

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BLYTH MORPETH ROAD FIRST SCHOOL**

Blyth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122257

Head teacher: Mrs C Robson

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell  
2456

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 195029

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Disraeli Street Blyth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE14 1HZ
Telephone number:	01670 353257
Fax number:	01670 797749
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Foggett
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	Mrs J Bell	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			History	How well are pupils taught?
			Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
			Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	What should the school do to improve further?
			Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	
			Equal opportunities	
14083	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12631	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	English	
			Music	
			Religious education	
32138	Mr T Plant	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Design and technology	
			Art and design	

The inspection contractor was:

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

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33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE.

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a larger than average sized first school situated close to the centre of the town of Blyth in Northumberland. It admits pupils aged three to nine. The area is one of social disadvantage with high unemployment. The school has 286 pupils on roll; this includes 77 children who attend the nursery part-time (39 full time equivalent). There are 116 boys and 131 girls in the main school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals (148) is very high and well above the national average. The school has two pupils with English as an additional language and both are at an early stage of learning English. The children enter the nursery with a broad range of attainment, but most are well below the level expected for their age, with a few who have very low attainment, particularly in their language and social skills. Many have very limited vocabulary and find it difficult to talk about their ideas or to join in play activities. The school has 58 pupils on the register of special educational needs; this is below average. Of the pupils on the register of special educational needs, 33 are at an early stage and 11 need the involvement of outside agencies. Three pupils have a statutory assessment and 11 have a statement of specific need; the number of statements is above the national average. The school is housed in two Victorian buildings that were once separate infant and junior school. There has been a long period of uncertainty in the school due to the long-term illness of the head teacher. The deputy head teacher is acting head teacher but will leave the school at the end of this term to take up the headship of another school. An experienced head teacher has been seconded from another local school to take over the school until the situation is resolved.

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

The school provides an effective environment for learning that enables all pupils, whatever their ability or background to make a good start to their education. Although standards in reading and writing are below national averages, the pupils achieve well when compared with schools with a similar intake of pupils. The pupils do well in mathematics; standards match those attained nationally and are well above those attained in similar schools. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark that recognises the progress being made in raising standards, and also School Improvement awards in 2001 and 2002. The school has been well led and managed and the acting head teacher provides effective leadership and is supported well by staff and governors. All staff work well as a team and are committed to providing a very high level of care and support that ensures that pupils' personal development is very good. Teaching is often good with some very good teaching in all year groups. It is often very good in the foundation stage (nursery and reception classes). The very good relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils develop good attitudes to school and behave well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The school is led and managed well by the head teacher, acting head teacher, senior staff and governors.
- Relationships in the school are very good and so pupils develop good attitudes to school and behave well.
- The substantial amount of good teaching enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, to achieve well.
- All staff work hard to provide a very high level of care and support to pupils; this ensures that their learning is effective and their personal development is very good.
- There is very good programme to promote pupils' personal, social development and to encourage citizenship and a healthy lifestyle. The provision and support for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The provision for children in the foundation stage is very good and the very effective teaching

and learning ensure that they make a very good start to their education.

- The staff and governors develop very effective links with the community in order to maximise the benefits to pupils.

**What could be improved**

- The standards in English, mathematics and science could be higher.
- The assessment of pupil’s progress and the way this information is used on a day-to-day basis to build on what pupils already know and match work more closely to their ability.
- The effectiveness of the roles of the key stage and subject co-ordinators.

*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 made sound improvement since the last inspection in 1997. Despite the period of uncertainty and concern due to the long-term illness of the head teacher, the issues identified in the last report have been resolved. Teaching and learning have improved and so pupils are achieving well in relation to their low starting point on entry to the school. Standards are higher and are steadily improving over time. The staff have undertaken in service training and so expertise in science is higher. The school has adopted national guidance for the subject and so there is a steady progression in experimental and investigative work as pupils move through the school. Staff have worked hard to improve planning and in most lessons they are clear about what pupils will learn. Assessment procedures are better than they were although more work is needed to ensure the day-to-day checks on pupils’ progress are used more effectively to plan the next lessons. The subject co-ordinators now have a more clearly defined role and are managing effectively the developments in their subjects. However, they have too few opportunities to visit other classrooms to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning and their impact on standards. The role of the key stage co-ordinators is not well developed and they have a limited impact on the work in their areas. Since the last inspection several governors are new. However, governors are now linked to subjects and areas such as special educational needs and this is improving their understanding of the work of the school and enabling them to support management more effectively.

**STANDARDS**

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
reading	E	D	D	B	well above average      A above average            B average                    C below average            D well below average      E
writing	E	D	D	B	
mathematics	E	E	C	A	

The school admits children with a broad range of ability but many have language, mathematical and social skills that are well below those expected for their age when they enter nursery. Children make good progress throughout the foundation stage, and progress is often rapid in their personal and social development. However, by the time they start Year 1, the children’s attainment is still below that



expected for their age in the language and literacy areas of learning and for a few children it is well below. Many have a limited range of vocabulary and find it difficult to talk about what they have learned.

The results of the 2001 tests for seven year olds show that the pupils' performance in reading and writing was below the national average. In mathematics the standards matched those attained nationally. The school does well when compared with similar schools and standards were above the average attained in these schools in reading and writing, and well above in mathematics. The teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science were below the levels attained nationally, but the number of pupils attaining the higher levels was above average.

In current work, standards of reading and writing are often below those expected of seven year olds. Pupils do not have sufficient encouragement from teachers, or the resources to develop opportunities to read for pleasure and this affects their performance in reading. Standards in writing could be higher if pupils had more opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects and there was greater consistency in the teaching of spelling. In speaking, standards are below average and many pupils have a very limited range of vocabulary. Listening skills are sound. Standards in mathematics are below those expected at the age of seven. This is mainly due to a higher number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Standards in science are below those expected by the age of seven. The high number of undemanding worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to practise writing skills. Pupils build on earlier work and often make good progress, but standards in English, mathematics and science are often still below what is expected when they transfer to Middle School at the age of nine. The standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are at the level expected by the age of seven and meet what can be expected at the age of nine. By the age of seven, work in religious education matches the standards identified in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools, but by the end of Year 4, standards are below what can be expected for their age. This is because pupils of differing abilities all do the same work and religious education is often taught alongside the personal, social and health education programme. This results in insufficient time to cover the requirements of the syllabus in sufficient depth. Not all teachers have a good understanding of the agreed syllabus.

Standards in art and design, history, music and physical education are broadly as expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and match what can be expected of nine year olds at the end of Year 4. Standards in design and technology and geography are lower than expected by these ages. Many pupils have a greater knowledge and understanding than their writing skills show and although they have limited vocabulary can explain their ideas in their own words. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English are supported well and achieve well in relation to their ability. They make good progress against the targets set for them.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils enjoy school and are keen to take advantage of what it offers them. They try hard and usually concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils know what is expected of them and behave well, both in lessons and in the play areas.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and staff and pupils are very good and so pupils' personal development is very good.

Attendance	Poor. Attendance is very low when compared with national averages.
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The school works very hard to improve attendance because of the detrimental effect on the progress of these pupils. Despite the school's best efforts to promote good attendance, there appears to be a culture of condoning absence among some of the parents.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching is satisfactory overall with a substantial amount that is good and sometimes very good. There was some good teaching in all classes and only a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This was mainly in religious education and reflected the teacher's lack of expertise in this subject. The teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes (the foundation stage) is good and sometimes very good. The effective teaching ensures that these children achieve well and have a good start to their learning. Staff in the foundation stage have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide a stimulating range of activities to encourage their learning. The teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good or very good in Years 1 to 4. The teaching of English is at least satisfactory, with some that is good or very good and the basic skills of literacy are mainly taught well in English lessons. Teachers have good strategies for teaching reading but pupils have too few opportunities to read for pleasure. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but there are insufficient opportunities to teach literacy skills throughout the curriculum that would enable pupils to develop and practise their writing in other subjects. The teaching of mathematics is broadly satisfactory and sometimes good. However, pupils have limited opportunities to practise numeracy skills in subjects such as science. Many teachers rely too heavily on published worksheets; this limits pupils' opportunities to develop and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and to learn to set out work correctly in mathematics and science. Teachers and support staff work well with pupils who have special educational needs to ensure that they learn as well as they can. Their individual learning plans are useful and support their learning. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good and they are well supported by teachers, support staff and specialist staff from the local authority staff.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum covers all subjects. The school has good links with the community and these enhance the pupils' learning experiences. Provision for children in the foundation stage is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils' needs are quickly identified and met well through the good work done by teachers and the effective teaching by support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are well supported by specialist staff from the local authority and by class teachers and support staff. They make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The pupils have good opportunities to express how they feel and learn to get on well together. The moral and social development of pupils is very good. The pupils' awareness of their own culture is well promoted but provision for multicultural awareness is more limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff know the pupils very well and give a high priority to their well being.

The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. The school enriches the curriculum through well-planned visits out of school. Procedures for monitoring personal development, performance and to monitor and promote attendance are very good. Assessment procedures do not yet enable staff to make best use of information gained from day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in order to plan the next work to build on previous learning. The provision of extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory since the school only provides extra-curricular activities that are charged for and this means they are not accessible to all pupils. The school works hard to establish good partnerships with parents but not all parents respond to these efforts. Those that do respond have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The acting head teacher builds well on the good leadership and management established in the school to provide a strong lead in the school's efforts to raise standards. All of the staff work well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors work hard to support the school's planning for improvement. They are gaining a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through links to subjects. However, their annual report to parents' does not include all the required information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is developing sound procedures to look closely at its performance. It identifies strengths and weaknesses and plans carefully to overcome any shortcomings. It has identified the weaknesses in writing and begun to implement its plan for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Careful financial planning supports the priorities for improvement and the school seeks the best value in its expenditure.

The head teacher has been absent through long-term illness but has established a climate in which the school is led and managed well. The acting head teacher is providing good leadership and the school is well managed, with good support from staff. The subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics visit other classrooms to monitor teaching and learning, but there are few opportunities for the co-ordinators of other subjects to gain an overview of how their subjects are developing throughout the school. The role of the key stage co-ordinators is not well developed and has limited impact on standards of teaching and learning. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff. The accommodation is adequate and well cared for by the caretaker. However, the computer suite is too small for whole class teaching and this affects teachers' opportunities to develop pupils' skills more rapidly.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children enjoy school.</li><li>• The school encourages children to work hard, to do their best and to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The teaching is good and the children make good progress.</li><li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The information on how well their children make progress.</li><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li><li>• The amount of homework.</li></ul>

The return on the pre-inspection questionnaire was very low, but most parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. Some parents expressed concerns about homework and the lack of school organised activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged the amount and frequency of homework to be satisfactory and acknowledged the problems the school experiences in getting some parents to support homework. Inspection evidence supported parents' views about activities outside lessons, as the school only provides extra-curricular activities that are charged for and this means they are not accessible to all pupils. Communication between the school and home is good and parents are well informed about their children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 When they enter the nursery, the children's attainment covers a broad range but is mainly well below the standards expected for this age group in language, mathematical and social skills. For a few children attainment is very low, particularly in their language and social skills. Many have very limited vocabulary and find it difficult to talk about their ideas or to join in play activities. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them is often narrow due to the limited range of experiences outside school. Teaching is good and sometimes very good in the foundation stage (the nursery and reception classes that form the school's Early Years Unit) and so children make good progress. The staff in the foundation stage give a high priority to providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment that supports the children's personal and social development. This enables the children to make substantial progress in their personal and social development. They settle quickly into routines and achieve well. However, by the time they start Year 1, children's attainment is still often below and, for a few well below, expectations for their age in their language, literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world about them. Many are on course to be below the attainment expected in their mathematical development by the time they transfer to Year 1. Many children do well in their creative work and their physical skills are good; they are on course to match the goals identified for their age in these areas of learning by the time they reach the end of the reception year.

