

INSPECTION REPORT

BACKWORTH FIRST SCHOOL

Backworth, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108580

Head teacher: Mrs C A Crerar

Reporting inspector: Mrs K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th March 2000

Inspection number: 194342

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First (Primary from September 2000)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -10
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Park Backworth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Goodwin
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
K Manning	Registered inspector	English	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Geography	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching
		Physical education	Assessment and monitoring of academic performance
		Special educational needs	Leadership and management
L Buller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development
			Attendance
			Links with the community
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Monitoring of personal development and attendance
			Personal support and guidance
			Partnership with parents and carers
			Staffing
			Accommodation
			Resources
M Heyes	Team inspector	Science	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Art	Curriculum
		Design and technology	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Religious education	
		Equal opportunities	
J Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Information technology	
		History	
		Music	
		Under fives	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Backworth First School is smaller than most first schools and has 72 boys and 50 girls in classes from reception to Year 5. In addition, there are 26 children who attend the nursery part-time. Pupils in the present Year 5 class have not moved on to middle school as Backworth is to become a primary school from September of this year. Although more than a third of all pupils have either joined or left the school at different stages of their education, there has been little change to the surrounding area in recent years. Unemployment remains high and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. All pupils are of white ethnic origin and everyone speaks English as their first language. When they start in the reception class, the attainments of four-year-olds vary significantly, although for two-thirds of pupils their language and literacy skills are below expectations for their age. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is higher than in most other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. It is led and managed well and most of the teaching is good. Standards have improved considerably in mathematics and are improving in English, although there is still a lot of work to do in order to raise attainment in information technology. Pupils' are keen to learn and behave well. The cost of doing this is high, with significant spending on support staff. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good and excellent teaching of mathematics has helped raise standards.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures they make good progress.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are very good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance are very good.
- Teachers and pupils like one another and as a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- The school's aims and values are clear in all its work.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment are not high enough in English at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' attainments are too low in information technology at both key stages.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has responded well to the key issues identified in the previous inspection of 1996. It has been particularly successful in raising standards in mathematics steadily over the last three years. They have done this through better planning, careful assessment of what pupils can do and improved teaching. Standards in physical education in Key Stage 2 have also improved with firmer discipline from teachers and better behaviour from pupils. Considerable effort has been put into providing more opportunities for children in the nursery to participate in larger groups. The nursery has been redesigned so that children work close by those in the reception class. Because the school has not been able to increase the number of children attending the nursery all children attend the morning session. The library has been relocated and is now used regularly for pupils to choose books to take home and as a room for working. Other designated rooms no longer exist as the school undergoes major rebuilding work. Similarly, the number of pupils on roll will increase next year as the school becomes a primary school and the present Year 5 class becomes the first Year 6.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
reading	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	E	D	E	D	
mathematics	E	D	C	A	

A third of the group of children that made up the Year 2 class in 1999 had special educational needs, often related to language and literacy. This was a significant factor in why the results of tests in reading and writing are below average when compared with similar schools. In addition, the number of pupils in the group was so small that one or two pupils made a considerable difference to percentages. Results in reading and writing tests have been below or well below average for the last three years because many pupils start school with under-developed skills in these areas. However, the rise in standards in mathematics over the past three years has been a real success story for the school. When compared with pupils from similar schools their achievements are well above average. The school is not required to set targets for English, mathematics and science because it is a first school.

The standards pupils reach in science and religious education are high enough, though pupils have only a limited knowledge of world faiths. At a time when schools are emphasising the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, pupils reach high enough standards in art, design and technology, geography and history but not in music. Standards are well below expectations in information technology and this is a key area for the school to develop.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good, positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons, the playground and at lunchtime.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils are willing to take responsibility.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are similar to those in most other schools.

Pupils' behaviour is good because they want to please their teachers. During lessons, a small number of pupils are easily distracted but respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. The relationships forged between staff and pupils are a strength of the school and contribute significantly to pupils' readiness to learn and do well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in English is good for the under-fives and in both key stages. In mathematics, it is excellent for the under-fives, mainly very good in Key Stage 1 and there is also some excellent teaching in Key Stage 2. Numeracy skills are taught to a good level. Literacy is taught well. Greater emphasis needs to be given to developing vocabulary, comprehension of text and writing at Key Stage 2. Most teaching, 54 per cent, is good, nine per cent is excellent, 11 per cent is very good and 26 per cent satisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning: very positive relationships with pupils – very good management of pupils' behaviour – good planning - interesting activities – very good support for pupils with special educational needs – variety of methods – very good systems for assessment in English and mathematics – good use of the skills of non-teaching staff. All these factors promote good learning.

Weaknesses in teaching and learning: information technology and music in both key stages. These factors contribute to weaknesses in learning. With the emphasis on literacy and numeracy music is not a key issue for development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall with the exception of information technology. The curriculum for under-fives is appropriate. There are very few after-school sports and clubs to enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. As a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Social, moral and cultural awareness is promoted well and satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are very good.

Teachers work in close partnership with parents. They are encouraged to support their children's work at home and are welcome in the school. One of the strengths of the school is how well teachers know and care for their pupils. It is a significant factor in maintaining good behaviour. Because it lacks the resources, the school does not meet legal requirements to teach all aspects of information technology.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good. The senior management team and co-ordinators play their part well. Existing systems to check the quality of teaching and learning are effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities. There is no health and safety policy. Governors are involved in decisions about spending and the curriculum and are aware of the need to monitor spending very closely in the near future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good view of what needs to be done to improve its performance.
The strategic use of resources	There are sufficient teachers to have small classes in most year groups and ample classroom assistants to support pupils' learning. However, there is not enough expertise on the staff in information technology and music. The accommodation is in a state of change as the school is extended. A lack of resources severely inhibits pupils' learning in information technology.

Pupils' performance in tests is compared with local, similar and all other schools. The school does this very well. Decisions about the curriculum are reviewed at least annually to see if they are effective in maintaining standards. Governors and the senior management team try to ensure that they get the best possible value for money and that pupils have good quality resources to help them learn. Parents' views about the school are sought on matters, such as, the home-school agreement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The teaching is good. • They are kept well-informed about how their child is getting on. • Their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • They feel that the school's attitudes and values have a positive effect on their children. • They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems about their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that there are not enough after-school clubs or activities for their children. • They would like more homework for their children.

The inspection team agrees with the views of parents about the positive things they like about the school. Inspection findings are that parents are right about there being few after-school clubs. However, the head teacher has already begun to tackle this problem. There are plans to increase the range of activities and sports available to pupils. The school will be helped to do this by the local High School and other agencies. Although all pupils are given reading and spellings to learn at home, older pupils are not set homework about topics on a regular basis.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Since the previous inspection, standards in English have improved at Key Stage 1 but continue to be low at Key Stage 2 and this remains a key issue for development. However, the school has been particularly successful at raising standards in mathematics. Standards have improved in physical education. In science, art, design and technology, geography and history standards have been maintained. Standards have fallen in information technology and this is also a key issue for development. Standards have also fallen in music. In religious education, standards remain in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus though there are some gaps to pupils knowledge of major world faiths in Key Stage 2.

2 The results of National Curriculum tests in 1999 showed that by the age of seven, far fewer pupils attained the expected levels in reading and writing than in most other schools. Standards have been consistently low over the past three years, partly because of the greater than average numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and also because of the high number of pupils who join the school in the middle of a key stage. In the 1999 Year 2 class, a third of pupils had special educational needs, often related to language and literacy difficulties, and in that year 16 pupils joined the school part way through their education. Despite this, similar numbers of pupils to most other schools reached the expected level in mathematics. This is tremendous improvement since the time of the previous inspection, when standards were so far below the national average that this was considered a key issue for development. Over the past three years the results of national tests have consistently improved; with more pupils reaching the expected level 2 each year and also more pupils reaching the higher level 3. This is a real success for the school and is made possible by very good teaching in the subject. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that fewer pupils reached the expected or higher level. They also showed that pupils lacked knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes but did better at experimental and investigative science. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results are below average in reading and writing but very high in mathematics.

3 Over the last four years, there have been no trends to the performance of girls and boys in reading or mathematics, although girls have performed better in writing for the last three years. Similarly test results in reading and writing have fluctuated, reflecting differences in pupils' previous achievements. Almost every parent who completed the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting was unanimous in their praise of pupils' attainments.

