

INSPECTION REPORT

HILL VIEW INFANT SCHOOL

SUNDERLAND

LEA area: SUNDERLAND

Unique reference number: 108771

Headteacher: MRS W.A. ANGUS

Reporting inspector: Stuart Dobson
18074

Dates of inspection: 2-5 JULY 2001

Inspection number: 195484

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-7

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Helvellyn Road
Sunderland

Postcode: SR2 9JJ

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Appropriate authority: THE GOVERNING BODY

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Turnbull

Date of previous inspection: 14.01.97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stuart Dobson 18074	Registered inspector	Science Design and Technology English as an additional language. Equality of opportunity	Standards of achievement Quality of teaching Leadership and management
Jennifer Madden 13450	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' welfare and guidance Relationship with parents
Margaret Mann 23276	Team Inspector	Art and Design History Music Religious Education	
Angela Smithers 17456	Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical Education Education for children under five	
John Manning 2893	Team Inspector	English Information and Communications Technology Pupils with special educational needs	Quality of the curriculum

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves an area of mixed private and publicly owned housing to the south of Sunderland city centre. It is a relatively large school with 341 pupils on roll. There is a 52 place nursery and there are four classes in each of the three year groups. The school has pupils from three to seven years old. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly above average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need and on the register of special educational needs is slightly below the national average. Pupils on the register mostly have general learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is similar to the Sunderland average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than the national average.

The school is close to its capacity and there are requests for places in all year groups.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school in all aspects of its provision and performance. Pupils reach standards which are well above average in English, mathematics and science and this is not at the expense of other subjects as pupils reach above and well above average standards in almost all of them. A very high percentage of the children in the foundation stage surpass nationally expected levels because of the very good provision which they experience. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. This has been achieved through the very good leadership and management of the school and in particular the excellent leadership of the headteacher and key staff. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

This school has major strengths in all areas of its work and as a result, pupils achieve well in almost all aspects of their development.

Exceptionally good are:

The overall quality of teaching and in particular teachers' very high expectations.

The leadership of the school.

The use made of assessment to inform the planning of the curriculum.

As a consequence, the parents have the highest regard for the work of the school.

What could be improved

There are no significant areas for improvement and the school should follow its own development plan.

Two minor issues which the managers should consider are:

Improving the punctuality of some pupils at the start of the school day;

Addressing, as rapidly as possible, the school's plans to improve the damp conditions and poor ventilation in most of the school building.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since that report there has been very good improvement in standards achieved in ten subjects and standards have been maintained in the eleventh (physical education). The issues raised for improvement in the last report included improving standards in information and communication technology, improving provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision, improving the curriculum planning and schemes of work, improving the management structure of the school and improving the school development planning. There has been very good and often excellent improvement in all of these areas. Overall, the school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	B	A	A
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The standards achieved by the school in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently high and are mostly well above average. The school has maintained this standard for many years. The school sets itself targets for reading, writing and mathematics which are based on a thorough analysis of pupils' earlier performance. These targets are challenging and help the school to achieve improvement even within these high levels.

The high standards are not confined to these three areas. Inspection evidence indicates that by the time the pupils are seven years old they reach very good standards in English, mathematics, science, art, design technology, information and communication technology and music. They reach good standards in geography, history and religious education and satisfactory standards in physical education. In the school's own planning, physical education is the next target for improvement.

Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 and children in the nursery and reception classes make good and often very good progress, whatever their ability or particular needs. The school is fully aware of the need to include all pupils and does so by identifying individual needs and providing for them. This is particularly evident in the planning for lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are very keen to work and are enthusiastic about the interesting activities which the teachers provide.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall. The few minor instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with rapidly and effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist between all of the staff and the pupils and between the pupils. Even the youngest children in the nursery have developed an awareness of others and show respect for their needs.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory overall though a few parents have a rather casual approach to getting their children to school on time and these late entrants cause disruption to the excellent atmosphere which has been so carefully created by the teachers at the beginning of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is consistently very good. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in 8 per cent of lessons, very good in 49 percent and good in a further 37 percent. Only 5 percent of lessons were satisfactory and 1 percent, one lesson, was unsatisfactory. There is consistently very good quality of teaching in the nursery, reception and Key Stage 1.

There are very few areas for improvement in teaching. The teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and particularly noteworthy is their teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy and the way in which they support and encourage all pupils to be effective learners. This begins in the nursery when they are expected to suggest ways of finding things out, for example adults asking children 'where can we look for . . . ? and how could we find out if . . . ?'. The shared planning of the year groups is a great strength as is the teachers' planning for the classroom assistants who work well and make a good contribution to learning. Through very thorough lesson planning and the teachers' very good knowledge of the pupils gained from assessment, activities are provided which match the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. On the one occasion when teaching was unsatisfactory this was due mostly to the teacher's lack of knowledge of one part of a lesson.

In response to this consistently good or very good teaching, the pupils are secure, they know that what is expected of them they can achieve with effort and they try hard all the time to succeed. In the week of the inspection, this was particularly noticeable when in the hot, damp conditions in the classroom at the end of a long and tiring day, the pupils responded well to the new mental challenges being set by the teacher in a mathematics lesson or in another lesson, sang beautifully with great enthusiasm.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good. It covers all required subjects and areas of learning and is particularly effective as often subjects are linked together, for example when pupils work with a map to site homes for zoo animals which they are planning and making in technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. The pupils' needs are identified as soon as they arrive at the school and then considerable efforts are made to help the pupils to catch up or at least improve as much as possible.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Provision is very good. All of the pupils get the support they need with English and the class teachers are very aware of the need to support pupils, particularly with technical vocabulary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	All aspects of provision are very good. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The children have exciting opportunities to learn, for example the nursery children eagerly anticipated the arrival of 'the bear' and were overwhelmed with excitement when it arrived. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have responsibility, learn about their own and other cultures and learn to manage their own behaviour.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. There is very good monitoring of the pupils' academic and personal development and staff use this information to provide a relevant curriculum
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The school has an excellent relationship with parents. They are supported in helping their children to succeed and they have very good access to the teaching staff when they have anything to discuss.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management is very good overall. The headteacher has established excellent relationships with the whole school community and they share a strong sense of direction and a great desire to continually improve. All key staff make major contributions to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is challenging, helpful and supportive and is effectively developing a shared leadership role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	All aspects of the work of the school are effectively monitored and evaluation of the school is effective because there is a clear vision of school improvement targets.
The strategic use of resources	Almost all of the resources of the school are used very well. The only resource which could be used more effectively is the hall.

There is a generous allocation of teachers and classroom support assistants to each class and this is a major factor in the success of the school. The accommodation is generous in size but most of it is excessively damp making working conditions unpleasant. There is a need for much better ventilation. The hall is not efficiently used. The organisation of the hall for lunchtime and clearing up afterwards takes far too long and this impinges on curriculum time.

There are no identifiable weaknesses in leadership and management as any areas raised by the inspection team are already contained within a very effective school development plan. The school applies best value principles to all its major spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All aspects of the school please most parents. They are very happy with the high standards achieved. They are particularly pleased that the school does not put pupils under pressure but supports and encourages them Parents are pleased with the inclusive nature of the school; children speaking languages other than English are said to be included well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues of concern were raised with the inspection team.