2 In the 2001 tests for seven year olds, pupils' performance in reading and writing was below the national average but in mathematics standards matched those attained nationally. The school achieves well when compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils; it attains standards above these schools in reading and writing and well above the standards achieved in mathematics. The boys performed better than girls in reading and mathematics. The school has identified this and the school has focused successfully on improving boys' performance in mathematics through improved opportunities to raise boys' expectations and to improve their attitudes. Although teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science were below average, the numbers of pupils attaining the higher levels was better than the national picture. Pupils make good progress from their low starting point and their performance when compared to similar schools shows the value added to their learning by the substantial amount of good and sometimes very good teaching throughout the school.

3 The last inspection described standards as below the national averages for English, mathematics and science, but pupils progress is now good and standards are steadily improving year on year and those in mathematics have improved well. Pupils achieve well over time and the by the time they transfer to Middle School at the age of nine they are attaining standards that are just below those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.

4 Pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time, whatever their ability or background and current standards in English are often below those expected of seven year olds. Standards in speaking are very low on entry and many children start school with very limited vocabulary. This improves due to the good work of staff who reinforce speaking and listening skills in all activities. However, many pupils find it hard to convey their ideas and show what they know because they do not have a sufficiently broad range of vocabulary. They often find it hard to listen carefully to adults and each other. Pupils make steady progress in reading; teachers teach a good variety of strategies to help pupils read unfamiliar words. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure and their limited vocabulary makes it difficult for them to understand all that they read. By Year 2, more able pupils read fluently and with expression but do not always read punctuation. In Year 4, pupils know how to use books to find information and most know how to use the contents and index

pages to help them. More able pupils in Year 4 are not always challenged well enough by the books they choose.

5 The school has identified the need to improve writing and their work on developing pupils' skills in writing for different purposes is having a positive impact. However, attainment in writing is below that expected by the end of Year 2. Pupils write for a range of purposes but their progress is slowed by the teachers' over reliance on worksheets that lack challenge and provide few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in English and in other subjects. Their limited vocabulary does not enable them to write interesting and extended pieces of work. By Year 4, pupils write for a wider range of purposes such as newspaper reports, poetry and accounts in science but the overuse of worksheets is still a feature and activities such as cutting up sentences from a worksheet and sticking them in books do little to enable them to practise their independent writing skills. In handwriting lessons, only more able pupils use a joined script and few apply this to their other work. Less able pupils mainly use worksheets for their handwriting activities or copy examples of writing.

6 Standards in mathematics are mainly below those expected at the age of seven. Pupils are beginning to have knowledge of two, five and ten times tables. They can count forward and back in twos, fives and tens and most can add and subtract two digit numbers and understand the place value of tens and units. They use their knowledge of numbers to solve 'shopping' problems and successfully work out change from £1.00. Pupils are beginning to tell the time in hours and half hours and name and recognise the features of two-dimensional shapes. Although progress is at least sound, much of the work is recorded on undated worksheets; this makes it difficult for teachers to track achievement over time. By Year 4 pupils attainment is below that expected for nine year olds. They build on earlier work to make at least satisfactory progress. However, their setting out of work is often inaccurate because of too few opportunities to set out work for themselves.

7 Standards in science are improving due to some good teaching and use of national guidance for the subject to provided steadily increasing challenge as pupils move through the school. However, standards are below those expected by the age of seven at the end of Year 2. A few pupils achieve above this level but the number could be higher if there was greater challenge for the average and more able pupils. Pupils aged seven are developing their understanding of forces and have some understanding of friction and how this may slow movement. They gain a basic understanding of the need to make a test fair but are slow to identify ways to do this. Most pupils understand a simple electric circuit and know how to make a bulb light. They know which foods are good for health and which are not but their work consists of cut out and coloured in pictures of different foods. By Year 4, pupils are clearer about what makes a test fair. They make more complex electrical and introduce two bulbs. Most know that this makes both bulbs show a dimmer light but cannot explain why. They can name the parts of a plant and know what plants need to grow. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to record their investigations in their own words and few can set out work correctly.

8 The standards in ICT have improved and are at the level expected by the age of seven. Pupils have sound basic keyboard skills and know the function of different keys, such as 'shift' and 'spacebar'. The sound teaching means that pupils are learning to work with new PCs and software. They work well and can open a program, find a file, type in text and print their work. They successfully use the mouse to control cursors and to locate icons that enable them to drag and position words and images correctly.

9 By the end of Year 2, standards in religious education match those identified in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. Pupils have a sound understanding of stories from the Old and New Testaments. They can sequence the story of the creation and know basic facts about the life of Jesus. Their knowledge of Judaism is less good; they recall some Jewish symbols but cannot name them correctly. At the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is below what can be expected of nine year olds. This is because pupils of different abilities do the same work, they have few opportunities to



write and there is too little time given to religious education because it is often taught within the personal, social and health education programme.

10 Standards in art and design, history, music and physical education are broadly as expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and match what can be expected of nine year olds at the end of Year 4. Standards in design and technology and geography are lower than expected by these ages. It is evident that many pupils have a greater knowledge and understanding than their written work shows and in some subjects they also find oral explanations difficult. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and achieve well in relation to their ability. The grouping of pupils by ability helps them because they can work at a slower pace to ensure their understanding. They make good progress against the targets set for them in their individual learning plans. The pupils with English as an additional language are at an early stage of learning English and achieve well in relation to their ability. They are well supported by teachers, support staff and specialist staff from the local authority staff. A pupil who has been identified as having above average skills in mathematics works with older pupils of similar ability for this subject. This enables him to do well.

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

11 Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They arrive promptly each morning and are keen to start the day's activities. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in class. Pupils of all ages consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Most pupils are motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They are attentive to their teachers in lessons and most willingly ask and answer questions. Most parents agree that their children like school.

12 Overall standards of behaviour are good. The teaching, support staff and most of the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. Many parents agree that behaviour in the school is good. Children move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is good and sometimes very good. The behaviour of Year 3 and 4 pupils on a visit to the local swimming baths was excellent. However, a few pupils have underdeveloped social skills and can, on occasions, disrupt learning by shouting out and seeking attention in lessons. There were no signs of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils. There was one fixed-term exclusion in the current academic year.

13 The relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. Pupils of all ages work well together in the classrooms and play well together in the playgrounds. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. Most pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, pupils are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and sit quietly at times of reflection.

14 The pupils' personal development is very good. Opportunities for pupils to develop their capacity for personal study have improved since the last inspection. In the classrooms, most pupils willingly take responsibility for their own work, and in many lessons children worked independently. From starting school, children in the nursery and reception classes learn to be independent and get out and return equipment; they are well settled in the Early Years Unit. Where opportunities for taking on formal responsibility around the school are offered, pupils respond in a mature and sensible way. For example, the "Blyth Buddies" look out for any lonely or upset children at breaks and lunchtimes. There is a very good range of social and educational visits and pupils have opportunities to learn from a range of visitors, who come to school to share their expertise. The school supports local, national and international charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. Most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

15 The attendance rate at the school is very low in comparison with other schools. Despite the school's best efforts to promote good attendance, this aspect has deteriorated since the last inspection.

There would appear to be a culture of condoning absence among some of the parents. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average.

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

16 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with a substantial amount that is good and sometimes very good. The exception is religious education where it is unsatisfactory due to a few teachers' limited expertise in this subject. There was some good teaching in all classes. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection; there is a greater proportion of good and very good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching. In most lessons teachers plan well and provide a good range of interesting activities to keep pupils motivated. Many question pupils well to check on what they have learned and pupils respond well because they know they will be listened to. Teachers use a wide range of methods and organisation to meet the needs of pupils. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils well and so behaviour is good. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, work lacked challenge and the same tasks were presented to all pupils, whatever their ability. The pace of these lessons was often slow and time was lost through interruptions that disrupted the learning more than the minor incidents that they were meant to check. For example, on one lesson the teacher interrupted the lesson several times to give out 'stickers' for good behaviour; the lessons slowed each time and pupils lost interest.

17 Teaching is good and often very good in the foundation stage. Staff in the foundation stage have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide a stimulating range of activities to encourage their learning. All staff are very effective in successfully promoting children's personal and social development. They use a consistent approach, establish good routines and have clear expectations of behaviour. The nursery nurses and other well trained support staff work well with teachers to promote the children's achievement across all the areas of learning. They take a full role in teaching and work well with the children who need extra help.

18 Children make good progress throughout the foundation stage, and progress is often rapid in their personal and social development. The effective teaching enables them to achieve well, whatever their ability and to make a good start to their learning. The Early Years Unit is newly established from separate classes that in the past worked independently. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes are beginning to plan closely together to implement national guidance for the early years curriculum. They are beginning to strengthen the shared approaches to teaching and learning between the nursery and reception classes in order to ensure continuity for children as they move through the foundation stage.

19 Teaching is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good or very good in Years 1 to 4. Teachers build on the good work done in the foundation stage and this enables the pupils to continue to make good gains in their learning. The teachers are effective in teaching the basic skills in literacy and numeracy and in many lessons they plan interesting work so that the pupils remain eager to learn. The teaching in English is at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Staff have good approaches to the teaching of reading and pupils develop a sound range of strategies to help them tackle new words. Teachers read to the pupils in a lively and expressive manner to provide examples to encourage pupils to try to use expression when they read. However, pupils have too few opportunities to learn to read for pleasure. The teaching of writing is broadly satisfactory, and there has been some sound progress in developing opportunities for pupils to extend their vocabulary and write for different purposes. However, although literacy skills are taught and practised well enough in English lessons, they are not consistently well taught and reinforced in all other subjects. The teaching in mathematics is mainly satisfactory in Year 1 and 3 and good in Years 3 and 4. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved through their work in planning for and implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers use to good effect the time at the start of lessons, when the pupils calculate mentally and try to solve problems. This keeps them on their toes and maintains their interest very well. Teachers do not consistently reinforce the correct setting out of written work and this impacts

on pupils' accuracy. Marking does not always tell pupils what they are doing well and how they could improve their work. In English, mathematics, science and most other subjects teachers place too much reliance on the use of worksheets for pupils to record their work. These worksheets frequently lack challenge since they often only require a one-word answer. This means pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills or to set out work correctly. These worksheets are rarely dated and easily become muddled; they provide limited opportunities for teachers to check on pupils' progress over time.

20 In many lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching methods. They know that many pupils find it hard to concentrate for long periods and they find ways to get pupils' interest at the start of lessons. As a result, many pupils listen carefully and are eager to be involved. For example at the beginning of a Year 2 English lesson, the teacher shared a story of 'Winnie the Pooh' with the whole class. Her very good use of resources such as 'Pooh' stickers helped to excite attention and to motivate the class. The teacher ensured a very good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups. The pupils were very clear about what they would learn and because of the excellent relationships established in the class, pupils gained self-esteem. The teacher sought pupils' ideas and was quick to praise; for example, when a less confident pupil volunteered 'purple' as the class talked about eye and hair colours, the teacher said 'Yes, we'll use purple because I like good colour words'.

21 Teachers develop very good relationships with pupils; this helps them to manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. In the most effective lessons the pace is good and this enables pupils to concentrate well. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the brisk oral session at the start of the lesson enabled pupils to develop a brisk recall of number facts. In the main part of the lesson, pupils responded well to the opportunities to talk about the methods used to solve problems. The lesson was well resourced with two-dimensional shapes to enable pupils to learn about the properties of different shapes and to apply their learning to identify pairs of parallel lines.