4 Varying standards at Key Stage 1 are also attributable to variations in the experiences of four year olds on entry to the reception class. Despite making steady progress in all areas of learning in the nursery, many children still have limited language skills. After almost two terms in school, their learning has been good but they have not caught up yet. However, as a result of excellent teaching, children make very good progress in mathematical development and achieve well. Attainment is close to expectations for five year olds in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development.

5 Inspection findings are that standards in reading and writing are now in line with expectations for seven year olds by the end of Key Stage 1. These findings give a different picture from last years' test results. This is because pupils in Year 2 have benefited from more focused teaching since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy almost two years ago. Similarly, in science, pupils have benefited from improved planning and better use of assessment to get a good match of work to their prior attainment. As a result, standards in science are also in line with expectations for seven year olds. Inspection findings reflect

last years test results and show that the achievements of most pupils are in line with expectations for their age and a significant number achieve beyond this.

6 There are no national tests with which to compare the attainment of pupils in the current Year 5 class. However, inspection findings are that the attainment of many pupils is not high enough in English. Many pupils lack confidence when speaking to others and have a limited vocabulary, they do not always understand fully what they have read and they do not write at sufficient length. In mathematics and science, standards are typical for pupils' ages. In both key stages pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, pupils write accounts of events in history, they locate position on maps in geography and record the results of tests and observations in science.

7 Inspection findings are that pupils' attainment in information technology is well below expectations for both seven year olds and those in Year 5. The weakness in both key stages is because pupils have not had enough opportunities to work with computers and other information technology. This is linked to serious shortages in equipment, an inadequate curriculum and teachers' lack of expertise in the subject. At present, insufficient thought has gone into how teachers can better incorporate computers into teaching literacy and numeracy.

8 Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1. There are some gaps to pupils' knowledge of major world faiths by the end of Year 5.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils' attitudes to school have remained consistently good since the time of the last inspection. Their keenness to come to school results in satisfactory levels of attendance and positive approaches to work. Attitudes of children under five are good. They maintain concentration for increasingly longer periods of time, and work hard to meet teachers' high expectations. Pupils in all year groups are interested in their work, particularly when it provides them with challenging new ideas. This is most evident in mathematics lessons where pupils enjoy high quality teaching which promotes their thinking and enables them to become enthusiastic, highly motivated learners. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning as a result of the confidence they gain from extra support and the successes they gain from activities which are planned well to match their needs.

10 Pupils' behaviour in and around school also remains good. This is as a result of an effective behaviour and discipline policy that is operated consistently by all staff. Pupils are aware of what is expected of them and the rewards that are to be gained from good behaviour. As a result, the majority of pupils have reasonable levels of self-control, and understand how their actions can affect the learning of themselves and others. Behaviour in assemblies is good. The majority of pupils are sociable and friendly at playtimes and lunchtime. Bullying or oppressive behaviour is rare; confirming parents' views that the school deals with this successfully. As part of the schools behaviour policy there have been a small number of exclusions during the last academic year.

11 Pupils' personal development is good. Children under five gain self-esteem and confidence; on the whole, they share resources and are beginning to take turns in discussions. As they get older pupils take more responsibility for a range of important jobs, such as handing out trays at lunchtimes and supporting the supervision of younger pupils in the play-yard. They readily take initiatives by helping one another, their teachers and visitors to school. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 support and help pupils with special educational needs by finding definitions of words from the dictionary. Throughout the school, pupils handle property carefully and with respect.

12 The quality of relationships within the school continues to be a strength. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and are the source of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Because of the

very good relationships that exist, pupils work hard to meet the standards that are expected of them and are confident that their contributions will be valued. They work well together in small groups. Pupils in the reception class are able to co-operate with each other to enable them to safely set out equipment for their physical education lesson. In design and technology pupils in Year 5 discussed their ideas sensibly and arrived at an agreed plan for producing the required product. On the whole, pupils are considerate to one another and friendly and courteous to adults. In assemblies and religious education lessons they are able to reflect on the feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example, older pupils discussed the inequalities in the world and tried to imagine the feelings of people less fortunate than themselves. In assembly pupils reflect on how their actions in the playground can affect others around them.

13 Attendance is around the national average and is similar to the level reported at the last inspection. Due to very good procedures and effective monitoring there is no unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive at school on time although a small core of poor time keepers sometimes disrupt lessons by coming in late. The school is working with families to try to improve punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14 Most of the teaching, 54 per cent, is good. Of the remainder, nine per cent is excellent, 11 per cent is very good and 26 per cent is satisfactory. This picture of teaching is different from that observed at the time of the last inspection. There is more good teaching than previously and the very good teaching remains a strength of the school. Factors, which contributed to unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2, are no longer areas of weakness.

15 All of the excellent teaching observed during the inspection was of mathematics. This is a real strength of the school and is the reason why standards have risen over the past three years. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of how to teach mathematics and their own enthusiasm for the subject is always evident. This was particularly noticeable in the reception class, where the teacher *performs* each lesson for them. This often involves puppets, mystery, singing and lots of action. As a result, they are enthralled by numbers and easily make the connections between, for example, a song and the concept of taking away. In all classes, teachers plan activities that are interesting and motivate pupils to do well. When asked, pupils almost always said that mathematics was their favourite lessons.

16 Teachers use a good range of methods to teach. Lessons are a good balance of whole-class teaching and opportunities for practical work. Very often, teachers use a plenary session at the end of the lesson to recap what has been taught and to give pupils a chance to show what they have done. At these times, pupils are expected to show and talk about their work with others. If teachers are to raise standards in speaking, more of these times need to be planned into lessons.

17 Teachers have sound knowledge of most subjects of the curriculum. The exceptions are information technology and music, where the training and resultant knowledge of most teachers does not allow them to provide a suitable curriculum. They have a thorough knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use these to good effect to plan lessons. However, because they have been using a similar strategy for teaching mathematics for some years, teachers are more confident about using numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, reminding pupils that co-ordinates help locate position on a map. Teachers have a secure understanding of the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and they maintain a satisfactory balance between the different components of the literacy hour. While literacy skills are consolidated in most other subjects, pupils in Key Stage 2 are not always expected to write at length and some reports and accounts are short. In order to raise standards in writing, pupils need to be encouraged to write in greater detail.

18 A particular strength of teaching throughout the school lies in the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers treat pupils with respect and staff and pupils like one another. Their high

expectations of sensible behaviour are reflected in pupils' responsible attitudes to learning and their good behaviour in lessons and when carrying out tasks. Teachers insist that pupils listen to what they say and follow instructions. Sometimes this is hard work as there are pupils in the school with special educational needs linked to emotional and behavioural problems and others who are easily distracted. However, teachers manage in such a way that the pace of lessons is rarely slowed.

19 A second strength of the teaching is the provision made for pupils with special educational needs. They are supported well by teachers, who ensure that work is at an appropriate level. Teachers also make good use of the skills of classroom assistants to support the work of pupils with special educational needs, children in the reception class and pupils in Key Stage 1. The close attention classroom assistants give to individuals and groups of pupils allows pupils with special educational needs to gain increased understanding of the work and leads to good progress. In addition, pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from lessons taught by a skilled support teacher and their own class teacher. During these lessons pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to take a more effective part in discussions by answering questions targeted specifically at them and they receive close attention during individual and group work. During a good lesson in Year 5, the teacher used one of Shakespeare's poems to stimulate pupils' imagination and boost pupils' confidence in writing their own poetry. As pupils' imaginations came into play, they explored the sound and use of words and extended their vocabulary.

20 As at the time of the previous inspection in 1996, teachers' planning is good. It provides a secure foundation for covering most subjects of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth and ensures that literacy and numeracy are taught at the correct level. Short-term planning has improved since 1996. Most teachers are skilful at raising pupils' awareness of the expected outcomes of their work and in the best examples share the aims of the lesson with pupils. This ensures that pupils understand what is expected of them and allows them to work at a suitable pace. The homework teachers provide makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning in school for pupils in Key Stage 1 but is not given consistently or in enough subjects in Key Stage 2.

21 Teachers are very good at assessing what pupils know on a day-to-day basis. They do this by questioning pupils skilfully to find out what they have remembered and to promote deeper thinking. The use teachers' make of information from assessments of pupils' work to plan the next stage of learning is proving to be very effective in planning work. Since the previous inspection, considerably more value has been gained from the way in which teachers use the information from the results of National Curriculum and other regular tests in English and mathematics. By recording their achievements in graphic form, teachers effectively track the progress of older pupils. In this way they can judge if pupils are doing their best, or are underachieving in the light of past attainments.