The inspection team fully agrees that parents are right to be delighted with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When pupils come into nursery class their attainment is appropriate for their age and only a few children have unsatisfactory speaking and listening skills. They make very good progress in the nursery class and by the time they enter the reception class there are no notable areas of weakness, and most children show particular strengths in the areas of personal, social and emotional development. Their good progress continues in the reception classes and the children become confident learners who are well prepared for the national curriculum and Key Stage 1. By the time that they leave the reception classes, a high proportion of the children have reached and surpassed many of the Early Learning Goals¹. They make even progress in all six areas of learning.
2. The most recent national tests for seven-year-olds (2000) show that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is well above the national average for reading and writing and mathematics. The standard is equally high for boys and girls. The standards achieved at Hill View are well above average in comparison with schools of a similar background. Teachers' assessments in science show that attainment at seven years is above the level expected nationally.
3. The school has maintained these high levels for many years and is continuing to make improvements, even though results are already high. Standards in tests have been maintained since the last inspection and standards of work in class have been significantly improved.
4. Achievement in information and communication technology is well above expectations at Key Stage 1. This is a vast improvement since the last inspection. In art, design and technology and music, standards are well above expected levels. In geography, history and religious education, standards are above those expected. In physical education standards are as expected for their age but this is the next target for school improvement.
5. Pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs are well provided for; individual plans are relevant to their needs and they make good progress. The good teaching and support they receive from all staff ensure that they achieve well in relation to the targets set for them.
6. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. They are well supported, particularly in relation to the acquisition of technical vocabulary and they gain confidence to engage in all lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupil's attitudes to the school have improved since the last inspection when they were good. They are now very good. Pupils are very happy coming to school and clearly enjoy the school day in the stimulating and supportive atmosphere. This enjoyment applies equally to the children in the nursery. In spite of their obvious pleasure at being in school, the start of the school day is tardy for some pupils, with quite a number of

¹ Nationally agreed targets for children on entry to Key Stage 1.

parents arriving with their children late for registration. In the classroom, pupils are enthusiastic, alert and they work hard. They respond intelligently and creatively to questions and offer ideas and solutions. Pupils are given the scope to think and work independently and quietly apply themselves to the task in hand. Pupils with special educational needs are also keen to make progress and are well integrated into the happy and purposeful atmosphere.

8. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school has improved since the last inspection from good to very good; a fact that delights parents. In lessons, they respond to the very good management strategies employed by staff and to very good teaching. During playtimes and lunchtimes, behaviour is similarly very good though pupils are very noisy. There was however, no evidence of rough or oppressive behaviour during the inspection and none reported by either parents or pupils. There have been no exclusions from the school. No groups of pupils are singled out as different or less worthy of friendship and consideration. Pupils are taught to be kind to one another and to all living creatures and this was well demonstrated by the care taken with the mini beasts collected for a science lesson and their return to their habitats. There is no vandalism in the school and pupils take care of their own and school property.
9. Pupils' personal development and the relationships within the school are very good. Through circle time² when pupils can share their hopes and fears, assemblies, religious education and other areas of the curriculum, pupils are taught to consider the results of their actions on others. Consequently they listen well to each other, applaud other pupil's efforts spontaneously and generally refrain from teasing and criticism. The teaching of religious education has been especially good in teaching tolerance. For example, a session on reflection and meditation saw pupils sharing their thoughts about their friends. This greatly enhanced their self-esteem. Pupils take responsibilities appropriate to their age and tidy away without being asked, return registers to the office and readily help teachers and other pupils should the need arise. By the time they reach Y2, pupils are confident, responding well to challenges and able to share their thoughts and feelings with their classmates. Relationships in the school are extremely constructive; teachers have a good rapport with their classes and this increases pupils' desire to succeed. Pupils work well together, creating a good working atmosphere in the classroom where they are able to evaluate other's work and listen to their views. Pupils with special needs similarly have very good relationships, and consequently are fully integrated into the life of the school, both academically and personally.
10. Attendance is satisfactory, being very close to the national average at 94.61% in the year 1999/2000. During the current academic year, attendance has dropped slightly. Many pupils are brought by their parents too late for the start of the school day and consequently, the first 15 minutes of the school day are wasted by the constant interruption of the planned routine.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching is exceptionally good. This is one of the main reasons for the good and very good standards which the pupils reach in many of their subjects. There is very little difference between the quality of teaching of the pupils in the foundation stage³ and those in Key Stage 1. Overall the quality of teaching is excellent in 8 percent of lessons, very good in 49 per cent, good in 37 percent and satisfactory in only 5 percent. Only one lesson, (1 percent) was unsatisfactory. This was in Key Stage 1 and

² A planned opportunity for pupils to discuss issues which affect them.

³ Nursery and reception classes.

was caused by the teacher's misunderstanding of a part of the lesson. It is clear that this is a very rare occurrence in this school.

12. The teaching of children in the foundation stage is very good or better in 67 percent of lessons and good in a further 30 percent. It is never unsatisfactory. There is very little difference in the quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes and there are examples of excellent teaching in both. The styles of teaching are different but nevertheless effective. In the nursery most of the teaching is done through a vast range of exciting and stimulating practical tasks which are supported very well by the adults. They all have very good questioning techniques and the planning is sufficiently good so that they all know the purpose of the lesson. In the week of the inspection, much of the activity centred around 'hunting for animals' and the adults very cleverly used every opportunity to engage the children in questioning such as; "where do you think that . . . , when do you think . . . ,," as well as developing children's positional language and creative skills. The week culminated in a picnic; a very good opportunity for the children to develop their social skills and a wonderfully exciting occasion when 'the bear' so long sought, arrived. The children were tremendously excited and thrilled to show off their dance, singing and language skills. Despite their excitement they behaved very well.
13. In the reception classes the teachers continue to provide practical learning opportunities and continue to support the very good development of pupils' literacy skills. Teachers throughout the Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of the learning needs of young children. In the reception classes, the children have more formal lesson times and there is a more distinct emphasis on the subject of the lesson. Very good planning, for example in mathematics, ensures that the lessons are very clearly matched to the needs of the children, the teachers have a clear focus on teaching and reinforcing the use of correct mathematics vocabulary and the children learn rapidly. There are no consistent weaknesses in teaching.
14. In Key Stage 1 the very good teaching continues. It is very good or better in almost 50 per cent of lessons and good in a further 41 per cent. 8 percent of teaching is satisfactory and 1 percent (1 lesson) was unsatisfactory. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and this allows them the confidence to pose questions and extend pupils thinking beyond the lesson. The teachers are not constrained by nationally indicated levels of what pupils are expected to achieve and they extend the pupils as far as possible. This was seen in science lessons where pupils had successfully progressed to the identification of groups of vertebrates and invertebrates through observable and non-observable features. This work is often left until the end of Key Stage 2.
15. The areas for development in satisfactory lessons were in the main the use of time which, though satisfactory, did not support the lively pace which these pupils are used to.
16. All of the teachers make very good use of homework to involve the pupils and often their parents in meaningful extension activities. This is very well managed. The high quality of the teachers' work is possible because they make very good use of assessment to plan lessons which are appropriate for their own groups.
17. All pupils are taught by a specialist music teacher. The teaching of music is very good and as a result pupils reach very good levels. This was seen in a wonderful concert rehearsal where pupils sang in two parts, where soloists sang clearly with sustained and accurate pitch and in which every child behaved in a most mature manner.