22 With the exception of religious education, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is at least satisfactory. A useful programme of in-service training has ensured that they are confident in planning and teaching most subjects. For example, a lot of work has been done to improve teachers' knowledge in ICT and this has enabled a substantial rise in standards. However, the co-ordinator for religious education does not have a clear brief for monitoring teaching and learning in other classes and the school has not ensured that staff have been trained to teach the new agreed syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. This is affecting the standards pupils attain by the age of nine.

23 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is mainly good in both the foundation stage and in Years 1 to 4. Teachers and support staff work hard to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Many pupils have limited concentration but staff encourage them to persevere with their reading and to complete their set tasks. The individual learning plans are well written and all staff ensure that work is matched well to the targets set for each pupil. They ensure that these targets are regularly checked and updated to match pupils' progress, which is often good. The support staff are deployed well and work effectively with these pupils both in class and when they withdraw them for extra help, either individually, and in small groups. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good and they achieve well because of the effective support of class teachers, support staff and the input of specialist staff from the local authority.

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

24 The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and follows guidance from the local authority on what should be taught in religious education. The provision for children in the foundation stage is very good and they make a good start to their learning through the very good range of activities and experiences available.

25 The school has adopted national guidelines in all subjects throughout Years 1 to 4 and this is beginning to enable teachers to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and ensure that the National Curriculum is taught systematically across the school. At present, opportunities to practise and develop writing in subjects other than English are not being used sufficiently well. Writing and spelling have been ongoing areas for improvement and this year, group and individual targets have been introduced which should have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Throughout Years 1 to 4 pupils are taught in ability sets for literacy and numeracy, which reduces the range of ability in each teaching group, making it easier for teachers to meet the needs of individual pupils.

26 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully throughout the school and standards have been rising steadily, with minor fluctuations year on year. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark that recognises the progress being made in raising standards and also School Improvement awards in 2001 and 2002.

27 The school enriches the curriculum with a good range of off-site visits and by bringing visitors into the school to work with the pupils. For example, pupils have been to Wallington Hall and Whitehouse Farm to support work in history and geography. Theatre and music groups have visited the school and representatives from local church groups contribute to assemblies on a regular basis. The 'Dads and Lads' group is an ICT initiative that is sponsored by British Telecom and encourages boys' confidence in working with computers. The school made a successful joint bid for funding, with another first school, and this has paid for new equipment that is used by parents, grandparents and pupils working together to extend their knowledge and skills.

28 Equality of access and opportunity is built into the everyday life of the school. Much has been done to improve policies and other school documentation to give acknowledgement to issues of equal opportunities. Teachers generally do all they can to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully included in the work.

29 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress in their learning. Their support is mainly linked to improving their literacy and numeracy skills, and these often impact on other subjects. Teachers and support staff help them well in lessons. All staff are fully aware of their individual education plans. The work is often well matched to the pupils' needs and takes good account of the targets set for them in their learning plans. These targets are reviewed and updated regularly. Pupils have full access to all parts of the curriculum. The school's identification and referral procedures are well organised and comply fully with national requirements. The school makes good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language. They receive good support from school staff and specialist staff employed by the local authority.

30 A significant number of parents rightly disagree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Although the children are taken on a wide and varied range of visits into the community, there are currently no extra-curricular activities freely available to all pupils at no cost to their parents. Activities available have included gymnastics, soccer, cricket, basketball and athletics. However, these activities are only available on a paid basis, which excludes some pupils who wish to take part. The school hosts a breakfast club that is well attended and has impacted positively on improved punctuality. The breakfast club meets four times a week; the school works in partnership with a charity, Trinity Youth Trust, to provide a free breakfast and activities before school starts. Children aged four to 11 can take part but numbers are restricted to 30 places.

31 The school makes good provision for citizenship, personal, social and health education. The school's motto, 'Morpeth Road is a happy school' shows one of the school's key aims. The school is in the Northumberland Health Zone and is actively working towards the Healthy Schools Quality Mark. The 'Health' mobile classroom visits once a year and this ensures that there is direct teaching about sex education and drugs awareness at appropriate levels for the pupils. During the rest of the year these two key areas are dealt with as they arise in response to pupils' questions or in lessons where appropriate. Every year the school takes part in a sponsored silence to raise funds for their chosen charity 'Macmillan Cancer Care'.

32 Links with the community are very well founded and bring additional learning opportunities to the curriculum. The school uses community resources very well, for example, field trips, in and around the local area, are used very effectively to support the geography and history topic work. Community visitors, regularly take personal, social and health education lessons, and assemblies. The school has successfully bid for money from local and national organisations to fund major grounds improvements. There is regular contact and good relationships with the receiving middle school. This ensures smooth transition to the children's next stage of education.

33 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. It underpins the school's ethos of caring and valuing all who work both in, and for the school. There is very helpful, detailed guidance, but this is not used well enough to plan provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the whole curriculum.

34 Spiritual development is satisfactory. There are opportunities in assemblies for pupils to listen, or to join in, saying prayers. However, although music is played as an introduction it is not used well enough to provide a time for quiet reflection when all the pupils are assembled. Teachers do not plan well enough for opportunities for pupils to reflect on, and make a personal response, in their learning. Some pupils have thought carefully about the creation story, and have responded well by writing prayers of thanks to God. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write about their personal feelings. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their own experiences, and to value what each other has to say. However, not all are confident enough to take part. In a geography lesson in Year 3, pupils valued each other's contribution when making group decisions. In Year 4, pupils sharing their experiences and understanding about the dangers of drug misuse were asking some thoughtful questions.

35 Moral and social development is very good. It is a major strength of the school. Pupils are valued, and all adults working with pupils consistently use opportunities to raise pupils' self-esteem. Adults always provide a good example of the school's expectations of behaviour. Pupils know the school, and class based, rules. One pupil called to her friend when they were leaving the classroom at the end of the day 'You're not allowed to run'. Teachers respect pupils, and value their contributions and work. In two lessons, when teachers made minor mistakes, they promptly apologised to the pupils. Pupils respond well and show respect for adults, each other and property. They are proud of their school. Some pupils are given roles of responsibility, and those chosen take these seriously. Some pupils prepare fruit and distribute it to classrooms for the morning break. They know what they have to do, and behave maturely. Other pupils have responsibility for delivering registers to classes. Pupils who are on duty as 'buddies' at playtimes are proud of the tunics they wear to show other pupils who they are. They know what they are expected to do and say 'We look out for anyone who seems left out, and go and talk to them'. Pupils are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Their successes are regularly celebrated in assemblies.

36 Cultural development is satisfactory overall, although pupils have very limited understanding of the richness and diversity of faiths and cultures around the world. This is because pupils are not given opportunities to use their writing skills in religious education, history and geography to support

their learning. Visits and visitors to the school promote pupils' awareness and understanding of their own cultural heritage well. Teachers make good efforts to help pupils learn about the heritage of their own community. For example, pupils are learning why the dismantling of the local power station is so important to people in their community. They know that it has been a distinctive landmark in the town for many years, and that many local people used to be employed there.

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

37 The school provides very effective care for its pupils. All members of staff are very caring, dedicated and totally committed to the welfare of the children in their charge. They are very approachable and totally supportive. The support staff give very good support to both teachers and pupils. Experienced, well-deployed teaching assistants and nursery nurses work very effectively to support children's learning, particularly those pupils who have additional educational needs. This has a positive impact on the progress these children are making. All staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, which they implement consistently and conscientiously. Procedures for child protection are securely in place and fully understood by all staff. The class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs.

38 The governing body and the head teacher take their health and safety responsibilities seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including risk assessment, are systematically carried out and formally recorded. Conscientious teachers, teaching assistants and nursery nurses, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils very well at breaks. Experienced midday supervisors, who have been trained in behaviour management, undertake lunchtime supervision conscientiously, and the standard of care is very high.

39 The school has good procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. All staff have high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and discipline is administered conscientiously and consistently throughout the school. This has a positive impact on the high standards of good behaviour maintained throughout the school. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good. Registers are completed correctly, reasons for non-attendance recorded consistently, and absences rigorously followed up.

40 The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance are good. There are very good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. The school uses the results of annual statutory and optional tests, as well as their own regular assessments in English, mathematics, science and ICT to group pupils by ability for English and mathematics, and to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs. The school also targets support for those pupils attaining just below what is expected for their ages in English and mathematics.

41 Record keeping systems are very good. Individual pupil profiles contain examples of pupils' work, the results of termly assessments, annual assessments and copies of annual reports to parents. These records are shared with parents at parents' evenings. The school uses ICT effectively to track the progress of individual pupils. This information is used well to set class and group targets in English and mathematics, which are aimed at raising standards.

42 The school has dealt with part of the issue from the last inspection, and objectives for lessons are identified in planning. However, despite the very good procedures in place for assessment and recording attainment, the day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons and the use of the information to plan future lessons is not yet as good as it could be.

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

43 Relationships between the school and parents are satisfactory. The school does have some difficulty in recruiting the active support of many parents. There is a small number of committed parents and governors who regularly help in the classrooms, accompany the children on out of school trips and give of their time to help in other ways around the school. For example, a small number of



parents regularly attends the weekly literacy and information technology sessions with their children. However, not all parents are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home. Not all parents support the school's efforts to promote good attendance. There is a small but active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that organises social and fund raising events for the school. A considerable amount of money has been raised for the school in this way. The PTA is currently actively fund raising for grounds improvements.

44 The return on the pre-inspection questionnaire was very low, but many parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. Some parents expressed concerns about homework and the lack of school organised activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged the use of homework to be satisfactory and acknowledged the problems the school experiences in getting some parents to support homework. Inspection evidence supported parents' views about activities outside lessons, as the school does not currently provide any free extra-curricular activities.

45 Communication between the school and home is good. Most parents agree that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. The nursery staff make home visits and provide parents with very good information during the early years of their child's education. The school sends out regular, informative newsletters and individual letters about specific events and activities. It publishes a comprehensive, informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. The latest report fails to include the statutory information about teachers' professional development and the school's national curriculum assessment results at the end of Year 2.

46 Parents are given an informative annual progress report that clearly indicates what the pupils can do, the progress they are making and areas for improvement. They are offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The head teacher and staff are very welcoming and approachable. They make themselves readily available to meet parents at the start and end of each day. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to speak informally to their child's class teacher.

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

47 The leadership and management of the school are good and have been maintained since the last inspection despite the changes brought about by the long-term illness of the head teacher. During her absence the school is led well by the deputy head teacher, who is currently acting head teacher. This will change at the end of term when she leaves the school to take up the headship of another school. An experienced head teacher from a local school has been seconded to be acting head teacher until the situation is resolved. The head teacher has led the school well and given a clear direction for its development. She has shown a clear understanding of what the school does well and where it could improve. The head teacher has worked well with staff and teamwork is good. The acting head teacher has continued the planned initiatives identified in the school improvement plan and has built well on the work of the head teacher to move the school forward. In this she has been well supported by the staff, governors and local education authority. The management of the school is good and well supported by staff and governors. The school secretary provides high quality support for the daily administration of the school and uses computer systems well to support her work.