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

22 The school provides a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum to promote pupils' intellectual, physical and moral development effectively. The only exception to this is the subject of information technology, which is not taught in sufficient depth to meet legal requirements. Health, drugs awareness and sex education are integrated successfully into the curriculum. The school is aware that as it becomes a primary school, these areas of the curriculum will need to be reviewed to take account of the needs of older pupils. Religious education is based securely on the recommendations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

23 The successful introduction and implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies is already having a positive effect on standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The numeracy strategy is more effective because the school had used a similar approach to teaching before the introduction of the numeracy hour. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school ensures that pupils have equal access to a broad curriculum and equal opportunities to learn and make progress.

24 The under fives in the reception class have a broad and balanced curriculum in the six areas of learning. The activities planned help them achieve many of the skills that are desirable for children of their age and prepare them well for their work in the National Curriculum.

25 Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they gain full access to the curriculum and make good progress. It meets all requirements of the national Code of Practice and statutory requirements for pupils with statements of their specific needs. The school uses a good range of strategies to identify pupils with special educational needs and to assess their progress. Pupils on the register for special educational needs have their needs met through individual educational plans that focus on literacy, mathematics and behaviour. These plans set clear and achievable targets for improvements to pupils' learning and give helpful direction to teachers' planning. Annual reviews for pupils at higher stages of the register of special educational needs fulfil statutory requirements. Regular monitoring of their progress also contributes to the good progress pupils make in English and other subjects.

26 A wide range of educational visits enriches the curriculum. These include places of local interest such as Whitehouse Farm, Plessey Woods, Bede's World at Jarrow and the Beamish Museum. Visiting speakers from the police and fire service also contributes to this provision. In addition, a visiting author worked with pupils in Key Stage 2 during world book week. However, the provision of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The only provision offered is soccer to Key Stage 2 pupils. However, the school has already begun to tackle the problem by linking up with the local high school and intends to provide further training to staff.

27 The school continues to make sound provision for pupils' spiritual development. The provision for their moral, social and cultural development remains good although there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge of the major world faiths other than Christianity.

28 Spiritual development in the school is sound. In religious education lessons pupils gain an understanding and appreciation of some of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity. The quality of assemblies is satisfactory and they meet statutory requirements. In a Key Stage 1 assembly, there was a moment of reflection as pupils considered how they would treat each other in school that day. Visitors such as the local vicar occasionally take them. However, in most lessons and assemblies observed, there was a lack of opportunity provided for pupils to experience wonder or be given enough guided time to reflect in order to deepen their self knowledge.

29 Provision for moral development continues to be good. Pupils are expected to behave well, and are taught very effectively to know right from wrong from their entry into school. In all classes there is evidence of the way that positive rules for behaviour are consistently reinforced. Teachers provide very good role models for their pupils. The *Backworth Buddy* code is displayed in the hall and classrooms. This clearly sets out how pupils are expected to behave in school. Each class competes for the *Backworth Cup* on a monthly basis. It is awarded to the class who gains the most merits for good behaviour and work in lessons. In addition, the head teacher awards merit certificates once a fortnight during assembly. Children's achievements are also noted in a special *Golden Book* on display in the school hall. These help reinforce the strong moral code in the school.

30 The social development of pupils is another strength of the school. Co-operation between pupils is good and they work well together in pairs or small groups. For instance, pupils in a Year 4 class worked well in small groups when solving activities in their fraction work. A noticeable feature of classroom behaviour is the way in which all pupils listen with respect to others and appreciate their point of view. The very good relationships in all classes are a major feature of the school and contribute significantly to the social development of pupils.

31 The cultural development of pupils in school is good. Pupils use their own local area and region to enrich their experiences of their own culture. For instance, pupils march to the Shiremoor *Big Treat Field* in June, and give performances at Christmas in the local church. The curriculum includes a range of activities to extend pupils' cultural knowledge. For example, in geography Year 3 pupils are studying the impact of extreme weather conditions found in the Death Valley in California. The work of famous artists such as Van Gogh, William Morris and Kandinsky are being used as models for pupils to study and imitate in their artwork. There are also effective displays around school of different cultures and periods in history to support this aspect of the school's provision.

32 The school has maintained its good relationship with the local church. There are satisfactory links with the local community through involvement in annual local celebrations and the use of visitors such as the school nurse and Newcastle United Football Club. Educational visits to places of interest extend the work pupils do in class and provide first-hand opportunities. These include visits to the theatre, where older pupils were able to take part in drama workshops as well as developing an understanding of the work behind the scenes. The school is beginning to develop links with the local High School in preparation for their transition to primary school status and together they have made a bid for funding in order extend out of school activities for pupils of both schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33 The school continues to take good care of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection comply with the local education authority guidelines and staff have had the necessary training and guidance. Day-to-day safety practices are satisfactory, however the school has not yet complied with the legal requirement to have a health and safety policy. Fire safety, first aid and medical arrangements are satisfactory. There are regular checks of the premises and safety checks on equipment. Pupils are supervised at all times throughout the school day. Pupils are confident that they will be looked after when in school and are aware of the routines to follow if they have an accident or are feeling unwell.

34 The school has very good procedures for promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour. This is effectively delivered through the *Backworth Buddy* scheme, which is understood and valued, by pupils, parents and staff. The school uses its reward system effectively and consistently to promote good work and behaviour. Procedures for dealing with bullying are clearly stated in the school behaviour policy. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Most parents respond well to requests for information about absence and the school quickly follows up unexplained absences. Pupils are encouraged to get to school on time and most do this. The school keeps a close check on pupils who arrive late or who have to leave during the school day.

35 Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good and continue to influence the provision made for each pupil. Teachers know their pupils very well and use this information to ensure that they receive appropriate support and guidance to enable them to develop in confidence and self-esteem. The information recorded through the monitoring of pupils personal development is also used effectively in reporting to parents and enables the setting of targets for further development. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good and follows the nationally agreed Code of Practice. This contributes to the good progress that these pupils make.

36 The school has a wide range of procedures for assessing pupils' attainments in all subjects, and thorough procedures to assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Assessment forms a natural part of teaching and learning and records of attainment are kept in a formal and consistent way. Most teachers use assessment in English and mathematics successfully to group pupils with others at similar levels of attainment. This strategy is successful in raising standards in the subject. It allows teachers to provide challenging activities for most pupils so that effective learning takes place. Teachers keep thorough and detailed records of pupils' progress in both English and mathematics and particularly

good use is made of the results of tests carried out in the reception class and in subsequent years to measure and track the progress of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37 Since the last inspection, the school has maintained good links with parents. The small proportion of parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting show considerable confidence in most aspects of the school's provision.

38 The school continues to be committed to working in partnership with parents and recognises the benefits from this partnership in raising standards. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home, although some parents would like more homework for their children. They are asked to read with their children and write comments about how easy or difficult books are in reading diaries. These also contain comments from teachers about where children have difficulties, which means that parents know how well their children are doing. Parents are encouraged to help in classes and a small number provide valuable support for teachers by doing so. One or two have gone on to take more formal qualifications as a result of the encouragement they have had from teachers. The school establishes good relationships with parents through regular consultation meetings where parents get a chance to talk about their children's progress. Most parents value these and the informal opportunities they have to talk with teachers at the start and end of school.

39 Although the school has produced a home-school agreement, a significant number of parents have not responded to it. Some feel that more should be done to provide after-school sports and clubs for their children, because they do not want them to miss out on activities they would have experienced at a middle school. The school listens to their suggestions and has begun to consider ways of increasing the range of sports and activities available to pupils.

