricular clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. In many lessons pupils behave very well. Inappropriate behaviour sometimes occurs when lessons do not interest pupils. Behaviour around school and in the playground is good.
Personal development and relationships	Good; relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils are positive. Pupils respect others and are sensitive to their feelings. A feature of the school is the way in which the youngest and oldest pupils play together well. Older pupils take good care of younger ones in the playground.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The strength of teaching in good lessons is linked firmly to the very good relationships evident in most lessons most of the time. This means that teachers are usually able to manage pupils in a quietly effective way. The effective teaching is most clearly evident in the classes for the oldest and youngest children and in the lesson taught by the headteacher. The needs of all pupils are met.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good. The clear structure which the strategies have given, support all teachers well. Teaching in information and communication technology has suffered in the past because of the lack of resources, particularly computers. New resources are now in place and teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm have improved. A consistently good feature of teaching throughout the school was the way in which well planned and managed homework is used to benefit pupils' learning.

In the less effective lessons pupils are not given the chance to take part in interesting activities and can lose interest in lessons that do not challenge them. When this happens their behaviour deteriorates and teachers have to waste time getting pupils back to task. Behaviour of this kind was only noted in classes in the middle years of the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; the curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils have equal access to it. There are strengths in the provision for extra-curricular activities and visits, health education and citizenship.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and planning clearly identifies learning objectives. Support, in class or in separate groups, is well planned and effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good for social and moral development and satisfactory for spiritual development. Pupils benefit from their knowledge of the local culture. Provision to enhance pupils' understanding of the British multicultural society is underdeveloped.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to their wellbeing. The school's ethos and positive relationships promote effective personal support. Assessment is now used well in English and mathematics but standards in other subjects such as history, geography or religious education are not assessed.

The school has established a good relationship with parents. Parents consider this to be 'their' village school. Information provided and communications between home and school are good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher has led the school well through recent periods of significant change, particularly relating to the turnover of staff. The headteacher and second-in-charge have a clear view of how they want the school to develop. The staff work very much as a team committed to higher standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well organised and generally maintains a sound oversight of the work of the school. They recognise most of the areas in which the school needs to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has sound systems in place to monitor teaching. Test results in the core subjects are now being analysed and used to keep track of pupils' progress. The school plan for development has identified most areas which need to be developed. The school now evaluates its performance well.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources available to it. In particular, funds it has received after bids to the local educational action zone have been well used to increase the number of computers in school and the range of extra-curricular activities offered. Support staff are well used in lessons and for pupils with special educational needs. Principles of best value are soundly applied.



The school accommodation is just adequate. Some classrooms are only just big enough. The hall is too small for classes of older pupils to do some physical education activities in it. The school's use of the church hall goes some way to compensate for this.

There are enough resources of satisfactory quality in most subjects but there is a lack of suitable reading books and musical instruments which limits the curriculum in these subjects.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like coming to school.</li><li>• They think the school staff are approachable and sort out problems effectively.</li><li>• They think that the school is a happy community where children of all ages get on well together.</li><li>• They think their children are well taught.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents would like more notice of events and class changes which happen in school.</li><li>• Some parents thought there could be more extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' views that this is a happy, friendly school in which very good relationships underpin pupils' personal development. The provision for extra-curricular activities is better than that seen in most schools as it includes opportunities for pupils from Key Stage 1 to join in.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The year 2000 national tests are the latest ones for which national comparisons are available. The eleven-year-olds achieved results that were generally below the national average. In English and science, results were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. In mathematics, results were in line with the national average but below those for similar schools.
2. School information shows that the results for the eleven-year-olds who took the tests in 2001 achieved similar standards, although comparisons with similar schools are not yet available.
3. Results in the 2000 tests for seven-year-olds show that standards were in line with the national average in reading and writing but below standards seen in similar schools. Standards in mathematics were above the national average and in line with those seen in similar schools.
4. Tests results have fluctuated over the last five years. This is partly because this is a small school with small year groups and the results of one or two pupils can affect the figures. But it is also because the school has gone through a period of considerable staff change in the last few years and this has had an effect on the standards pupils achieved. Taking the years from 1996 to 2000, standards of English at Key Stage 2 were above the national average until 1999, when they dropped to below average. Standards in mathematics were above, or well above, the national average until 1998, when they dropped to be in line with the national average. Science results were similar, although they dropped to below the national average in 1999.
5. Trends in the results for Key Stage 1 have also fluctuated, with results in reading and writing being above or in line with national averages, and results in mathematics rising from below average in 1997 to slightly above average in 2000.
6. In general, the standards seen in both key stages have not kept up with national standards in the last five years. However, there have been recent changes in the way the school is organised and the standards seen during inspection suggest that the decline in the last few years has been halted and the school is improving.
7. Pupils begin school with levels of attainment that are generally above average. It would be expected that by the time they leave school their attainment would be, at least, above the national average, as they were for, example, in 1998 and reflecting the pupils' capabilities. This is not the case at the moment but there are clear signs that the school is regaining these former standards.
8. During the inspection, standards of achievement for pupils in the foundation stage were above that seen in most children of their age. These children make good progress so are in line to be well above the national average by the time they move to Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve standards which are in line with national expectations generally, but above in English.
9. Standards for the pupils in the present Year 6 are average in English and mathematics, and above in science. This shows an improved picture compared to 2000 and 2001. This is partly explained by the fact that the present Year 6 group has a lower percentage of pupils with special educational needs. More importantly, improvements have occurred in English and

mathematics because of the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The well structured plans give teachers good support. In science, in which standards have improved most dramatically, better arrangements for teaching have been responsible.

10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are identified early in their school life and effective support is provided in class, and especially in the withdrawal groups which are taught very well, for example in literacy and numeracy.
11. Standards in information and communication technology are not good enough because pupils have not yet been able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new computers and the control aspect of the subject is not available. Standards in religious education do not meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus because not enough religious education is taught and little is recorded in writing. Standards in geography are also below those expected.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour in school are good overall. They are very enthusiastic about school and have very good attendance, confirming parents' views that their children like school. For example, the reception children are so eager to come into school that many line up in the playground long before the bell rings for the start of the day.
13. Most pupils listen carefully in class and work hard with good concentration and effort as a result of good teaching and interesting lessons. Pupils with special educational needs show a high level of commitment to their work and a determination to achieve. Occasionally, in some classes pupils' attitudes and behaviour lapse when the lesson does not interest them or it is not well matched to their needs. They become restless and their unsatisfactory behaviour means that learning time is lost trying to regain their attention.
14. However, behaviour around the school is often very good. Pupils behave very well in assemblies and during indoor breaks. There have been no exclusions. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with all adults in school. In the playground pupils of all ages play amicably together. There is a lively friendly atmosphere at lunchtime. Most pupils listen well to each other in class and respect others' points of view.
15. The personal development of pupils is good. Opportunities for them to show independence and to be responsible for their own learning are few but pupils of all ages are encouraged to take on a wide range of other responsibilities in school. They do this willingly and conscientiously and wear their monitor and school council badges with pride.

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

16. The quality of teaching in lessons is satisfactory overall. Twenty-eight lessons were seen during the inspection. This is a relatively small number of lessons because this is a small school. Care should be taken when making judgements because two or three untypical lessons could give a false picture of the quality of teaching. However, overall judgements on teaching are made using a wide range of other evidence as well including pupils' work and teachers' planning.
17. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 86 per cent of lessons. It was good or better in 43 per cent and very good in seven per cent. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 14 per cent of the lessons seen.

18. Teaching in the foundation stage (the reception class) is good. Consequently children make good progress in their first year in school. The quality then dips in the next two classes and as a result pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. In contrast, in the class for the oldest pupils it is always satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. This quality of teaching is one of the main reasons why standards at the top of the school are rising.
19. Overall the school meets its pupils' needs and enables them to learn most subjects at a good rate. The pupils with special educational are taught well in class and very well when they are taught in groups withdrawn from class. This means they make good progress and achieve well. In the small group sessions seen work was broken down into small steps that the pupils could cope with. This meant they were able to succeed and were therefore motivated to keep trying hard. Relationships were very good and the teacher was very encouraging but still expected a lot from pupils.
20. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good. The documents associated with the strategies give teachers a clear structure in which to plan their lessons and this gives them good support and helps to produce effective lessons, so pupils learn at a good pace, especially in the Year 5/6 class.
21. For science the Year 5/6 class has been taught as two separate year groups since the beginning of the 2000/2001 school year. The headteacher provided good quality teaching to the Year 5 group during this year and the benefits are now being seen in this school year. This year group is now receiving good quality teaching from the new Year 6 teacher who is able to build on the good teaching from last year and achieve standards which are above what would normally be seen in children of this age.
22. In the most effective lessons teachers have good knowledge of their subject matter and present work imaginatively so pupils' interest is captured. Teachers help pupils see the purpose of the work they are doing and the links between what has been taught before and what will be taught in the future. For example, in a science lesson for Year 5 pupils, pupils had the opportunity to use soil, peat and water to set up experiments to find how much air was present. Very good questioning deepened and refined pupils' knowledge, both of physical properties of the materials and what makes a fair test to conduct a useful experiment.
23. When teaching is unsatisfactory in the middle two classes, there are a number of common faults. In lessons which do not interest pupils, behaviour deteriorates and too much time is spent restoring order. Sometimes activities are not matched to pupils' level of attainment. For example, in a science lesson, a worksheet did not give pupils the support they needed to successfully complete the task they had been given. These shortcomings do not enable the teaching to get the best from the pupils.