48 The acting head teacher works well with staff to develop good teaching and learning, and to continue to raise standards. She provides a strong lead for the school in maintaining the very good ethos that ensures the high quality care and support for all pupils. The school is successfully raising standards over time, although currently below those expected by the time they leave the school. This shows a big improvement from their low starting point on entry to the school. The head teacher and staff have worked hard to identify how standards can be improved. The school's improvement plan

provides a useful framework to plan, implement and monitor the effectiveness of developments. For example, the current priorities are all relevant and based on a clear awareness of the school's needs. They rightly include priorities such as raising standards in literacy and numeracy, further development of ICT, and continued review of the curriculum for the foundation stage children in the newly established Early Years Unit, and working with parents to improve attendance.

49 The head teacher, acting head teacher, staff and governors have worked hard and the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Despite the period of uncertainty due to the head teacher's illness, the issues identified in the last inspection have been resolved. In particular, teaching and learning have improved, standards are higher and assessment procedures are better than they were. The school analyses information from test results and teachers' assessments of pupils' performance to set targets and provide support for groups and individuals. This is working well but more could be done to ensure that all teachers use their day-to-day checks on what pupils have learned in lessons to plan their next lessons so that they build more closely on what pupils have already learned.

50 Subject co-ordinators work hard to support colleagues and develop work in their subjects. Those for English and mathematics have had time to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the work in these areas by visiting other classrooms. These opportunities are not yet in place for other subject co-ordinators and this is needed if they are to give a lead in developing their subjects. The pastoral role of the key stage co-ordinators works well and they give a good lead in supporting pupils and managing their behaviour throughout their key stage. However, their role in management is not well developed.

51 In the absence of the head teacher they have worked well with the acting head to implement performance management. This is enabling the school to identify the professional development needs of staff and to establish a good programme of in-service training that reflects the needs of staff and meets the priorities of the school improvement plan. However, the key stage co-ordinators have little overview of teaching and learning in their key stage or throughout the school. They have no role in working with subject co-ordinators to monitor the development of the curriculum throughout the school and in ensuring that work builds on what has gone before.

52 The governors are very supportive of the school. They are kept well informed by the acting head teacher and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have given her good support during the absence through illness of the head teacher and have supported staff morale. Governors work hard, through their committees and visits, to check on the school's provision and to help it improve. However, not all the required information is included in their annual report to parents. Many governors are newly appointed and the link of individual governors to the main subjects and special educational needs is providing the governing body with a good overview of the work of the school. The school's financial planning is good and specific grants such as those for special educational needs are used efficiently. The governors seek the best value in their expenditure. The acting head teacher, staff and governors track the school's progress towards the targets set for improvement and consider what value has been received from the money that it has spent. The school provides good value for money.

53 The school makes good provision to meet the needs of its pupils and provides good support to them and their families. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and well managed. The school's provision meets the requirements of the new code of practice for these pupils. Pupils with learning problems are identified early and those on the special educational needs register have well written and useful individual education plans that indicate clear targets. These targets are reviewed regularly and the plans updated. The well-trained and experienced support staff work well with teachers to improve pupils' learning opportunities and enable them to make good progress; many achieve well in relation to their ability. The support staff bring many individual strengths to the school; they have a clear commitment to the education and well being of all their pupils.

54 There are sufficient teachers, and support staff, to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teachers are all suitably qualified, and there is an appropriate balance of experience and expertise. Teachers with specific expertise for particular areas of the curriculum often use this well. For

example by taking another class for art or music. Teachers have received appropriate training to meet the new initiatives for literacy and numeracy. Support assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs and those targeted for additional specific support. However, those classes with a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, but with no pupils with a statement, have no additional adult support. Nursery nurses and support staff working with children in the foundation stage complement the work of teachers very well and enable the children to make a good start to their education. There are clear procedures for the induction of newly qualified staff and staff new to the school.

55 The school comprises two main buildings, one for the early years and one for the main school. The school is set in spacious grounds comprising a large smooth surface playground and a grass sports field. There is a separate safe and secure play area for the children in the foundation stage. There are plans and recently acquired funding for major grounds improvements.

56 The teaching accommodation is satisfactory. The nursery is spacious and more than adequate for the number of children who currently attend. The classrooms are of adequate size and allow all aspects of the curriculum to be taught. There is a good size library and a small computer room. However, the computer room, often used for special educational needs withdrawal, is on the first floor and is not accessible to children with physical disabilities, nor large enough to house a full class and this limits its use and impacts on opportunities for whole class teaching. Although pupils' are achieving well in ICT, their learning could be more rapid if teachers could use the computer suite with their whole class. There is a general shortage of storage space for teaching resources. For example, there is no indoor storage for physical education equipment and these are stored around the hall taking up teaching space. The caretaker and cleaning staff keep the school very clean; it is well maintained and the learning environment is enhanced by attractive displays.

57 The school has sufficient resources to teach the National Curriculum, although some adjustments are being made to allow full access to the nationally approved teaching schemes that have been recently adopted by the school. Resources are well maintained and stored and this allows easy access to them. Co-ordinators work well with colleagues to identify resource needs.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58 In order to further improve pupils' progress and attainment, the head teacher, staff and governors should: -

(1) Improve further the standards in English, mathematics and science by: -

in English-

- increasing opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their writing skills in other subjects;
- providing more opportunities and resources to encourage pupils to read for pleasure;

in mathematics and science-

- providing more opportunities for practical work and investigations;
- enabling pupils to be more accurate by ensuring that they order and set out their work correctly;

in all three subjects-

- reducing the use of undemanding worksheets that limit opportunities for pupils to practise writing and setting out their own work correctly.

(Paragraphs; 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 19, 75, 76, 79, 81, 82, 86, 97, 101, 102)

(2) Improve systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress by: -

- ensuring that the information gained from the day-to-day assessment enables teachers to plan work that builds more precisely on what pupils have already learned;
- ensuring that the marking of pupils' work provides information on what they do well and guidance on how to improve their work.

(Paragraphs; 9, 19, 42, 49, 50, 51, 83, 90, 91, 103, 118, 123, 148)

(3) Improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by: -

- clarifying and reviewing the role of the key stage co-ordinators;
- strengthening the role of all subject co-ordinators to improve their awareness of what is working well in their subjects and where there could be improvement.

(Paragraphs; 22, 84, 103, 116, 123, 129, 149)

59 Governors may also consider including the following the minor issues in their action plan.

1. Further develop the good work with parents to improve attendance.  
(Paragraphs; 15, 43)
2. Review the policy of providing only extra-curricular activities that have to be paid for by pupils' families.  
(Paragraphs; 30, 138, 142)
3. Raise standards in religious education by ensuring a sufficient allocation of time and by improving teachers' subject expertise.  
(Paragraphs; 9, 22, 145, 148)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	-	10	19	23	4	-	-
Percentage	-	18	34	41	7	-	-

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	247
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	148

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	49

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	22
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	39	38	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81% (73%)	79% (76%)	94% (80%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	22	22
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	39	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81% (71%)	92% (82%)	90% (78%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

*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	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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



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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7:1
Average class size	27.4

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39.0:1
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	84
Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.6:1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	624,390
Total expenditure	2,215
Expenditure per pupil	2,210
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	1,191

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	286
Number of questionnaires returned	34

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	47	9	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	41	15	3	15
The teaching is good.	65	29	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	38	12	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	35	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	50	35	12	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	56	32	3	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	41	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	47	18	3	3

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

60 The provision for children in the foundation stage (nursery and the reception classes) is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The children spend up to three terms in the nursery class and nearly all of them transfer to the reception class. The nursery was organised as a separate class until very recently; the foundation stage is now housed in its own refurbished building and forms the newly established Early Years Unit. The nursery has 39 children who attend for five part-time sessions, although most stay for lunch. When they enter the nursery, the children's attainment covers a broad range, but is often well below what can be expected for their age particularly in the language, literacy, and communication areas of learning, and in their personal and social development. For a few children, language skills are very poor and they have very limited vocabulary and find it difficult to convey their ideas or to talk in their play activities. Many children have speech problems and find it difficult to make themselves understood. Children often have a limited range of experiences to help them gain an understanding of the world about them. They make good progress throughout the nursery and reception classes (foundation stage) due to the effective teaching. Teaching is mainly good, and sometimes very good, in both the nursery and reception classes. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom support staff work very well together. The support staff are deployed well and take a full and effective role in teaching the children. All staff have a very good understanding of the learning needs of young children and this enables them to provide a very good environment for learning.

61 The co-ordinator for the foundation stage has a good understanding of what needs to be done to develop the Early Years Unit and has worked with staff to devise a comprehensive development plan to underpin future developments. However, the Unit has only recently begun and staff are still trying out different methods of organisation. This is still ongoing and staff are working together to get a fully integrated Unit where nursery and reception children can work together where appropriate. Although nursery organisation works well the organisation of the morning session in the reception classes is not yet well established and the current practice of having children taught in three groups according to ability means that they move between the two teachers and a nursery nurse, who leads practical activities. The early lunch hour meant that some sessions were very short given the time taken for children to remember which group they were in and so they produced only a limited amount of work in the sessions. This was brought to the attention of the school during the inspection, and when inspectors returned two weeks later the lunchtime arrangements had been changed.

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

62 The staff in the foundation stage give a high priority to providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment that supports the children's personal, social and emotional development. This enables the children to make substantial progress. They settle quickly into routines and achieve well. This area of learning is promoted well and the good teaching ensures that the children gain in confidence as they work together in their class bases or enjoy outdoor play. They respond well to opportunities to begin to express their ideas and feelings. By the time they leave the reception classes their personal and social development is often good and sometimes very good. The children make good progress because of the good routines and clear expectations of the staff. Relationships are very warm and supportive and the staff work well as a team; they provide effective examples for the children. The staff forge an excellent partnership with the children's parents by visiting them at home and inviting them to visit with their children before they start school and to help in the classrooms if they wish to do so. This helps children settle well in school. They are eager to learn and many are keen to show their work to visitors. They persevere with tasks and are beginning to work together. They built well on their role-play in the 'Baby Clinic' and, when a parent of a nursery child brought in a

real baby they eagerly named things the baby needed such as ‘baby lotion’ and ‘nappy’. They were delighted by the opportunity to watch the baby being bathed and moved closer and closer in their excitement.

63 Children build trusting relationships with all the adults in the foundation stage and this helps them to understand other people’s points of view. From starting in the nursery, children are encouraged to show initiative and to be increasingly independent. They respond well, work together as friends, share equipment with each other and are learning to tidy equipment away. They do their best to dress themselves independently after physical education lessons and settle readily into daily routines, such as milk time. Children in the nursery make choices from activities and become independent in choosing. In the reception class, children gain independence as they move between classes for numeracy and literacy lessons where they are grouped according to ability. They relate very well to both teachers and to the nursery nurse who teaches the third group. By the end of the reception year children can work and play independently and in groups. They share sensibly and have learned to take turns. The staff manage children very well; from starting in the nursery children are taught the difference between right and wrong and as a result, behaviour is mainly very good. Teachers keep detailed records of the personal, social and emotional development of individual children, which are used very effectively to enable staff to intervene and ensure they are well supported in this area of learning. This is particularly effective for those who have special educational needs or who are immature.

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

64 These areas are often taught well in both the nursery and reception classes and so children achieve well from their low starting point on entry. Children’s communication skills are poor on entry to nursery and staff in both the nursery and reception classes work hard to develop these, but they are still below, and for a few children, well below what is expected for their age at the end of the reception year. Staff plan a very good range of learning experiences to promote and extend children’s talking in particular. There are good role-play facilities in the nursery. For example, children use their experience from home to act out the role of parents, nurses and doctors in the ‘Baby Clinic’ or to prepare meals in the ‘kitchen’. However, in spite of good intervention by staff most of the nursery children are still communicating using simple words or gestures and do not readily engage in conversation. For example, a child says ‘wa in puggle’ for ‘walk in puddles’. The staff in the reception work hard to extend children’s vocabulary and read books and share ideas that relate to the children’s experiences. In one lesson the teacher shared the story ‘Oliver Goes to Hospital’. Pupils were very keen to volunteer anecdotes of when they had visited hospital and made good suggestions of what they would need to take with them. They decided they would need a toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush and talc. A few children correctly identified and named a stethoscope and thermometer from pictures in the book. However, many reception children still have a restricted and narrow vocabulary for their age.