40 The information provided to parents by the school is good. Parents are kept informed about school events through regular newsletters. The school prospectus outlines for parents the curriculum, routines and expectations. Reading diaries are, on the whole, used well to maintain effective communication between teachers and parents. Reports to parents provide satisfactory information regarding pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and give clear details of their personal development. The best examples provide guidance as to how pupils could improve further. However, they do not comply with the requirement to report each subject of the National Curriculum because technology is reported as one subject. The governors' annual report to parents includes all of the statutory information required. Meetings held with parents prior to children's entry into nursery and the reception class provides parents with good quality information that enables children to settle quickly and happily into school routines. Meetings held with parents to inform them of major changes to the school curriculum, for example the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy are valued, although not well attended. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are notified of any concerns at an early stage and are kept fully aware of their children's progress. They are invited to reviews of their child's achievements and to record their comments on individual education plans and statements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41 The head teacher provides good leadership, which sets clear educational direction for the school and contributes to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by pupils. Parents' views that the school is led well are justified. Great care is taken when appointing and supporting new staff and in deploying teachers to maximise their skills. The head teacher's dynamic approach and enthusiasm has contributed to the high percentage of good teaching in the school and the effectiveness of arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. Both have a positive impact on pupils' very positive attitudes to learning.

42 There is a shared sense of purpose and a strong commitment to the success of the school, which shows in the way that temporary staff are supported well and teachers are prepared to share the heavy

workload of responsibilities that comes from working in a small school. Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. Subject co-ordinators support their colleagues in the classroom and whenever possible, monitor standards of attainment and progress in their curriculum areas. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when the process had just begun and reflects the willingness of all staff to work hard to raise standards. The deputy head teacher provides quiet inspiration for others and sets a very good example for pupils, staff and parents. The high level of effectiveness of the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators enables all teachers to make positive contributions to curriculum development and in setting priorities for improvement. Teachers with responsibility for ensuring that pupils with special educational needs get an appropriate curriculum do this well. Care is taken to ensure that their needs are met fully and that they are given the extra support they need. Good leadership puts the school in a good position to further improve standards and raise the levels of pupils' attainment.

43 Governors support the life and work of the school well. Members of the governing body have increased their involvement with the school since the previous inspection. They are now far more involved in determining policy and in monitoring the curriculum and have looked carefully at how well the school has met the goals of the action plan drawn up after the last inspection. There are trained governors for literacy and numeracy and the chair of governors works in close partnership with the head teacher to manage spending. This is crucial for the school because of the difficult decisions it will need to face about staffing and the budget in the next year as it becomes a primary school. Governors are aware that spending on support staff is high and that there are small classes in some year groups. They recognise that long-term financial planning needs to be very careful if the school is to manage finances efficiently. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory obligations with the exception that there is no policy for health and safety.

44 Day-to-day financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive. The finance clerk is responsible for maintaining and monitoring spending on the school fund account and for providing current details of all expenditure for regular health checks by the governors. The school has recently been audited and the head teacher and finance clerk have already begun to make the few changes recommended. A good feature of management is the careful and prudent use the school makes of its resources. Head teacher, governors and curriculum co-ordinators have good combined awareness of the need to make the best use of all spending. This was evident when consultation took place about the purchase of new computers and the possibility of gaining some second-hand from local businesses.

45 A strength of leadership lies in its success in meeting the school's aims and in securing its values. This is evident in a commitment to equality of opportunity, very good relationships and pupils' positive attitudes and interest in learning. All of these aspects have a strong impact on pupils' willingness to learn.

46 The school has sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the planned curriculum. They are all suitably qualified and there is a good balance of experience. There is currently however a lack of expertise amongst staff with regard to the curriculum areas of music and information technology, which is impacting on the quality of learning within these subjects. The school is aware of the need to address this issue and have listed this a priority within their current school development plan.

47 Accommodation is satisfactory. The school is currently undergoing major building work to enable them to become a primary school. Despite this disruption they continue to make good use of available space and both teachers and pupils have worked hard to ensure that the impact on learning is kept to a minimum. In response to the previous inspection report the library has been moved into the main school building and is now easily accessible to all pupils.

48 With the exception of information technology the school has satisfactory resources for learning. There are insufficient computers and computer programs to enable the teaching of the full programme of study for information technology. As a result standards attained in this subject are below those expected.

The library is stocked with an adequate range of books and is supplemented by books purchased to deliver the National Literacy Strategy. Despite major disruption due to building works resources remain accessible to adults and children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49 The governors, head teacher and staff should:

(1) Continue to raise standards of attainment in English at Key Stage 2 by planning frequent and structured opportunities for pupils to:

- speak and extend their vocabulary in all subjects and from the nursery onwards;
- engage in comprehension tasks to improve their understanding of what they read;
- write at greater length in all subjects.

(paragraphs 53, 58 – 64)

(2) Raise pupils' attainment and ensure they make good progress in information technology by:

- providing the resources necessary to teach the subject effectively;
- improving the expertise of teachers through additional training;
- establishing routines for all pupils to improve their skills by using computers on a regular basis;
- ensuring that teaching is supported by a good quality scheme of work;
- ensuring that computers are used to support learning in other subjects and particularly to teach literacy and numeracy.

(paragraphs 17, 46, 48, 71, 100 – 104)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9%	11%	54%	26%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	122
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	24

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.96
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	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
	1999	20	8	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	18
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	19	19	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68% (65%)	68% (80%)	89% (80%)
	National	82% (81%)	83% (82%)	87% (86%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	18	17
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	21	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75% (70%)	89% (80%)	86% (80%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

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	122
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	9	1
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 – Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	20.3

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.4
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998 / 1999
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	£
Total income	281,212
Total expenditure	273,047
Expenditure per pupil	1,897
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,907
Balance carried forward to next year	14,072

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	135
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	21	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	29	0	7	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	23	23	0	15
The teaching is good.	71	21	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	36	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	21	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	93	0	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	36	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	36	0	7	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	7	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	29	7	14	29

Other issues raised by parents

Pointers from the meeting for parents

- Parents are satisfied with the attitudes and values that the school promotes.
- Parents said that the school has improved greatly in recent years.
- Parents said that they have mixed feelings about the school becoming a primary school. They are concerned that their children get enough support to help them make the move to secondary school at the age of eleven.

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

50 Children enter the nursery at the age of three and transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection 26 children attended the nursery in the mornings and eight children aged under five attended the reception class fulltime. Many children start the nursery with below average levels of attainment especially in the key areas of language and literacy, and personal and social skills. They make steady progress through the nursery and on transfer to the reception class make very good progress. By the time they are five most children achieve the expected early learning goals in all areas except in language and literacy.

51 The nursery provides a safe, secure learning environment for children to start their school life. The activities are organised well and are appropriate to meet the needs of all children, including those with special education needs. Nursery staff work hard to ensure that all children have a range of experiences that prepare them for the next stage of their education. Planning in the nursery is lead by the reception teacher who gives high quality support in the nursery, but only for a very limited time each week. As a result, while teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, teaching in the reception class is very good or excellent, resulting in children making very good progress when they transfer to full-time education.

52 Personal and social development in the nursery is satisfactory. Children sit quietly in a circle when they enter the nursery and mostly answer their names when the register is taken. When encouraged some children are willing to reply to a greeting such as *good morning* or *hello*. Children play happily along side each other in the role play area but do not play together. For example, one child played with a doll while another put food on plates but they rarely spoke to one another. Nursery staff play games with the children encouraging them to take turns. Sometimes this is not successful, for example, in a group of three children sitting alone round a board game, a boy in firm control of the dice answered *no* when it was suggested to him that the other children needed a turn. Nursery staff present good role models and show the children respect and consideration. No unfriendly behaviour was seen and children treat toys and books with care. In the reception class, children make good progress and develop social skills that enable them to play together and share toys. In the *pets clinic* children took on separate roles and shared the responsibility of looking after the *animals*.

53 Children in the nursery make steady but slow progress in language and literacy. Children do not instigate conversations but respond to adults with simple phrases such as *I want to*. Although staff ask questions they do not always expect a reply. Staff talk to the children as they take part in activities but they do not intervene sufficiently in role-play to develop children's language skills. Children show an interest in books and are excited by big books when used by the reception teacher in a group session. Children go to the book corner and choose books. Although they turn the pages and enjoy looking at pictures, some children do not know the difference between print and pictures. Although the nursery has a mark making and writing centre children do not often choose to sit in it. With adult help they were copying or tracing their names into their Mother's Day cards. When children join the reception class they benefit from a rich literacy environment and take part in the literacy hour, which is delivered in a manner that meets the needs of both the four and five year olds. In the reception class, children choose books to look at during regular quiet reading periods. They understand the terms *front cover* and know where to find the title of the story. The teacher skilfully asks them to give a reason for their choice drawing attention to the information that is on the front cover.