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

### **The curriculum – the learning opportunities the school provides**

24. The school now provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets the requirements of the law, to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. However, pupils have too few opportunities to participate in drama and the time allocated to religious education is on the low side. Appropriate emphasis is given to teaching the key skills of literacy and numeracy and the use of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy supports sound teaching of these skills in English and mathematics lessons. The curriculum for pupils in the foundation stage follows the national recommendations for this age group. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum.

There are strengths in:

- the provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- the provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship;
- the provision of extra-curricular activities and educational visits;

There are shortcomings in:

- the range of work covered in information and communication technology;
- planning, in some subjects, for work to be sufficiently more demanding as pupils move up the school.

### **The provision for pupils with special educational needs**

25. These pupils have individual education plans which are clear about their particular difficulties, how they will be tackled, what the pupils are expected to learn over the next half-term or so, and how their progress will be measured. These documents provide useful guidance to the teachers and teaching assistants who support the pupils. Pupils who get additional teaching in small groups are taught very well. The school's arrangements for supporting pupils with statements of special educational needs ensure that their needs are met well. The provision has a strong bearing on the good progress these pupils made.

### **The provision for personal, social and health education (pshe) and citizenship**

26. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and to the wider local and parish community. For example, they take considerable responsibility for organising activities to raise money for charitable causes. The recently established school council makes a good contribution to pupils' learning about democracy and the responsibilities of voting and of representing others. Several aspects of school life promote pupils' self-esteem well. For instance, in an assembly pupils who completed the Junior Great North Run were congratulated on their achievement.
27. There is an effective programme to teach pupils about healthy and safe lifestyles through physical education and science. This is enhanced by contributions from members of the emergency services that serve to broaden pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Appropriate attention is paid to sex education and teaching pupils about the dangers of drug misuse.

### **The provision of extra-curricular activities and educational visits**

28. A significant minority of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire were not happy with the provision of out-of-school activities. However, the inspectors judge the range as good for a school this size. Clubs run on three nights each week and include activities for Key Stage 1 pupils. Furthermore, the curriculum is enhanced by a good range of well-planned educational visits. For instance, pupils in Key Stage 1 visit Beamish for a Victorian Day as part of their work in history, and the work they produce extend the subject significantly.

#### **The range of work covered in information and communication technology**

29. Insufficient work is done on the control aspect of this subject, mainly owing to a shortage of suitable resources. The school has recognised this and is planning to acquire the computer programs which will enable pupils to gain the skills to write instructions which will control the movements of lines on the computer screen or a programmed toy.

#### **Planning for work to be sufficiently more demanding as pupils move up through the school**

30. This aspect of curricular planning is satisfactory in English and mathematics because the school uses the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies appropriately. In several other subjects the work for each class is planned on a two-year cycle. This ensures that all the required content is covered. However, the planning does not make clear the progression in demand on pupils as they get older. Consequently, there are occasions when there is little distinction between the work undertaken by pupils of different ages in the same class. The cumulative effect of this shortcoming undermines the rate at which pupils make progress in two classes.
31. Since the last inspection satisfactory progress has been made on providing curriculum guidance which will give support to teachers when they are planning for continuity and progression in subjects. Whole school plans of work are now in place for all subjects. These take account of relevant national guidance and recommendations. However, more remains to be done in several subjects to ensure that pupils undertake progressively more demanding work as they move up the school.
32. When last inspected there were shortcomings in the range of provision in the reception class. These have now been dealt with and children in the foundation stage undertake suitable work in all areas of learning.

#### **Spiritual development**

33. The school uses the community well to enrich pupils' learning. Many visits to local places of interest such as Beamish Museum enhance the curriculum. There are good links with the church for special services and collective worship. Many opportunities are taken to liaise with other primary schools for sporting competitions and for residential visits which complement pupils' personal development. The school has very good links with the local nursery school and this has a positive affect on the ease in which children transfer to the reception class. Links with the local secondary school are limited to the transfer of national test results of pupils.

34. Collective worship makes a good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual development. It takes place in a reverential atmosphere with a strong sense of the school as a community. Staff help pupils to appreciate the spiritual quality of Christian songs. For example, in hymn practice, the song 'I'll be still' was introduced as 'the quiet, prayerful one' and pupils responded almost with a cheer when the words of 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God' were displayed on the overhead projector. Prayer is part of the daily routine in all classes and pupils understand what it means to pray to a deity. Spiritual development is further promoted through the close links with the parish church.
35. Some religious education lessons extend pupils' awareness of the spiritual aspects of life, for instance, in one lesson pupils showed an understanding of commitment in the context of sticking with something one had decided to do, such as football practice. However, overall, religious education does not contribute sufficiently to pupils' spiritual development. The weaknesses in this subject result in pupils having limited knowledge about the beliefs and values held by followers of different religions. Opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual awareness are not yet planned systematically in other subjects. Nevertheless, some opportunities are grasped and utilised. For example, children in the reception class were helpfully encouraged to consider and express their responses to a quite abstract work of art. In the year 1 and 2 class, the teacher used the story of the Creation from the Bible well, to deepen pupils' awareness of the uniqueness and value of each individual.

### **Moral and social development**

36. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. The staff set a good example and they promote sound moral values in the daily acts of worship and incidentally in classroom life. The school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour and has an effective, agreed system of rewards to encourage good behaviour. As yet, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to debate moral issues and learn to make decisions and judgements about moral dilemmas.
37. The school provides well for pupils' social development in many aspects of its life. For example, pupils are given responsibilities for classroom jobs and they undertake these duties very willingly. For instance from their earliest days in school, pupils take attendance registers to the school office. Older pupils have good opportunities to help the younger ones and they show a high level of care and concern for them and sensitivity to their needs. The staff are successful in promoting a strong sense of the school as a community and they actively promote good relationships. The pupils respond positively to this ethos. They establish very good, co-operative relationships and they willingly contribute to school life. Pupils know they are valued and their views respected. For example, recommendations of the school council have been acted on.
38. The only shortcoming in this generally positive picture is the limited opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in lessons and to take a degree of responsibility for their own learning. Opportunities are missed here; too often activities with potential to be used to give pupils these experiences are closely directed by the teacher. Also, teachers tend to do too much for the pupils that they could do for themselves, for example, giving out exercise books and worksheets.

### **Cultural development**

39. The school is rooted in the local community. This, along with the educational visits arranged for pupils, helps them to develop an awareness of the cultural traditions of the local area. A broader cultural awareness is promoted through work in some subjects. For instance, pupils study a range of works of art and listen to recorded music. However, the school does not do

enough to raise pupils' awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity and prepare them for life in the multicultural British society.

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

40. The school continues to provide a good level of care for its pupils. This is evident in the close family atmosphere in school. Parents are happy with this aspect of the school's work. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety and for child protection. The school follows safe routines in the daily organisation and in lessons such as physical education where safety is stressed. Caring and sympathetic induction for the reception year group clearly helps the children settle quickly into school routines with the result that almost all are happy and confident in only their third week in school.
41. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Informal but ongoing systems are in place, based on the very good relationships between staff and pupils and the fact that each pupil is known well. The school has initiated many opportunities for older pupils to be responsible for school routines such as getting the hall ready for assemblies. Younger pupils too get the chance to have responsibilities in class such as the 'Helping Hands' rota in Class 3. All ages share in decision making through the school council. There is very good celebration of pupils' success in assembly. For example, the headteacher led the school's congratulations for pupils who had taken part in the Junior Great North Run and encouraged them to feel pride in their achievement.
42. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and anti-bullying. Very good relationships were observed in school. If there are any problems pupils are confident that these will be sorted out. Most class teachers have high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond well, resulting in most pupils behaving well. Pupils feel that they are all treated fairly, commenting that 'Everyone is treated equally'. Attendance is very thoroughly monitored by the school clerk who ensures a clear picture of each pupils' attendance and reasons for any absence.