18. Because of the consistently high standard of teaching the pupils learn well for most of the time. They gain basic skills of literacy and numeracy at a rapid rate and they are taught how to learn in all classes. They make a great effort to succeed in all that they do and maintain a very good pace of work even on very hot and humid days. They are all encouraged and concentrate well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make rapid gains partly because the teachers support them in lessons but also because the whole school gives them confidence.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good. The curriculum is very well planned and is enriched by many extra curricular activities. The curriculum for the foundation stage is meticulously organised so that children under five receive a very good start to their education. Throughout the nursery and reception classes the school provides fully for children to meet and often surpass the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The activities provided help ensure that children develop the skills which they need as they move from nursery to reception and on into Year 1. They are very well equipped to tackle the National Curriculum when they move into Year 1.
20. The school meets all statutory requirements. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good, particularly in the provision for information and communication technology and the standards being attained. The clearly expressed curriculum policies are complemented by detailed schemes of work in all subjects. Teachers have adapted national guidelines and they work closely together to plan in both the short and the long term.
21. The curriculum is coherent and all lessons start with a clearly stated plan so that pupils understand what is expected of them. The teaching that pupils receive is consistent from year to year. There is also regular observation of teaching and learning to share good practice. There are planned links between the subjects, for example, between history, geography and English in research topics on famous people. Pupils trace Florence Nightingale's journey and describe how conditions differed in that period from today. They use information and communication technology in other subjects such as science, art and design, and in technology projects. The many vivid displays of written work and graphs and designs around school provide evidence that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced in many lessons.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are generally taught in class and they are integrated well. The plans for their work are thorough and well thought out. Individual education plans have clear targets for pupils and they are consistently reviewed and updated to ensure that they make progress. There is a regular monitoring system to track their progress in literacy lessons and in mathematics. All statutory requirements are fully met.
23. Teachers have made the literacy sessions very successful because they have had the confidence to adapt them for the needs of their own pupils. In these sessions pupils learn the way that language works. They have good opportunities to read and write to practise their skills in realistic tasks such as writing letters and stories for other people. They also learn to build up a knowledge of technical language by studying topics that cross subject boundaries during the literacy hour. The same is true in the teaching of numeracy. The numeracy lessons are taught briskly and efficiently and pupils apply their knowledge well in other areas of learning. As a result standards in literacy and

numeracy are very good.

24. All pupils have good access to every aspect of the curriculum. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well so that they quickly learn to communicate in English. They are therefore able to participate fully in their lessons. Most achieve very well.
25. The school provides good extra curricular opportunities in a wide range of areas. There are many activities such as computer club and French and Spanish speaking groups. Music is strong and recorder players practise at lunch times. Sporting sessions in soccer and swimming are run by outside agencies and parents, and prove very popular with pupils. There are numerous visitors to school such as an artist, writers and members of different religious faiths and they all add greatly to pupils' understanding of the wider world.
26. Personal and social education are very good. Planned lessons to teach pupils to be aware of the dangers of drugs and the importance of health are built into science topics and physical education. These are supplemented by visits from outside experts. In circle time,⁴ pupils discuss issues such as how to remain safe, why rules are important and the broader elements of citizenship. Prominent displays showing pupils' work act as a good follow up to lessons.
27. The school has very good links with the community and with the nearby Junior School. Recent financial contributions from large firms and the Local Education Authority have resulted in a wild life garden and an activity play ground being built. These add new dimensions to pupils' learning. There are regular meetings of the cluster of local schools and frequent meetings between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teachers in the Infant and Junior Schools to discuss curricular matters.
28. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good in all aspects. This has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a daily assembly that meets statutory requirements. Numerous examples of spiritual moments were observed during the week of the inspection. The entry of a "Victorian visitor" into a history lesson caused great excitement. The artefacts that she brought helped pupils to understand more vividly the clothes that people wore then and the tools that they used. A lesson in religious education presented pupils with a very clear idea of how important reflection is to followers of the Buddhist faith. They sat in complete silence surrounded by the religious objects and were fascinated by the ideas that were presented to them. In the computer suite some pupils were genuinely delighted when others showed them how to change the colour and the style of their graphs. At the end of term musical concert the quality of the singing was very moving.
29. Moral education is very good. Teachers create an atmosphere of industry and calm in the classrooms where pupils feel secure in their learning. They deal with any minor outbursts or silliness in a sensitive but very firm manner. The planned curriculum adds to pupils' understanding of moral issues such as the discussion in personal and social education on school rules and on what bullying means. Pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves. They collect for children in need in other countries such as Romania. There is also a very good link with a child in Uganda and the communications that occur, contribute to pupils' cultural and social development also.
30. Pupils' social development is very good. Pupils play well together in a normal, loud and

⁴ A planned opportunity for pupils to discuss issues which affect them.

lively way. They co-operate well in classes, especially when they share computers for a joint task. There are many visits to places of interest which give pupils the chance to learn how to conduct themselves in different settings outside school. All pupils, including those in the nursery, are confident in meeting adults and have good social skills. Pupils treat each other with respect and one girl was given a spontaneous round of applause after she recited a verse from memory to illustrate the story of the willow pattern used in an art lesson in Year 2.

31. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about different cultures. They do this in art and music by studying different styles of painting and a range of musical instruments from different countries. In religious education there are visitors from different faiths such as Judaism and Buddhism who add to the information provided by the teachers. History and geography lessons introduce pupils to the way in which cultural ideas change over time and from country to country. For instance, letters from a pupil in Egypt give pupils an insight into the similarities and differences between schools and homes in the two countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school takes very good care of its pupils. In the previous inspection it was described as good. The staff in each year group; teacher, nursery nurses, support assistants and parent helpers, know their pupils well in terms of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. Each pupil's individual needs are taken into account and they are well supported. Gifted and talented pupils are supported by additional provision in for example music and through setting and withdrawal in maths. Provision for those with other special needs has been boosted, in Year 1, by extra support and a scheme to examine group education plans.
33. The school's very caring attitude to pupils is reflected in the recently produced child protection and health and safety policies. Pupils are taught to be vigilant in these areas of life through the curriculum and the provision of opportunities for more informal discussion in circle times. All staff have received training in child protection and are aware of the procedures. The site manager reviews health and safety in and around the school on a daily basis and the school governors are in the process of completing a risk assessment with the aid of the local authority. There are trained first aid staff on duty during the school day and an adequate provision of equipment available.
34. The promotion and monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. There are however areas of practice, which need to be improved. Teachers do not consistently record the reason for a pupil's absence, when this is known, in the official class register. The school does not assertively ensure that parents are aware of the importance of a prompt start to the school day. The school liaises weekly with the education welfare officer who follows up issues arising with parents and carers.
35. Behaviour monitoring and procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. The school aims to promote good relationships and through these promote good behaviour rather than deter anti-social behaviour. The school succeeds in achieving these aims through a system of praise and rewards and very good classroom management. Rules are discussed with all pupils. Sanctions are clear and informative records kept of any incidents. However, the lively rapport between teachers and pupils and enthusiasm for learning in the supportive atmosphere of the school contributes overwhelmingly to the very good behaviour.