54 Children in the nursery begin to develop mathematical skills. Within a group they can recite numbers to five and about half the children can continue to ten. A few children can say numbers up to twenty. Very few children in the nursery can count objects accurately beyond six. With the excellent but

limited input from the reception teacher, children develop an understanding of the concepts of *one more* and *one less* and these skills are developed rapidly when children move to the reception class. Children sort by colour and know the basic colours, however, few copy a pattern from a card on to a pegboard. By the time they are five they join in chanting numbers to twenty and beyond and have an understanding of the concept of addition and subtraction as applied in imaginative situations and stories. For example, in the rhyme *five little ducks*.

55 Children develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world. Through water play they explore the properties of floating and sinking and by working with play dough learn that some materials are pliable and their shape can be changed easily. They know that wet sand can be moulded into shapes and used to build. Nursery children know that by touching the keyboard pictures move on the screen while children in reception are confident in using the mouse to drag and drop pictures on the screen to *Dress Teddy*. In the reception class the teacher effectively catches children's imagination with a soft toy, Barnaby Bear. The children take turns to take Barnaby home and then they take him on visits away from home. The teacher inspires interest in both children and parents in Barnaby's adventures, which effectively form the basis of developing geography skills as Barnaby's visits are enthusiastically reported back to school.

56 Creative development is satisfactory. Children are supported to play percussion instruments such as the tambourine and triangle. They enjoy joining in songs and know the words of simple repetitive songs such as *If you are happy and you know it*. They enjoy dropping blobs of paints on to paper, which then become *butterflies* as the paper is folded. Painting skills are further developed in the reception class when they paint pictures of Barnaby Bear.

57 Physical development is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection the nursery outdoor play area was out of use because of building works. However the children used the main playground at a different time to the other children. Children had the space and freedom to run and use space but staff lost opportunities to engage the children in playground games and to develop early ball handling skills. In the reception class good use is made of the hall for physical development.

ENGLISH

58 Standards of attainment in English are rising as a result of better teaching since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. This is most noticeable in Key Stage 1 where inspection findings are that standards are in line with expectations for pupils' age in both reading and writing. This is a different picture from the results of 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, which showed that pupils' attainment was well below the national average in both reading and writing. However, a third of the pupils in this group had special educational needs, often linked to reading and writing. This drastically reduced the percentage who achieved the expected level. Although they make good progress in speaking and listening a significant number of pupils nonetheless lack confidence and have a limited vocabulary by the end of Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school many pupils still do not have a wide enough vocabulary and are unable to describe events and opinions thoughtfully or clearly.

59 Teachers are aware of the need to extend pupils' vocabulary. They give them many opportunities for speaking, during plenary sessions at the end of lessons and in responding to questions and suggestions. This is having a beneficial effect on pupils in both key stages. Pupils in the reception class quickly learn words associated with books and talk about covers, titles and authors. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are keen to discuss matters of immediate interest and willingly engage in conversations with the teacher. However, a significant number do not have a broad enough vocabulary to help them incorporate detail into their descriptions and they often describe objects as *things* rather than use the correct name. By the time they are in Year 5, few pupils are confident or eloquent speakers. Higher attainers are beginning to see that language and expression are important, for example, when reading the poems or plays of Shakespeare. Others struggle and although they learn technical vocabulary in subjects such as geography,

they often fail to make use of the simplest of words. For example, one pupil remembered the word *reservoir* but had great difficulty in recalling or using the word *river*. The need to continue to give particular emphasis to language and vocabulary is a key issue for development within the school.

60 Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively to teach reading and as a result, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in the reception class get a good start in learning to read unfamiliar words by building up the sounds of letters. They particularly enjoy guessing the words hidden on the Elmer elephant display and get quite excited about letters and sounds. In classes in Year 1 and 2, pupils widen the range of strategies they have for reading. They make good progress because of the regular opportunities they have to read to teachers and because they have very positive attitudes towards reading and books. Although the methods used are helping pupils make steady progress throughout Key Stage 2, many pupils fail to understand significant ideas and themes from the stories and text they read. Teachers have begun to tackle this problem by giving greater emphasis to comprehension tasks and this is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' understanding of texts. However, many require a lot of help because their limited vocabulary restricts how easily they understand text without having to look up the meaning of words in a dictionary. Because teachers encourage pupils to read a wide variety of texts, many pupils in Year 5 express a fondness for poetry. They have favourite poets, both contemporary and classical and enjoy the rhythm and rhyme of words. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 read with far more expression and understanding than average or lower attaining pupils and their attainment is typical for their age.

61 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils' writing is in line with expectations for their age, though always restricted by their limited vocabulary. As a result of the emphasis given to grammar and punctuation average attaining pupils use capital letters and full stops and higher attaining pupils are beginning to use speech marks in their writing. Teachers ensure that pupils have many opportunities to write in subjects other than English. Consequently, pupils write stories and poems in English, accounts of their experiments in science and factual information in history and geography. Lower attaining pupils write shorter accounts and use a less interesting vocabulary but higher attaining pupils often write interesting and unusual stories and try hard with their work. In Key Stage 2, teachers continue to encourage pupils to write in other subjects and to use word processing to rewrite work that they have drafted in rough. Pupils are very proud of the work they produce on computer but a serious lack of computers restricts the progress that pupils make in this aspect of their work. By the time they are in Year 5, average and higher attaining pupils write for a wide range of purposes but what they do not do is write at length. This is an aspect of teaching that needs reinforcing if the school is to raise standards in writing. Because teachers encourage pupils to use dictionaries and thesauruses and expect them to learn words at home, most pupils make steady progress with their spelling and frequently used words are generally spelled correctly. Pupils' handwriting varies considerably. Some pupils write with a good style while others do not form letters correctly and writing is inconsistent in size. Teachers have begun to overcome this in Key Stage 1 where greater emphasis is given to handwriting. As a result pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve, for example, a boy in the Year 2 class pointed out that his writing sloped and said that he could improve it if he had some lined paper underneath his writing paper to guide him.

62 Pupils with special educational needs, whose attainments in reading and writing are below expectations for their age, make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. They respond well when working with the teacher and other adults and they enjoy literacy lessons. These pupils benefit from a generous amount of extra support for their reading in lessons. As a result, pupils read a range of simple texts and produce written work that is often short but usually completed.

63 More than three-quarters of the teaching is good and the remainder is satisfactory. Teachers plan activities well and ensure that they are interesting to pupils. They bring their own enthusiasm for books to pupils and this is having a marked effect on pupils' positive attitudes to authors such as Shakespeare. A strength of the teaching is the way that teachers assess and record what pupils can do. Teachers keep

detailed and very useful records of what pupils have read and of any difficulties they have with their reading. This helps them plan work at appropriate levels and means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve success in reading. In addition, teachers now use a range of standardised tests to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school. This means that teachers are able to set realistic targets for what pupils should be able to achieve and also focus their teaching on gaps in learning. The success of this initiative is evident in how teachers have managed to raise standards in Key Stage 1. It is less evident in Key Stage 2 because of the higher numbers of pupils who join or leave the school part way through the key stage.

64 The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject. Procedures established during the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy to plan work to an agreed format and to agree levels of attainment have provided sufficient information to begin to raise standards in both key stages. Monitoring has been less successful in raising standards because changes to staffing have meant that time has not always been available for the co-ordinator to observe her colleagues at work. The co-ordinator recognises that raising standards is a key issue for development and has targeted this as a priority in the next year. Her thorough understanding of what needs to be done and willingness to tackle the task puts the school in a good position to make the changes necessary to achieve this.

MATHEMATICS

65 The standards reached by most pupils are particularly high when compared with similar schools. This is a great achievement for the school and one of which they are rightly proud. Standards have been rising for the past three years and in the 1999 National Curriculum tests a fifth of pupils reached the higher level 3.

66 The school introduced a structure similar to that of the Numeracy Strategy several years prior to the Strategy being introduced nationally. Teachers are therefore confident and present the subject with enthusiasm and a uniformity of style that highly motivates pupils' interest in mathematics. This has a significant impact on the standards achieved. Mental calculations, games, puzzles and open-ended challenges have been a feature of lessons prior to the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. During informal conversations with pupils many said that it was their favourite subject.