## **Assessment**

43. Taken overall, the school's arrangements for checking up on pupils' progress are satisfactory. The school fulfils all the requirements of the law in relation to assessment and undertakes additional testing. This system is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- The assessment of pupils' learning and tracking of their progress is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science;
  - staff, in particular the headteacher, have begun to analyse the information and use it effectively;
  - the arrangements for identifying pupils with special educational needs and keeping their progress under review are good.
44. When children start in the reception class, the staff check what they know, what they understand and what they can do, and plan work that builds on this. From Year 1 to Year 6, nationally recognised English and mathematics tests are administered each year and the results are recorded so that staff can compare each pupil's progress year on year and set targets for their attainment in the national end of key stage tests. The school holds a lot of information about how well pupils are getting on. A potentially very useful computer program has recently been introduced to aid the analysis of this assessment data. The headteacher recognises the importance of monitoring each pupil's progress and uses the data to identify pupils who are making little progress or who do not achieve the standard expected for their age in the tests. However, the data is not yet used as rigorously as it could be to check whether pupils are achieving as well as they should from their starting points and to



pick up those who, though achieving the standard expected for their age, do not fulfil their early promise. As a result the school does not always get the best from these pupils.

45. There have been some recent improvements in the use of assessment data and a heightened awareness of its value. Staff analysis of the test results have revealed weaknesses, such as pupils' writing in Key Stage 2 being considerably less good than reading. This is now being tackled by appropriate changes to the work and teaching methods and signs of improvement are already evident. The significant underachievement in mathematics in Key Stage 1 has also come to light and has led to consideration of how to improve standards.
46. In most of the other subjects of the curriculum and religious education there are no systematic arrangements to check what pupils have learned and how well they are progressing. This is a contributory factor to the unsatisfactory standards in some subjects. It makes it harder than it need be for teachers to match work to pupils' levels of attainment so they build effectively on what they have already learned.
47. The last inspection found some weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of standards. Sufficient improvement has been made though there is still scope to assess pupil's learning more systematically in several subjects.

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

48. The school has a good partnership with parents, who are very supportive of its ethos of family values. They feel that it is a real school community in which pupils of all ages are friendly towards each other. Most parents agree that they would feel comfortable approaching the school if they had a problem and that teachers would sort it out. Some parents do not feel very well informed of their children's progress or that the school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. The inspectors agree with parents that the school promotes a family atmosphere in school where pupils enjoy very good relationships with adults and with each other. They think that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially for a small school. Its provision of clubs for younger pupils is seen rarely in other schools.
49. The annual reports on pupils' progress provide good information on what pupils can do and have learnt but do not include specific targets for them to improve further. They report well on pupils' attitudes and personal development. There are three consultation meetings throughout the year for parents to discuss their children's progress. The school recognises that there is a need for more confidentiality at these meetings. Links with parents of reception children are particularly strong with good induction and informal monthly meetings with the class teacher. Parents receive good information on the school with regular letters informing them of school matters and events. There are useful meetings on the curriculum such as to explain 'Jolly Phonics' for parents of the reception class children. There is a good booklet for suggestions on how parents can help their children learn at home and good dialogue with parents through the reading diaries.
50. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. All parents have signed the good home/school agreement. A small number of parents help effectively in classrooms and some are involved in creating lovely story sacks for use in the reception class. The school has given good support to parent helpers, training three to enable them to become teaching assistants. The Parent Staff Association (PSA) offers very good support, regularly raising funds for extra resources such as library books.

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

51. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The school has gone through a period of considerable change in the last few years and the headteacher has managed this well.
52. Two of the four classes have had teachers who were new to them this year. However, because of decisions made by the headteacher and governors, the school looks to have a more settled future than for some time. The decline in standards has been halted and inspection evidence suggests that standards are now returning to those previously achieved. This is largely because of what the leadership of the school has done recently.
53. The newly appointed second-in-charge supports the headteacher well and is beginning to have an impact in the life of the school in her own right. She moved, at the beginning of this school year, from successfully teaching the reception class to the class for the oldest children, Years 5 and 6. It is already apparent that she has transferred her teaching skills effectively to this class.
54. These two senior managers have a clear view of how they want the school to develop in the coming years. They are clear that the first priority is to move standards in English and mathematics to their previous heights. They have already begun this improvement, and have made a significant impact on standards in science because of the way they have reorganised the teaching in the upper part of Key Stage 2. A system of school evaluation has recently been put into place and this is already helping management to identify the areas for development. The school is now checking how effective it is as well. Teaching is being observed in all classes and, where there are areas of weakness, advice and support is given. However this is an area of evaluation which needs to be strengthened because unsatisfactory teaching still happens from time to time.
55. As this is a small staff team, each member will be responsible for a number of subject areas when responsibilities are reorganised this year. The workload is great and not all subjects have had the management necessary to help standards rise. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are led well. Information and communication technology is already seeing the impact of an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is already using the new equipment well and supporting teaching so that standards are already improving towards those expected. However, managers of other subjects, in particular, religious education and geography, have not monitored standards or the teaching, and standards have slipped.
56. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is very supportive of the school. They provide a good range of expertise and experience. The chair of governors, in particular, is a regular visitor. However, because of their busy professional lives, few other governors can get into school other than for governors' meetings. They generally have a good overview of how the school is performing and recognised that standards in the core subjects needed to rise. However, monitoring systems are not sharp enough to pick up all weaknesses and take action to eliminate them.
57. The financial management of the public funds provided to the school is good. The school clerk manages the day-to-day administration of finance well. The school has taken advantage of the financial services offered by the local education authority, the headteacher and finance officer prepare the first draft budget which is then carefully discussed by the governor's finance committee. Governors link spending to school needs, for example, in the way they decided to employ more education support staff. They look at 'best value' issues carefully, for example, by getting more than one quote for work on the school building.
58. Good use has been made of additional grants and funding. The school has made successful bids to the local education action zone which has resulted in additional computers and funds to support extra-curricular activities.

59. There are sufficient teachers and support staff. Support staff are deployed effectively to help pupils with special educational needs benefit from lessons and make progress. Staff who are new to the school are supported well by their colleagues so they quickly feel part of the school community and play their part in its life and work. An appropriate induction programme is in place for the newly qualified teacher.

### **Resources and accommodation**

60. While there are enough resources of satisfactory quality for most subjects, there is a lack of suitable reading books and of musical instruments which could limit the English and music curriculum. Accommodation in school is just adequate. There is just enough space in classrooms but the hall is very small and has a negative effect on the provision for physical education. There is no designated outdoor area or large climbing equipment for the reception children. The non-fiction library on low shelves round the hall is not easily accessible for pupils to be able to research topics freely. For instance, older pupils had to crawl along the floor as they looked for biographies to research work for an English lesson. The school makes the best use to ensure good stimulating displays to support pupils' learning and also of pupils' work to celebrate their achievement.
61. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. There are good procedures for making sure these pupils' difficulties are picked up and dealt with. The support staff are deployed thoughtfully so good use is made of their time and expertise. The governing body oversees this aspect of the school's work well and ensure that funds are allocated to provide additional specialist teaching hours.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62. To move the school forward and improve the education the children receive, the governors, headteacher and staff must:

- improve pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave school by:
  - ◆ In English:
    - improving standards of writing by building on the programme the school has recently started to put more focus on teaching the skills needed to structure extended writing;
    - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across all subjects of the curriculum;
    - teaching spelling more effectively, using a consistent approach throughout the school;
    - providing more up-to-date, quality reading books throughout the school and more sets of books (including 'big books'), for use in the Key Stage 2 literacy hours.

(paragraphs 89, 90, 94, 95, 96)

- ◆ in mathematics:
  - building on the good work being done in the numeracy strategy lessons;
  - developing the analysis of assessment information to identify gaps in knowledge in each year group and use day-to-day assessment to improve short term planning;
  - providing more challenging work for pupils, especially in Key Stage 1.

(paragraphs 112, 113, 114)

- Raise standards in religious education, information and communication technology and geography so that they meet, or exceed, the expectations of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education by:

- ◆ in information and communication technology:

- taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the recently acquired computers to put in place a rigorous programme of planning and staff training;
- ensuring that the ‘control technology’ aspects of the subject are taught appropriately to each year group.

(paragraphs 142, 143, 144)

- ◆ in religious education:

- planning the curriculum to ensure that, as pupils move up the school, they consolidate and build on what they have previously learned;
- ensuring that learning objectives in lessons are sufficiently demanding;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to reinforce their learning by keeping a record of what they have learned.

