

INSPECTION REPORT

THE GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oakfield Lane, Consett

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114046

Head teacher: Mrs L Hume

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hardman
17794

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 195130

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oakfield Lane Consett County Durham
Postcode:	DH8 8AP
Telephone number:	01207 502938
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Hillery
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17794	Mr D Hardman	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Art and design	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
			English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
			Foundation stage	What should the school do to improve further?
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4720	Mr G Carter	Team inspector	Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			Special educational needs	
			Equal opportunities	
15474	Mr J Fairclough	Team inspector	English	
			Geography	
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			Music	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Grove Primary School is a smaller than average school situated on the edge of Consett in County Durham. There is a broad social mix in the school and the full range of ability is represented. The school's initial assessments of pupils' attainment when they start school show that many pupils are well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in language, mathematical and creative development. There are 80 boys and 81 girls currently on roll. A further 55 children attend the nursery on a part time basis. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language. There are 64 pupils eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Fifty three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, this is above the national average and 14 have statements of special educational need, which is well above the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have either speech and communication difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. There has been a high turnover of pupils in the last few years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with significant strengths. Very good leadership and management by the head teacher, senior management team, key staff and governors, provide clear direction for future developments. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. This leads to good learning and, in the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is at the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is improving and they achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Pupils are responsible and relationships in school are very good. Despite the fact that it costs more than the national average to educate each pupil, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the head teacher, senior management team and key staff, and the quality of teamwork by staff and governors, are very good.
- The provision for children in the foundation stage, this is the nursery and reception class, is very good.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good. This leads to good learning and improving standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is very good. Relationships and opportunities for personal development are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school implements the recent initiative for inclusion very well and this ensures that all pupils have the same educational opportunities.

What could be improved

- The consistent use of classroom-based computers to extend and build more effectively on pupils' skills learned in the new computer suite.
- The use of some subjects to further develop pupils' writing skills.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good progress in dealing with the issues identified in the previous inspection in 1997. The school has established, and uses well, clear guidelines which are used by teachers to plan their lessons. This ensures that knowledge and skills are taught systematically, effectively building on pupils' previous experiences. The head teacher and subject co-ordinators are now playing an important part in the development and monitoring of the curriculum. They have written policies and

guidelines for their subjects, lead discussions with other staff and governors and regularly observe teaching and learning to monitor pupils' progress. There has been good progress in refining the school's assessment and recording procedures, which are used well by teachers to guide their planning of lessons. In addition, pupils are more aware of their own learning because the objective of each lesson is made clear to pupils and record sheets in pupils' books are used well to record their progress. As a result, teaching and learning continue to improve and pupils are making good progress, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	D	E	B	well above average A above average B
mathematics	C	E	C	A	average C below average D
science	D	D	D	C	well below average E

In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds the school's results were well below the national average in English, below average for science and in line with the average for mathematics. When compared to similar schools, pupils' performance was above average in English, well above the average in mathematics and average in science. The lower results in English and science were due to a combination of factors. There were only 20 pupils in Year 6 last year and so lower than expected results for one or two pupils adversely affected the overall scores. In addition, there were a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and they did not perform as well in English and science as they did in mathematics. There is a strong emphasis on improving pupils' attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, because the information gained from the detailed school analysis of the National Curriculum tests is being put to very good use and improving the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence shows that standards have improved over recent years which reflects the importance the school has given to the subjects and this is shown in the good teaching and learning for pupils. For example, in the present Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age, with a significant minority achieving above this level in English, mathematics and science.

The recent establishment of a computer suite has greatly improved the opportunities for pupils to use up-to-date resources and good teaching in the suite is improving pupils' skills. However, computers in classrooms are not used consistently enough to develop pupils' skills in the subject further. Children in the nursery and reception class make good progress and most reach levels in line with those expected for their age. In the present Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the average in mathematics and science but below average in English. The school's assessments of this group of pupils from their entry into the school show that they have made good progress in most subjects. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment has improved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school is well set to meet its challenging targets and implement any future changes in the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and their work. They enjoy coming to school and their enthusiasm for school life improves their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils know what is expected of them and their behaviour is very good. They are polite and courteous towards one another and adults. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. They respond very well to the school's encouragement to take responsibility for their actions.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average, mainly because of the number of parents who take pupils on holiday during term time. The school makes every effort to encourage pupils' attendance and their procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good.

Pupils' very good attitudes result from the school's positive, caring, family atmosphere. This is a particular strength of the school. Pupils respond well to the very good behaviour management strategies employed by all staff. They are considerate of others when they move around the building, use the dining hall and play at break times. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with staff. They respond very well to the trust and respect they are shown. For example, Year 6 pupils are "Buddies" and take their responsibility to help other pupils, when necessary, very seriously.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Some very good teaching was seen throughout the school, especially in the foundation stage and for pupils in Year 6, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teaching throughout the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning have been observed by the head teacher and senior management team and the sharing of good practice is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school. This strategy has been successful in establishing a climate where teachers are more aware of their strengths and areas for development.

Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the guidance of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies; most tasks are organised to challenge different groups in classes and pupils make good progress. Standards are improving in the school and the use of assessment data to set targets for each lesson is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and learning. Assessment data is used well to set challenging but achievable targets and to guide teachers' planning for the next stage of learning. Classroom assistants give very good support to individuals and groups of pupils when they are working with them. Teachers make sure that pupils with special educational needs or physical problems experience the same activities as their classmates. The good support from both teachers and support assistants in lessons and withdrawal sessions, ensures these pupils make good progress throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. There is a wide range of learning opportunities for all pupils, the school has adopted the most recent national guidelines and teachers are following these in their planning to ensure that all pupils have a varied and interesting curriculum. A particular strength is the very good range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and support assistants know the pupils well, ensure that they participate in the same activities as their classmates and this makes a positive contribution to their attainment and learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The quality of relationships is very positive and makes a significant contribution to the very good behaviour in the school. This provision makes a very good contribution to promoting the school aims.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the results of these are used to set targets and so raise pupils' attainment further.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and goes beyond this to include several features that enrich it considerably. For example, a strength of the curriculum is the very good provision that is made for pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities. There is considerable effort put in to extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors that give pupils a wide experience and help them learn. The school has formed a good partnership with parents, which makes a good contribution to pupils' learning both at home and in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher and senior management team provide very good leadership and management, which give a clear educational direction for the school. The quality of teamwork by all staff is very good and fosters a positive family atmosphere in which all pupils are valued and their efforts well supported.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is committed to helping the school move forward. Governors make an effective contribution to the running of the school and are committed to maintaining and raising standards further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. The programme for observing teaching and learning is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and all staff work very hard to improve their own work and the educational opportunities provided for pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school has sufficient staff and they are well deployed. Support staff play an important role in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The accommodation is satisfactory and very well maintained. Resources to support pupils' learning are satisfactory and used effectively. The library is well stocked and used well to support pupils' learning in all subjects. The

	school's finances and administration procedures are very good.
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The very good leadership and management provided by the head teacher and governors are major factors in the quality of teamwork and positive atmosphere in the school. The very good strategic management of the school is evident in the way that literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have been given priority for development recently. The head teacher and senior management team regularly watch their colleagues teach and how well pupils are learning. As a result, they are well placed to improve and prioritise initiatives for raising standards. The school uses funds designated for particular purposes very well. For example, the funds provided for the support of pupils with special educational needs are supplemented by the school to ensure that the good staff/pupil ratio is maintained. Governors and the head teacher keep a close eye on spending to ensure that they follow the principles of "best value" well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The amount of homework provided. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents expressed concern about the amount of information about their child's progress.

Parents consider that they have a good partnership with the school and express satisfaction with virtually all areas of its life and work. Inspection findings confirm the positive views expressed by parents. The inspection team does not agree with the concern noted above because parents are kept well informed about school events and how their children are getting on through regular, informative newsletters, an "open door" policy and discussion evenings, where teachers and parents discuss pupils' achievements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in all subjects is broadly in line with the level expected for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In music, there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement. The school is well set to continue to improve standards, meet the realistic targets and implement any further changes to the curriculum. During the inspection, no significant variation was noted in the attainment of boys and girls in any subject. The school has implemented the recent initiative for inclusion very well and all pupils are given every opportunity to develop their potential. For example, there is a register of talented or gifted pupils and these pupils are given work appropriate for their level of ability. The trend of pupils' attainment over time is broadly in line with the improving national trend. However, because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group and the varying number with special educational needs, comparisons with national averages is often unreliable.

2 In this school the foundation stage is made up of a nursery and one reception class. The school's assessments of children's attainment show that many enter the foundation stage with levels of attainment that are well below those of most other children the same age. They make good progress through the foundation stage and most of the children are on course to achieve the standards expected by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs achieve well when compared to their previous attainment because of the good provision and effective teaching provided by the school.