67 Teaching is very good in both key stages. It has improved since the previous inspection and is raising standards and maintaining pupils' very positive attitudes to work. All teachers have successfully adapted their methods to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. In both key stages they now develop pupils' ability to apply their understanding of mathematics effectively to practical tasks. For instance, in Year 3, the teacher skilfully encouraged pupils to use their existing knowledge to investigate statements about number patterns and find as many ways as possible to arrive at a given answer. Higher attaining pupils competed with enthusiasm to find more and more complicated methods, which they could then explain to their friends. The high degree of commitment that pupils show in such challenging and interesting activities leads them to make good progress in their learning.

68 A strength of teaching is good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. This has a strong effect on pupils' learning in both key stages and in the reception class where excellent teaching of the basic skills of numeracy takes place. In Year 4, the teacher used her knowledge of equivalent fractions to make the introduction to the lesson interesting and lively. As a result, most pupils were very interested and achieved good understanding of the equivalence of fractions. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs made good progress, with support from a non-teaching assistant. They understood that, for instance, $\frac{4}{8} = \frac{1}{2}$.

69 All pupils are taught to use correct mathematical language although not all have the confidence to use it when explaining their methods. When pupils in the reception class explained a hidden number

sentence by looking at the pictures in a book, the teacher praised them for their effort and correct mathematical vocabulary. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils enjoy and get the most from their work. This has a positive influence on their good progress. In Year 5, a pupil found it difficult to explain how she *rounded up* a decimal number to the nearest whole number. With patient encouragement and questioning she succeeded and gained congratulations from the teacher and smiles from the class.

70 Teachers plan work mainly at three different levels. Pupils can then work steadily at the level that best meets their needs. This results in pupils who are highly motivated and enjoy success. For example, in Year 2, average attaining pupils look at the highest number first when adding three single digit numbers. Higher attaining pupils work with larger numbers while lower attaining pupils work on simpler calculations but using the same strategies. Similarly, in Year 5, average and lower attaining pupils work out the area of shapes by dividing them into squares while higher attaining pupils work on more complicated shapes and work out the area by using the measurements of sides and a formula. Pupils with special educational needs are identified carefully and provided with challenging work and good support from non-teaching assistants. This is effective in both key stages and means that they make good progress. Teachers also assess pupils' work regularly, and have a sound understanding of what pupils know and can do. Pupils are continually challenged to explain their thinking by teachers who are skilled in directing questions to individual pupils. In addition, teachers record pupils' achievements and analyse information from assessment for gaps and successes in teaching.

71 The subject has strong leadership that makes a positive impact on standards. Close teamwork exists between governors, the head teacher, the subject leaders and staff. The school has moved forward considerably since the previous inspection and has taken the action needed to correct weaknesses. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented. The subject is adequately resourced and future needs are identified. Most opportunities are taken to link mathematics to other parts of the curriculum. The exception to this is information technology. Although some teachers are confident users of information technology, the subject is not established sufficiently to use it in mathematics throughout the school. Policy and practice are not developed strongly enough to link mathematics with information technology. With the strength of leadership and teaching, the school is well placed to maintain high standards.

SCIENCE

72 The results of teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching level two or above is below the national average and the percentage of pupils reaching level three or above is well below the national average. However, last year's cohort of Year 2 pupils included a third of the pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the school has made changes to its approach in the delivery of science by the implementation of much more focused planning and teaching of the subject by all staff.

73 This is confirmed by inspection findings in which all aspects of science are covered with appropriate breadth and balance, and are in line with the national average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, and by the end of Year 5. All pupils including those with special educational needs are making good gains in their learning.

74 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have covered a range of work in all aspects of science in some depth. When classifying materials found in school, home or outside, pupils can say whether they are 'natural' or 'made'. This was linked to their work in art in which they had made observational drawings and collage pictures of different items to extend their knowledge and understanding of materials. They also know the importance of a balanced diet and drew a graph to show which is their favourite fruit. In Year 2 the pupils use exercise diaries to show how this affects the health of a human. They also describe well what they can feel and touch. For example, Year 1 pupils were describing different items from a feely bag and

putting them into *smooth* or *rough* hoops. This helps develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding as they move through the Key stage.

75 By the end of Year 5, pupils have built on their skills and experiences of observation, predication and hypothesising from Key Stage 1. They are also using more scientific language when discussing their work, which helps with their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Year 5 pupils, including lower attaining pupils can name the main parts and functions of a plant. They also know how to use a magnifying glass to examine and look closely at a stem and flower of a plant. Pupils in a Year 3 class were developing their knowledge and understanding of how soil absorbs water by observing what happens to water if it is spilled on a paper towel. This helped pupils to understand that soil absorbs water, and the roots of a plant suck the water from the soil so that the plant can live.

76 Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to discuss, record and measure scientific findings in experiments and observations. The pupils read to follow instructions and write purposefully to record their investigations, or persuasively when expressing their opinions about an experiment or observation. They represent their work in a variety of ways using graphs, tables and sets. An example of this was seen in a Year 1 class, where pupils were classifying materials into sets. However the use of information technology in lessons is currently underdeveloped to support and enhance pupils' attainment and rate of learning in the subject. The subject provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop socially. In all lessons there are situations provided for the pupils to work collaboratively and to take responsibility for their own work through clear knowledge of what is expected of them. For example, in Year 3 pupils were independently measuring the growth of seeds they had planted earlier.

77 Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. Behaviour is always good and pupils respond positively to challenge in lessons, which is having an impact on their rate of learning. When required they collaborate well with other pupils, sharing ideas and equipment sensibly, as was seen in a Year 5 lesson when pupils used a magnifying glass to examine the main parts of a plant.

78 The overall quality of teaching observed is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection. This ensures the majority of pupils work to the best of their ability. This contributes significantly to the good rate of learning seen in lessons and the overall good progress pupils make as they move through school. Teachers have a secure and confident subject knowledge that extends pupils' thinking well. There is a good focus on developing key vocabulary and clear scientific language. This was particularly well done in a Year 1 lesson, where the pupils were discussing whether items were rough or smooth. Lessons are well planned with more focused learning objectives which allows activities to proceed at a good pace. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils and the resulting good behaviour contributes well to the quality of learning. However, in some activities in Key stage 2 there is a tendency to use photo-copied sheets when pupils could have been encouraged to record their findings independently. The use of information technology is currently underused by staff to support pupils learning in the subject.

79 The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and is instrumental in promoting the development of the subject. This has resulted in a much clearer focus on practical investigation, and an emphasis on teaching and its impact on learning. The co-ordinator has not been given the opportunity to monitor planning and observe teaching for progression and continuity. However, staff in both key stages meet on a regular basis to discuss planning for the subject. The resources are adequate for the subject and are accessible to staff.

ART

80 Attainment in art is typical of that reached by most pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 5. Standards are high enough and have been maintained since the previous inspection. As a result of teachers working through a broad programme of work in art, all pupils have appropriate skills in drawing, painting, creating two and three dimensional work. They also have a sound knowledge of several famous artists and their styles. There are no gaps to their knowledge and they have very good attitudes towards their work.

81 Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject and use this to plan lessons that are interesting. Informative introductions to lessons, which often include details of the lives of the artists they are studying, not only increases pupils' motivation but also ensures that they remain focused on their work and are keen to do their best. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know to look carefully at shape, form and shadow when drawing and sketching objects. Pupils extend these skills in Key Stage 2 as they widen the range of media and techniques used to include printing, pastels and collage. By working systematically to produce work in the styles of artists such as Klimt and Van Gogh at Key Stage 1, pupils in Key Stage 2 approach the work of Kandinsky and Morris with increasing awareness of the influences of underlying different traditions. In addition, the very good relationships that pupils have with their teachers allowed pupils in Year 4 to question her closely about the work of Andy Warhol.

82 A strength of the teaching is the way that art is used to support work in other subjects. Pupils illustrate work in history with careful and attractive drawings and in science and geography they often put their skills to good use to draw diagrams and maps. This was evident from the work of pupils in Year 1 who had drawn detailed plans of their route to school and incorporated some simple architectural features of the buildings they pass on the way. Older pupils produced a collage of natural and made objects, as part of their science topic on materials. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 have made models of Tudor buildings to support their work in history. Art is one of the few subjects where pupils also apply their information technology skills. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use paint programs to produce colourful and imaginative pictures on computer.