36. There is very little bullying in this school, a fact emphasised by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, and any cases are dealt with quickly and effectively. There is an effective anti-bullying policy in place, which shows the clear involvement of governors in monitoring incidents and ensuring that they are swiftly resolved. All the school staff has received training in anti-bullying strategies and the school takes every opportunity to reinforce ways of dealing with bullying. These include assemblies, circle times and appropriate areas of the curriculum. Pupils were clear that bullying should be reported immediately and that every assistance should be given to help those pupils being bullied. Central to the absence of bullying is the confidence and self-esteem felt by the majority of pupils through the effective use of praise and reward and the celebration of success.
37. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is very good. It is based on very good, very thorough assessment of what they can do and a clear understanding throughout the school of what the pupils need to do to improve. This ensures that there are clear targets for each pupil and these are shared with both pupils and their parents or carers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents say that the school makes excellent provision for their children; a real improvement on the last report when most parents were said to be supportive. All parents who returned the questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed and that the teaching is good. Ninety-nine percent agree that the school expects their children to work hard leading to good progress, they also agree that they, as parents, feel comfortable in their dealings with the school. In ninety-eight percent of cases, their children like the school and ninety-seven percent of parents say the school works closely with them and their children are becoming mature and responsible. Ninety-four percent feel well informed about their children's progress. A little less than ninety percent say children get the right amount of homework and a number of parents of nursery pupils say their child has a less than interesting range of activities outside school. In addition, parents at the pre-inspection meeting had no criticism of the school. The inspection team agrees with parents on these judgements in all respects except that of providing out of school activities where they feel the school is making very good provision.
39. The effectiveness of the schools links with parents is very good and begins with entry into the nursery. Parents are given a loose-leaf folder with details of life in school including a yearly diary, induction timetable and photographs of the staff. The school asks parents to complete an 'I can do book' with their children before starting which includes abilities with shapes and colours, any special concerns and medical information. This then forms the start of the school's considerable database about pupils. In November, a parents evening gives them the opportunity to talk about their child's entry profile and read the written report. Transfer to the junior school is similarly well thought out with pupils making visits to their new school, meeting their new teachers and parents being involved in the whole process. Parents of pupils with special needs are brought together in a support group, which enables them to work with the teachers and other staff in an informal way to increase their understanding and ability to help their children.
40. The quality of information is also very good. The brochure is informative and well presented; newsletters are now sent out regularly and contain a mixture of information. Leaflets have been produced for parents on, for example, 'How to help your child with speaking and listening at home'. Workshops are held for parents on aspects of the

curriculum at which Farsi speakers are available to help parents should this prove necessary. Pupils' achievements are clearly documented through the written reports which are produced termly and which contain a detailed analysis of pupils' progress and future targets. Parents of pupils with special needs are also well informed and consulted about individual education plans and their child's targets. Termly meetings are held at which parents and teachers review reports, consider the targets set for pupils and receive next term's objectives. In addition, the day to day conversations between parents and teachers ensure any potential problems are dealt with immediately. Parents are consulted on such areas of school life as the homework and setting in Year 2, for which, after a trial, they gave overwhelming support.

41. Parents have a considerable and positive impact on the school. A team of parent helpers works in the classroom and in other areas of the school including helping on school visits and holding two swimming lessons a week. The parent teachers' association has raised considerable amounts of money for the school through an ambitious programme of social events. Homework plays an important part in the life of the school and parents of pupils from the nursery upward make a very good contribution to their child's progress in the school. Parents of nursery pupils are able to choose from fifty-eight separate packs, each designed to support particular parts of the foundation curriculum. These are available for them to use at home with their child. There are home school agreements to which most parents subscribe.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. There has been vast improvement in the quality of leadership and management from that described in the last inspection report. There is now a very clear management structure, the roles and responsibilities are very clearly identified and the excellent leadership of the headteacher supports the whole school community in its search for constant improvement. Very good leadership and management are now a strength of the school. The very good management of the school has been exemplified recently in dealing with unexpected and potentially very disruptive staff absences. The parents of children affected are completely reassured about the security of their child's education. The staff have worked very well together in a supportive manner and it is testimony to the very good relationships with the junior school that they too have seen this as a development opportunity and have been most supportive.
43. The headteacher has maintained and enhanced a team approach, despite the post of deputy headteacher not having been filled permanently for several terms. All of the staff have a voice and are encouraged to share their views, issues and reasons for celebration. Because of the very good relationships which exist and the very clear focus on meeting individual pupil's needs, this is a fully inclusive school. Parents recognise this as a very important feature of what the school offers. The focus on this is led by the headteacher through her analysis of information and demonstrated by the teaching staff through their actions in lessons and around the school. The views of the governors and the parents are regularly canvassed so that the sense of direction for the school is shared with the whole community.
44. Despite bringing about changes, the high standards achieved have been maintained in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and have been extended to almost all of the other subjects. This is supported by the delegation of authority for subjects to the co-ordinators and the support given to them in carrying out their roles. For example, when standards in design and technology (DT) were a focus for school attention, a DT week was set up in such a manner that the co-ordinator could monitor

and give support to her colleagues thus raising standards for pupils and increasing the confidence and improving the competence of the teachers.

45. Target setting, based on the evaluation of assessment information, has been introduced across the school to assist in the raising of standards.
46. There is useful monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects and the school is able to identify strengths and weaknesses. Co-ordinators have a very clear vision of the standards achieved and are constantly seeking ways to improve. The headteacher is very aware of variations in the quality of teaching and learning between classes and has taken steps to support improvement.
47. The management of the curriculum is excellent. The organisation of the school into planning groups ensures that all pupils receive the same entitlement and that work progresses in a planned manner. This year the school has introduced setting in Year 2 for English and mathematics and has canvassed parents, teachers' and children's' views about the success of this venture.
48. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and is well informed about the outcomes of its decisions. Some of the governors are able to come into the school on a regular basis and gather their own information about teaching, learning and the quality of provision. Some of the governors help in school. These activities contribute to governors' good monitoring of the quality of provision. Members of the Governing Body are honest and forthright in their dealings with the school and are unafraid to ask challenging questions. This is very valuable.
49. Financial planning is very good and the management of finances is secure. All available finances, including the money raised by the parents' association, are used appropriately to provide a good education. Specific grants are used well to improve teachers' skills in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and other subjects. School development planning is very well managed and includes all staff, governors and the parents. The school finance officer is effective in her role; systems are secure and this is very supportive to the headteacher. The school understands and seeks best value for money.
50. The accommodation is well presented thanks to the efforts of all the staff including the caretaker. It is generous in size but is excessively damp and because of the state of the windows, there is poor ventilation. This sometimes results in a poor atmosphere in which to work. Mostly the space available is used well but the setting up of the hall for lunchtime and the clearing of tables afterwards takes far too long and this is too much lost time when the hall could be used for curriculum delivery.
51. The school is well resourced for most subjects and it is particularly well resourced for information and communication technology
52. The induction of new and newly qualified teachers into the school is very successful and new staff very quickly become full members of the team. There is on-going training for other members of staff and this helps them to improve their skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. As there are no major areas of weakness, the governing body should follow their own

school development plan in order to continue to improve. They should attempt to deal with the issue of dampness in the school, indicated in the plan, as quickly as possible.

Para 50

54. One minor issue for the school to consider is the slightly late arrival a number of families after the start of the school day. This is disruptive to the other children as well as to the late comers.

Para.10

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	48	36	5	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52	289
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.4	School data	0.2
National comparative data	5.2	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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	44	43	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	42	44
	Girls	43	41	43
	Total	85	83	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (88)	95 (92)	100 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	42	43
	Girls	40	40	42
	Total	82	82	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (88)	94 (89)	98 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	12

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	171

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	52

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

Number of pupils per FTE adult	1:10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	665923
Total expenditure	656383
Expenditure per pupil	1931
Balance brought forward from previous year	9556
Balance carried forward to next year	19096