(paragraphs 159-165)

- ◆ in geography:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop the skills needed for geographical enquiry;
- identifying the skills which pupils need to learn for each topic and plan to teach and assess these skills.

(paragraphs 125, 126, 127)

- Improve the quality of teaching in two classes by:

- continuing the monitoring of teaching to identify areas of strength and areas for development;
- considering ways of providing more in-class support by using the expertise of staff in school.

(paragraph 26)

- Improve the provision for multicultural education by:

- improving the religious education teaching about world religions;
- planning activities to help pupils understand the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society.

(paragraphs 39, 164)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	11	12	3	0	0
Percentage	0	7	36	43	14	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### *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)	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	10	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (87)	88 (87)	100 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (87)	88 (87)	94 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

*Separate figures for boys and girls are excluded as there are 10 or less boys and girls in the year group taking the test.*

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	8	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	12	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (88)	82 (81)	82 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	6	5
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	9	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (75)	76 (81)	71 (81)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
Total income	257,198
Total expenditure	251,570
Expenditure per pupil	2,266
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,041
Balance carried forward to next year	20,669

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	114
Number of questionnaires returned	65

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	28	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	34	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	54	9	5	2
The teaching is good.	60	35	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	45	20	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	6	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	31	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	58	11	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	40	52	5	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	0	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	45	25	3	3



## **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**

63. The foundation stage covers education from three years of age to the end of the reception year. Children start at Easington CofE School at the beginning of the school year in which they become five, the reception year. At the time of the inspection there were 16 reception children. They were taught in a class with a small number of older pupils.
64. When children start school, almost all have attended nursery school for a year and several have benefited from two years pre-school education. Their levels of attainment vary from year to year but, taking account of all the children coming into school over several years, attainment on entry is above average. In some years the vast majority of pupils are already attaining well above average standards when they start school.
65. The curriculum in the reception class follows the national recommendations in the 'curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and, as children achieve the targets for the end of the reception year (the early learning goals) they move seamlessly on to work from the National Curriculum. This ensures that work is usually sufficiently demanding for them to make progress in their learning.
66. The children do well and they maintain their early head start through to the end of reception. This represents good achievement and learning and is the result of teaching that, taken overall, is good. Consequently, by the end of the reception year, standards overall are at least above the targets for children this age, the early learning goals in all areas of learning.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the key areas of personal and social development and communication, language and literacy. In the other areas of learning; mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, it is satisfactory.
68. The classroom and the resources for learning are arranged so that, when children choose their own activities, they inevitably undertake worthwhile activities from which they will learn. However, the staff tend to concentrate on direct teaching of new work to 'focus groups'. They rarely pay sufficient attention to children's work at self-chosen activities to push their learning on through these activities as much as through direct teaching.
69. A newly appointed teacher took over in the reception class just two weeks prior to inspection. Judgements on standards, by the end of the foundation stage, are based largely on the standards seen at the beginning of Year 1. The quality of teaching seen in the reception class suggests that standards are likely to be maintained.
70. The change has been managed effectively. The previous reception teacher has provided helpful guidance for her successor and much planning was undertaken jointly before the changeover. She continues to carry responsibility for oversight of work in the foundation stage and is the new teacher's mentor for her first year in the profession. Consequently, she works closely with the reception class teacher.

The main strengths in the foundation stage are:

- good teaching, particularly for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy;
- the successful creation of a good environment and climate for learning;
- the children's very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour. These stem from the very good relationships the teacher has quickly established with the children.

There are weaknesses in:

- provision for children to learn out of doors.

This is because there is no separate area for these children to work outside and very little suitable equipment for climbing, balancing, and manoeuvring to help them develop co-ordination and body control.

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

71. The provision for this area of learning is good. As a result, the children learn at a good rate and, by the end of the reception year, standards in all aspects of this area of learning are well above what is expected.
72. The children have very good attitudes; they are disposed to want to learn and to try hard. Their concentration is very good for their age and they have the confidence to try new activities against a background of a secure and familiar environment. They respond positively to new experiences and express their feelings appropriately. For example, the reception children's comments on a quite abstract painting were sensitive and thoughtful.
73. The children learn to make positive relationships. The teacher sets a very good example in her very good relationships with the children, her encouraging manner and her clear enjoyment of being in the children's company. The children follow her lead. They work and play with a very good degree of co-operation for their age, even in situations where supervision is minimal and there is little intervention by staff. For example, a group of boys and girls played happily together in the domestic play area, taking different 'roles' and sustaining them well. The children accept and rise to the high standards set for their behaviour.
74. Children settle into school life very well. They are taught what is expected of them and quickly learn the routines of classroom life. After only two weeks in school, the reception class has 'gelled' and the children are well organised and familiar with their new environment. This good training pays off as the children are soon learning effectively. They have a very good degree of independence, for instance, in selecting activities and getting the resources they need. This is supported well by the organisation of resources in the classroom so that things are easily accessible by the children.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

75. Provision for this area of learning is good and, by the end of the reception year, standards exceed the expectations for the children's age. By the beginning of Year 1, children are reading and writing at the first level of the National Curriculum and are confident in what they know and can do.

76. Pupils at the beginning of Year 1 work simple words out independently when reading. They recognise a good number of commonly occurring words on sight. They grasp the key points of a simple plot line well and they describe the characters in their books. They have very positive attitudes to reading and talk enthusiastically about their books. These pupils organise their own writing into a few sentences but rarely mark them accurately with full stops and capital letters. Nevertheless, they are beginning to learn this, and in class teaching sessions, show that they know where to put this punctuation. The pupils' handwriting is good for their age; most of them form letters correctly.
77. In the reception class good attention is paid to teaching phonics. The teacher sets a very good example, making sounds correctly and precisely and she insists on accuracy from the children. Children are taught the sounds made by each letter and almost all the children remember all the letters they have learned so far. This gives them a valuable tool for working out unfamiliar words and lays solid foundations for reading on their own. Most of the children already work out phonically regular three-letter words such as 'pin' and they are beginning to predict rhymes. For instance, 'puffy' to rhyme with 'huffy'. The higher attaining children confidently find things in a picture that begin with a given letter.
78. Writing is taught well. The children are taught the correct way to form letters as they learn their sounds. Staff take great pains to ensure that every child gets it right so good habits are established from the start. Opportunities for writing and examples of a wide range of purposes for writing are built into the activities children choose from. For example, there is a writing table with a good range of pens and pencils. During the inspection the focus was recipes. There were recipe cards on the table and paper for children to write their own recipes. Most of the children were already making marks that looked like the shapes of letters. The higher attaining children were making 'words', groups of correctly formed random letters.

### **Mathematical development**

79. Less evidence was seen in this area of learning. Nevertheless, the provision is at least satisfactory. By the end of the reception year the children's attainment exceeds the early learning goals for their age.
80. By the beginning of Year 1, the children accurately work out related addition and subtraction facts for numbers up to ten. Most do this in their heads. Lower attaining children are familiar with numbers up to 20 and put them in the right order.
81. The reception children count to ten confidently and many go on to at least 15. Nearly all of them put cards with the numerals one to ten on in the correct order; only a few lower attaining children need help to do this. Most of the children form numerals up to five correctly.
82. The teaching and learning seen was satisfactory and all the children either learned something new or consolidated recent learning. However, the activities were not always sufficiently challenging to enable all children to move on as rapidly as they could. For example, rather a lot of time was spent on making 'number necklaces', though most of the children quickly grasped what to do and showed they had the knowledge to complete the task fairly easily. Fewer opportunities for mathematical activities are built into the activities children choose from, than for communication, language and literacy.

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

83. Children make sound progress in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year, they exceed the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of historical and geographical concepts and in their ability to use information and communication technology.
84. The Year 1 pupils are already achieving standards in geography that are well above the expectation for the end of the reception year. They recognise geographical features, such as a hill and a village on plans and they are beginning to understand the use of a key.
85. The reception children learn about significant events in the past. For example, they know about the Great Fire of London. They are developing early scientific ideas. For instance they sort pictures of different foods into 'healthy' and 'unhealthy'. They are confident, independent users of information and communication technology. For example, they work through a simple mathematical computer program to reinforce their understanding of number facts. They use the 'mouse' competently and they click on items on the screen and move them purposefully.