3 For pupils in the present Year 2, attainment in reading and speaking and listening is in line with the levels expected for their age but in writing it is below the level expected. This is a small year group and a significant number of pupils have special educational needs and school records show that all have made good progress when compared to their previous attainment. In the most recent National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils' attainment in reading was below average and well below average in writing. Pupils' performance in the reading tests was well above average in comparison with similar schools but well below average in writing. However, there were a large number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 last year and the low numbers taking the tests mean that results are affected significantly by the performance of a small number of pupils. Over time, pupils' attainment is improving because of improved teaching and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

4 In the 2001 National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was well below the national average but above the average for similar schools. However, in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, there was a small number of pupils in the year group and a large proportion had special educational needs who achieved well when compared to their previous attainment. Pupils' standards are improving and inspection findings show that in the present Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. The analysis of assessment information means the school has evidence of the good progress made by these pupils over the last four years. Teachers do not always use pupils' literacy skills in other subjects satisfactorily; for example, in the recording of experiments in science and in written descriptions of events in the past in history. This has been recognised by the school and there is a good plan in place to focus on improving pupils' writing skills throughout the school.

5 In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics was average, it was well above average when compared to similar schools. In the present Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with the level expected for their age. In

the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 6, pupils' attainment was average when compared to all schools but it was well above average when compared to similar schools. In the present Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are in line with the level expected for their age. This shows an improvement in standards since the last inspection. The improving standards reflect the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in previous tests and this has resulted in the setting of clear, realistic class targets to focus on improving the weaker areas of mathematical knowledge. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects such as science by creating graphs showing features of their own bodies.

6 In the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001 at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in science was very high when compared with national averages. It was also very high when compared to similar schools. This is an improvement in standards since the previous inspection, when standards were below national expectations. Pupils in the present Year 2 are making good progress but there are a large number of pupils with special educational needs and so the overall standard is not as high as last year. In the National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Year 6 in 2001, pupils' attainment was below average. It was in line with the average when compared to similar schools. In the present Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. The school is improving standards and setting realistic targets to improve further.

7 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with the level expected for their age. Standards have improved since the previous inspection which is a credit to the school because of the change to different computer systems, the introduction of a computer suite and the use of new programs. The school has made considerable improvements to its curriculum over the past two years. Information and communication technology is valued as an essential part of the curriculum. For example, the establishment of the very well equipped computer suite has made a significant improvement and the teaching of skills to large groups of pupils is raising their attainment considerably. However, classroom based computers are not used sufficiently to further improve pupils' skills and support work in other subjects. Pupils understand the importance and use of computers both in school and in the wider community. For example, they have used the Internet for research and the e-mail facility to send messages.

8 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The progress pupils make in their understanding of world faiths is good, as is their ability to reflect on what they have learnt in lessons. There is effective use of the local and wider community to enrich the curriculum and provide pupils with first hand learning experiences. Older pupils understand the importance of religion to different people and they relate well to stories through discussions about their own life experiences and present day issues. They present some of their work in books but throughout the school there is insufficient focus on pupils recording their findings and views, and, as a result, the subject does not help to develop their literacy skills.

9 In all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. Other subjects of the National Curriculum make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example, through discussions in history and geography, recording their visits to places of interest, producing graphs in science and explaining their designs when working in design and technology. However, opportunities for pupils to further develop their writing skills are sometimes missed in other subjects, for example, by recording the results of their experiments in science, retelling stories from world religions in religious education and writing factual accounts, in their own style, in history and geography. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in literacy skills. These pupils work at levels that are well matched to their abilities and their previous experiences. Teachers set work, paying particular attention to the targets identified in the individual education plans. Extra support is provided for these pupils and teachers assess their work regularly and review their individual educational plans accordingly.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. Children in the foundation stage are eager to come to school, enthusiastic and listen to their teacher's instructions. They work well and play well together. Older pupils have very good attitudes towards their work and to school. When motivated by good teaching they are capable of sustained concentration. This was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson when they used their prior knowledge to solve "magic square" problems and in a Year 6 mathematics lesson about percentages and fractions. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaires agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this.

11 The behaviour in school is very good. The pupils move around the school in a sensible manner. When there is an instance of unsatisfactory behaviour it is dealt with quickly by the staff. Pupils take pride in their school, looking after the equipment very well and there is no litter or graffiti.

12 Relationships are very good, friendly and constructive throughout the school. Pupils of different ages get on well together and with all the school staff. This is very well supported by the well established "buddy system". Pupils show respect for each other's feelings, beliefs and values and are confident to join in discussion. This was seen in class discussions and when Year 5 discussed the elections of buddies for next year. They are appreciative of each other's good work and behaviour and there were occasions of spontaneous applause at the end of lessons when pupils' completed work was shared with the whole class.

13 Pupils' personal development is very good. They develop in self-confidence and are willing to accept responsibility when opportunities are given, quietly carrying out duties in class and around the school. They are proud of the responsibility given to them, for example when chosen to be "buddies" or head boy and girl.

14 Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is well below that found nationally in similar schools. The rates of authorised absence are well above the national average. There has been some improvement during the school year. However, attendance remains below the national average. The number of family holidays taken in term time and epidemics of chicken pox and whooping cough have contributed significantly to this in the current educational year. Most pupils are punctual and lessons start and finish promptly, so that little time is wasted at the start of school sessions.

15 Pupils with special educational needs are generally well behaved. On occasions, some pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are easily distracted but not often disruptive. When given tasks appropriate to their educational needs they show interest in their work and concentrate for moderately long periods of time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16 During the inspection, teaching was good and sometimes very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when 6 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Discussion with teachers and analysis of pupils' work show that the quality of teaching is improving, especially in English, mathematics and science. A significant amount of this improvement has resulted from the observations undertaken by the head teacher, senior management team and key staff. They observe colleagues teaching and check to ensure that all pupils are learning effectively. They provide feedback in order to improve the quality of teaching. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and pupils' standards are improving in virtually all subjects by Year 6. Teachers regularly use a range of tests, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. The information available from these tests is used well to identify pupils' weaknesses and to guide teachers' planning, for example, by setting specific objectives to improve pupils' attainment.

17 The quality of teaching for children in the foundation stage is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and take account of the national guidelines that lead to children making good progress. There is a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for structured play activities. All staff, teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants, know the children very well and are sensitive to their needs. Staff have high expectations and manage behaviour firmly, calmly and kindly. All adults are examples for children to follow because they treat everyone with care, courtesy and respect. They make sure that all children have access to all activities and children know that they are being treated equally and fairly. For example, children's speaking and listening skills develop particularly well because of the very good emphasis placed by all staff on extending and developing correct vocabulary as part of every activity.

18 The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is good. Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The pace of most lessons is good and teachers use the techniques of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to best effect. Pupils have very good relationships with teachers and adults in the classroom, which has helped to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort are good and pupils are expected to do their best. This was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, when pupils improved their knowledge and skills of percentages, fractions and decimals when working out answers to problems. The brisk pace of the lesson and the mature attitude of pupils led to very good learning and pupils' improving skills in identifying fraction and decimal equivalents in percentages. Teachers use the Literacy Strategy effectively and plan lessons that are challenging and interesting. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils joined in enthusiastically with the shared discussion about a "fishing game" to find words containing the letters "ae", "ai" and "ay". They improved their knowledge of different letter combinations because of the skilful questioning by the teacher.

19 Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum. For example, the school recognised that teachers' skills needed to be improved, especially for older pupils, in information and communication technology and training courses have been undertaken. As a result, teachers are using the computer suite well and pupils' attainment is improving. However, teachers do not always show in their planning how information and communication technology is used to support other subjects. As a result, classroom computers are not used sufficiently often to improve pupils' developing skills. Teachers use the correct language to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the particular subject. This was particularly evident in English and mathematics where specific technical language was used well. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils understood the concept of "counting down" as a means of solving division problems. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of English and mathematics and they use good observational assessment of pupils to build upon the areas that pupils need to develop. For example, in an English lesson in Year 1, pupils responded well to the teacher's request to predict the likely events to come when half way through reading a story.

20 Teachers know and manage their pupils very well and provide good support for different activities. The very good relationships between staff and pupils create a secure climate in which to learn. Teachers use their daily observations of pupils' work to set challenging tasks and include positive comments when marking pupils' work and many provide precise comments on what pupils need to do in order to improve. The school has an established homework policy that teachers use consistently and, as a result, the amount of homework given is about right for pupils' ages and it has a positive effect on their learning. The school has a good policy for the recent initiative on inclusion. Teachers follow it well and ensure the all pupils are included in all activities, which makes a positive contribution to their learning.

21 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is good. Teachers make early identification of pupils with special educational needs. They work closely

with support assistants to plan work for these pupils that is matched to the work of other pupils in their class. All staff have a very positive attitude towards these pupils and this enhances their learning. Class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff all work very effectively together ensuring pupils take full part in the curriculum and make good progress. As a result, the provision for special educational needs is well organised throughout the school. All adults working with pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic in their approach and keen to recognise and praise success. This effectively encourages pupils and helps them develop confidence.

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

22 The curriculum is appropriately balanced and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It reflects closely the school's aims of providing a stable and stimulating environment in which all pupils can flourish. Since the time of the last inspection, good improvements have been achieved. These include updating policies to reflect the latest government guidelines, implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the foundation stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception class.

23 The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy skills is generally sound, although there are insufficient opportunities provided in some subjects, such as geography and science, for pupils to develop their writing skills. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching numeracy is good.

24 Teachers' planning is, in most respects, good but in many subjects insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills. All teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Procedures for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs and for those who are able and gifted are thorough and the provision for these pupils is very good.