65 Children enjoy books. In the nursery they listened attentively to the story of ‘Alfie’s Feet’ and recalled the story well as staff effectively used the theme of the story as a stimulus to explore the children’s ideas of how they use their feet. The children looked at different shoes and made suggestions about who might wear them. One looked at high heeled shoes and decided ‘Mummy shoes’; another recognised baby’s shoes ‘cos they liddle’. In the well-resourced lesson the story was used well to reinforce children’s personal and social development as they looked at crutches and walking frames and learned that ‘special’ children might need them and that ‘we are all special’. In the reception classes, some children know that an author writes books and can identify the title. They listen carefully to stories and recognise some letters and regularly used words. Staff throughout the foundation stage reinforce letter sounds in all activities and through songs and rhymes. Reception children sometimes match objects to the correct initial letter sound but they need lots of prompting and

support. In a reception class, the teacher motivated children well by using a well-resourced game on a Velcro board that enabled them to match objects to their initial letter. Most children in this average ability group knew many letter sounds and a few were aware of their alphabet names. About half the children matched the objects correctly with their initial letters. The reception children know the difference between storybooks and those that contain information. The children in the reception class make a good attempt at joining in when the teacher reads from a 'big book'. Throughout the foundation stage staff read in a lively and enthusiastic manner and so the children are interested and keen to know what happens next. Children take home books and parents are actively encouraged to share books with them at home. Some parents support their children's reading at home but in some cases books are not returned on time and children have very little support for their reading at home.

66 Children are given many opportunities to develop their writing skills. In the nursery, early writing skills are developed well as children 'write' in their role-play and take 'telephone' messages and book appointments in the clinic or write down 'shopping lists' in the kitchen. In the reception class the teacher linked the writing task to the current topic and the children copied the teacher's sentence to produce captions for their pictures. They copied 'Here is a fire engine'. They then re-wrote the sentence putting in the rest of the word after the teacher had written the initial letter. The least able children had a sheet with the two versions of this sentence, one with the words in the wrong order. They successfully cut up this sentence and pasted the words in their correct position below the original sentence. Most children can write their names by the end of the reception year and a few write simple sentences with only a little help. Teachers question well to check on children's understanding. In a literacy lesson with a reception group the teacher's well timed questions reinforced children's awareness of sentence structure; most knew that a sentence starts with a capital letter and a few recognised the need for a full stop at the end. Children develop sound pencil control and by the end of the reception year the more able and some of average ability can write recognisable letters and a few simple words. Few write independently. The effective support given to all ability groups by either a nursery nurse or classroom support assistants or a parent helper ensures that children make a good rate of progress in lessons.

### **Mathematical development**

67 The children's mathematical development is often well below the standards expected for their age when they start in the nursery but they make good progress throughout the foundation stage. However, many children are likely to be below the learning goal identified for their age at the end of the reception year. Teaching in this area of learning is good and enables children of all abilities to achieve well. In both the nursery and reception classes, staff reinforce counting skills in all activities. In the reception classes the teachers ensure that children have a secure basis for work in National Numeracy Strategy in Year 1. Lessons and activities are well planned, to develop early concepts of number and size. They ensure that children are taught the correct mathematical language related to different concepts such as 'small/large' and 'long/short' by using real examples. This was well illustrated in the nursery as children took off their shoes and socks and counted their toes. They compared the different lengths of their feet and then checked their predictions about who had the largest feet by drawing round their own feet. The teacher reinforced vocabulary well and reinforced their understanding of terms such as 'big', 'little', 'long', 'longer', 'short' and 'shortest'.

68 Teachers ensure children have opportunities to use mathematical skills and knowledge in activities, such as songs and number rhymes. In a reception class lesson, the teacher led the singing of 'Hickory, Dickory Dock' as a good start to some work on 'time'. Her very good questioning elicited a good range of ideas from the children about other ways to tell the time apart from looking at a clock. One child knew how we use a timer in cooking and said 'It goes off and then you know that the cooking is done'. The teacher used the children's experience from home to good effect and children volunteered that if you boil an egg for too long it will 'go hard'. Children looked carefully at a clock as

the teacher set the hands to one o'clock but children made wild guesses such as 'nine o'clock' or six o'clock and only reached the correct answer after many attempts. Most children can count from zero to 20 and can accurately work out simple word problems such as 'If three birds are nesting in a tree and two more fly in, how many is that?' The children know the answer is seven and could write the numbers. Teachers have organised the two reception rooms to be either literacy or numeracy bases and this makes effective use of resources. Work is well matched to the age and abilities of the children and takes account of the different stages children have reached. In both the nursery and reception classes children use play-dough to make recognisable two-dimensional shapes and use large three-dimensional shapes to build towers, using cylinders, cones and cubes. The staff use these opportunities well to teach children the names of shapes and many recognise circle, triangle and square. Teachers use classroom displays effectively to constantly reinforce new skills and knowledge. Children use number games, role-play and counting and matching games on the computer to improve their number recognition.

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

69 Teaching is mainly good teaching in this area of learning in both the nursery and reception classes. This ensures that children make good progress but many have a very limited range of experiences before starting the nursery and only a few are on course to reach the early learning goals identified for their age by the end of the reception year. Many are likely to be below what is typical for this age group. The children's poor language skills often limit their learning. A wide range of interesting activities and visits is planned, such as those to local parks and shops. Visitors include a wide range of people, for example, linked to the topic 'People Who Help Us'. Children learn about the ways in which things change over time and look at how they have changed since they were babies. They make careful observations of changes in the weather and help teachers record this day by day, using terms such as 'cloudy', 'sunny' and 'windy'.

70 Many children make rapid progress in using ICT and work very confidently with the computer programs. They have sound basic skills and know how to move objects on screen using the mouse to move cursors or drag items into position. The children are beginning to work sensibly in pairs and to help each other. For example, children in the nursery worked well together using a 'matching' game. In a reception class, children worked in the computer suite and showed a good recall of previous programs such as 'Three Little Pigs', 'My World' and the art program 'Dazzle'. There was good, direct teaching of how to locate and use the function keys. Most children knew how to type a capital letter and could use 'backspace' and the space bar. The teacher made good use of a plastic covered template to reinforce children's awareness of the keys and their functions. As a result they successfully typed in their Christian names and a few managed their surname. They were beginning to locate function keys and recognised the print icon and described how they would print out their work. When working independently a few children can select the option they need to access the game they want from a simple menu.

71 In nursery and reception classes children have opportunities to bake and this reinforces their scientific understanding as they describe how heat changes the cake mixture or dough. Teachers plan for a good range of activities linked to the natural world and by the end of the reception year they understand what plants need to help them grow. They know we have a skeleton and are beginning to name different body parts. All adults extend children's learning through well-timed questions to help them consolidate what they know and to challenge them to investigate for themselves. For example, children are encouraged to plan and make choices of equipment and materials when making models and to say what could be improved.

### **Physical development**

72 The teaching is often good in outdoor play and in formal sessions in the hall. Children make very good progress in their physical skills. They are likely to meet the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year, with a few children who are likely to achieve well. Nursery children enjoy regular opportunities for outdoor play and show sound control as they ride and steer wheeled vehicles about their play area. Children in a reception class joined in enthusiastically to act out the story of 'Jack in the Beanstalk' in their dance lesson. They listened carefully to the taped instructions and to those of their teacher and showed through their movements a real understanding of how to interpret the different characters. For instance, they made heavy, solid movements as they acted as giants and danced lightly to the sound of the harp. The teacher joined in and this motivated the children well and they responded safely and sensibly, making good use of space and 'chopped down the beanstalk' or 'swam in Jack's pool'. The teacher reinforced well the impact of exercise on their bodies and although children had little idea where their heart is they touched their brow and suggested 'exercise makes us hot'.

73 Children use tools appropriately when they paint, join objects together and cut shapes from paper. Adults do not intervene too quickly when the children have difficulty in manipulating materials but guide them to practise their skills and enhance their learning. Nursery children learned to handle knives safely and sensibly as they made jam or cheese spread sandwiches. Although their cutting skills were at an early stage, the very good, patient instruction by the teacher enabled all in the group to successfully make their sandwiches.

### **Creative development**

74 The teaching is good and so the children learn effectively and make good progress throughout the foundation stage. Many are on course to reach the goals set for their ages in most aspects of this area of learning. The staff plan a range of stimulating activities through which the children explore different media, such as when they mix colours, or roll and flatten clay. In the nursery class, for example, the children made patterns using their handprints and the teacher effectively reinforced their observation skills as they looked at the lines on their palms. The adults often offer good support for the children's learning as they talk to individuals or groups. In art activities the children make choices the size or colour of paper they use. They enjoy music making and can clap out rhythms. The nursery children join in simple action songs and enjoy using percussion instruments to beat out a rhythm to their songs. In a lively music session the teacher made sure that the children had fun and knew that they needed time just to experiment to find out what sort of noises their instruments would make. The reception children know many songs by heart. There are good opportunities for the children to act out roles and create imaginary scenes. These activities are planned well so that adults are sometimes involved in order to extend the children's vocabulary.

### **ENGLISH**

75 Standards in English dropped after the last inspection, but picked up again following the introduction of the Literacy Strategy. Despite this improvement, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are still below what is expected of seven year olds, and of pupils who leave the school, aged nine.

76 Standards are not high enough for several reasons. When children start in the nursery they have very limited speaking skills and poor levels of concentration. Despite the good progress they make in the nursery and reception classes, and the steady and sometimes good progress through Years 1 to 4, their limited language and literacy skills never catch up to what is expected for their ages. Whilst the school has identified improving writing as a focus for development this year, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practice and develop their writing skills because much of their recording is done on worksheets that only require one-word answers.

77 Pupils achieve satisfactorily against their prior attainment because the results of assessments are used well to organise pupils into sets according to ability and to target those pupils attaining just below what is expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the additional adult support they receive. The pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well and are making good gains in their language because they are supported well by the school staff and specialist staff from the local authority. However, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for more able pupils.

78 Pupils make steady progress in speaking and listening. Standards in listening are broadly satisfactory by the time they leave the school but their speaking skills are often still below those expected at the age of nine. This reflects their poor language and communication skills when they start school. Teachers emphasise opportunities to promote speaking and listening across the curriculum. In a personal, social and health education lesson in Year 4, pupils talked in front of classmates about their own experiences, and they shared with each other their understanding of the impact on health of the misuse of drugs, such as smoking. In a geography lesson in Year 3 pupils talked in small groups to come to decisions about the priorities for improvements in their locality. They listened to what each other had to say. However, too many pupils find it hard to listen carefully. Some teachers take answers only from those pupils with their hands up. Other pupils then become restless and lose interest and they are not always sure what they have to do. Although pupils are polite and willing to talk to visitors, many find it difficult to explain their work clearly. They often speak indistinctly and in short phrases. When talking to Year 4 pupils about the books they were reading, one pupil replied, "I can't think of the words, but I like it".