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	341
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	16	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	26	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	27	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	41	1	2	8
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	37	6	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	20	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	40	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	28	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	41	8	3	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. Children are admitted to the nursery during the year in which they are four and enter the reception classes in the autumn term prior to their fifth birthday. Nursery children attend on a part time basis and reception children attend full time.
56. Children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are average. They make very good progress and broaden their knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. By the time children start Year 1, they are likely to exceed the expected targets of the early learning goals, with the majority of children working within the National Curriculum levels. Children with special educational needs make good progress.
57. The planned provision for the Foundation Stage is very good. There are improvements in both the range of suitably challenging activities and in the standards the children achieve since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in both the nursery and reception classes is very good. The school makes good use of special events, for example the teddy bears picnic to interest children in a wide range of interesting learning opportunities.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children are likely to exceed the expected early learning goals in this area. Children demonstrate considerable self confidence and all children show much interest in the stimulating range of activities offered. Children are keen to learn and show independence when they have the opportunity to select tasks. Children have good concentration and work consistently at activities for long periods of time. They know how to share and co-operate with other children and do so through a range of activities. Children are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong actions and the adults working with the children provide very good role models through their harmonious and polite relationships.
59. Nursery children confidently enter the classroom, know the routine relating to self-registration and quickly select their first chosen activity from the very good stimulating range on offer. They are able to share and cooperate when using the outdoor wheeled toys and while playing in the 'camping' role-play area, they take turns while playing dice games. Reception year children concentrate very well undertaking the exciting tasks. They enjoy working together to discover how best to balance the seesaw, and they all contribute to group activities making sensible suggestions. They are able to talk about instances of when they felt special and reflect quietly and consider their answers before contributing.
60. All staff are very good role models, treating one another and the children with respect. The ethos is very good and provides children with the security to explore new ideas and take risks while undertaking new learning. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and encourage them to express their feelings and show respect for others. The organisation of the nursery enables children to make independent selections, initiate ideas and solve simple practical problems and these skills are developed further in reception classes.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Children enter the nursery with the language skills of the average three to four year old. They make very good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority will exceed national expectations and are working within the National Curriculum levels. They speak confidently, and listen well. They read simple text with accurate word match; they use initial letter and context cues and enjoy reading and listening to stories. Writing skills are well developed; children form letters which are correctly shaped, spell simple words correctly and put several events together in sequence while writing.
62. In the nursery the children describe what they are doing while engaged in practical tasks and join in with songs and stories. They are encouraged to listen to and carry out requests made by adults. They talk about places they have visited, such as Marine Park and write postcards to put in the school post box. Higher attaining pupils write their own name unaided, and the majority can copy over or under adult writing. Nursery children enjoy books and many know that print carries meaning and in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom. Children in the reception classes speak confidently and imaginatively. For example, they make up rhyming words in the 'jungle' and they can pose and answer questions, relating to a story, 'The Bear and the Scary Night' and use their imagination to predict an ending to the story. They write sentences that start with capital letters and end with full stops. Most children spell and write using phonics effectively and they are encouraged to find, read and copy words correctly. Most know about how a book is formed and some of the strategies used by authors, for example speech bubbles. They are keen to read them and do so with expression.
63. Well-planned literacy activities enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the sounds and patterns of written and spoken English. Children are encouraged to develop their reading and writing skills through good links with information and communication technology and through individual reading support. Teaching is very good; the nursery staff organise a varied range of activities. The reception class teachers use the national guidance very skilfully to help them to ensure that children experience a stimulating range of activities. These activities are challenging but meet their needs well. Children respond very well to the high quality of provision.

Mathematical development

64. Children enter the nursery with average levels of mathematical knowledge and vocabulary. They make very good progress within the Foundation Stage and by the time they enter Year 1 they exceed the nationally expected goals and the majority of children are working within the National Curriculum levels.
65. Children in the nursery are beginning to use mathematical language to describe quantity, shape, position and size. They enjoy number rhymes such as '1,2,3,4,5, once I caught a fish alive' and counting games. They count everyday objects; for example, they fish in the water and count the number of fish they have caught and the numbers on the fish. They recognise and recreate patterns linking this work well with their creative development by printing patterns with objects and paint. Children in reception classes know the number bonds to ten and can count in twos to twenty. They recognise money coins and can use the number bonds to ten to calculate shopping totals and change. They are developing accurate and quick mental strategies and are beginning to be able to articulate their strategy.
66. The provision is very good. The nursery staff plan practical first hand activities that children enjoy, such as the fishing game, filling containers in the sand to explore volume and size, and playing dice games with adults. Reception teachers plan very

effectively using national guidance skilfully. They include a very good range of practical, relevant first hand experiences and children apply themselves intelligently and creatively to the task.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The very good range of activities that are provided in the nursery make useful links to children's own experiences at home and within the community. Early scientific knowledge and understanding is effectively developed when children observe the life cycle of a butterfly and grow tomato plants. They build and construct with a range of objects concentrating for long periods setting up a circular train track and then making it move in various directions. They select tools and techniques to shape, assemble and join materials when they are making kites. They are confident using the computer and have great fun making programmable toys travel in different directions and up ramps. Nursery children find out about past and present events in their own lives and observe and find out about the natural world through visits to local places. They are beginning to learn their address.
68. During the reception year the very good teaching and systematic planning enable children to experience a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum that builds on their nursery experiences and extends children even further. Children learn key words to describe the salient features of animals, for example the elephant has big ears, the giraffe a long neck. This is linked well to information and communication technology (ICT) where children label animals on screen. Children design and make a map of the zoo, and this promotes lots of discussion about the juxtaposition of the various animal enclosures. Children recognise the human resources that are needed in the way of a café, toilets and shop. They start to draw simple maps of the way to visit certain animals and are beginning to use the correct directional language such as straightforward and turn right. They enjoy making pastry and moulding it into snakes, learning the importance of hygiene by discussing why they need to wash their hands before starting. They make good links with mathematics, measuring the ingredients.

Creative development

69. Children handle different coloured paints when learning about mixing different colours together and they enjoy making representational paintings or patterns. They handle different textured materials with interest, for example when touching a fish, and feeling coral before selecting the materials best suited to represent them accurately in paint on paper. They have good opportunities to work in both 2 and 3 dimensional tasks, and in individual, small group and whole class projects. They use a variety of everyday objects to make forms of transport, and a large group of children contribute to a collage of transport in operation. They experience music from other cultures and develop a sense of beat while singing songs about their holidays. They learn the names of specific instruments and make their own.
70. Children in the reception year enjoy discussing the work of a visiting artist reflecting on whether it made the wall, happier, brighter or more interesting. They showed delight and joy when joining a head and tail of animals they had drawn. All the classrooms are aesthetically vibrant with jungle pictures and artefacts produced by the children. They are enthusiastic and tuneful while singing known songs and playing musical instruments.

Physical development

71. Children make very good progress in their physical development. By the end of the reception year they have good co-ordination and control of their movements. Nursery children can access climbing equipment both indoors and out and soon become confident at climbing. They are provided with good opportunities to handle tools such as scissors and pencils and to use construction kits and malleable materials. They dance to a favourite song and march to the music while at the teddy bears picnic. Children in the reception year are confident in pedalling wheeled toys and scooting. They have good control over the wheeled equipment and stop at traffic lights and to let their friends fill the tank with petrol. They slide and climb over and under equipment. They balance on vibrating equipment and walk on small stilts. They learn the importance of health and hygiene washing their hands after playing outside and drinking water frequently in very hot weather.
72. There has been good improvement in the facilities for this area since the last inspection. Money from business and community links was used to extend an area of the school so that children can access more equipment indoors as well as outside. Currently the outdoor provision is being improved further to create more opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