25 The quality and range of extra-curricular activities is very good. Pupils have opportunities to be involved in sports, such as football, netball and basketball. They take part in the choir, computer club, production of a termly magazine, cycling proficiency and drama club. At the time of the inspection, pupils were enjoying their rehearsals for a summer term production of "Robin Hood".

26 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is successfully taught through a series of timetabled lessons about themes such as friendship, citizenship, health and family issues. They make a significant contribution to raising pupils' self awareness and self esteem. During assemblies and lessons, pupils have good opportunities to consider and discuss personal, health and social issues. The school has clear policies for drugs awareness and sex education. The implementation of these policies is supported well by the involvement of the local community police officer and school nurse.

27 The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of educational visits and visitors to the school. Visitors include the local vicar, who regularly takes assemblies, and theatre and dance groups. Pupils enhance their understanding of local geography and history by visiting Bamburgh Castle and develop their understanding of Anglo Saxon village life through a visit to Bede's World. An annual youth hostelling visit to the Lake District, visits to London and a bi-annual visit to France augment pupils' curricular experiences very well. Since the time of the last inspection, the school's curriculum has benefited from initiatives such as the Healthy School Award, closer links with commerce through the Durham Education Business Partnership and increased knowledge and awareness of Europe through links with a school in Sweden.

28 The curricular opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, are similar to those for all other pupils. Full access to the curriculum is provided through a range of strategies, including specially planned work within a

whole class setting, separate provision in small groups with a specialist teacher and in-class support of a classroom assistant. Well written individual education plans help teachers to plan more specific tasks for these pupils and so their learning is good. In addition, the very good provision for promoting pupils' social and moral development has a significant impact upon their good standards of behaviour and personal development.

29 The school has good links with the local secondary school. Pupils are well prepared, by visiting the school, for the transition to secondary education. In addition, visits of staff from the comprehensive school and the work they do through the "Building Bridges" activities give the pupils a confident start to the next stage of their education. There are strong links with the community. A number of pupils attend the Breakfast Club held in the Community Hall and local businesses have sponsored strips for the football and netball teams. The children in the foundation stage visit the local supermarket as part of their Healthy Eating project. A committed group of volunteer parents works regularly in the school to support pupils' learning. In turn, pupils contribute to the local community by raising money for charities, performing in school productions for senior citizens and distributing food to the elderly and needy during Harvest Festival celebrations.

30 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted through imaginative teaching, stimulating assemblies and interesting visits to new places. As part of their study of history, for example, pupils have opportunities to reflect on the hardships in the Middle Ages during an organised visit to a mock Anglo Saxon village. In Year 6, pupils have good opportunities to reflect on the lifestyle of sailors in the early nineteenth century as they study and write about the adventures aboard the famous schooner, "Trincamolee". During a science lesson, pupils gasped with amazement as they watched the teacher drop an egg on the floor following a small juggling session, only to discover that it was hard boiled - irreversibly changed by boiling. In a very good assembly, the local vicar used a bubble making device to stimulate pupils' imagination about the wonder of God as they watched many large and colourful soap bubbles, often joined together, drift across the hall.

31 Pupils' moral development is very well promoted in a number of ways. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide good examples for pupils in lessons. School rules are few but are well used to reinforce high expectations. Pupils' study of people such as Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale provide them with historical examples of those showing moral strength. Through their work for charity, opportunities are available for pupils to understand the disadvantages suffered by others. Through their training for and involvement in the "Buddy" scheme, pupils in Year 6 regularly consider the negative impact of harassment and bullying. In their PSHE lessons, pupils consider moral issues sensitively when they discuss their responsibilities within the family and as citizens in the wider community.

32 The social development of pupils is very well promoted. They are given opportunities to work together in many subjects, such as physical education, science and mathematics and invariably do so with enjoyment and much co-operation and respect. Pupils treat each other and adults respectfully at all times and respect others' property and school resources. Pupils fulfil their responsibilities well, such as register monitors, playground "Buddies", lunchtime monitors and assembly music monitors. They gain confidence in their own worth as members of the school community.

33 The school provides a very good range of interesting opportunities to promote cultural development very well. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about the customs and sacred symbols associated with Christianity and other world faiths, such as Sikhism and Judaism. In art and design, pupils use work from other countries, such as South American pottery, to stimulate designs for their clay plaques. Visits to museums, cities and other European countries raise pupils' awareness of local culture as well as those of other nations. The school's recent involvement in the "Comenius

Project" gives pupils further opportunities, through visits, letters and the Internet, to discover how people live and work in other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 The standard of care provided by the teaching and support staff is excellent. The head teacher takes the lead in setting an ethos of care, order and structure through the daily assemblies. The school has a suitable policy for child protection; there is a designated person who has received training and all staff are aware of their responsibilities and kept up to date with child protection issues. All staff have received first aid training and the pupils know who to go to if they are sick or injured. There are regular fire drills and fire notices, with the location of the assembly point, displayed around the school. Clear procedures are in place for identifying and controlling risks to health and safety.

35 The procedures for assessing pupils' academic achievements and progress are good. They provide the school with a good foundation for tracking the progress of any child from his or her entry to the school. The school tracks pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and this information, which contributes to each pupil's personal record, provides a good basis for reporting to parents. National tests are administered when pupils are seven and 11 and regular assessments are carried out in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 in English, mathematics and science. The progress made by pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is monitored and reviewed regularly and carefully. Test results are analysed so that weaknesses in curriculum and pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding can be identified and targeted. For example, in English, the school has identified weaknesses in pupils' writing and spelling in the school development plan and appropriate strategies and resources have been implemented.

36 Information from assessment is used well to support pupils' academic progress. For example, test results are used to group pupils by ability during English and mathematics for particular activities. This enables work to be more specifically tailored to pupils' prior attainment. Assessment is used well to set targets for individual pupils and pupils are developing a good awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. To complement the assessment procedures, the school has developed a successful record of achievement for pupils and a pupil "planner" document, which enables pupils to keep track of their learning targets and monitor their own progress over time. This and the school's other assessment strategies, represent a good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

37 There are good arrangements to support pupils' personal education, to improve their social skills and their understanding of citizenship. Weekly class lessons address personal and social issues appropriate to the pupils' ages. Pupils value these opportunities to speak, to be heard and at times, just to listen. These lessons also reflect the school's success in developing pupils' self-confidence and social skills. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 spoke in turn to say what they thought made them special. The residential visit to France and the weekend visits to the Lake District make a good contribution to social and personal development. The school makes good use of outside agencies such as the police and fire brigade, older pupils have the opportunity to take part in the locally organised "Safety Carousel". During the summer term, pupils have the opportunity to take their cycling proficiency test.

38 The school has good measures in place for monitoring and improving attendance. Registers are monitored weekly and the Educational Welfare Officer is contacted if any attendance gives cause for concern. These measures have helped the level of attendance to rise, although it is still below the national average. The school works hard at reminding parents about the need for good attendance and classes are given certificates and small incentives for good attendance each month.

39 The school has a positive approach to behaviour through "Choices", the school's behaviour policy. As a result, the standards of behaviour in the classrooms, dining hall and other parts of the school are very good. Any bullying is dealt with quickly and sympathetically. All members of staff monitor the behaviour of individuals and present a united approach in dealing with discipline problems

when they arise. The pupils and parents know the rules, what is expected of the pupils and the sanctions that are applied when necessary.

40 There are good relationships between the pupils, teachers and other adults in the school. The teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of all pupils. They are alert and responsive to the pupils' needs and their personal and social development is monitored very effectively. The Breakfast Club is a social time where the pupils can chat about their problems or concerns. Personal and social issues are further addressed in classes during personal, social and health education lessons. The pupils who have a specific problem or emotional needs know that all the staff will support them sensitively.

41 Like all other pupils, those with special educational needs are well cared for. The school pays very careful attention to the medical needs of several pupils. Pupils' academic progress is regularly assessed at formal reviews; parents and representatives of outside support agencies are very effectively involved in this process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42 The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents have positive views about the school and the replies to the questionnaires and the responses given at the parents' meeting show that they have a high level of confidence in the school and its staff.

43 The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school prospectus contains all the necessary information for pupils joining the school, with a special section for the parents of children about to join the foundation stage. There are regular newsletters providing a full account of activities and details of forthcoming events. The governors' annual report gives a clear picture of school life in the preceding year. The school has held demonstration classes to explain the numeracy strategy and the way information and communication technology is taught. Parents are provided with termly opportunities to meet the staff to discuss their children's progress. The annual reports to parents state what their children know, understand and can do in subjects and include the pupils' own written targets.

44 Parental involvement in their children's learning is good. Support from home is well promoted and valued by the school. Parents support the life of the school through the weekly cake stalls, providing food for the weekend residential visits and their attendance at fund raising events such as the popular ice skating in the school hall and school productions. Some parents and friends make a valuable contribution to the life of the school by helping in the classroom and hearing pupils read on a regular basis. The Home School agreement has been signed by all parents.