### **Physical development**

86. The children achieve a good degree of manual dexterity and fine motor control. This is seen in their cutting and sticking and in accurate formation of letters and numerals. They have plenty of opportunities to hone these skills using a range of tools such as glue spreaders, scissors and writing implements.
87. Standards in movement are in line with expectations for the children's age. Children's rate of learning in this aspect of their work is hindered by the limited resources for outdoor play and climbing and balancing. The reception children copy animal shapes made by their teacher but their awareness of space is limited; in the hall they have difficulty finding a space in which to work on their own.

### **Creative development**

88. Standards in the art and music aspects of this area of development are higher than expected for the children's age. In the art activity seen, the reception children were already working at a level not far short of the early learning goals. They made collage pictures with various materials in warm colours. They selected and arranged items in their pictures thoughtfully. In music, standards are above expectations by the end of the reception year. The Year 1 pupils sing tunefully and are working at the first level of the National Curriculum.

## **ENGLISH**

89. Standards at the top of the school are broadly in line with the national expectation for pupils of this age. However, they are not as high as they should be, in view of the pupils' starting points, largely because of weaknesses in pupils' written work. This means that, although pupils are now making gains in their learning at a satisfactory rate, those in upper Key Stage 2 have not yet achieved the standards they could.
90. Standards are not as high as those achieved in the national tests in 1997, the year of the last inspection. However, all the indications are that with continued good teaching, the present Year 6 pupils are likely to come close to where they should be, by the end of the year.
- Standards of speaking and listening are above average in both key stages;
  - standards of reading and writing are a bit above average in Key Stage 1;

- in Key Stage 2, standards of reading are generally where they should be but pupils' writing is not as good as it should be and spelling is weak in this key stage;
- teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall; they are good in Years 5 and 6;
- the subject is led and managed well; weaknesses have been recognised and the conditions are now in place for standards to rise;
- the resources for teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2.

### **Standards in Key Stage 1**

91. In speaking and listening, the majority of pupils in Year 2 are already achieving the level expected by the end of the year. They listen attentively to teachers and their classmates. In discussion they make relevant contributions and they are beginning to develop their ideas orally. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to adapt what they say to meet the needs of their listeners, for example, re-phrasing their comments if they are not understood at first.
92. The pupils who took the Year 2 tests in 2001 did well at reading and the standards of reading in Year 3 broadly reflect these end of Key Stage 1 results. All these pupils have reached at least the standard expected for their age and the higher attaining pupils are already close to two years ahead of the expected standard. The present Year 2 pupils, a less capable group for the school, are attaining the standards they should. The teaching of reading is highly structured and effective. Pupils are keen readers. They read accurately and most have a sound range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words, though the lower attaining pupils occasionally have difficulty applying what they have been taught about the sounds made by groups or pairs of letters. Most have satisfactory understanding of what they read. For example, an average attaining pupil explained that a character in his book was 'scared' to meet a dinosaur 'because he might eat him'.
93. Standards in writing are also high and pupils have made the progress they should from their starting points. The higher attaining pupils' work from last year is well above the expected standard, and standards in the present Year 2 indicate that pupils are on target to exceed age-related expectations. At the beginning of Year 2, most of the pupils are already working at the level expected at the end of the year. They write in sentences, usually using capital letters and full stops correctly, and their handwriting is of a satisfactory standard. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to use more advanced punctuation, whilst the lower attainers write their ideas in a few simple sentences but do not always punctuate them. Most spell common words accurately.

### **Standards in Key Stage 2**

94. The Year 6 pupils are achieving above average standards in speaking and listening. In lessons they answer questions thoughtfully and elaborate on their answers, using language more precisely when required to. They pay good attention to what others say. Their ability to explain themselves in words is well promoted by their teacher's good use of questions. She challenges pupils to think and to use language carefully. The younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have fewer opportunities to learn to express themselves orally because, for the most part, teaching is more didactic. This means pupils answer questions but are rarely given the opportunity to develop their ideas orally. Drama plays a very minor role in the English curriculum. The effect of this is most marked in Key Stage 2 where pupils' speaking and listening skills do not develop equally well in all aspects of this part of the work.
95. Standards in reading are a little above average in Year 6 and this represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils. Most of the pupils read confidently at a slightly higher than average level and the higher attaining pupils are set to exceed the expectations for their age by the end of the year. However, their ability to appreciate different types of literature and develop personal reading tastes is limited by the shortage of suitable books.

96. In writing, the Year 6 pupils are not achieving the standards they should. This was also the case with last year's leavers. Only the higher attaining pupils produce good written work. The majority do not write at length. They use a rather unimaginative vocabulary, rarely selecting words thoughtfully to achieve particular effects. The organisation of their writing is at least a year behind what is expected for their age. These pupils' books written for younger children show they can adapt their written style to meet the needs of different target readers. Standards of handwriting are generally above average. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 have mastered joined handwriting and write fluently in legible, evenly-sized writing. Spelling is weak because pupils are not taught systematically. They do not learn to use commonly occurring groups of letters and the learning of words as 'spellings' for weekly tests is not sufficiently closely related to the errors they make when writing independently.
97. Standards in Year 5 are higher, in relation to the pupils' age, than in Year 6. This suggests that, with continued good teaching, these pupils have every chance of achieving the standards they should by the end of Key Stage 2.
98. Pupils with special educational needs are doing well in the light of their learning difficulties. This is because they benefit from very good teaching in small groups.

### **The quality of teaching and learning**

99. Pupils are now making gains in their learning at a satisfactory rate overall in both key stages. Teachers are familiar with the National Literacy Strategy and the structure of the literacy hour. This supports them in teaching the skills of reading and writing and, as a result, pupils are now learning at a satisfactory rate. In all the lessons seen teachers used the literacy hour properly and the teaching was at least satisfactory.
100. In the Year 5 and 6 class teaching is good. These pupils are learning well and beginning to catch up. There is clear evidence of significant progress in just two weeks in this class. This is because the teacher knows her subject and is therefore able to extend and challenge the pupils effectively. She manages the pupils well and expects a lot of them. They respond well to this, trying hard and rising to new challenges. The teacher helps pupils to develop the skills needed to organise their writing and use language thoughtfully whilst maintaining an appropriate emphasis on correct grammar. In a lesson on complex sentences and the use of conjunctions these pupils made particularly good progress. The full class 'plenary session' at the end of the lesson was used well to help pupils to assess their own learning and to reinforce the key teaching points.
101. The quality of teaching and learning in small group sessions for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Consequently these pupils take their work seriously, they try very hard at it and make good gains in learning. The work in these group sessions is closely linked to what the pupils' classmates are doing but is broken down into small steps in a very encouraging and supportive atmosphere. This ensures the pupils experience success and are therefore motivated to keep up their efforts.
102. When the teaching is not so effective it is usually because either:
- the links between the full class work and the tasks set in the next part of the lesson, for groups and individual pupils, are not sufficiently clear. This makes it hard for pupils to see the purpose of their work; or;
  - too much time is given over to discipline. Sometimes this is when pupils' behaviour is perfectly acceptable, sometimes because the teacher has a few difficulties managing pupils

when they become excitable. Either way, it slows lessons and diverts teacher and pupils from the main purpose of the lesson.

### **Leadership and management and potential for improvement**

103. The school has identified and faced up to the weakness in writing in Key Stage 2 through its analysis of the test results, and has already begun to take appropriate action to address it. There is now more direct teaching of how to organise a piece of writing and develop ideas, and pupils are getting more opportunities to write at length and apply this learning.
104. There are several good features in the use of assessment data at the whole-school level. However, more could be done to use the information available to track pupils' progress through the school.
105. The subject leader knows about work in English throughout the school. She knows where the strengths and weaknesses lie and has a clear vision for future improvement. Steps have already been taken to improve teaching. For example, the organisation of the whole class part of the literacy hours has been simplified. The staff are receptive to advice and the subject leader is therefore now able to influence work in the subject in all classes.
106. These factors put the school in a good position to raise standards.

### **Resources for teaching and learning**

107. There are deficiencies in the resources for teaching and learning that affect standards and the quality of work in English. Reading books have not been kept up to date. Many of them were first published around 30 years ago and some are even older. There are sufficient suitable books for use with whole classes and groups in literacy hours in Key Stage 1 but not in Key Stage 2. Furthermore, the school's book stock is heavily weighted to reading books and there is little good quality children's literature for these young readers to explore.
108. The school is involved in a 'reading for pleasure' project with the education action zone. This has the potential to help staff overcome some of the shortcomings in resources.