79 Pupils make steady progress in reading because teachers keep good accurate records of pupils' progress, and a variety of reading skills are taught. However, standards are still below what is expected for pupils at the age of seven and are still below those that can be expected of nine year olds. There are too few opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure and pupils' limited vocabulary impacts on their understanding of what they are reading. In Year 2, although more able pupils read fluently and with expression, they do not read punctuation. This impacts on their understanding. One pupil suggested 'Moon boy' was "Alaska" although the text identified him as a 'hunter'. Average ability pupils read hesitantly, and do not correct errors, such as reading 'We know' for 'I know'. They need to look at pictures to talk about what they have read. Less able pupils guess many words, have poor concentration and quickly revert to talking about the pictures.

80 In Year 4, pupils know how to find information books in the library; most pupils know the purpose of contents and index pages, and that index pages are in alphabetical order. Pupils in the more able 'set' read independently but often choose books that are not matched well enough to their abilities. One pupil brings books from home, such as the popular Harry Potter books. All these more able and average ability pupils use bookmarks as a line guide for reading. Only one pupil read fluently and expressively. This pupil had difficulty through using understanding of what had just been read to explain the meaning of unfamiliar words such as 'summoning' and 'vengeance'. Pupils offer little information as to why they like what they are reading beyond 'I really like it a lot'. Another pupil, reading a book with very large print, still made mistakes, which were not corrected, and hesitated over the word 'mention'. When asked, 'How do you know Mr. Knobbs was angry?' this pupil could not explain that it was because 'he was waving his umbrella'. Another pupil from this more able group struggled to read many words and read 'the wally' for 'Diwali', making no attempt to build the word up.

81 Although pupils' writing skills are still weak, the school's action to develop writing for different purposes is having an impact. Pupils have written accounts of visits, information booklets and poetry, and have sequenced the events in well-known stories. However, their progress in writing is



hindered by the overuse of worksheets that provide little challenge or opportunities to develop their writing skills. In Year 2 there are examples of pupils writing simple sentences, then later cutting out pictures, and words, to match and stick into their books. More able and average ability pupils write in a sequence of sentences but capital letters and full stops are not used accurately. Too often pupils are writing capital letters within sentences, and sometimes within words, such as 'jumPing'. This impacts on their ability to start joining letters together. Pupils write short sentences and seldom use words to join sentences. Less able pupils make steady progress but are just beginning to write independently this term. Their writing is readable, but a few pupils still reverse some letters.

82 In Year 4, although pupils are writing for different purposes such as newspaper reports, poetry and accounts of events, they are still sometimes using worksheets. For example, they have cut up pictures and sentences about instructions for making a birthday cake which they then stuck in their books in the correct sequence. This activity provided very little challenge, particularly because the pictures had also been coloured in! Only more able pupils regularly use a joined script. When practicing handwriting, pupils join letters but this is inconsistent in their other writing. Many pupils do not start sentences with capital letters although they are starting to use more complex punctuation such as commas and speech marks. Average ability pupils write in a sequence of sentences but simple punctuation is not used well. They still sometimes write capital letters in the middle of words, such as 'waRm'. Spelling is often careless, with pupils still writing words as they sound, such as 'dun'. Less able pupils are mainly using worksheets for their writing activities, and copy writing sentences.

83 Teaching is at least satisfactory and is better in some classes than others. It is particularly good where teachers thoughtfully plan the use of resources to interest, and support, pupils in their learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, 'mirror booklets' with foil covers were well prepared for pupils to write their descriptive words after they had been observing features of each other such as hair colour. In another lesson, ICT programs were used well to support pupils with special educational needs. All teachers identify what pupils are expected to learn in lessons, and share these with pupils at the start of lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are nearly always managed well in lessons and this supports their learning well. Specialist support for pupils with special educational needs, groups of pupils targeted for specific support and a pupil with English as an additional language, is good.

84 Teaching is better during the part of the literacy lesson where teachers work with the whole class to read and share ideas. Teachers use good questioning skills to assess how well pupils are learning, but there are times when this part of whole class work goes on too long. This leaves not enough time in the rest of the lesson for pupils to practice their writing skills in small groups, and the end part of lessons are sometimes rushed. Teachers do not plan this part of lessons well enough to check how well pupils have, or have not, learnt. As a result, planning for future lessons does not build well enough on what pupils already know, although this was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. For example, in an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 1, pupils were all doing the same activity. This was not matched well to the abilities of pupils with special educational needs, although they made satisfactory progress in the lesson because of the good adult support. Other pupils finished the activity very quickly, and were asked to write their names on the sheet. One pupil spent the rest of the lesson practicing writing his name! This part of the lesson neither provided appropriate challenge for some pupils, nor matched the abilities of some others. ICT is not planned well enough to support pupils' learning in lessons.

85 The management of the subject is sound. Strengths in the leadership and management of the subject are the co-ordinator's efforts to raise standards through analysis of results of a range of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress to identify areas for improvement. The need to raise standards in writing has quite rightly been identified, but this is not yet managed well enough. Pupils are not using their writing skills to support their learning sufficiently well. Checking on the

effectiveness of teachers' lesson planning and the quality of pupils' work is not rigorous enough. As a result, there are inconsistencies from class to class in planning what different groups of pupils are expected to learn. There are clear targets for pupils to develop their writing skills in each class, but marking does not always indicate the progress pupils are making towards achieving these.

86 Resources to support teaching English are satisfactory overall. Resources to support the Literacy Strategy are good and they are organised well. The school has identified the need to replace the reading scheme, and the Parents' Association has donated a large sum of money towards this. There are insufficient attractive fiction books, particularly for older pupils, and few opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87 The standards have improved since the last inspection. The trend over the past three years has been one of steady improvement. This reflects the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. However, the standard of current work at the end of Year 2 is down slightly and is below that expected of seven year olds. There are more pupils with special educational needs in this year group and the school anticipated this slight drop in attainment. In Year 4, pupils' current work is below the standards typical of pupils aged nine. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language are well supported and achieve well in relation to their ability. A very able pupil has been identified and is taught mathematics with older pupils of similar ability and so makes sound progress.

88 Year 2 pupils are learning their multiplication tables and can count on and back in twos, fives and tens. Most can add and subtract two digit numbers and understand tens and units place value. They are able to apply their knowledge to shopping and change and work with money to £1.00. Many can tell the time, recognise some of the features of 2D shapes and measure in centimetres. A lot of written work is done on worksheets, which are not dated and so it is difficult for teachers to track their progress accurately. Some tasks are over repetitive and uninspiring. Presentation of work is generally poor and pupils have too few opportunities to set out work for themselves. They have limited opportunities to practise and consolidate these skills due to the teachers' over reliance on worksheets. Use of mathematical vocabulary in oral work is not developed well enough.

89 By the end of Year 4 the lower attaining pupils can solve simple problems using their three and four times tables. In a very well taught lesson, the teacher's very good use of a 'tables rap' motivated the pupils well and they learned their tables while enjoying chanting 'Three threes are nine, I'm feeling fine'. More able pupils consolidate their understanding of place value and accurately add 100 to 4689 in their heads. They learn about right angles and parallel lines and many pupils can identify the properties for two-dimensional shapes such as straight/curved sides and numbers of sides. They understand concept of parallel lines and identify these in a range of shapes such as rectangles and squares. Good links were made with ICT as pupils worked well in pairs and used a program to sort different shapes. Pupils gain an understanding of inverse calculations and learn that for each division operation there is a multiplication. By the end of a good lesson pupils could deal with the multiplication for example,  $9 \times 5 = 45$  therefore  $5 \times 9 = 45$  but many struggled with 45 divided by  $9 = 5$  and 45 divided by  $5 = 9$ . The teacher's patient support enabled them to grasp the concept by the end of the session.

90 Throughout Years 1 to 4, mathematics is taught in sets organised by ability. There are upper and lower sets in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 and 4, the three classes are set by ability into four mixed-age groups for four days a week, returning to work with their own class teacher on day five. Pupils work hard in mathematics and the majority always try to do their best. They take part well and there are always lots of hands up to answer. There are no significant differences between the performance

of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are targeted for individual and group support; this is effective and they make good progress.

91 Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 1 and 2 and often good in Years 3 and 4. This ensures that pupils' progress is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy and this is taught consistently throughout the school. The three-part lesson structure is firmly established and teacher's planning reflects this. At the start of lessons, teachers focus pupils' attention well and ensure that they know what they are going to learn. The mental and oral parts of most lessons have a good pace and give pupils opportunities to develop their number skills. For example, multiplication facts were practised and knowledge about place value revised in a good Year 2 lesson. There are good examples of teachers targeting questions to the needs of individual pupils and adjusting the degree of difficulty accordingly.

92 The main teaching activities are used to consolidate learning and acquire new knowledge and skills. Good questioning skills are used throughout the school and teachers use open and closed questions well to check pupils' learning and understanding. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers and sometimes ask them to explain their strategies. During independent work and group activities teachers sometimes focus their attention on a particular group, but they also ensure that other pupils are working hard. There was a good example of a teacher explaining group activities particularly well in Year 2, whereas in a Year 4 lesson this was not the case. Teachers effectively monitor and assess work in progress during lessons, ensuring that pupils are working and identifying any problems as they arise. Work is marked during and after lessons; it is invariably given a tick or a cross, but there are few written comments. Those that are made tend to be of the 'Well done', 'Good work' type, rather those which give advice on what has been done well or how work might be improved.

93 Day-to-day marking and assessment is not being used consistently to inform future lesson plans and set learning targets for individual pupils. The time at the end of lessons is not always used well and there were examples at both key stages when insufficient time was left for the teacher and pupils to review progress made during the lesson and check that aims had been met.

94 Teachers use ICT appropriately to support teaching and learning in mathematics, for example in Years 3 and 4 pupils used programs linked to two-dimensional shape work and data handling. There are some opportunities for pupils to present findings in science in simple bar graphs and tables. In design and technology, pupils have some opportunities to use their measuring skills. However, planned opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects could be further developed.

95 Number work is a very dominant feature of the mathematics curriculum. There was little evidence of mathematics being used and applied in different situations and only a few examples of practical mathematical tasks being done, for example weighing and measuring.

96 The subject is well led and managed and this has helped to improve standards since the last inspection. The guidance for teachers on what should be taught is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and a commercial scheme has been introduced to complement it. The co-ordinator has completed a detailed analysis of national test scores and identified appropriate areas for improvement. The school also uses its own termly assessments and the results are recorded in pupils' portfolios. Tracking and assessment of progress through the school is effective.

97 The Local Education Authority has identified the school for intensive mathematics support and all teachers of numeracy have completed a five-day course. They have also had an opportunity to visit another school to see a leading mathematics teacher at work. The co-ordinator's monitoring role

is not fully developed and she has little time to work with teachers directly in their own classrooms to assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

## **SCIENCE**

98 Standards in science are below those expected by the age of seven. Many pupils are still below the standards expected for nine year olds when they transfer to Middle School. However, standards are steadily improving year on year and have improved since the last inspection. Teachers have taken part in training that has ensured that they have greater confidence in enabling pupils to learn through investigations. Teaching is now based securely on national guidance and this ensures continuity as pupils move through the school. Teaching is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good. This means that pupils enjoy science and behave well. They achieve well given their low starting point on entry to school. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching where pupils were presented with a worksheet that was not well matched to their needs. Many have limited reading skills and found it difficult to read the worksheet in order to answer the questions. This resulted in some loss of concentration and some noisy behaviour, which was not managed well by the teacher.