45 Good opportunities are provided for parents of pupils with special educational needs to be involved in reviewing their progress. For those pupils on the "school action" programme (part of the new National Code of Practice) this involves the three parents/carers evenings per year. For those parents of children with statements of special educational need the statutory annual review process is also available and is well managed and administered by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 The head teacher, senior management team and key staff provide very good leadership and management. This has improved from good to very good since the last inspection. Governors make a very good contribution to the effective running of the school and are committed to maintaining and raising standards further. The observation of teaching and learning by the head teacher and key staff is regularly discussed with governors who are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has worked effectively to deal with the key issues from the previous report and is well placed to maintain the strengths and build effectively upon them. The head teacher and key staff give a clear educational direction for the school which is raising pupils' standards. For example, the school uses the analysis of pupils' results in National Curriculum tests to target particular

areas of the curriculum in English, mathematics and science and this is successfully raising pupils' attainment in the present Year 6. The information also shows clearly that pupils with special educational needs perform well when compared to their previous attainment and many reach the lower levels of national expectations by Year 6.

47 The governing body has a very good committee structure that works very effectively to support the school. The roles and responsibilities of all staff are under constant review and evaluation because of the implementation of the recent performance management initiative that is used to set targets for all staff, including the head teacher. The roles of the core subject co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science, are clearly defined and they have opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching and learning in their subjects. These co-ordinators are well placed to implement this monitoring because of the example set by the head teacher in the very good monitoring in place which has been instrumental in raising standards and expectations since the last inspection. The co-ordinator for special educational needs gives very good support to staff. The co-ordinator also plays an important part in assessing pupils' difficulties when they are first identified as needing additional help. The school policy is detailed and reflects the school's current practice taking into account the new national guidance for pupils with special educational needs.

48 The head teacher and governors work together closely and are managing the issues brought about by national changes very well. There is clear direction for the work of the school, ensuring that strategic decisions determine the financial and educational development of the school. The head teacher and governors work together to ensure that all decisions relating to the budget are closely linked to the development plan, are manageable and that the principles of "best value for money" are applied rigorously. A good example of the quality of the management of finances is the way the school has developed the computer suite to improve the teaching and learning in the subject. The grants for special educational needs are used well and the school is supplementing this budget to maintain the good staff/pupil ratio for these pupils. The staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum matters and to evaluate the progress being made in all aspects of school life.

49 The head teacher, staff and governors are all involved in preparing the school development plan. This working document is fully discussed before being adopted as the action plan for future years. It is a very effective document, which clearly identifies the priorities and targets to be tackled and guides the work of the school. It takes into account national initiatives and educational priorities are closely linked to financial planning. These include the development of more time for co-ordinators to check on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The school knows its strengths and areas for development and has a very good grasp of how to improve. All staff work hard to improve their own performance and the educational opportunities presented to pupils. The school has clear targets for improvements. For example, the school is aware that pupils' writing skills are an area for development and they have plans to use other subjects more effectively to widen the range of writing opportunities for pupils.

50 The school has sufficient staff and they are well deployed. Teaching and support assistants play an important role in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school has a designated senior management team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. For example, all curriculum subjects have a subject co-ordinator. Procedures for the induction and support of new teachers are good. Newly qualified teachers are given mentors and are well supported by all members of staff. Staff training is linked to priorities in the school plans for the future, which has focused recently on the development of literacy and numeracy. Arrangements for performance management are in place and meet statutory requirements. The school administrative staff make a valuable contribution to the efficient running of the school.

51 There is strong and effective leadership and management for pupils' special educational needs provision; it is provided by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Through regular meetings, all staff are kept well informed and classroom assistants are well trained to provide effective support. As a member of the school's senior management team, the co-ordinator has a significant impact on the overall provision for these pupils, which is very good.

52 The school is situated in large attractive grounds comprising one hard surface playground, a garden and a sports field. There is a separate safe play area for children under the age of five. The accommodation is satisfactory. The classrooms are of a good size, are bright and airy and have their own integral storage cupboards for resources. The school benefits from a small library and a well-appointed computer suite. The hall is a good size for physical education lessons and large enough to accommodate the whole school for assemblies and other collective gatherings. There is good disabled access into and throughout most of the school. The school is kept spotlessly clean and very well maintained.

53 The overall quality and quantity of the school's learning resources are good and resources are used well. Resources are very good in English, good in religious education, mathematics and physical education. The library is well stocked and used effectively to support pupils' learning in all subjects. Money is spent wisely and is linked to the school's priorities for development. There is very good leadership and management and very good relationships in school. Expenditure is above the national average but, because of the good quality of education provided in classes, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54 In order to further improve the quality of education, standards and progress in the school, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

- A. Plan opportunities for pupils to use other subjects to further develop pupils' writing skills, for example, by recording the results of their experiments in science, retelling stories from world religions in religious education and writing factual accounts, in their own style, in history and geography.
(Paragraph numbers 4, 9, 23, 69, 73, 75, 96, 98, 99, 114)

- B. Further develop pupils' information and communication technology skills learned in the computer suite by using classroom based computers more consistently in other subjects. Do this in order to give pupils regular opportunities to practise and improve their information and communication technology skills, particularly in word processing and data handling.
(Paragraph numbers 7, 19, 81, 84, 105, 114)

- NB. The school has identified these issues in its own priorities and has a good action plan in place to address these matters.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	23	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	29	51	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	161
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	64

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	51

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	9.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	12	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	13
	Girls	11	-	12
	Total	21	16	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81% (69%)	62% (62%)	96% (85%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	11	14
	Girls	-	12	12
	Total	20	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77% (69%)	88% (85%)	100% (81%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

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

Where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less, figures are omitted.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	12	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	
	Girls	-	-	11
	Total	14	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70% (68%)	80% (59%)	90% (82%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	14	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78% (55%)	83% (68%)	94% (82%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

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

Where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less, figures are omitted.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	161
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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
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	£
Total income	385,303
Total expenditure	366,806
Expenditure per pupil	2,027
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,725
Balance carried forward to next year	38,222

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

189

Number of questionnaires returned

60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	17	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	0	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	0	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	43	5	0	11
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	30	8	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	17	7	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	42	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	57	35	3	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	63	32	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	35	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	32	4	0	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55 In this school, the foundation stage is made up of a nursery and one reception class. The provision is very good and a strength of the school. All staff work very well as a team because the school uses the facilities and space as an Early Years Unit. The school has improved provision for children in the nursery and reception class and provides a very good start to their education. The good teaching and rich curriculum offered has a positive effect on children's learning. Children enjoy their time in the nursery and reception class. They are enthusiastic, happy, concentrate well on their activities and make good progress. The behaviour and attitude to learning is very good because children are very well managed and are kept busy. There are a wide variety of interesting activities that are very well planned by all staff and assessments are used effectively to track the progress of individual children.

56 When children enter the nursery a full range of ability is represented, but school assessments indicate that the attainment of the majority of children is well below that typical for their age. This is particularly evident in their speech and language development and knowledge, skills and understanding of the world. When children enter the reception class, they have achieved well when compared to their previous attainment and although initial tests taken during the first few weeks indicate that many are below the level expected for their age, particularly in language, communication and mathematical skills their attainment in personal independence is typical for their age. By the end of the reception year, good progress has been made and the majority of children achieve the standards expected for children of this age, with a significant minority achieving standards above those expected in language and communication skills, mathematical development and in personal and social development. This represents good achievement for these children from when they first enter the nursery.

57 Children who have special educational needs are identified early, with speech and language difficulties tested and monitored rigorously from when they first enter the nursery. The effective liaison with external agencies, along with very good relationships with parents and carers, ensures that children with special educational needs are well provided for and consequently make good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

58 By the time the children leave the foundation stage, most achieve the levels expected in this area of learning. Personal and social development is taught well. Teachers and support assistants place great emphasis on developing independence and social skills and they do this very effectively by setting good examples for the children to follow. Learning activities are organised so children experience the opportunity to make choices and take decisions. This effective strategy soon builds up the confidence of the children. They very quickly get used to the routines of the foundation stage. For example, all children enter confidently in the morning and afternoon sessions and sit sensibly waiting for the register to be called. They respond quickly to instructions for the first session of the day and, when given opportunities to choose, they move sensibly to their chosen activities. After each activity, children are encouraged to tidy up and this is made easy for them as the nursery is very well organised and children know where everything belongs. The two rooms, "blue" and "yellow", in the Early Years Unit are well organised to provide different experiences for children. The blue room is used well by all children to develop practical and creative skills as well as literacy and numeracy. In both rooms, children are aware of rules and routines. For example, as they enter the school, they independently hang up their coats on clearly labelled pegs and place their school bags in a large box. As a result, the school day begins promptly, with all children being on the carpet and ready for registration within minutes. Many children show quite impressive levels of concentration and persistence and they eagerly involve themselves in new activities. Children share resources well with

others, take turns and know that some games have special rules. Behaviour is very good and children speak politely to each other and to all adults in their classrooms. They show a natural curiosity to visitors, but soon relax and talk happily about what they are doing. For example, two children described how they added their names to the “Love Vine” in the blue room because of a kind act to a classmate.