83 Attractive and carefully planned displays of pupils' work also provide a clear picture of how pupils improve and develop their skills when mixing paint, producing portraits, such as those of Tudor kings and queens in Year 5 and reproducing the work of well known artists such as William Morris in Year 4. Displays in classrooms and corridors also make the school an attractive place to learn and give pupils the chance to consider what other pupils in the school are doing. On several occasions during the inspection, pupils were seen pointing at and discussing the work that is on display and pupils in the reception class were very keen to talk about the pictures in their classroom.

84 There have been very few changes to the curriculum since the previous inspection. Teachers continue to plan work well and use a structured system to record what pupils know and can do. A checklist of skills and portfolios of pupils' work help teachers provide parents with useful information in end of year reports. The subject is managed and led well, by a temporary teacher. She is able to monitor the standards achieved by pupils from displays and check the quality of teachers' planning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85 Standards in design and technology are high enough. Pupils' attainments are typical for their age by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 5. The rates of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are good and standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection.

86 As a result of good teaching, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a clear understanding of processes for designing and making. Because teachers explain and demonstrate how to use tools safely, pupils are competent at cutting and joining material such as card, paper and textiles. These skills were

evident in the well-constructed finger and glove puppets that pupils in the class in Year 2 made. They looked like the original designs and incorporated a range of materials and textures. Pupils had paid particular attention to adding good finishing touches, such as features and buttons, to their models and were justifiably proud of their accomplishments. When asked to explain what they found most difficult, pupils' responses revealed real enthusiasm for the subject. However, the limited vocabulary of some pupils in both key stages inhibits their ability to explain what they have done.

87 Teachers in Key Stage 2 successfully build on these early skills as they plan lessons where design and technology is incorporated into other subjects. A strength of the teaching is the way teachers in Key Stage 2, plan design and technology lessons as part of topics. This means that pupils understand the importance of designing models that fit a purpose. For example, pupils in Year 5 were asked to design and build a box that would demonstrate how a plant grows towards light. Not only does the task improve pupils' skills in designing and making, it also deepens their scientific awareness. Because teachers plan interesting activities, pupils are very keen to learn new skills and apply ones they have already mastered. This was evident in Year 4 when pupils could hardly wait to begin making model houses in order to produce a three-dimensional street map in geography. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of how to teach design and technology and use this to good effect to explain each of the processes. As a result, older pupils are beginning to evaluate their work and consider what how it could be improved next time. This happened when pupils in Year 4 considered whether the *giggle glasses* they had made needed modifying. The very good relationships that pupils have with their teachers ensures that they are not afraid to ask for help and watch attentively as their teachers shows them what to do.

88 The quality of pupils' work indicates that teaching in design and technology is mainly good. Pupils' experiences of food technology have increased since the previous inspection through planned opportunities for baking. This ensures that pupils experience a wide range of materials and components in their work. Pupils in Year 3 have made sweets and scrambled eggs as well as looking at and making packaging for food. A structured system of assessing and recording what pupils know and can do is used well to plan work at the right level of challenge for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs often benefit from the support of classroom assistants who help them work on designs and make models. As a result they make good progress in both designing and making.

89 The leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the way that standards can be raised. Because the co-ordinator is the head teacher she is able to monitor the quality of teaching by observing in classrooms and by checking planning. For example, she is aware that planning does not always show what is being taught and how. Resources for teaching and learning provide for a variety of experiences and are in reasonable supply. Developments to the subject since the last inspection place the school in a satisfactory position to maintain and improve standards in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

90 Standards of attainment in geography are high enough. They have been maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with expectations for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 5.

91 Teachers use the local environment and what pupils know about Backworth as a starting point for much of the geography. This works well and also deepens pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage. Pupils say they enjoy finding out about their own village. This was evident when pupils in the class in Year 4 got quite excited as they spotted the old village school on an Ordnance map of the area. Using their knowledge of the world around them, pupils in Key Stage 1 begin to plan and then map routes to school and gain familiarity with the locality and its character. They build up geographical skills by asking and answering questions about shops, roads and prominent buildings in the three areas close by the school.

As a result, by the age of seven, most pupils are good at identifying physical features from photographs and have wide enough knowledge of the area. By the time they are in Year 5, pupils have extended their geographical knowledge and skills. They have studied how Backworth has grown and changed as a settlement and contrast life in the north-east of England with areas that have a different climate, such as Death Valley in California.

92 There are several strengths to the teaching that help to make half of it good and help pupils in both key stages make steady progress in acquiring geographical skills and knowledge. The first is the way that teachers emphasise the use of geographic vocabulary in lessons. The words they have planned for pupils to learn are reinforced during lessons and pupils are encouraged to use them when reporting back their research to the class. As a teaching method this works well and means that pupils in the class in Year 5 could use terms like *reservoir* and *evaporation*. What they could not do was give clear explanations of the water cycle or say how they would attempt to conserve water because their basic vocabulary is limited. A second strength of the teaching is the way teachers make good links between geography and other subjects. For example, in a lesson in Year 4, pupils used mathematics skills to locate places on a map using co-ordinates. Again, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils used their literacy and information technology skills to research facts from a CD-ROM. As a result, pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills and gain practise in both.

93 Teachers set homework more regularly in geography than in other subjects. Pupils in Year 3 were asked to find a feature that they had seen on photographs on the way home and pupils in Year 5 kept a tally record of the frequency that they used water in their homes. The work they are asked to do at home helps pupils prepare for the work they do in class.

94 There have been few changes to the curriculum since the previous inspection. Teachers continue to use the scheme of work to plan thoroughly and their assessments of what pupils know and can do are accurate and recorded regularly. One change since the previous inspection is that there is now a co-ordinator to manage the subject. This is a recent appointment and the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. What he has done successfully is begin to monitor teachers' planning and gain a clear view of what resources and training are needed if the school is to continue to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.

HISTORY

95 Pupils' attainment in history is typical for their age. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection with all pupils, including those with special educational needs, having a sound understanding of the periods and people they study.

96 Teachers in Key Stage 1 choose interesting events for study and ensure that there are plenty of pictures and photographs to stimulate pupils' interest. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of the events leading up to the Great Fire of London. They are fascinated by the events leading up to the fire and recall many little details about the style and materials used for building, peoples' dress and lack of proper fire services, which made the fire so devastating. The proof of their enthusiasm was evident when one girl with special educational needs told the class how the size of the monument was the same distance as that from the start of the fire because she had talked about this with her father.

97 In Key Stage 2, teachers ensure that pupils learn about different periods in history. A strength of the teaching is the way they use the subject to promote pupils' cultural development. This ensures that pupils gain an understanding of the beliefs and traditions of past cultures that were different from their own. For example, pupils were very enthusiastic to talk about how Henry VIII disposed of his wives and to give their opinion about why a king should not be able to make or break laws. Because teachers present the subject in an interesting way, through stories, videos and pictures, pupils enjoy learning. By the time they

leave the school, pupils know about life in the ancient civilisations of Greece and Egypt and about England at the time of the Tudors. They are keen to show off their work and proud of their efforts. However, as with other subjects, pupils limited vocabulary and lack of confidence in speaking inhibits their ability to talk eloquently about what they have learned.

98 Teachers are good at using questions to determine what pupils have remembered and to deepen their understanding of the passing of time and historical events. Other features, which make the teaching satisfactory are that pupils with special educational needs are given good support. Sometimes this is from classroom assistants who provide help with spelling and reading, at other times from suitably adapted worksheets or tasks that match their capability. In both cases, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers use a good quality scheme of work to plan lessons and have a detailed system for assessing and recording pupils' progress. This ensures continuity in what is taught.

99 With a newly appointed co-ordinator and an improved scheme of work, the school is in a good position to be able to continue to raise standards. The co-ordinator has made a good and determined start at deciding what needs to be done in order to improve provision and has the enthusiasm to make this happen.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

100 By the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 5, pupils' attainments are well below expectations for their age. This is because they have not had sufficient opportunities to work with computers and other information technology. Standards have fallen considerably since the previous inspection. The school recognises this as a key issue for development and an area that needs tackling urgently.

101 There are three main reasons for pupils' poor achievement. The first is that the school does not have the resources necessary to teach the subject. There are too few computers to teach lessons to the whole class or even small groups. This means that it takes a long time for the whole class to practise a skill and subsequently pupils' progress is slow. In addition, most of the computers in classrooms are out of date or not working. The two new computers; one in each key stage are shared on a half-termly basis but this is not nearly enough to help pupils catch up. Neither is the additional computer used in the class in Year 4. However, governors have set aside money from a national initiative to purchase more computers in the coming year. Teachers are also negotiating with local businesses to see if they will donate computers. The school is also short of other information technology equipment. There are not enough programable robots to teach control technology. This is not being taught, which means that the school does not meet legal requirements. Other gaps in resources are sensory equipment and software to use with computers. Without the necessary resources the school is unlikely to raise standards.