ENGLISH

73. Standards of attainment in last year's National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven were well above average in reading and in writing compared with all schools. Against similar schools standards were well above average overall in English. The proportion of pupils gaining the above average level 3 in writing is very high. Over the last three years, high standards have been sustained in reading and writing. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Considering that pupils enter the school with attainment similar to the national expectations, these results indicate that pupils make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They have a lot of ground to make up and by the time they reach the age of seven they have achieved well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in a short time. Despite having little or no English on arrival, several pupils are now able to take part confidently in class discussions. The support they receive has made a difference.
74. Standards seen during the inspection were well above average in reading, writing and in speaking and listening. The well-planned structure of the teaching in the Foundation Stage where pupils are expected to work hard, shows in the good work that they produce in Key Stage 1. Pupils are very articulate with a broad vocabulary and a curiosity for language. Teachers ask testing questions such as; *"How do birds stay in flight for so long?"* Pupils are able to use non-fiction books to find out the answer quickly. They respond in extended sentences demonstrating a wide knowledge of technical vocabulary. This was illustrated in a Year 2 discussion on different species of snakes:
- Teacher: "Are they poisonous?"*
Pupil: "No they are harmless. Not like adders which are venomous."
- Pupils are encouraged to pose their own questions to ensure that they have a good grasp of what they read. Teachers ensure that even then they are stretched and do not allow them to settle for the first idea that occurs. For example:
- Pupil: "We could ask, How many layers does a snake have?"*
Teacher: "What exactly do you mean by a layer?"
- The pupil's detailed response showed that he understood very clearly the nature of a snake's skin. This example also shows how well teachers help pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects such as science.
75. Reading is good though results in recent years have shown that it is not quite as good as the writing. This year, however, several pupils have scored the very high level 4 in reading. They reveal a good understanding of how books are produced and they can use reference material very well. In discussions about their own reading they can describe characters from their favourite stories, usually from Roald Dahl and the Harry Potter series. Teachers encourage pupils to think about how stories are composed and ask them to predict new endings. There are very good opportunities for pupils to use a range of information books in their research and they can skim and scan text confidently. They also use the Internet in their research. In reading aloud many pupils can bring the stories to life with vivid, dramatic expression but boys appeared happier and more confident when asked to read out extracts from non-fiction. The teaching of reading is thorough in almost all lessons. The libraries in the classrooms are generally satisfactory but the selection of fiction and non-fiction material overall is not particularly exciting.
76. Writing is of a very high standard from reception, where pupils write at length about visits they have made, and describe design and technology projects in good detail, to

Year 2 where the range of writing is commendable. Carefully planned activities allow pupils to build up their vocabulary and style of writing. For instance in Year 1 they were asked to write an improved synopsis for a science reference book for next year's class using the index to guide them. Even with such a demanding task the majority of the class had completed a substantial first draft in twenty minutes which met the conditions set by the teacher.

77. Pupils spell accurately and they frequently use word processing to improve the quality of their writing. Handwriting is legible but not joined. Pupils show great commitment to their writing and produce quite a lot of interesting work. Examples of this are seen in the extended letters in the project on Florence Nightingale, and in geography where pupils had written to a young child in Egypt. They show that they can sequence ideas logically when they retell familiar stories such "The Pied Piper of Hamelin". There are some lively poems and detailed factual accounts. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of teachers.
78. Teaching is almost always at least good because the teachers know their subject and make the lessons varied and interesting. There is a high proportion of teaching that is very good. The best feature of the teaching is the way that the staff have made the literacy hour their own by adapting the structure to meet the needs of their children. Teachers are good at "seizing the moment" to set pupils to work just when they are ready to go. They do not prolong discussions unnecessarily. Similarly if it is more appropriate to start with quiet reflection and move to a whole class debate later, such as after a hot playtime, teachers make this work as well. The links that teachers have made between subjects across the curriculum have had a very beneficial effect on writing standards. Displays of work on Florence Nightingale in history, on Buddhism in religious education and on Egypt in geography reveal how pupils have developed their skills in writing for a range of purposes and for different audiences.
79. The key to successful teaching and learning in the school is the high expectations that are set in all classrooms. Teachers also make lessons interesting by using a variety of approaches. For example: pupils are divided into those with pictures of words such as "flute" and others with the phonemes that form the core of the word. They then have to pair up. This results in discussion and practice at using the sounds. The use of computer technology in Year 2 is also proving effective in reinforcing pupils' understanding of language because teachers and pupils can manipulate words and sentences very visually.
80. The management of English is very good. Teachers share ideas and good practice. The assessment procedures are very thorough and allow teachers to track pupils' progress and to set follow-up work that is appropriate. The marking likewise is helpful and gives each pupil a realistic target to aim for at regular intervals.
81. In the last inspection English was judged to be satisfactory in most aspects. It is now much better than that. It is very good. This represents substantial improvement.

MATHEMATICS

82. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
 - The good standards have improved further and are now well above average.
 - The quality of teaching is consistently good or very good, and is very good overall.
 - Pupils achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching and through their own intellectual efforts.

- The curriculum provision is broad, balanced and relevant and teachers make very good use of the national guidance to support continuity and progression for pupils.
83. By the end of the key stage pupils attain standards well above those expected for their ages in numeracy and all areas of mathematics; number, algebra, space, shape and measures. They can solve relevant problems using and applying their knowledge. National tests and inspection findings show a similar picture. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
 84. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of place value; the majority is able to manipulate numbers to 1,000. They know the properties of 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes, they can tell the time using analogue and digital clocks, they understand the specific vocabulary relating to weight, volume, money and length and use measuring instruments accurately. They recognise right angles, and simple symmetry. They learn to rotate a picture of a person and to tally numbers and present them in graph form. Pupils have very good strategies for undertaking mental calculations and are confident in describing their methods.
 85. The teaching of skills and subject matter is knowledgeable, stimulating and perceptive. Teachers use imaginative resources and make intellectual and creative demands on pupils to extend their learning for example in a half price sale, and expecting pupils to calculate half of 74 pence mentally. Challenging questions are used to consolidate, extend and verify what pupils know and understand; for example the expectations that pupils can mentally calculate how much change they will receive from two pounds if they spend one pound and seventy seven pence. The methods chosen are geared well to the particular focus and demands of the lesson. For example all the money calculations involve relevant shopping purchases and at the end of the task there is a challenge which pupils are keen to complete. Teachers make very productive use of the time available. Pupils are always engaged fully and the sessions and questioning moves them forward at a brisk pace. None of the sessions extend beyond the recommended time. Relationships in the classroom provide a confident and positive atmosphere in which achievement flourishes. Pupils are keen to learn, rise to challenges in creative ways and think further. They work well for extended periods of time and make very good progress.
 86. Very good use is made of national guidance. The three part lesson structure is well established and there is a very good balance between direct teaching and pupils undertaking oral and written tasks. Tasks are always challenging and meet the needs of the pupils well. Teachers use the final part of the session effectively to check present learning and prepare children for forthcoming sessions. For example, in the half price sale, prices are reduced by a further half or a quarter. Good use is made of numeracy across the curriculum. Pupils time races at sports day; they consider space when visiting the Angel of the North and see how many pupils can fit into different spaces. They collect data on weather charts and present the information in graph form using the computer. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership for the subject. She is knowledgeable and supports and guides colleagues and developments in the subject very effectively.

SCIENCE

87. Teachers have assessed attainment in science for seven-year-olds as consistently

well above the nationally expected standard for the last four years. Overall standards have improved considerably since the last inspection when overall attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations. Standards are well above levels expected for most seven-year-olds in all aspects of science.