Language, literacy and communication

59 The teaching in this area of learning is good and as a result, the majority of children achieve the standards expected for their age and ability by the end of the foundation stage. Higher attaining children have a good grasp of reading, speaking and language skills and achieve above the standard found in most schools. Speaking and listening skills develop particularly well because of the very good emphasis placed by all staff on extending and developing correct vocabulary as part of every activity. Children are constantly encouraged to talk about what they are doing and express their thoughts and feelings. The children achieve well because they are taught to listen very carefully to stories or instructions and to give extended answers to questions. For example, an activity in the nursery extended language skills considerably as children responded with correct names and animal sounds as the teacher removed model animals from a bag. They followed the jungle theme of the week and named the animals often accompanied by their imitation of the sound the animal would make. Speaking skills are extended by very good use of role-play activities, for example, children use the area set up to be a jungle safari very well, they dress as explorers or animals and play their role exploring the park very well.

60 Reading skills are encouraged as children take books home regularly to share with their family. In the reception class, higher attaining children know the title of their reading book when asked and identify the main characters in a story, pointing to show, “Space girl Sue. This story is about a space girl”. The story was read fluently and humour recognised in the description of Sue’s nose as “green and very long”. They self-correct when making mistakes. Children of average ability read the new words that they have learnt and practised at home. Children who are less confident readers develop good strategies to tackle new words that are unfamiliar to them. The staff use reading records well to track the progress of individual children and a home-school reading diary provides another effective link with parents and carers. Children form very good attitudes to books and reading.

61 Early writing skills are developed well for nursery children. They are given many opportunities to make marks, copy their names or add titles and labels to their drawings. Older children in the reception class are taught basic writing skills very effectively. For example, when writing suitable phrases inside pictures, one child wrote in the shark, “I wud swim away fast”, showing a good understanding of the nature of sharks and making a commendable and understandable effort at the word “would”. Staff teach children using a good variety of ideas to develop skills, for example, they use pictures that children have to put in the correct sequence and the writing underneath clearly stated that, “Baby used to wear a suit” showing children’s writing skills developing well. In small groups, children develop independent writing as they write short sentences to illustrate pictures to tell the story of a monkey in the jungle by writing, “Monkeys can jump up in trees”. They develop good spelling strategies as they use a word dictionary in alphabetical order. Handwriting skills are taught very thoroughly, either by the teacher or support assistants, to small groups of children. This ensures that staff see how the children form and shape their letters and any mistakes are corrected immediately. This leads to good learning.

Mathematical development

62 This area of learning is taught well and by the end of the reception year, children reach the standards expected for their age in mathematics, with higher attaining children exceeding the standard.

All children make good progress and achieve well from when they first enter school. In the nursery during an activity with a group of children they discussed using correct mathematical language, where the eyes, nose, teeth and whiskers on a lion should go. They spun the dice to provide the number of whiskers and teeth, counted them out and carefully placed them on the lion's face. Staff use every opportunity to encourage children to count. For example, in stories about jungle animals they count together the various limbs shown in pictures, in number games all staff have children counting when matching numbers on cards and they record progress as children sequence blocks in order of size.

63 In the reception class, children work on practical activities to extend their knowledge and understanding of counting numbers to 100. They developed an understanding of capacity as they watched enthralled as the support assistant mixed ingredients together to make biscuits. Questioning was very effective and children were encouraged to use mathematical language such as more than, less than as they helped to mix the ingredients. Higher attaining children use number sentences and complete the written addition and subtraction of numbers to ten. Children who have special educational needs are well supported in all activities, particularly to develop the correct mathematical vocabulary. Children learn quickly in lessons because activities are very well planned and a good selection of resources is used effectively to give them a sound base to their learning. Those children who finish activities early are given further challenging extension activities. This keeps them attentive, interested and ensures that all ability groups make equally good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64 Teachers provide rich learning experiences to ensure children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result of good teaching and a wide variety of interesting and relevant activities, most children reach the standards expected for their age in this area of learning. Scientific concepts are developed in the nursery as children observe how plants grow. Good use of written labels giving information and an interesting selection of plants, bought on a visit to the garden centre, are grown in the garden and children show real interest when looking at changes over time in their plants. In their imaginative play area, a safari park, they learn about animals found in the jungle. They pretend to be lions and tigers and move in suitable ways to show their understanding of the different ways animals behave, thereby demonstrating the good development of scientific skills and knowledge and understanding of the world.

65 All children use a good selection of construction resources to build towers, homes and safari parks using model animals. Both nursery and reception children use the computers confidently by using the mouse to move a cursor around the screen. They click on pictures on the screen to create a logical sequence, for example, of growing plants. In the reception class, computer skills are taught effectively through a number of learning areas, for example, in mathematics they choose the correct number to place in a sequence. All children in the reception class have the opportunity to use the computer suite and most use the keyboard to enter their name and use programs by clicking on the correct icons. Computer skills develop quickly and children show very good attitudes to learning these new skills. In design and technology, children make models using a variety of materials. Awareness of the feelings of other people was developed well in a lesson when children discussed friends and family who love them. Awareness of other cultures is developed well during discussions on Africa and the animals that live there compared to the ones that live in this country.

Physical development

66 Children make good progress in the development of their physical skills and reach the standard expected in this area of learning mainly because teaching is good or very good. Staff provide many opportunities for children to handle construction equipment, use play dough to roll, cut and shape, to play in the sand tray and use scissors, paint brushes and crayons. In the nursery, children use trikes confidently with good recognition of the space around them and how to avoid others. They run, skip

and change shape quickly when imitating the movements of different animals; this is a good link to the jungle theme. They transfer movements to apparatus imaginatively when using benches, balance beams and tunnels. Those children who have special educational needs in the Early Years Unit are well supported in physical activities, enabling them to have full access to all activities. Reception children take part in gymnastics using apparatus in the hall. These activities are very well organised, with health and safety a strong feature of lessons. Children are taught how to use space safely and are given good examples to follow by teachers and learning support assistants. In one lesson, children reacted quickly and accurately to changes in speed, shape and direction as the session progressed. Most children use apparatus to climb and balance. The outdoor learning environment is used well and consistently as part of a planned learning programme to extend the physical skills of the children.

Creative development

67 The teaching of creative development is good. Activities are well planned, resources are used effectively and support staff work with children in small groups so that knowledge and skills are developed thoroughly. As a result, children make good progress and reach the standard expected in this area of learning. Children are provided with an interesting curriculum and, in particular, have the opportunity to experience a good variety of tools, materials and equipment. In the nursery, children choose a selection of card, which they join together with glue to make a model tree. Staff use all sessions to develop children's mathematical and language skills, for example, when baking by measuring ingredients and discussing with children the way that mixing changes the shape and consistency of the materials.

68 Older children in the reception class use colour well to design a sun painted on grease proof paper so that light shines through and brings the picture to life. They recognise many colours and mix new colours by using hands and brushes when exploring shades and tones of colour. Musical activities are enjoyed as children in the nursery have regular sessions where they use a good selection of percussion instruments. For example, in a mixture of story and music children used drums, triangles, maracas, tambourines and shakers to create suitable sounds for each animal as it was mentioned in the story. Their enthusiasm and attention while listening for their turn was very impressive. When singing, they keep to the beat of the music and sing a good selection of songs. Accommodation, including outdoor facilities for children in the foundation stage, is good. Resources are good and used very effectively.

ENGLISH

69 Standards in the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the ages of seven and 11 have risen steadily since the last inspection and this reflects the good achievement of pupils who started from a significantly low level of language skills. Comparison against similar schools shows very good reading attainment by seven year old pupils and good attainment by 11 year old pupils at both the expected level and at the higher level of attainment. However, overall performance continues to be below the national average particularly in the use of writing skills. The reason for this is the very low level of children's language on entry to the school, particularly vocabulary and the expression of ideas. This is an area that the school has already identified for development and inspection evidence shows that good improvement is being achieved for pupils by the age of seven and 11.

70 Standards overall for pupils at the end of Year 2 are below the expected level. This group of pupils entered school with underdeveloped language skills. They do not find the written expression of ideas easy. Analysis of pupils' work reveals writing skills below the expected level. Handwriting has poor letter formation with higher attaining pupils in the early stages of joined script and other pupils using weak letter formation. Sentences have a simple structure for all abilities and there is little writing of any length. All pupils use basic punctuation to mark the beginning and end of sentences, but higher attaining pupils do not extend their sentences and begin most sentences in their writing with the

word 'then'. Spelling is generally weak and pupils do not have respect for accuracy as they use a variety of simple guesses. However, reading skills are at the expected level. Pupils like reading and speak enthusiastically about the books that they like. They use books at home and read regularly to adults. Higher attaining pupils use punctuation well to give expression to their reading and separate difficult words into meaningful parts. They also recognise complex letter blends such as "ph" when they read words such as "aphids". Average and lower attaining pupils recognise many words by sight and read carefully at a suitable level of difficulty. However, they are not secure in reading letter combinations such as "kn" in words such as "know" and sometimes guess at words so that "rocketty" becomes "rocky". Speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils listen carefully to others and speak clearly with supporting reasons when explaining ideas.