99 Pupils make sound and sometimes good progress in most lessons and teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what they will learn. By the age of seven pupils are developing a sound understanding of forces. In a well-planned lesson with Year 2 the teacher enabled pupils to investigate and record for themselves by testing toy cars travelling down a ramp. Pupils worked in groups to conduct their own tests and began to introduce variables such as altering the steepness of the ramp, pushing each car to start it or flicking each car with a ruler. They predicted what might happen if the ramp was higher each time but found it difficult to understand that the different sizes of the cars could make the test unfair. The teacher reinforced the notion of the pupils as scientists and this enhanced their self-esteem and also gave them an insight into the open-ended nature of scientific enquiry. There were good links with numeracy as pupils used centimetres to measure the distances the cars travelled and devised their own recording tables. The teacher questioned very well to encourage pupils to think about why the cars moved at different speeds on the polished floor and on the carpet. When one pupil discovered that a car with smooth wheels went faster than one with a grip the teacher used this effectively to introduce the concept of friction. Only a few pupils have a clear understanding of the need for a fair test and how to make it fair.

100 By the end of Year 2, some pupils know what they need to do to keep healthy. Pupils coloured in pictures of foods and pasted them in columns according to whether they are good or bad for us. However, some pupils were not able to place the foods in the correct columns. Pupils have learned about electricity in the home and most know how to construct a simple electrical circuit. Good use is made of the school grounds to develop effective understanding of other living things and the conditions they need to thrive.

101 By the time pupils reach the end of Year 4 they are can classify 'minibeasts' into groups. For example they can sort into groups that have legs and those that do not. In a well-taught lesson, with Year 3 pupils, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard well to introduce the idea of a branching database and showed pupils a simple database that she had prepared so that they could understand the notion of 'key questions'. Although pupils could divide their chosen 'minibeasts' into two basic groups they struggled with the problem of sub-dividing each group. Many pupils found it hard to pose simple questions, but with the teacher's well-timed intervention many sorted their insects into those that could fly or those that live in water. The teacher used ICT well and demonstrated the program 'Flexitree' that she had used to collect and order data. Much of the work was based on pupils' recent experience of pond dipping and enabled them to learn how to base their findings on first-hand experiences.

102 Pupils have built on earlier work on electricity and have made circuits. The more able pupils know that putting in an extra bulb makes the light dimmer. Most pupils can label parts of a plant correctly and have a basic understanding of photosynthesis. They know how to conduct an investigation and have carried out their own texts to see whether having big feet enables people to jump further! However, the findings from the investigation were set out in a printed out table on a worksheet and pupils had no opportunity to learn how to record scientific findings by constructing their own charts and tables. Sometimes pupils write up experiments and information but the work is copied directly from the teachers' work on the blackboard and many pupils had only a limited understanding of what they had written.

103 Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and this enables pupils to feel confident to offer suggestions in a secure learning environment. Pupils' attitude to science is good. They are keen to work hard, show enthusiasm and most are gaining the confidence to offer their ideas and suggestions. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are well supported by skilled support assistants. This enables these pupils to contribute in whole class sessions and make good progress. However, written work of all pupils is not of a high standard and the quality of setting out experiments and findings is poor. There is too much uncritical use of worksheets that only require one-word answers and limit pupils' opportunities to learn how to set out their work correctly. Many worksheets are not dated and become muddled so that it is difficult for teachers and pupils to track the progress that has been made.

104 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has a sound overview of development in the subject. This has been used well to support staff following the last inspection. The co-ordinator has established good links with the local Environmental Agency and the school makes effective use of the local environment. Assessment is undertaken at the end of each six-week unit but there is little evidence to show that the results of the assessment are used to inform future planning and teaching. Although the co-ordinator monitors planning for the term, there are no systems to check on how these plans are then expanded in weekly planning to show what pupils will learn. Resources for science have improved since the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

105 Standards of attainment and progress in art and design are sound and have been maintained since the last inspection. The guidelines for teachers on what should be taught in art and design is being developed from national guidance to ensure that pupils are taught a range of skills and given opportunities to work with different media. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a separate programme of activities for each year group, while in Years 3 and 4 there is a rolling two-year programme of activities, which carefully avoids repetition in the mixed age classes.

106 It was not possible to see any direct teaching of art and design, as it is not timetabled for this half term; there is a rotation with design and technology on a half-termly basis. However, one art and design lesson was observed when a visiting artist came into the school to work with Year 3. This was linked to the quayside development in Blyth and part of the artist's remit is to visit local schools to raise pupils' awareness of art and design. The lesson was very well planned and organised and had good links to other subjects, for example local history and geography. Pupils were asked to draw something from the town's historic heritage. For instance coal mining or fishing. One pupil did a good pastel drawing of a wind turbine and was shown how to 'smudge' the sail to give an impression of movement. Once she had seen how this was achieved she could replicate the technique successfully herself.

107 During the lesson the class teacher took on a supportive role. The special educational needs support assistant worked closely with an individual pupil ensuring that he was able to take part fully in

the lesson. Pupils concentrated well and persevered with their task and they were very proud of their finished work. The artist made a very good impact on pupils' learning and it was possible to see visible progress within the lesson. Other community links have helped pupils to make colourful, well-designed banners, a parish map and an outdoor mural.

108 Although no other lessons were seen it is evident from teachers' planning and the quality of pupils' finished work that teaching is at least satisfactory. Art work displayed in the school shows that teachers plan for a good variety of two and three-dimensional work and that constructive links have been made to other subject areas. For example, Year 1 work includes neatly made three-dimensional plaster models of animals, a printed frieze and drawings of flowers and toys. Year 2 have done some careful pencil drawings of the school building and also made a well-designed collage of it using different materials.

109 In Years 3 and 4 there are good examples of portraits, completed in the style of famous artists. There is good work linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example large models of insects and drawings of the local power station. Art and design work from the school has been displayed to good effect in the local teachers' centre as specimen examples of good practice.

110 Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language are well supported and achieve well in relation to their ability.

111 The co-ordinator's role is well established and the subject is managed well. The co-ordinator sees teachers' half term planning and checks this against the national guidelines for art and design. Resources are adequate to teach the subject across the school but some new materials have been ordered to enable new elements to be taught effectively. Some specialist teaching is used well and has a positive impact on standards as the co-ordinator teaches both Year 2 classes for art and design.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112 Pupils are not attaining the standards that are expected for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection when attainment was judged to be sound at both key stages.

113 Displayed work shows that each year group is doing some design and technology work but there is a limited amount of completed work. Teachers plan carefully together to ensure that pupils in parallel classes and groups are given similar opportunities to develop their design and technology skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language are well supported and achieve well in relation to their ability. There is no evidence that computers are being used to support work in design and technology.

114 During the period of the inspection it was only possible to observe one design and technology lesson; this was in Year 2 towards the end of the academic year which will give a fair indication of attainment at the end of the key stage. The teacher gave a clear introduction and ensured that pupils understood the aims of the lesson. Pupils were given an opportunity to evaluate a simple toy that they had made and suggest possible improvements to the winding mechanism. Pupils showed in the discussion that they had some good ideas of their own, which was recognised and commented on by the teacher. However, they were not given the chance to develop these further. The teacher had structured the lesson very precisely and pupils were not able to design the next toy or to have any choice over the materials to make it from.

115 The activity was well prepared and resourced but it was over-directed by the teacher. Pupils demonstrated good making skills assembling a set of given parts and were then given a

restricted opportunity to do some design work on an extension task. Pupils worked well during this lesson and showed a lot of concentration, only a few were impatient for the glue to dry so that they could try out their toy. At the end of the lesson pupils were delighted that their toys worked.

116 Although no other lessons were seen, evidence from teachers' planning and records, plus samples of completed work shows that teaching is broadly satisfactory but the small amount of work done is limiting pupils' opportunities to design, make and evaluate their own work. In many cases the teachers direct how work will be done and all pupils work with the same templates and materials. This limits their opportunities to develop their own ideas and gain an understanding of the design process.

117 Discussion with the co-ordinator and an examination of planning shows that there is a good basis for further developing work in design and technology. The co-ordinator took on the role within the last year and has made good progress integrating national guidelines with the school guidance for teachers on what should be taught in design and technology. A useful action plan is in place, which identifies the need for monitoring at classroom level as a priority in order to ensure that all aspects of design and technology are being fully covered. However, this has not yet been implemented and the co-ordinator has limited opportunities to check on the way the subject is taught and developed throughout the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

118 Pupils' attainment at the age of seven and nine is below the standards expected for pupils of this age, a finding which is similar to the last inspection.

119 Standards are not high enough because the planned work is not varied enough to meet the needs of individual pupils; they are all given exactly the same tasks and this affects how well they can achieve, particularly the average and higher attainers. Most work is not dated so it is not possible for teachers to check on progress over a period of time with any accuracy. Written work is marked but there are few written comments made to show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language are well supported and achieve well in relation to their ability. Work is the same as that of others in their classes but they achieve well because of the effective support in lessons.

120 Some of the pupils' work in lessons is of a better standard than their written work shows. In Years 1 and 2 teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. There is evidence of joint planning as both Year 2 classes were comparing Blyth with a contrasting locality in Mexico. Pupils were given an opportunity to taste 'Mexican' food. They were nearly all prepared to do this and for many it was a completely new experience. This was an interesting activity for the pupils that they enjoyed immensely. The follow up activity asked pupils to compare food and cooking in the two localities; they were able to do this quite well but the task mainly consisted of cutting out and pasting pictures onto sheets of paper and did not challenge their thinking.

121 In Years 3 and 4, teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good. The teaching and learning in a Year 3 lesson about local change was very good. This lesson had clear aims and was well resourced. Although tasks were not set for different abilities, pupils were grouped well to provide support for lower attainers and those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils were able to express their views about the local environment clearly and reach agreement as a group.

122 A mixed Year 3/4 class used news links to good effect to extend their knowledge and understanding of world geography. This is an ongoing activity that has caught their interest and imagination. Pupils were able to use secondary sources of information, including atlases, to follow up news stories. One particular line of enquiry was linked to the World Cup and visiting Japan by air.

The class teacher had put together a project box with books collected from the local education resource library in Morpeth. Pupils were able to use an index correctly but tended to copy from the books rather than write in their own words. Mapping skills are underdeveloped and pupils found it difficult when they were asked to draw a sketch map. Pupils are able to access information from world atlases on CD-ROM with adult support. Displays of work show that pupils' efforts are valued and this supports their self-esteem.

123 The school guidance for teachers on what should be taught is based on national guidelines and the selected contrasting locality is Tocuaro in Mexico. A key strategy is to work from the known local area, out to places further away. Good use is made of local visits and first hand experience to support work in geography, for example visiting the local shops and coastline. An overview of the scheme gives a clear indication of the work that is being covered across both key stages. There is a good balance of activities.

124 The present co-ordinator now covers all humanities subjects. She took on geography during the head teacher's absence and has been working on the new guidelines. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Monitoring and assessment has not been fully developed in this subject and the co-ordinator has no opportunity to visit other classes to look at the impact of teaching and learning or to check on how the subject is developing.

## **HISTORY**

125 Standards in history are as expected for pupils who are seven years old and at the age of nine when pupils transfer to Middle School. This is similar to the last inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory and pupils achieve well given their limited experience and general knowledge when they start school. Their weak reading and writing skills often limit their opportunities to show what they know and their lack of vocabulary means that many find it hard to articulate what they know. However, pupils are developing sound enquiry skills and show an empathy with people in the past. They are learning to understand the value of different sources and of direct investigations such as those conducted by archaeologists.

126 No history lessons were seen as the subject is rotated with geography and taught in half-termly blocks. However, evidence is drawn from teachers' planning and records, pupils completed work, displays and discussion with staff and pupils. This shows that many pupils have a wider understanding than their written work suggests. For example, staff take good account of pupils' limited reading and writing skills and use art and design to good effect to enable pupils to communicate what they know. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English achieve well because they are well supported by adults, who ensure that they understand texts and know what to do.