## **MATHEMATICS**

109. Standards at the top of the school and at the end of Key Stage 1 are now broadly in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. Standards in Key Stage 2 are not as high as those achieved in the national tests in 1997, the year of the last inspection. However, indications are, that with continued good teaching, the present Year 6 pupils are likely to exceed national expectations by the end of the school year. Standards in Key Stage 1 are better than those indicated by the test. However, in this small school care should be taken in comparing year groups, as the results of just one or two pupils can dramatically affect the national comparisons.
- Standards of work with numbers are generally above average in both key stages, partly because of the structure of the planning for the numeracy strategy, teaching is sound throughout the school and good in Years 5 and 6;
  - the school is well resourced to cover all aspects of mathematics.

### **Standards**

110. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are generally achieving standards that meet the national expectations. The inspection was held very early in the school year, but, looking at work from previous years and at the work they are doing now, pupils are generally learning well. Pupils who find

mathematics difficult to learn progress as well as the average pupils because of the good support they get in class and the appropriate work they are asked to do. During the inspection, examples were seen of higher attaining pupils not being sufficiently challenged as some of the work they were given was too easy. Pupils are confident when using numbers. In a lesson, Year 2 pupils worked accurately when taking away numbers from 20. Most realised that, if they are to take away all smaller numbers, they should do it in a logical sequence by taking 19 then 18 then 17 and so on. Younger pupils from Year 1 in the same class, did similar work with smaller numbers as they subtracted from five and ten. Some needed to use counters for support, but most did the task quickly using their fingers or doing the calculation in their head.

111. From the work in last year's books it can be seen that pupils' number calculation skills develop at an appropriate pace. Pupils in this key stage study shapes and their properties. They recognise, for example, that a triangle has three sides and three corners and that a cube has a square on each of its six faces. However, the school knows that this area is one for development.
112. Pupils in Key Stage 2 also achieve standards appropriate for their age. Older pupils have suffered from staffing changes recently which could have affected the progress they have made. This hasn't, as yet, enabled pupils to attain standards above the national average, which is where they should be. However, pupils in the top class are now being taught well and look to be in line to achieve appropriate standards. Pupils are now learning well, especially at the top of the school. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress as they are very well taught when they work in a group with a specialist teacher.
113. All mathematics lessons seen during inspection were based on number work, so judgements on other aspects of the subject were made from the work done previously and by talking to pupils. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class work confidently with their two and five times tables. In the mental introduction to a lesson they quickly and accurately round a number to the nearest 10 and 100, and some try 1000. When, they move into their year groups for the written tasks Year 4 pupils develop their mathematical knowledge by learning a new way to add two, two-digit numbers together. The Year 3 group consolidates number skills by working on addition and subtraction calculations at, generally, an appropriate level.
114. The pupils in the Year 5/6 class build on their previous knowledge of numbers by working on multiplication and division tasks. Because of effective teaching and challenging work they make good progress in their learning. During the introduction pupils develop their mental skills by finding the answer to 'Find the Number' puzzles. 'I divide a number by four and I get six – what is my number?' Pupils enjoy this activity and compete, in a friendly way, to be first to the answer. In the written tasks which follow, Year 5 pupils accurately multiply numbers. Year 6 pupils double and halve numbers accurately, including decimals. Some higher attaining pupils are set a challenging task in which they have to see who can halve a number most times in one minute. Some achieve complex series of numbers;  $18 - 9 - 4.5 - 2.25 - 1.125$  etc.
115. Teaching of mathematics is now good overall across the two key stages. The structure provided by the National Numeracy Strategy planning sheets supports the teachers well. The best mathematical teaching occurs when introductory activities proceed at a good pace and the group work set is challenging but achievable. The problem that teachers need to address here is that each class has two year groups, each with different ability groups. Work at, at least four levels, needs to be planned and produced. This is tackled effectively in all classes in mathematics, and particularly well in the class for the oldest pupils. Pupils enjoy mathematics. In all lessons seen during inspection pupils showed good attitudes to their work and their behaviour was good.



116. The subject is managed by the headteacher. She monitors planning well and has a clear view of areas for development. A lot of money has been spent on mathematics since the introduction of the numeracy strategy and the good resources are having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

## **SCIENCE**

117. Standards at the top of the school are in line with national expectations now, and, by the end of the school year are likely to be above the national average. This is an improvement which was signalled by the national test results from last year. Although national comparisons are not yet available it is clear that the 2001 Year 6 results were better than those in 2000. In the 2000 results for the eleven-year-olds by the end of Key Stage 2 standards were below the national average and well below that seen in similar schools. However, in 2001 all the pupils in Year 6 achieved the standard expected for their age. The results of the teacher assessments for the seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils are achieving as well as most pupils of their age. The following are important factors relating to standards at Key Stage 2:

- this improvement in standards by the end of Key Stage 2 is almost certainly because of the decision by the school management to alter the way science is taught to the Year 5/6 class;
- the class was split into two year groups with the headteacher taking the Year 5 group. This meant that the teacher of the Year 6 group was able to focus the work she was doing to one year group instead of two;
- the new Year 6 teacher, this year, has benefited from taking on a Year 6 group which has been well taught by the headteacher for a year. This means that this year group has had good teaching for a year, and will continue to benefit from good quality teaching this year; standards are likely to continue to rise.

## **Standards**

118. Standards of achievement for the pupils in the Year 5/6 class exceed those expected for their age. This is because the class is taught in two small year groups by two good teachers. This was illustrated when the Year 5 group conducted experiments to find out if air was trapped in containers filled with different solid objects such as dried peas. They observed carefully as they poured water into the container and noticed bubbles of air being forced to the surface of the water. They developed this experiment when asked to look at soil and peat and estimate which would contain most air. To find the answer they had to accurately measure amounts of soil, or peat, and water and calculate how much water is left when the materials are covered. They found that more water goes into the peat and, therefore, it contained more air. The Year 6 group investigated the way living plants and animals form a 'food chain' in the natural world. They understood that some animals eat grass and other plants and then other animals eat them! They used information about the arctic region of the world well to produce an 'Arctic Food Chain'. One pair of pupils showed kelp as the first stage of the chain, the producer, eaten by seals who, in turn, are eaten by polar bears!
119. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class cover a good range of work and generally achieve standards appropriate for their age. They have studied the hot and cold areas in their classroom and a pupil suggests that the ceiling is warmer than the floor because hot air rises.
120. No work from the previous year for the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 was provided during inspection so a clear judgement on present standards was made from interviews with pupils. These show that standards now are in line with national expectations; although the teaching seen in the one lesson in Year 2 was not promoting attainment of this level.

## **The quality of teaching and learning**

121. Pupils are now learning well in Key Stage 2 and make overall satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. The most effective learning is made in the class for the pupils in the Year 5/6 class. The class is split into two year groups and both the class teacher and headteacher teach the groups very well. Both teachers know their science well and set work which challenges pupils to think carefully about the work they produce. They expect the highest standards of work from their pupils and the pupils respond well, concentrating hard and achieving good standards.
122. When the teaching is not as effective there are a number of common faults. Firstly, work is not matched well to the age and ability of pupils. This means that they become frustrated by not being able to do it, or bored by finding it too easy. As a result behaviour can deteriorate and the teacher has to spend too much time bringing pupils back to an inappropriate task.

### **Leadership and management and potential for improvement**

123. The subject manager has identified the cause of the former poor standards in the subject. This was largely because the task of providing appropriate work for both the Year 5 and Year 6 groups in the top class was too difficult. The new arrangements have had a dramatic effect on standards because work has been more closely matched to pupils' need. This way of grouping pupils has been identified as a way of improving standards, not only in science but other subjects, and with a strong senior management team now in place there is good potential for improvement in this, and other, subjects.

### **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

124. The paragraphs for these two subjects are being reported together because of the similar situation they were in during the inspection week. No judgement is made of standards in either subject because of the lack of evidence available. No work from previous years was available and as the term was only two weeks old little current work had been produced. Well-planned policies and schemes of work suggest that teachers are given satisfactory support for their lessons. Co-ordinators recognise the need to begin to assess the standard of the work pupils' produce. Samples of work from previous years would be useful in assessing present standards .

### **GEOGRAPHY**

125. It was possible to see only two lessons. Judgements are based on these lessons, examination of the work done by Year 5 and 6 pupils last year, discussion with pupils in the present Year 6 and with staff. The standards of work seen in Key Stage 1 are above average for the pupils' age but, by the top of the school, pupils are not achieving the standards they should.
- Standards at the top of the school are not as high as reported at the time of last inspection. There are several reasons for this. The main one is in recent years pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not been taught sufficient geography to enable them to achieve the standards they should. This is no longer the case; in this class sufficient time is now devoted to the subject;
  - in Key Stage 1 both geographical knowledge and the skills to use it are taught effectively;
  - there is little useful guidance for teachers to support them in teaching this subject;
  - the leadership and management of the subject are not good enough.