71 By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards reflect the very good quality of teaching for the older pupils. These pupils have made good progress and overall attainment is now at the expected level. There is good written work in response to stimulating experiences provided by the enthusiastic teaching but pupils do not yet express their ideas independently. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good range of skills in writing. They use paragraphs, speech and interesting structure in their extended writing. Imaginative use of vocabulary uses ideas such as, "I saw a huge, red, blazing ball of fire" or "the sea looks like a rough carpet on the floor". Good work in Year 5/6 on Shakespearean text includes rewriting of passages such as, "I'll follow you" in a modern school setting and a witches spell for a vegetarian. However, the writing of average and lower attaining pupils uses a simple sentence structure. Basic punctuation is accurate but attempts at speech and complex sentences do not use connecting words well and punctuation is frequently inaccurate. Spellings of frequently used words are not consistently accurate. There are a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6 group and this does affect the overall standard of pupils' work. Handwriting is joined, formed well and used naturally in all written work by most pupils. Speaking and listening is good. Pupils answer questions clearly with good opinions and reasons. They use good vocabulary about sentence structure and the effect that the author wants to create when discussing shared text. Reading, for 11 year olds, is in line with expectations. All pupils have favourite books and clearly enjoy both fiction and reference books. They know how to find information in complex reference books and speak of using the local library. Higher attaining pupils read confidently and make good use of punctuation for good expression. They understand the use of character when explaining the story line but do not easily use the behaviour of characters to project possible future developments in the story. Other pupils show similar skills at a level that matches their ability but are not effective in searching through text for key words and ideas.

72 Pupils' response to English lessons is good. The older junior pupils clearly enjoy their work. They produce a good quantity of writing that shows interest and enthusiasm. The presentation shows pride and obviously means much to them. Pupils of all ages give full attention to the teacher and then work with concentration to complete their tasks. However, pupils in the infant classes and lower junior classes do not show the same interest when writing. Tasks are completed but care and presentation are weak.

73 Teaching and learning of the infant pupils is good overall. A full range of experiences, that delivers a good knowledge about reading and language, supports a good variety of writing opportunities. Pupils' work is celebrated in display and pupils are given targets for future progress. Lessons are planned well with clear objectives for learning. Good relationships mean that pupils contribute readily to discussions. Shared reading involves the pupils and develops real expression in their reading. Frequent discussion ensures that pupils understand the text. This means that pupils interpret a passage well when they offered the word "ignored" as an explanation for other fish turning away from one particular fish in the story. However, the limited level of pupils' basic vocabulary meant that an explanation of "emerged from the darkness" was simple and without development. The use of classroom support is very effective. Staff are very well informed about learning objectives and so give very good support to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Although marking uses praise, it does not often make suggestions for improvement to written work. This is in

part linked to an overuse of worksheets that do not usually offer pupils independent opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt. As a result, writing opportunities do not always reflect high expectations and so pupils' work lacks interest and presentation is careless at times.

74 There is consistently very good teaching and learning for the older junior pupils in Year 5/6 and none that is less than satisfactory. Display is used well to celebrate pupils' work and there are numerous examples of good quality work to be seen. Literacy skills are used effectively in other subject areas such as history, and information and communication technology is used to present pupils' written work in a variety of attractive ways. Older pupils experience a wide variety of imaginative writing opportunities and results are writing of length that uses skills well. Lessons are planned with a clear focus on learning objectives and all activities are linked well to the theme of the lesson. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson writing sentences to illustrate the meaning of words the teacher asks "Does it sound right?" and "What is wrong with it?" so that pupils think carefully about what they write. Pupils have a clear idea of their progress because learning objectives are written at the back of their books. Marking offers constructive suggestions about improving work and homework is used regularly to develop skills learnt in lessons. However, where teaching was less successful, the learning objective was allowed to dominate the lesson. As a result, mainly factual knowledge followed and many pupils were unable to identify imaginatively to the challenge of writing a letter of complaint. Higher attaining pupils wrote a minimum amount and others struggled with spelling because they were working without a collection of useful words. Classroom support for pupils with special educational needs is used very well. A good input to the pupils' learning, follows the structure of the lesson and ensures their full involvement in the learning.

75 There is very good management of English by a very enthusiastic co-ordinator who gives valuable support to other teachers. Resources are very good with a wide range of "Big Books" for literacy lessons and an attractive, graded set of reading books. As a result, the teachers have worked very hard to successfully use the strategy for teaching literacy and improvement since the last inspection is very good. A thorough and comprehensive policy has been written which supports good teaching. It includes a very useful progression of key skills to support assessment by all teachers. Guidelines for reading, writing, spelling and handwriting are detailed and structured well. They give a clear and practical guide for teaching pupils from early years to the age of eleven. Assessment procedures are very good. Analysis of pupils' performance in annual tests gives information about pupils who need support and also about areas of learning which need improvement. However, opportunities to use other subject areas such as history, geography, science and religious education for the development of writing are not well developed. This means that the occasions on which pupils can develop skills such as reporting, explaining, comparing and recording are reduced.

MATHEMATICS

76 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with the levels expected for their age. This shows a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection. The improving standards reflect the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in previous tests and this has resulted in the setting of clear, realistic class targets to focus on improving the weaker areas of mathematical knowledge. The National Curriculum test results are not always reliable indicators of standards as measured against the national average or similar schools because of the relatively small number of pupils taking the tests each year and the different numbers of pupils in each year group who have special educational needs. Governors set targets for improving test results for pupils in Year 6 and the 2001 targets were met. Pupils' achievements in the infants, from their below average attainment when they start the National Curriculum, is due mainly to good teaching and learning in the infant classes. Good teaching and learning, especially for the oldest pupils in the juniors results in good achievement. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and strengthened pupils' abilities in working with numbers and measurement.

77 In Year 2, pupils are confident to work with numbers. They understand, for example, that numbers up to 99 are divided into tens and units. Pupils accurately add and subtract one and two digit numbers up to 20 and sometimes higher, as seen when they successfully solve money problems using both addition and subtraction accurately. Pupils recognise that 3×2 gives the same answer as 2×3 . They then use this knowledge to explain how to multiply different numbers, and they know that this is the same as adding a series of the same number together. They understand how to multiply by two, three and ten, sequence numbers in different patterns and recognise the difference between odd and even numbers. Pupils appreciate the relative values of fractions, such as halves, and use this to good effect when telling the time. Higher attaining pupils develop good understanding of numbers when they “partition” numbers, for example, they break down the problem $46 + 23$ into $(40 + 20) + (6 + 3)$. By using correct mathematical language when tackling problems, pupils compare numbers that are “greater” or “less” than others. They measure everyday objects correctly using standard measurements of centimetres. They recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes, such as squares, pyramids and cylinders.

78 In Year 6, most pupils have a broad mathematical knowledge and a sound grasp of their multiplication tables. They multiply and divide properly and use long multiplication. They understand that percentages are parts of a hundred. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils used a grid well to identify fractions, decimals and percentages that were the same. Higher attaining pupils use estimation well before tackling a problem and so know whether their answer is about the amount they expected. Pupils calculate accurately with fractions and add and subtract them correctly. When setting out their workings correctly on paper, for example, pupils record how to find $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{8}$ of a particular number. Pupils build effectively on their work in previous classes, as seen in Year 4/5 when they solve problems such as “20 cement bags divided between 5 workers” using their knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils know how to present mathematical findings in bar and line charts. Pupils in Year 6, for example, create block and line graphs to show temperature readings over a period of time. The teacher ensures they use good mathematical strategies to answer problems and their confidence improves when pupils use patterns of thinking that can be applied to different situations. This was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 5/6 when they worked with sequences of numbers that included decimals, fractions and negative numbers. Due to pupils’ very good attitudes, including those with special educational needs, they make good progress overall.

79 Very good relationships between teachers and pupils result in a positive working environment and guarantee good levels of concentration and behaviour. Teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons, particularly during the mental mathematics sessions. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher used discussions very well to help pupils understand different sequences of numbers between 1 and 20. This learning was then used well to reinforce pupils’ understanding of the steps to take when adding larger numbers together by breaking them down into tens and units. Teachers use support staff well to help groups of pupils and individuals, according to their needs. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the teaching of basic skills; lessons are brisk and parts are challenging, with time managed well.

80 The successfully implemented National Numeracy Strategy has a positive impact on both teaching and pupils’ learning and is raising standards throughout the school. There have been improvements in assessment procedures since the time of the last inspection. The school aims to collect a good deal of information on each pupil and use a variety of tests and specific assessments at suitable intervals. Teachers’ planning shows the specific objective for each lesson and they share this with their pupils well. In a lesson for pupils in Years 4/5, for example, the teacher reminded pupils of previous discussions showing the relationship between multiplication and division and told pupils that the aim for the lesson was to find the answers to division problems using a count down method. Teachers mark pupils’ work regularly and most provide comments that pinpoint areas for improvement. Teachers establish effective classroom routines that encourage pupils to listen

constructively and to participate eagerly. They are enthusiastic about mathematics and value pupils' contributions. Consequently, pupils are keen to contribute to discussions and concentrate well on different kinds of work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond accordingly.

81 The mathematical curriculum is satisfactory with some good links to other subjects. In science, for example, pupils use their mathematical skills to record the results in experiments to check how quickly different amounts of ice cool a given amount of water. The mathematics policy, along with the plans for the teaching of the subject through the year, show the positive response that the school has made to its curriculum over recent years. For example, teachers identify the assessment of pupils' achievements in their planning, they use assessment as a means of setting class targets and to set challenging targets for pupils of all ages and prior attainment. There is a very good system in place for the head teacher and subject co-ordinator to observe teaching and learning and provide feedback to other teachers. The mathematics co-ordinator is very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to implement the school's strategy for the development of the subject, this strategy is good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, there are too few occasions when classroom based computers are used to support pupils' work both in mathematics and in information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

82 The attainment of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 is broadly in line with the national average. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection and is largely because of improved teaching.