102 The second reason for poor standards is that although teachers are familiar with computers most have not had the training to give them the skills or confidence to teach the subject successfully. While they all have word processing skills and know how to use the school's current software they do not have a wide enough knowledge of using spreadsheets, databases, simulators, or multi-media programs. This prevents them teaching the subject satisfactorily, which in turn means that pupils are unable to learn many of the skills they need to reach the expected levels. For example, most pupils have basic skills in word processing and can use Clip Art by the time they leave the school. What they do not know is how to combine text, graphics and sound to make their presentations more interesting. However, teachers are very keen to remedy this situation through more training.

103 Finally, although teachers do well enough to plan time on computers in some lessons, there is not enough emphasis on teaching information technology skills. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are unsure how to load, save or retrieve information or how to print their work. In addition, computers are not used often enough to teach literacy or numeracy. This is a weakness of planning for information technology and reflects the need for a good scheme of work to guide teachers. Similarly, while

all pupils in Year 5, including those with special educational needs, know how to use CD-ROMs they do not know how to access the Internet or electronic mail. A further gap in pupils' attainment is in their limited understanding of when to use control and sensory equipment. They also lack the ability to make decisions about how information can be used and how the use of information technology compares with other methods. In discussions with pupils, very few could explain why they would choose to use a computer to communicate information rather than any other method. However, most said that they would always use one if they could, because they enjoy working with computers. This was evident in all year groups. Pupils concentrated on their tasks and behaved well when using computers.

104 The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and leads this subject because there is no one else to do it at present. As a result of her efforts, there is now a good quality scheme of work, which provides a better structure for planning, and raising standards is seen as a high priority for development. Staff and governors are working together to increase resources and improve the quality of teaching and learning. The willingness of staff to tackle the issue puts the school in a good position to make the changes necessary to begin to raise standards.

MUSIC

105 At both key stages pupils' skills in appraising, composing and performing music are below expectations for their age. Standards are lower than at the time of the previous inspection as a result of less time given to music in the curriculum and because the school does not have a co-ordinator to lead them forward.

106 Not all teachers have the expertise or confidence to teach music well. They compensate for this by using taped music for singing in assemblies and by focusing much of their teaching on singing, playing percussion instruments and listening to music by well known composers and performers. As a result, pupils have only limited skills in each area. Because they get regular opportunities to sing, pupils perform a range of songs and hymns from memory. However, many lack clear diction and an understanding of how to vary the pitch and dynamics of their singing because they are not taught how to do this. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to perform with musical instruments. This means that pupils progress from clapping simple rhythms in Key Stage 1 to playing instruments in a regular four beat pattern by the time they are in Year 5. Pupils throughout the school are keen to sing and play. Pupils in the reception class join in enthusiastically with action rhymes and songs and older pupils are keen to play musical instruments. Teachers make good use of the school's resources to encourage pupils to listen to music and think about the feelings it evokes. Through listening to the music of orchestras pupils gain some familiarity with the musical instruments they hear playing. Most begin to consider how the music makes them feel and what it represents. For example, pupils in the Year 3 class said that a piece of music from Saint-Saens Carnival of Animals made them think of a tiger searching for food. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to compose music and this is an area where they have very little knowledge.

107 As there is no co-ordinator for music there is a lack of clear leadership. Combined with a need for training and the lack of a good quality scheme of work to support planning, this is resulting in low standards achieved by pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108 At both key stages, standards are high enough and pupils' attainments in physical education are typical for their age. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection. Pupils learn to perform gymnastic movements, such as forward rolls in Key Stage 1 and go on to incorporate these into sequences of travelling across apparatus in Key Stage 2. Most pupils have lots of stamina when it comes to aerobic activity and they enjoy lessons in physical education. Boys and girls have a good sense of balance and although girls are often more graceful than boys, they all finish gymnastic sequences with a flourish or appropriate pose. Older pupils improve their own performance by looking at what their teacher and others do. This was evident when a class of pupils in Year 4 watched one another perform gymnastics on the floor and large apparatus. Although keen to listen to their teachers' comments about what was good, some pupils lack the confidence and vocabulary to express their own views eloquently. By the time they leave the school, most pupils can swim. Almost two-thirds of the current class of Year 4 pupils can swim twenty-five metres or more and three swim distances greater than 100 metres. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn Scottish country-dances and have opportunities to dance expressively in response to music. Older pupils say they are less interested in dance and far more interested in sports. Several know the rules of football and those who attend the after-school football club benefit from the extra tuition.

109 Complete coverage of every aspect of the subject continues at the same level as at the time of the previous inspection. However, there are not enough after school sports to encourage pupils in their love of games or to promote the social development that older pupils get from mixing with pupils from other schools at competitive events. This is a justifiable concern of parents. The school recognises this shortcoming and has already begun to consider how it can be improved.

110 Pupils are taught well and two-thirds of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. Since the previous inspection, teachers have a firmer approach to discipline and insist that pupils always listen to instructions and follow them sensibly. As a result, pupils whose special educational needs arise from behavioural problems know that they have to behave appropriately if they want to take part. In addition, all pupils are safe and responsible when putting out apparatus. A strength of the teaching is the way that teachers assess what pupils can do and help them improve their performance. For example, when a boy in the reception class was rolling from the top of his head instead of the back of his neck, the teacher held him in the right position until he could do it. The help and demonstrations that teachers give enable pupils to improve their performance and it is possible to see them get better in the course of a lesson. Teachers' planning is generally detailed and the activities they choose shows how well they understand their pupils and constantly promote their personal and social development. This was evident when pupils in the class in Year 2 were encouraged to work with a partner as they practised throwing and catching balls.

111 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has contributed to improvements since the previous inspection. She is up-to-date with national initiatives and has a realistic view of what needs to be done when the school becomes a primary school. One of her priorities is ensuring that staff have sufficient training to help them extend the curriculum to pupils in Year 6 and to be able to provide the expertise necessary to coach more sports after school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112 Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 5, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge of the major world faiths. This is because the school has only just begun to use a new syllabus of work and pupils have not had the time to catch up with what they should know. Apart from this gap in pupils' knowledge, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

113 Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and have a sound knowledge of religious education. This has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and attainment. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils gain good early knowledge of Christianity. They understand why Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter and are beginning to read meaning into the stories that Jesus told. All pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy listening to stories from the Bible. Some have their own favourites, for example, when asked about this one pupil said that her favourite Bible story was David and Goliath. Because of the emphasis teachers give to spiritual development, pupils become increasingly aware of people who are significant in their lives and of their own importance within school and the local community. Consequently, by the time they are seven, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, know about rules, being fair to others and treating people who are different from themselves with respect.

114 In Key Stage 2, teachers give thoughtful and interesting introductions to lessons so that pupils know, for example, the Christian traditions of Mothering Sunday. This helps pupils share their own thoughts and ideas openly and increase their understanding of their own cultural heritage. By the end of Year 5 most pupils have a firm understanding of the Christian faith and its celebrations. They know many stories from the Bible and the events leading up to the death of Jesus. However, because there has been insufficient emphasis on other faiths there is a gap in pupils' knowledge and they are unable to make comparisons between religions or say how festivals are similar.

115 Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and discipline result in producing a creative working atmosphere, which allows pupils to make good progress. A strength of teaching in religious education is the good use made of discussions that take place where pupils consider social, moral and religious issues. Teachers show caring and respectful attitudes to pupils, which they then extend to one another. Religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It interests pupils in serious issues, develops their thinking and encourages them to express their views. Pupils demonstrate a growing spiritual awareness of the needs of others.

116 The management of religious education is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the curriculum and has helped teachers become familiar with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Since the last inspection the distinction between religious education and collective worship has been made clearer, although assemblies still support pupils' learning about religion. The co-ordinator recognises the need for greater emphasis to be given to the other faiths described in the locally Agreed Syllabus and plans to purchase the resources to help teachers do this in the near future. This strength of leadership ensures that the school is able to maintain standards in the subject and to continue to improve pupils' learning.