### **Standards at the top of the school**

126. Discussion with pupils in Year 6, observation of a Year 5 and 6 lesson and examination of pupils' books from last year all show that pupils at the top of the school do not know enough about the subject and have unsatisfactory geographical skills. They are around two years

behind. These pupils did little work last year and much of what was done was not suitable. There was too much concentration on pupils acquiring geographical knowledge at the expense of providing appropriate opportunities for them to undertake geographical enquiry and develop the skills needed for such work. The work lacked challenge and was not done in any depth. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 did the same work, usually using identical commercially produced worksheets and there is hardly any discernible difference in the standard and quality of work produced by pupils in the different years.

127. The pupils' knowledge of key facts, grasp of geographical concepts and mapping skills is weak. For most, knowledge and understanding of places are unsatisfactory. For instance, only the higher attaining pupils, around a third of the year group, have a satisfactory understanding of what a continent is and can explain the difference between a continent and a country. All the pupils name the Equator and know what it is but they cannot name the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. They have only a superficial understanding of climate; they say it is hotter near the Equator but do not appreciate the significance of altitude. They name the capital cities of the countries that make up the United Kingdom. However, despite living near the coast, they do not know the names of the seas surrounding Britain, other than the English Channel which some of them have crossed on holiday. Pupils are unfamiliar with giving and using grid references. This is partly because they have not had the chance to make sufficient use of Ordnance Survey maps. They do not know which figure to give first and cannot estimate the location of a point within a grid square. Their ability to locate places on a globe is satisfactory and they are developing an appreciation of how climate and the physical features of places affect the lives of people who live there. For example, they have begun to study mountainous areas. They realise that the tourist attractions of a town in the Alps would be different from those of their home area.
128. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 have now begun to undertake suitable work and learn at an appropriate rate. However, they have a long way to go to catch up to where they should be; they are starting from a low base. This was clearly seen in their lesson. They lacked both the geographical skills and general learning skills to carry out geographical enquiry work in groups at an appropriate level for their age.

### **Teaching and standards in Key Stage 1**

129. Pupils get a good start in Key Stage 1. In their lesson, the teacher used practical activities effectively to help them understand the function of a key on a map. The work captured the pupils' interest because it was about a Hebridean island that features in a book they are reading together. The Year 2 pupils know places have both natural and man-made features. They identify hills and woods as natural and the shop and post office as man-made. They understand that rivers flow to the sea. They have satisfactory mapping skills. They know that a symbol is a simple representation of a geographical feature and devise some symbols of their own to represent features on the island and place them correctly on a map of the island. This lesson was effective in integrating teaching about place and developing pupils' geographical skills. This set new learning in a meaningful context for the pupils.

### **Guidance for teachers and leadership and management**

130. Geography has been 'on the back burner' whilst the school has concentrated on literacy and numeracy. Consequently, some of the shortcomings identified in the last inspection report have not been dealt with and there are no plans laid to tackle them in the near future.
131. Since the last inspection the school has adopted a nationally recognised plan for work throughout the school that covers all the required content. However, there is still little practical guidance for teachers about how best to teach the subject, particularly the skills, such as collecting, recording and analysing evidence and drawing conclusions from it, needed

for geographical enquiry. Equally, not enough has been done to ensure that pupils undertake harder work as they move up the school and develop their geographical skills, such as mapping, alongside their knowledge of the subject. Too little is done to keep track of pupils' progress and to check on the quality of teaching and learning. This means the subject leader is not in a position to know just where improvements are needed.

## **HISTORY**

132. It was possible to see only two lessons and very little work was available for examination. Judgements are therefore also based on discussions with pupils and staff.
133. Standards are in line with the national expectation for the pupils' ages throughout the school. Last year's leavers just met expectations. These standards represent adequate achievement.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the subject;
  - the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

### **Standards in Key Stage 1**

134. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory awareness of how life has changed over time and their historical knowledge is satisfactory. They know everyday life was different in the past. They give examples of changes, such as in laundry. They know that washboards and mangles were used in the past. They describe these accurately because they have seen examples of them. These pupils' knowledge about famous historical figures is weak. They cannot remember any who they have learned about. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to find out about the past. They say they can look at books and have visited museums. However, they do not suggest using information and communication technology for historical research.

### **Standards in Key Stage 2**

135. By Year 4, pupils' awareness of chronology and their skills at historical research have developed soundly. They understand how a time line shows historical periods and events in relation to each other. They are beginning to understand how the past is divided into different periods. In their lesson they used reference materials successfully to find out differences between the Romans and the Celts.
136. The Year 6 pupils have a thorough knowledge of the period they are studying, the Second World War. They give the dates of the war and they know about evacuation and empathise with evacuees. They know some factual details about Hitler and Mussolini but only the higher attaining pupils are clear about concepts such as power and world domination.
137. The work retained from last year shows that, by the end Year 6, pupils had covered the work they should and had sufficient knowledge and understanding of the periods they had studied.

### **The quality of teaching and learning**

138. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Strengths were evident in the teachers' knowledge of the subject, the use of aids, such as a time line to help pupils understand chronology, and in the use of whole class plenary sessions to recap on the work and reinforce the main points.
139. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher managed the pupils extremely well and secured their interest in the work and commitment to it. Suitable objects from the past, such as ration books, were on display in the classroom and had been used effectively to help pupils get a

feel for everyday life in World War Two. The teacher used questions well, challenging pupils to think more deeply and explain and refine their ideas.

140. In the Year 3 and 4 lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge was particularly good. However, the presentation of the subject matter and the unclear explanation of what the pupils had to do led to some fussiness among the pupils. Consequently, the teacher was not able to make the most of the lesson and pupils' learning was merely satisfactory despite the potential being there for good progress.

### **Leadership and management**

141. Some of the weaknesses seen in geography are also evident in history. There are the same gaps in the planning of the curriculum to ensure progression in pupils' learning. There is a similar lack of check on pupils' progress and on the quality of teaching and learning. The weaknesses are compounded because, as a result of staff changes, no teacher currently carries responsibility for leading and managing work in history. This has not yet had a detrimental effect on standards. Nevertheless, pupils' present rate of progress is heavily dependent on individual teachers and there is an inherent risk that standards could slip and any weaknesses not be picked up soon enough.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. Standards throughout the school are below, and often well below, the expectations of the National Curriculum. This is partly because the funding to equip the school with modern computers has only just arrived, but also because, until this school year, some staff have been reluctant to use information technology in lessons.
143. No record of work produced in information and communication technology from previous years was provided for the inspection team so it is difficult to identify aspects of this subject that have been covered effectively. There was little evidence from displays after two weeks into the term of what pupils had done. The school is at a very early stage of development in this subject and there are many areas that need to be addressed.
144. There are some positive signs that standards will improve but there is much work to be done:
- the subject must be given a greater emphasis;
  - the subject manager has a good technical knowledge of computers and gives good practical support to his colleagues;
  - teachers in post this year are more confident in the use of computers than in previous years;
  - there is a lack of 'control technology' throughout the school. There is a 'roamer' (programmed toy) in school but it is not used.

### **Standards**

145. The use of the computer to produce written work in different fonts is seen in some work. Most pupils in all classes use the mouse effectively when they use programs to consolidate learning in mathematics or English. They can click on items to move them around the screen.
146. In a mathematics lesson Year 2 pupils independently set up the program they were working on. They set the screen so they could type in their names and use the mouse effectively to 'lift' numbers and the minus sign to make 20 number sums. Year 4 pupils in an English lesson have very limited skills for their age. They were slow to find letters on the keyboard and were unfamiliar with, for example, the key to delete words. Some pupils are very skilful in using the computers but have been taught their skills out of school. For example one girl in Year 4 had attended a computer summer school during the summer holidays.

## **Teaching**

147. Little direct teaching was seen during inspection. The teacher in the Year 5/6 class included an Internet search well when looking at a geography topic. Teaching was less successful in a Year 3/4 lesson when a topic was talked through but pupils had no opportunities to work 'hands-on' because the computer programs on which the lesson depended had not yet arrived in school. There are useful, helpful, documents in place but so far these have had little impact on standards, pupils are not ready to use the programmes of study for their year group because they have not covered sufficient work in previous years.

## **MUSIC**

148. It was possible to see only a limited range of work and very little composition. Judgements are therefore based mainly on pupils' musical performance, including the quality of singing in assemblies.
149. The standard of the work seen in Key Stage 1 was above expectations for the pupils' age. In Key Stage 2, standards, taken overall, are broadly in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are working slightly below the level expected for their age in composition. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The following characterise the work:
- the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good;
  - standards of singing are good throughout the school;
  - extra-curricular provision is of good quality;
  - in Key Stage 2 teachers' knowledge of the subject is barely adequate;
  - there are too few resources for work in Key Stage 2.