83 By the time they are seven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to classify substances, the structure of plants and what conditions are required for them to grow. They know that forces act on objects in different ways and they carry out a "fair" investigation into the factors effecting the way a vehicle runs down a ramp. In an investigation of how devices such as torches and toys are powered by electricity, most pupils know the main dangers of using electricity. Average and higher attaining pupils identify the negative and positive poles of a battery and successfully complete an electric circuit. By the time they are 11, most pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding. They have an effective grasp of such concepts as changing liquids into solids and separating substances through such techniques as filtration. Most pupils have a sound grasp of food chains and use the terms "predator" and "prey" appropriately. Pupils are competent investigators and have well developed skills when observing, recording and, for some higher attaining pupils, evaluating what they have seen. For example, in a Year 5/6 science investigation into reversible and irreversible changes, several pupils explained changes such as the melting of candle wax and the burning of a match by explaining whether or not the original substances had changed irreversibly and why. Many average and higher attaining pupils use their mathematical skills well to draw graphs to illustrate their results in investigations, such as the effect of temperature on the solubility of a substance. In most lessons, pupils make at least good progress and achieve well, including those with special educational needs.

84 The quality of teaching overall is good. For pupils in Year 5/6 teaching is very good, but in other classes it varies between good and satisfactory. All teachers plan well so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, have tasks which meet their needs. This enables all pupils to build well on what they have already learned. Teachers manage pupils well. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not waste their time and remain on task for substantial periods. In the best lessons teachers give very clear learning objectives to pupils in different attainment groups and provide resources which are of good quality to enable them to succeed. As a result, pupils are very clear about how to proceed and work

confidently. As these lessons proceed, teachers ask individuals and sometimes the whole class pertinent questions, which help pupils to clarify their understanding of different concepts. In a Year 5/6 lesson about reversible and irreversible changes, pupils in one group were observing a balloon attached to a test tube containing a mixture of lemon juice and bicarbonate of soda. They were asked why they thought the balloon was expanding and did it tell them anything about the kind of change occurring? In some lessons, such as one concerning the growth of cress seeds, insufficient opportunity was given to allow pupils to use measurement effectively and to record data graphically. In many lessons good quality computers are available, but too little use is made of them by teachers to enhance pupils' understanding of science and develop their information and communication technology skills. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that in many lessons, in both junior and infant classes, limited opportunities are provided to develop pupils' writing skills because of limited, often one word answers demanded by work sheets.

85 Pupils enjoy their lessons and frequently show very good attitudes by the way they cooperate with peers and maintain their interest for long periods of time. Their very good relationships with teachers and each other contribute to good learning. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. There have been useful policy revisions in liaison with other staff. The effective monitoring and annual audits, leading to improved resources, have contributed to the improvements since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

86 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in art and design is in line with the levels expected for their age. Pupils' progress and learning are often good and the quality of some art work on display is good. The satisfactory standards found in the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils in Key Stage 1 demonstrate a sound knowledge of colour and understand the difference between primary and secondary colours. In Year 2, they use art and design skills when making a sculpture using natural materials such as wood and stone. In Year 1, they make models in clay and create good symmetrical patterns. All classes contribute to the effective displays of work in classrooms and corridors.

87 Older pupils continue to develop their skills and understanding of art and design as they explore an ever increasing range of media. Drawing skills are developed as they explore the effects that can be obtained when using different pencils and crayons. For example, in Year 6, pupils use sketch books and good examples of still life pictures include flowers and landscapes. This work is developed well when pupils paint landscapes for a classroom display. Teachers ensure that pupils' studies include looking at the work of famous artists. For example, Year 5/6 pupils study Monet and Van Gogh and create pictures in the style of the artists. In Year 3/4, pupils create imaginative pictures and patterns in the style of Sean Scully and some used a great deal of imagination using different shapes and colours to produce "dream" pictures.

88 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy their art and design and take pride in their work. They work with care and are willing to try new ideas in order to achieve the best results. Pupils in a Year 5/6 lesson were keen to explain how they were making fathers' day cards using tissue paper to create a landscape with depth. They used different techniques well to develop their work, such as pinching tissue paper to create birds and tearing was used to show interesting "movement" effects. This subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural and spiritual development, as they learn about art in different societies and appreciate the range of feelings they experience in creating their own art works.

89 Only one lesson was observed in art and design but teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers show they have a good knowledge of the subject and understand how to help pupils develop the wide range of skills needed to master a range of media. Teachers base their

planning on good guidelines for the subject and the progress of both knowledge and skills is informally monitored by the subject co-ordinator. Lessons are well organised and resources used effectively to encourage pupils to experiment and enjoy finding new ways of creating works of art. Display is linked to art and teachers create a colourful environment that celebrates pupils' work. For example, in Year 3/4, pupils create collages with pasta and polystyrene based on their historical studies of the Anglo Saxons. The co-ordinator informally monitors the subject through teachers' planning and pupils' work on display and has good plans for information and communication technology to be used more often to support the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90 No lessons were seen due to timetabling constraints, but analysis of pupils' past work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils, indicate that standards achieved by pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with the levels expected for their age. Pupils' standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

91 In Year 2, pupils design and make a range of different objects, such as money containers, hand puppets and toys, using different materials, joining, shaping and finishing techniques. In their designs, pupils consider the purpose and use of the product and some can suggest ways of improving the design. By the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory gains in the skills of designing, measuring, marking, cutting and shaping. They employ a range of colourful and thoughtful finishing techniques. This was seen in well made slippers and handbags produced by Year 5/6 pupils. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in food technology when they design meals of different complexity for a range of purposes, such as those made to represent other countries during the school's European Day.

92 Teachers' planning is based on the recent national guidance and indicates adequate opportunities for pupils to investigate and build different mechanisms, using commercial kits and other materials, and a range of tools for shaping, joining and finishing. Although a useful range of tools are available on the school's one technology trolley, they are not available in sufficient quantity for classes to use them simultaneously. The range of resistant materials is barely adequate for the same reason. The co-ordinator informally monitors the subject through teachers' planning and pupils' work on display.

GEOGRAPHY

93 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in geography is in line with the level expected for their age. Discussion with pupils at the age of 11 showed standards in line with those expected with some good factual knowledge but underdeveloped skills of explanation and comparison.

94 Pupils at the age of seven use information and communication technology to draw and label an imaginary island as part of their lessons on the island of Struay. They know about island transport and make comparisons between town, country and seaside as part of their work on contrasting areas. They accurately locate place names such as Consett, The Grove, Whitley Bay and Gateshead. Work within the most recent topic about the seaside shows effective links with English, mathematics and art and design. There are accounts of a visit to Bamburgh that show awareness of distance and features of a different locality.

95 Discussion with pupils at the age of 11 reveals good factual knowledge about other countries, their own country, maps, rivers and issues involved with rainforest environments. They are familiar with world and national maps and accurately use a simple system of co-ordinates to locate places. They are not familiar with Ordnance Survey maps and are unaware of the use of six figure co-ordinates to give precise references for locating specific features. Pupils remembered recent work on

the merits of making a town centre traffic-free but were not able to offer argument beyond the most simple about the benefits and disadvantages. Work on rivers has given them knowledge of the water cycle and an awareness of some features such as waterfalls, network of streams and source but they had no deeper knowledge about features such as tributaries, estuary and erosion.

96 No lessons were seen in geography for the infant pupils but teaching is judged to be at least satisfactory from analysis of pupils' work. Work on display shows good links with other subject areas and good use of visits to localities in order to give meaning to locations studied. There is evidence of pupils using the skill of comparison. However, the use of commercial worksheets means that there is insufficient recording by pupils and this means that they are not developing a deeper understanding of the ideas taught in lessons.

97 Teaching for junior pupils is satisfactory in that the requirements of the National Curriculum are delivered and pupils gain factual knowledge of the topics studied. However, opportunities to use writing in developing the skills of comparison, explanation and linking local features with location are not developed well. A lesson on an Indian village used locational resources such as a world map well and developed an awareness of differences such as climate, water and transport well. However, the reasons and explanations for these differences were not explored. As a result, the lack of proper road surfaces and the link to extreme rainfall were not fully investigated and implications of water from the well rather than from the tap were not developed.

98 Subject management is satisfactory. A structured curriculum is in place and the subject is taught regularly. In view of the priority given to other subjects such as literacy and numeracy over the past few years, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Although planning documents follow national guidelines and geography is taught according to a cycle of topics, the links with other curriculum areas are not developed well in the teaching of the junior pupils. The use of writing skills is infrequent and so opportunities to develop writing at the same time as geographical skills are missed. Mathematical skills are not used sufficiently to develop an understanding of six-figure co-ordinates, or a confident use of ordnance survey maps. There is no structured system of evaluating the success of geography teaching or of assessing pupils' attainment in the subject. This means that there is no information to guide the development of the geography curriculum. However, trips are made to locations under study and residential visits are organised so pupils observe at first hand the differences in location between their own town and a tourist environment. The school has developed useful links with European schools in Sweden, Germany and Poland, teacher exchange has occurred and information and communication technology has been used very well for video conferences with a school in Sweden.