127 Teachers plan an interesting range of activities, based on national guidance for history. They introduce imaginative ideas that interest and excite pupils and so they are eager to learn and behave well. For example, in Year 1 pupils have drawn old and new toys and knew a doll was old 'because it is filled with wool' and that a toy car was new because 'it is made from plastic and they didn't have plastic then'. By the end of Year 2, pupils can compare differences between holidays now and in the past and have produced a time-line to show the changes. However, they cut up labels from worksheets and there were few opportunities to practise their literacy skills. They gained a good understanding of the use of photographs as they studied seaside holidays of 50 years ago with trips to the seaside now.

128 By Year 4, pupils gain an understanding of change over time through studies of their local area. They have visited the quayside and used old photographs to plot how Blyth has changed from a



once very busy port. Teachers make good links with geography and pupils have worked well in groups to produce their own tourist leaflets for the town. In art they have drawn and painted the old, coal-fired power station and also the new windmills along the shoreline that power turbines to produce electricity.

129 Pupils use ICT to find information about their topics using the Internet and CD ROMs. This type of work is at an early stage and many need help to do it but they are developing a good understanding of how computers can be used to help them learn. They do not yet have the skills to always decide what material is relevant.

130 The co-ordinator also manages geography and leadership is satisfactory; she has updated the policies and ensured that the work is based on national guidance. There have been no opportunities for her to observe work in other parts of the school in order to monitor teaching and learning and identify what works well and what needs to be improved. The school makes good use of visits and visitors who come into school to share their expertise.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

131 Standards in ICT match those expected for pupils by the time they are seven. By the time pupils transfer to Middle School at the age of nine they attain standards that are typical for their age. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Few ICT lessons were seen but pupils were working on computers in other lessons such as English and mathematics. Standards have also been judged on evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' previous work and discussions with them and with staff. The provision for ICT has improved with a small computer suite and computers in every classroom. Teachers have attended useful training that has raised their confidence and improved their skills in teaching ICT.

132 Teaching is at least satisfactory and enables pupils to make steady progress over time. Basic keyboard skills are taught well. Pupils use the mouse to access functions, icons and cursors. They use these to move pictures and text across the screen in matching games linked to English and mathematics. Pupils can access the Internet and this enables them to use interactive websites to support work in other subjects such as history, geography and science. The school has useful safeguards in place to protect pupils when using the Internet.

133 Some pupils build on skills learned at home and help others in class. By the age of seven most pupils know how to save work and to access it again later. They are developing their skills in controlling the mouse, opening and closing files and saving work on disk. Pupils have sound keyboard skills and use word processing to write simple sentences, stories and poems. They confidently use art programs to create patterns and pictures. Teachers plan effectively for the use of ICT in other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils have used a digital camera well to record their visit to Wallington Hall as part of their history topic. In Years 3 and 4 pupils can structure information, add new records to their files and place information in the correct fields. By the end of Year 4 they are beginning to use a program to create branching databases in science.

134 By the end of Year 2, pupils use computers to support their literacy and numeracy skills. In work linked to mathematics they programmed a floor robot to move in particular directions. They observed carefully as the teacher demonstrated how to instruct the 'Turtle' and checked that pupils fully understood. Pupils then took turns sensibly to put in the instructions to move it forward and back and to turn it through 90 and 180 degrees. They were interested as they waited for their turn and behaved well as they predicted how far the 'Turtle' would go. In another Year 2 class, the teacher's good planning built on previous work and questioning was effective as she asked 'What will happen if you direct a 360 degree turn?' One child eagerly volunteered 'You will make it do a full spin'.

Initially, pupils found it difficult to predict the number of forward steps needed to move the 'Turtle' to a particular destination. By the end of the lesson the pupils were becoming increasingly accurate. The teacher ensured that they were well aware of what they had learned and used praise well, 'Many of you have made good progress today'.

135 At the end of Year 4, pupils used the program 'Flexitree' to begin their work on branching databases linked to their topic in science. They could use the mouse to manipulate cursors as they learned that they could go back to earlier questions and could trace back to earlier answers. The teacher reinforced scientific terms well and pupils could appreciate how computers can access and order information quickly to aid learning. Pupils have used a word processing package to write and edit their stories and have successfully entered data from a survey done of the area around the school. The pupils who lack confidence in using computers, have special educational needs or have English as an additional language are supported well by classroom assistants and specialist staff, and often helped by more confident pupils as they work in pairs.

136 The co-ordinator gives a good lead and has a useful development plan for ICT. She has worked well to support staff and to develop written material to support the national guidance for the subject. The school has an ongoing priority to further improve provision and this should enable staff in their planned work to further use ICT to develop and support learning in all other subjects. The computer suite is small and cannot accommodate a full class. The room is also used for teaching groups of pupils with special educational needs and this limits its use for ICT. These limitations make it difficult for whole class teaching and for pupils to regularly learn and practise new skills. Staff use well the computers in the classrooms but progress could be more rapid if pupils had more opportunities for work in the computer suite.

## **MUSIC**

137 By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in music which match those expected of seven year olds and are typical of what is expected by the time they leave the school at the age of nine. In Year 2 pupils recognise hand signals for louder and softer and respond to these well when playing their own instrumental compositions. They use picture symbols to record their ideas. Pupils work co-operatively using both their voices and percussion instruments to combine simple musical compositions. In assemblies, they sing enthusiastically and with good attention to rhythm and diction. In Year 4 pupils use musical terms such as 'pentatonic' and most know that this is a five-note scale. They sing tunefully up and down this scale. Pupils remember 'ostinato' is a repeating pattern. They maintain their own part when playing keyboards to accompany singing. All pupils, whatever their background or ability, are well supported and achieve well.

138 Teaching is good. Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well to teach pupils to use the correct musical terms. A teacher with musical expertise uses this expertise well to teach another class. Pupils are managed very well in lessons. As a result they behave well and respond well to instructions. Teachers use a good balance of praise and questioning of pupils about how they might improve their work. This impacts well on their learning.

139 The co-ordinator supports music well by coaching singing and instrument playing for the school's Christmas performances, although there are no other extra-curricular music opportunities. Resources are satisfactory, but some instruments need renewing. The co-ordinator does not have responsibility for checking the standards and progress pupils make. African drum players have visited the school, but there are few other multicultural links made in music. Taped music is played as an introduction to assemblies, but there are missed opportunities for pupils to listen quietly to the music when they are all assembled and for them to learn about the composers and their lives.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

140 During the inspection it was only possible to observe gymnastics and games skills in Years 1 and 2. Discussions with the co-ordinator, other staff and pupils, plus the examination of documents and teachers' records demonstrate that the physical education curriculum covers all the strands of the required curriculum and the areas of physical education are taught according to the season. From this and lessons seen it is evident that by the ages of seven pupils attain standards that match those expected for their age. When pupils transfer to Middle School at the age of nine these standards have been maintained and are as expected for nine year olds. These standards are similar to those identified in the last inspection. Pupils make steady progress as they move through the school and achieve well. Those with special educational needs work at their own level and are supported well by all staff. They achieve well, whatever their level of ability and physical development.

141 From the lessons seen and the standards achieved it is evident that teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. In a well-taught Year 2 lesson, the teacher used her good subject expertise to set high expectations and ensure a brisk pace to the activities. The lesson was well planned and pupils were very clear about what they would learn. The teacher had planned a vigorous warm up that ensured that the pupils joined in enthusiastically and understood the importance of warming up before physical exercise. There was a good balance between direct teaching of ball skills and opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their work. The pupils responded well to the clear directions for holding a bat and directing the ball. They practised these movements and showed sound control as they worked with a partner to feed, bat and return the ball. Initially, about a third of pupils found it difficult to co-ordinate eye and hand movements but they worked hard and made good improvement by the end of the lesson.

142 In gymnastics, Year 1 pupils found ways of travelling around the hall and showed smooth, agile movements as they changed from upright movements to crawling or rolling. Their co-ordination was sound but a few showed little control as they made wild attempts at turning cartwheels. In this lesson the teacher made little use of pupil demonstration and so there were lost opportunities to enable the class to improve performance after watching good examples. Pupils could transfer their movements to benches and other apparatus and made satisfactory attempts to jump from trestles and boxes. Most pupils enjoy physical education lessons; they want to get the best out of the time available and so behave well.

143 The school organises extra-curricular football coaching, opportunities for 'Multisports' and gymnastics, but these activities have to be paid for by parents; this can be expensive for many families and limits the opportunities for some pupils. All pupils have eight sessions at the local swimming baths and learn the basics of swimming, but many are at an early stage of competence and their tuition is continued at the Middle School.

144 The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has some good ideas for improvement; she has had some opportunity to look at practice in other parts of the school, as part of the school's bid for the Active Mark. The school is waiting to hear how well it has done and whether it has achieved the award. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is developing links with Sunderland Football Club to enable members of the club to come into school to work with pupils. She organises whole school events such as a 'Mini-Olympics' and these are popular with pupils and their parents and allow all pupils to participate and achieve at their own level.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145 By the age of seven pupils attain standards that meet the expectations of the agreed syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. However, standards are below those that can be expected for

pupils aged nine. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language achieve well in relation to the ability because they are well supported. Although work is the same as that given to the rest of the class the adult support enables them to understand the work. All pupils, whatever their background or ability, are well supported and achieve well.

146 Standards are not good enough for several reasons. Worksheets are used too often, and pupils of differing abilities all do the same work. Sometimes religious education is taught alongside the personal, social and health education programme. This results in insufficient time for religious education to cover the requirements of the syllabus in sufficient depth. Not all teachers have a good understanding of the agreed syllabus. For example, teachers are not assessing pupils' attainment against the statements in the syllabus for pupils aged seven and nine.

147 In Year 2, pupils know that the Bible is in two parts. They know that the New Testament is about the life of Jesus, and that Jesus was born at Christmas, and died on the cross at Easter. Pupils recall some important facts from some stories from the Old Testament. They sequence the creation story. Pupils' awareness of Judaism is not so well established. They recognise some Jewish symbols but do not use the correct names. For example, they name the Star of David the 'Jewish star' and the challah bread used at Shabbat as the 'Jewish bread'.

148 In Year 4, work in pupils' books consists of coloured in worksheets, often about parables with one sentence written. Pupils have cut out, coloured in, and pasted into their books a picture of Palm Sunday and the Last Supper, but all the pupils have written identical sentences. In Year 3, pupils have coloured in and cut out pictures of the Jewish menorah candle, but again have not used the correct name, calling it the Hannukah candle. Pupils' knowledge and understanding about Judaism is very fragmentary.

149 Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although there was good teaching in a Year 2 lessons. Here, the teacher had good subject knowledge and pupils were being taught to use the correct terms, such as 'parable' and 'reconciliation', when they were sharing their understanding of the parable of the Prodigal Son. More able pupils were challenged to write a few sentences about times when they have had to say they were sorry. However, some teachers lack subject knowledge, particularly about teaching Judaism. Lesson planning is very brief and gives no indication of what pupils of differing abilities are expected to learn. There is no challenge for the majority of pupils in activities such as colouring in worksheets, or copying sentences. Teachers do not take opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in the subject. Marking is usually simply ticks, or praise for colouring in well.

150 The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce guidance for teachers, which is matched to the agreed syllabus requirements. However, there is insufficient detail to help those teachers who lack subject knowledge. The subject has not been prioritised in the school's development planning since the publication of the new agreed syllabus. The co-ordinator has not been given responsibility for checking how well teachers' plan their lessons, or the quality of pupils' work. This is impacting on standards, particularly by the time pupils are aged nine.