### **The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1**

150. Pupils in Key Stage 1 benefit from good teaching by the subject leader. This is grounded in her good knowledge of the subject, her skill at improving the quality of pupils' performance, and her good model of singing. As a result, in their lesson these pupils improved their ability to discriminate between sounds by listening to well chosen music. They correctly identified changes in pitch and reproduced them accurately with their voices. They used a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments to produce high and low sounds and performed well together combining voices and instruments.

### **Standards of singing**

151. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing tunefully and keep together. They have clear diction and good control of the volume of their voices. The Year 6 pupils hold a tune well when singing in two parts. They control the volume of their singing well and use dynamics expressively. They are attentive and respond appropriately to simple conducting. The standard of their work is supported by their positive attitudes to the subject. Almost all the older pupils join in singing in assemblies and in their lesson they made great efforts to improve their performance.

### **Extra-curricular provision**

152. The music club provides a programme of opportunities for listening and responding to music and composing and performing music. It makes a positive contribution to the standard achieved by those pupils who attend.

## Teaching in Key Stage 2

153. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 2, the teacher's knowledge of the subject was adequate for the work undertaken on tempo, pulse and dynamics. However, this work was at a lower level than would be expected for the pupils' age. The majority of pupils made at least satisfactory progress towards achieving the objectives of the lesson. They improved their accuracy when maintaining a steady beat with actions such as marching on the spot and clapping and they learned to control the volume of their music in response to conducting. They were beginning to develop an understanding of musical vocabulary, such as 'crescendo' and 'diminuendo'. However, teaching does not always enable them to work at a suitably demanding level for their age, especially in view of what pupils achieve in Key Stage 1. As a result compositions were simple, making little use of melody or more complex rhythmic patterns. There is a good variety of untuned percussion instruments but too few for all pupils in a class to play an instrument at the same time. The number and range of tuned percussion instruments is inadequate. This is likely to be a contributory factor to the relative weakness in composition in upper Key Stage 2.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Only two full lessons and two part lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements are made from these observations, the interview with the subject leader and the planning documents in place. Standards of work in both key stages are generally meeting those expected for their age. However, there are differences in the standards achieved in the different elements of this subject that stem from the accommodation. Almost all pupils achieve the required standard in swimming: to swim 25 metres by the time they leave school.

- The leadership from an enthusiastic and skilled co-ordinator is good;
- a wide range of team games are well taught;
- extra-curricular provision makes a good contribution to pupils' achievements;
- gymnastics and dance are areas for development and this is hampered because of the small hall with a low ceiling.

## Quality of teaching

155. Few lessons were seen and no judgement is made of teaching in Key Stage 1 where only a part lesson was seen. In Key Stage 2 good teaching of games skills was seen in both classes. A feature of this teaching was the way teachers' enthusiasm transferred to pupils who react well to the challenges set. Pupils from Year 4 appreciated how exercise helped them to improve their fitness and that their hearts beat more quickly and supplied more oxygen to their muscles. Many controlled a football well, dribbling it around cones accurately. Year 2 pupils moved across a rope with a good variety of movements including 'bunny jumps'.
156. Varied sports activities are offered to pupils through the year. These include a gym club for pupils in Key Stage 1 and, depending on the season, football, cross-country, athletics and other clubs through the year. Pupils benefit greatly from the opportunity to join in these activities.
157. The school hall is small and this makes it difficult for classes of older pupils to benefit by using it. On inspection, a lesson for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils was observed. The pupils could barely fit into the hall and the quality of their work suffered because of this. Resources are good for sport because the subject co-ordinator has taken every opportunity to join national initiatives which provide additional resources such as hockey sticks and goals. The range of apparatus in the hall is satisfactory, but, older pupils cannot use some of it because of the restricted space. The church hall is a resource available to the school for two afternoons each week. This is a good sized hall in good condition. Classes make good use of it when it is

available. However, there are no pieces of gymnastic apparatus in the hall so activities are limited.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

158. Limited evidence was available. There was no written work by pupils to examine because most teaching of religious education is through discussion and practical activities. Judgements are based on the teaching seen, discussions with staff and with pupils in Years 2 and 6, and scrutiny of teachers' planning.
159. Work is planned according to the locally agreed syllabus, the plan of work followed in Durham schools. However, pupils, particularly the older ones in Key Stage 2, do not remember the work they should have covered and, at the top of the school, they are not achieving the standard they should. Standards are not as high as those reported in the last inspection. The main reasons for this are:
- although religious values, such as love and concern for others and sharing resources, are stressed, teachers' objectives for pupils' learning are insufficiently clear;
  - the school's curricular plan is unclear about how work in each year should build on what has gone before and, in most classes, little time is allocated to the subject;
  - pupils do not record what they have learned in order to reinforce and consolidate their learning;
  - in previous years insufficient attention has been paid to this subject in Years 5 and 6.

### **Teaching Objectives**

160. Teachers are not always clear enough about precisely what religious knowledge and understanding pupils should acquire in lessons, because their learning objectives are too broad. For example, the objective of a lesson based on the Bible parable of the loaves and fishes was for pupils to 'understand how others viewed Jesus'. This was not sufficient to challenge the pupils or to promote the depth of work of which they are capable. There were some good features in this lesson but they were not made the most of to promote pupils' learning. For example, the practical introduction caught the pupils' interest. A pupil gave out sweets to the class but there were not enough for him to have one. However, this was not built on effectively. As a result, most of the pupils' did not move much beyond acknowledging the importance of sharing and grasping why the boy who shared his food could be seen as the most important person in the story.

### **The curriculum Plan**

161. The whole school curricular plan does not provide enough guidance for teachers. At present, it identifies which parts of the syllabus should be taught in each year; this ensures all the required content is covered. Little guidance is provided as to what level to pitch work at, what to expect from pupils, suitable teaching methods and appropriate ways for pupils to record what they have learned. These omissions have a bearing on pupils' underachievement, particularly in Key Stage 2.
162. Too few lessons were seen to form a valid judgement on the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, the available evidence indicates that teaching is not sufficiently effective and pupils are not making gains in their learning at the rate they should.
163. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are achieving standards that are broadly in line with the expectations for their age. For instance, in a lesson based on the Bible story of the Creation, they showed a satisfactory appreciation of the uniqueness of each individual. They remember studying Buddhism and describe a statue of the Buddha accurately but they are under the misapprehension that there are no Buddhists in England. For the most part, teachers do not do



enough to help pupils understand that followers of various religions live in many different countries. These pupils have adequate knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They have little recall of stories from the Bible but they name important people in it, such as Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the disciples. They understand the nature of prayer, describing it as talking to God, but also know it is not necessary to say particular words or to speak out loud. They explain this, for example, by saying that in assembly, 'Mrs S... sometimes says the prayers for all of us but we're praying too'. Some of these pupils are beginning to ask very thoughtful questions. For example, after hearing the story of the Creation, one pupil asked 'why did God make things that sting?'. They have sufficient understanding of religious symbolism. For instance, they talk about taking part in the Christingle service. They know the orange, candle and ribbon on a Christingle are symbolic but need reminding of what they represent.

164. Year 6 pupils' knowledge of religions is sketchy and superficial and falls considerably below the standards expected of pupils their age. They are uncertain whether or not the followers of different religions all pray. They remember very little about Sikhism, despite having done work on it. Their knowledge of Christianity is limited. They do not understand the religious meaning of miracles as distinct from parables in Christianity. They remember the bare bones of the story of Blind Bartimaeus but do not remember his name. They have reasonable recall of the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion and they know about the Last Supper and name several of Christ's disciples. However, they do not understand the relationship between the events of the Last Supper and Holy Communion.
165. The subject leader has encouraged teachers to use a variety of methods and to do more practical work and has ensured there are a good range of resources, including religious objects from the faiths studied and suitable books to support teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy practical activities and those in Year 6 still remember dressing up when they studied the Sikh religion in Year 4. Indeed, they remember much more from Year 4 than from last year, when they say they did little religious education. However, these approaches are not backed up by sufficient written work and other activities that might help to reinforce new learning more effectively. The result of this is seen in these same pupils' lack of knowledge of the 5 Ks of Sikhism, despite having covered this. The checking of standards and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Consequently the extent of pupils' underachievement in Key Stage 2 had not been recognised. However, the locally agreed syllabus has recently been revised so a review of the school's curricular planning is due to take place fairly soon. As the subject leader is now aware of the weaknesses and the reasons for them, this review should contribute to improving teaching and learning, thereby raising standards.