HISTORY

99 There was insufficient evidence to form a secure judgement on pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age. Pupils, at the age of 11, clearly enjoy their work in history. Their presentation is neat, the work obviously has meaning for them and they produce a good quantity of work that uses accurate vocabulary. Written accounts of a visit to an Egyptian exhibition show good historical knowledge and simple explanation of the Egyptians' understanding of life after death. Victorian maps are used well to show changes in local developments over time and comparisons are made in factual form about living conditions, education, voting and public health. Information and communication technology and mathematics are used well in an analysis of census information to present findings that show how few people lived beyond the age of fifty. Details about the short life span include possible reasons for it, for example, poor hygiene and lack of medical treatments. However, this use of historical skills is not fully developed through writing opportunities that demand extended use of literacy skills in the writing of comparisons, explanations and imaginative accounts of life in other times.

100 Good teaching for older pupils gives them a wide range of learning opportunities. The use of visits and visitors and the enthusiasm of teachers improves learning, as does the use of information and communication technology and mathematics. Good planning and preparation of perceptive questions ensured a good lesson about the Egyptians that used a video recording to show artefacts from the tomb of Tutenkahmun. Pupils were very interested in the lesson and asked to use notebooks as they watched so that they could better answer the questions to follow. However, most of the information questions were factual and, although the programme had raised points about the power of the pharaohs, their reasons for building pyramids and their beliefs about life after death, there was no requirement for pupils to explain any of the facts that they had noted.

101 There has been good improvement in history since the last inspection. Teaching is enthusiastic, skills of enquiry are used and there is a range of visits in support of the curriculum. The subject co-ordinator has developed a policy and refers to activities and teaching strategies but has not yet developed an overview of the history curriculum. However, there is no structure that could be used for assessing the effectiveness of teaching the subject or the pupils' success in developing skills of historical research.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102 The attainment of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with the levels expected for their age in skills and knowledge. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in lessons. This is

largely attributable to the consistently good teaching and the good quality resources, including the new computer suite. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils' use of information and communication technology to enhance other subjects and to consolidate their computing skills by using classroom based computers is not consistently undertaken in all classes.

103 By the end of Year 2, pupils use computers to write poems and short paragraphs on a range of subjects. They generate block graphs to describe different sets of data, such as height, eye colour and favourite meal. Many pupils know that computers are used to control devices such as cookers and video equipment. Pupils in Year 2 suggest commands to change the direction of a floor robot and higher attaining pupils write down commands to change direction several times. Pupils develop appropriate skills and understanding of the Internet. For example, Year 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs, located a local website about the "seaside" and used their skills competently to navigate through it. Higher attaining pupils use the menu bar competently and understand the term "scroll", average and lower attaining pupils require more support.

104 By the end of Year 6, pupils make sound gains in skills and knowledge and continue to achieve well in lessons. They know how to set up and use simple databases and to interrogate these for information. Teachers' planning indicates that they are shortly to use spreadsheets to organise and analyse different forms of data. Pupils use the term "field", "file" and "icon" accurately and higher attaining pupils in Year 5/6 explain what these terms mean. Year 5/6 pupils use sensor devices to measure the temperature on different days of the week and month and create block graphs to illustrate their results. Although no lessons linked to more advanced control technology were seen during the inspection, teachers' planning and discussion with the co-ordinator indicated that this is to occur during the term. Pupils understand the importance and scope of the Internet, and have used it to locate information on Ancient Egypt and to e-mail messages to pupils in a local school. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils of all ages enjoy using the computers and treat them with respect. In many lessons, pupils offer assistance to other pupils and are uninhibited when asking for advice from the teacher.

105 The quality of teaching is consistently good in all computer skills. Teachers use their knowledge well to give clear instructions and to test pupils' understanding with skilful questioning. This allows most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to work independently and gain confidence. In many lessons, teachers use opportunities to consolidate pupils' spelling and reading skills by linking questions to text that has been read on the screen or created by pupils. Teachers are particularly skilful in managing the behaviour of pupils, particularly in the confined space of the computer suite. This means pupils remain focused and persevere with their tasks. However, most teachers do not plan for the use of information and communication technology in other subjects, including English and mathematics. Although some limited use in mathematics and science was observed, it is generally inadequately used in most classes. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has been very influential in facilitating the necessary staff training and significant improvement in resources since the last inspection.

MUSIC

106 It was not possible to observe any music during the inspection and so judgements are not possible for attainment and teaching. However, singing in assemblies is good and a significant number of junior pupils showed a good interest in the subject when they attended a choir practice in preparation for a school production later in the term. There was a good balance of boys and girls as pupils began the early stages of learning their songs. They listened well to suggestions from the teacher, repeated phrases as requested and generally worked with commitment and interest. However, the pupils had not yet developed full expression of the music.

107 The co-ordinator of the subject has developed a good policy and scheme that states objectives and ideas for each stage of learning from nursery age until pupils leave the school at the age of 11. There is a good overview of what will be learned with year by year details of skills and activities suggested by a commercial scheme for the teaching of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108 Pupils' attainment in physical education is at the level expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Almost all pupils achieve the minimum requirement of swimming 25 metres unaided. The exceptions being a very small number of pupils with serious special educational needs. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and behave with consideration for the needs of others during activities. For example, they do not interfere with the activities of other groups and they respect the need for others to use space in practising skills.

109 Teaching and learning are good. Pupils in Year 1 listened carefully to the clear explanation by their teacher and so worked with enthusiasm and thought as they ran energetically around the hall without collision and then carefully controlled a ball with their feet as they moved it around a series of obstacles. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils worked very sensibly as they practised their throwing and catching. In a Year 4/5 lesson, pupils were very keen and interested in the demands of a throwing, batting and catching activity as a result of the teacher's challenge to score points for repeated success. However, the teacher did not offer an interesting and challenging variety of movements, such as brisk running, hopping or skipping, during warm-up sessions. This meant that not all pupils were sufficiently energetic to exercise the heart muscle fully.

110 There has been good improvement in the provision for physical education since the last inspection. The co-ordinator of the subject is well qualified to teach physical education and gives good leadership to other teachers. There is a good policy and guidelines that meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum in an imaginative variety of ways. For example, the use of a local sports hall has been arranged for orienteering activities. Funding is sought from the "New Opportunities Fund" for activities that incur charges. Resources are now of good quality and opportunities are increased for a variety of extra-curricular activities such as football, netball, cross-country, athletics and swimming. These include pupils below the age of seven as well as those up to the age of 11. There is a football team that includes pupils from both local schools as well as teams for younger pupils. All pupils are included in all lessons, due to a large and regularly washed resource of spare kit, so that they are now properly dressed for physical activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111 Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 meet those prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus and are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and this allows pupils to progress steadily and securely through the varied and interesting learning opportunities planned for them.

112 Teaching is better than it was at the time of the last inspection and most of it is now good. Under the good direction of the co-ordinator, guidelines have been written which are used well in teachers' planning of lessons. This is well linked to the locally agreed syllabus and the curriculum is broad and covers all required areas well. As a result, the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

113 Teachers use effective methods to deliver their lessons. They make good use of good quality artefacts either to introduce new learning or to check on pupils' understanding. In a good Year 3/4 lesson, pupils listened attentively to a story from the Sikh religion and handled artefacts, used by the teacher to show the special symbols of the religion, sensitively. In discussions they referred to their visit to Bede's World and how, dressed as nuns and monks, they learned more about the religious lives of those people. In both Years 1 and 2, teachers use artefacts from the Buddhist faith to illustrate how important friendship and caring are to followers of that religion. Teachers plan lessons well. They link the subject effectively to other curriculum areas to support understanding and

generate discussion. In a good lesson in Year 5/6, the teacher used comparisons between the story of Noah's Ark and one from the Buddhist religion to illustrate ways of showing responsible behaviour. By using challenging questions the teacher ensured that pupils thought carefully about the reasons for the flood and how people are often irresponsible. This illustrated well how the two aspects of the agreed syllabus interlink.

114 A real strength of the subject lies in the way that teachers use the personal, social and health education programme to support learning in religious education. In a Year 4/5 lesson pupils discuss the "Buddy" system used in school to provide support and care for all pupils. They gave sensitive answers to questions about why it was important to have rules and how valuable a friendship could be. Teachers share the targets with pupils at the beginning of the lesson to make sure pupils are involved in their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for through more simplified activities and with good support either from the teacher or well briefed classroom assistant. In most classes, pupils' knowledge and understanding is reflected in their written work. In a minority of classes, however, teachers' expectations of pupils' written work are not high enough and too few opportunities are given to allow pupils to write imaginative descriptions of their studies. All work is marked regularly and teachers give praise and encouragement to pupils but opportunities are often missed to suggest how work could be improved. Information and communication technology is under used in this subject.

115 The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. By undertaking an audit of the subject, the co-ordinator has identified the strengths and areas that need to be developed. For example, a new policy has just been completed and is ready for full staff discussion before being implemented. Resources to support the subject are good and used well by teachers to illustrate important symbols in religions studied.