88. Standards in the current Year 2 are well above average. In their work on the classification of animals, almost all pupils know clearly the differences between vertebrates and invertebrates and can describe these clearly. They have also learned about some of the types of animals which form the mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians. They can describe some of the distinctive characteristics of these groups. The higher attaining pupils know about some of the non-observable features of each group of animals; work which is not normally introduced until the latter end of the next key stage. The only slight weakness in the pupils' work is the use that they make of information and communication technology to record their work and present their findings, though even this aspect is improving rapidly as seen when the children in the reception class indicate the key features of animals on their on-screen drawings of animals from the jungle.
89. Analysis of the work of the pupils shows that they make consistently good and often very good progress and achieve well. In the last two years the teachers have placed considerable emphasis on the pupils investigating and testing ideas for themselves. These opportunities to investigate, which this school is so good at providing, is one of the main reasons why the pupils have such a good understanding of science. In the main the pupils' findings are recorded clearly, sometimes in their own words and this gives the teachers a very clear view of what the pupils have understood. At other times the class discusses an idea, the teacher writes up their comments and the pupils copy this into their books. This is a rather time consuming way of recording and one which is significantly less successful for the pupils who find handwriting difficult.
90. All of the pupils enjoy science; they join in with great enthusiasm when they are working on practical tasks and are delighted to show off their extensive knowledge of the living world, materials and forces.
91. The quality of teaching is at least good and often very good and this accounts for the pupils' very good progress.
- Teachers plan together in year groups and then evaluate what they are doing. This ensures that all of the pupils get the same diet of science but also means that where something was less than successful, the teachers work together on alternative approaches.
 - Most of the teachers have good subject knowledge and they are further supported by the very good knowledge of the co-ordinator. This enables them to ask very probing questions and to challenge pupils thinking in ways which encourages them to seek more solutions. This is evident from the Year 1 work on sources of light where pupils who have understood the basic concepts are further challenged by being asked to test the effect of a glass prism on a light beam.
 - The teachers use a very good range of teaching techniques, resources and activities which sustain the pupils' interest. Pupils throughout the school have a good attitude to science.
Within the planning, teachers identify opportunities for assessment and the pupils are regularly checked to ensure that they are making appropriate progress.
92. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who has very good knowledge of science and has the confidence and trust of her colleagues.

ART AND DESIGN

93. At the age of seven, pupils' attainment in art and design is well above expected levels.
94. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were in line with national expectation so there has been an excellent improvement. Very good progress is made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the time they leave Key Stage 1, pupils develop a very good understanding of a wide range of media, including paint, pencil, pastels and clay. They develop very good skills in all aspects of art work and have good attitudes to their work. Throughout the school there are very good examples of pupils' observational drawings, for example, of flowers and grasses. There are also excellent detailed drawings in other subjects, for example, the life-like reproductions of Florence Nightingale and the work concerned with Buddhism in religious education. Pupils have a very good knowledge of artists and their work. In one lesson, they discussed sensibly, the different styles of William Morris and L.S.Lowry, mentioning the "woodland colours" of one and the "matchstalk men" of the other. There are many good examples of work in the styles of specific artists around the school and in portfolios. For example, the pictures of favourite holidays using pointillism and a winter sky in the style of Van Gogh. High quality work on display shows good use of a broad range of materials and approaches. The pupils in Year 1 have produced a three dimensional lighthouse and the seaside mosaic which are very effective.
95. Teaching observed was never less than good and teachers know which skills they wish their pupils to develop. There are discussions, demonstrations and examples to help pupils understand the tasks they are to carry out. Teachers give very good guidance such as, "hold your pencil higher up" and "use gentle movements when shading". Learning is very good. Pupils in Year 2 show excellent concentration as they draw and shade their 'willow pattern' plates. They work carefully and take an interest in each other's work.
96. A local artist supports teaching and learning greatly. In addition to helping in lessons, he has undertaken a project to make a mural on the school wall. He is working with every child in the school and the results are very impressive. Pupils take great pride in pointing out their own contributions and the whole school is benefiting from the professional artist's experience and input.
97. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge and experience of the subject and provides good leadership. She regularly attends art courses and passes on this information, practically, to the staff, in addition to giving demonstration lessons in all classes and monitoring planning, teaching and learning. A record of pupils' drawing skills is kept in their profile books and an art portfolio is regularly updated. The previous inspection reported that there was "no scheme of work and incomplete curriculum planning". These have been rectified. The scheme of work incorporates the national guidelines, but also takes into account the specific needs of the pupils in the school. The co-ordinator ensures that the whole school displays in the hall and corridors are mounted uniformly and that all classes are included. The children learn in a colourful, bright and stimulating environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Standards are well above those expected for seven-year-olds because of consistently good teaching of a very well planned and stimulating curriculum. Standards are now much better than when the school was last inspected in 1997 when they were judged to be satisfactory. The issues raised in the last inspection have all been addressed very well. There is a very good and comprehensive scheme of work which supports pupils

in gaining appropriate knowledge and skills through a series of well designed and carefully structured practical tasks. In common with other subjects, there is good assessment of what pupils can do and therefore subsequent work can be matched to the pupils' needs. This was seen in a very good lesson on planning a zoo and homes for animals when all pupils completed a similar task but the more able were mostly left to think of their own solutions to problems whilst other pupils were given shorter tasks and more support from the adults. Through this, all of the pupils achieved a very creditable plan for the zoo which was well designed and illustrated and which could be discussed and evaluated by the whole group.

99. A vast range of evidence of completed projects was available in the school. The products of these projects are universally of a high standard from each class and year group. It is clear that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good from a review of the pupils' evaluations of their own work. The teachers are confident in teaching the subject and they are confident in using a range of tools, materials and techniques including work with textiles, wood, plastic, paper and card and food. The pupils experience a very good range of work.
100. The success of the school in this subject is based on the very good start that the pupils have in the foundation stage where the children design and make musical instruments, puppets, models of toys, resources for a multicultural dance festival and a range of masks. As the pupils move into Year 1 and 2 they engage in a series of tasks which involve the full range of planning, designing, making and evaluation. For example, they plan and make a range of playground equipment models which involve winding gear to make them operate.
101. Pupils enjoy the subject, working very well and showing real enthusiasm. They talk animatedly about the work they have done on planning and making Joseph's Coat. This is a very good link with work in religious education. The planning of the work involved significant use of computer aided design. Pupils have completed coat designs on the computer, printed them and then recreated them in fabric using a range of fastenings. This is an example of work of a very high standard. As the pupils get older, the complexity of the tasks that they are given increases and they are required to make more detailed evaluations of their work.
102. The subject is well resourced and the training and support offered by the co-ordinator has helped to ensure that the staff feel confident with the subject. The skills of the teachers and the quality of the resources available supports the very good standards achieved by the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

103. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
 - Standards are now above average and pupils achieve very well.
 - The quality of teaching has risen from satisfactory to very good.
 - The curriculum provision is very good.
 - The school has put in place a very good scheme of work that provides teachers with clear guidance and structures the development of knowledge and skills for pupils very effectively.
 - There are more resources and these support learning well.
 - Assessment procedures are in place and are effective.
104. By the end of the key stage the pupils have a good knowledge of local places. They know that the River Wear runs into the North Sea; they can describe different features

of the coast line and are able to compare and contrast the four beaches of the area. They understand the reasons for the positioning of the harbour, pier and lighthouse. They have the skills to find information from maps and photographs. Younger pupils are able to name and describe the buildings and facilities around the school. They are beginning to understand how people can change the environment. They develop mapping skills, using a programmable robot to follow routes, and drawing their own maps of the school.

105. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils who respond and achieve very well. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and so provide clear explanations and challenging activities. Pupils are excited by the stimulating tasks and make good gains in their learning. Year 2 pupils enjoy discovering the route to the Isle of Struay and finding out about the life in that rural community. Teachers use questioning techniques very effectively and pupils respond intelligently and creatively offering ideas and solutions. For example, Year 1 pupils work very hard and quickly to produce a letter to the road safety officer that clearly identifies problems for children crossing the road whilst cars are parking outside the school and they suggest sensible solutions. Teachers are skilful in consolidating pupils' previous knowledge and use questioning well to probe understanding and assess individuals. For example, in Year 2 they provide different photographs of the area they have been studying and question specific pupils about the human and physical features they can see in these new sources of evidence. They skilfully extend pupils' knowledge by providing interesting postcards and pictures from around the world linking this with pupils' current anticipation of going on holiday. Pupils learn to use the correct terminology in their descriptions of the human and physical features of seaside resorts in Spain and the United States of America.
106. The curriculum provision for geography is very good; it is broad, balanced and relevant. There are good cross-curricular links with other subjects. For example pupils track the route taken by Florence Nightingale in her journey to the Crimea. It is extended through personal links with other countries, such as two way correspondence with a child in Egypt. Parents are encouraged to send postcards of places visited so that, pupils can explore the names and positions of places around the world. Very good use is made of the locality, fieldwork and practical experiences.
107. There is a very good scheme of work, which clearly sets out expectations within the areas to be studied and the time to be allocated to them. The learning outcome for pupils, at a variety of levels, is specified. This provides guidance on the expectations for lower achieving, average and the higher achieving pupils and so all groups of pupils are successfully accessing the provision.
108. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable; she provides very good support and guidance to staff and effectively monitors the provision. There is an ethos that strives for improvement; for example recently staff revised the scheme of work to identify more clearly the specific requirements and expectations within each year group which the foundation stage work on 'Barnaby Bear' would promote. Resources are well matched to the needs of the curriculum and are purchased in liaison with other co-ordinators so that their use can be maximised across the curriculum

HISTORY

109. Attainment in history is above expectations for seven-year-old pupils. The progress of pupils of all abilities is good. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were at the expected level. The high standards result from the very

good quality of planning and good teaching. Pupils recall well the main events of the periods they have studied, are aware of how things were different in the past and understand changes over time. For example, Year 1 pupils are able to compare conditions in hospitals now and how they were in Florence Nightingale's time. They can also appreciate how Florence Nightingale made life better for the soldiers through giving them "clean bandages and sheets". Year 2 pupils can compare and contrast holidays at the seaside in Victorian times and nowadays in great detail. Through role-play they understand the differences between the lives of the rich and poor people. For example, when the Victorian visitor arrived in their classroom they were surprised to learn that she was rich enough to have a governess and that some poor girls went to school and had to pay a few pennies each week. Pupils are able to explain and record differences in transport, bathing and modes of behaviour. For example, "In the olden days people had no cars, buses or motor bikes. The ladies did not show off any of their body, they thought it was very rude". Through these role-play exercises and research pupils are learning to differentiate between fact and opinion. Also, by studying artefacts of the period, pupils are able to deduce their function and who would use them. For example, when looking at a glove stretcher and a button hook, they readily contribute their own ideas, with suggestions such as "to take your teeth out". Pupils' understanding of history is supported and extended by visits to museums, places of historical interest, such as Beamish, and visitors into school, for example, an army nurse to talk about nursing linked with the Florence Nightingale project. Extensive use is made of the computer and the Internet to further understanding.

110. Lessons observed were never less than good and teachers' planning and preparation is thorough. Pupils are given many opportunities to observe, investigate and make decisions to increase their knowledge and understanding of historical events. For example, Year 2 pupils are able to understand the function of an eyewitness and can relate this to the Fire of London and Samuel Pepys's account. Teachers are skilled at integrating history with other subjects and many links are made with literacy, information and communication technology and geography. For example, pupils study the coastline of Sunderland, "then" and "now", and realise that the physical features have remained largely the same. All pupils, including those with special needs, are fully integrated into lessons and all work is well presented and effectively displayed. High expectations and constant encouragement for all pupils promote effective learning and very good behaviour.
111. The scheme of work has been updated and the co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic, monitoring both pupils' work and classroom teaching. Assessment is ongoing and built into the scheme of work and is part of the school's good assessment arrangements. Close liaison with the co-ordinator at the link Junior School ensures good progression from one key stage to the next.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. The school has made excellent progress in this subject since the previous inspection when standards were below expectations. Attainment is now well above average. In all classes pupils are very confident in using the computer and other technology, such as tape recorders and programmable toys. All the elements of the National Curriculum are planned very carefully, and pupils achieve well in a range of skills. The recent acquisition of active white-boards in Year 2 classrooms has added a new dimension to the teaching and learning.
113. Information and communication technology is taught both as a separate subject to all

pupils and also is planned into other subjects in the curriculum. This means that pupils are taught the skills to use the technology and they have good opportunities to apply these skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve very well in the subject.

114. After a sound foundation in the nursery and reception classes, pupils come into Year 1 with a good understanding of how computers can be used for a variety of purposes. They are able to classify information that has been collected and present it in various graphical forms. For instance, they can collate the results of a survey they have undertaken to explore the parking problems at the school at various times of day. Prompted by good teaching which asks them to interpret their data, they discuss the issues using their bar graphs and pie charts as visual aids. Pupils show independence in creating graphs, changing colours and fonts and in saving and printing.
115. In Year 2 pupils combine text and graphics to produce pages for a school brochure to show to new pupils. They have done their own research on aspects of the school such as its history, trips undertaken and the school concert. Pupils respond well to clear instructions and work creatively and with concentration. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good knowledge of technical terms such as "icon, cursor, font." They know how to highlight, edit, and undo operations that have not worked as well as they wanted. Many can use the spell-check facility independently when the screen shows a spelling error.
116. Scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils revealed that most had a good understanding of a wide range of modern communications. They could describe how firemen who had visited the school recently were able to send messages to each other. Pupils from Year 2 had written a story for nursery children and had then put it onto tape. Information and communication technology is used frequently across the curriculum; in historical research on Florence Nightingale pupils use CD ROMS; in design and technology they draw models of Joseph's Technicolor coat; in science they use a line tool to label a picture. Pupils are also required to write their own opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of using a computer.
117. Teaching is very good overall. The facilities are well used to demonstrate a variety of computer applications. Teachers involve pupils fully in these demonstrations thereby enhancing their skills and confidence. Teachers work well as a team, planning and refining their teaching approaches. They have a clear idea of what the next points for development are: namely, to help pupils to improve keyboard skills to speed up their work, and to refine the procedures to assess pupil progress.
118. There are some distinctive strengths:
 - The management and co-ordination of the subject are very good with clear planning and good, supportive monitoring systems in place.
 - Resources are very good and they are used well.
 - Teaching is confident and teachers are prepared to make pupils think.
 - The support staff are sensibly deployed to complement the work of teachers.
 - There is a real sense of enjoyment in the learning.
119. Information and communication technology is now a strength of the school.

MUSIC

120. The standards achieved in music by the age of seven are well above the national expectation. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection when standards were above those expected at Key Stage 1. From the earliest stages pupils' listening skills are developing well and they learn to sing tunefully and rhythmically. Year 1 pupils can repeat rhythms accurately and have a good basic understanding of musical form. For example, they are able to produce a rhythmical composition with specific instruments, subsequently adding notes played on the recorder and thus combining rhythm and melody in their compositions. They are beginning to read written notation, following a pattern of rhythms on one note. Year 2 pupils have a very good understanding of pitch, tempo, timbre and texture and are learning to appreciate mood and style. For example, they are able to listen to and compare two contrasting pieces of music before composing their own tunes. Using one tuned and three untuned percussion instruments, pupils are able to work collaboratively in small groups and create a tune, discussing which instrument should play the pulse. They organise themselves effectively and produce work of a very high standard. Each group's work is recorded graphically and on the tape recorder and appraised within the lesson. Pupils make relevant suggestions for the title of the pieces and discuss the style and mood of them. All pupils make very good progress in listening, appraising and composing.
121. Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully and with confidence. By the end of the key stage they can sing a wide range of songs and show sensitivity to phrasing, dynamics and mood. They can sing rounds and two part arrangements very competently. Their performance skills are excellent. They perform and play with confidence, poise, panache and maturity and use musical vocabulary to describe their performances accurately, for example, "the pulse was a little fast".
122. All teaching observed was very good or excellent. A music specialist teaches music throughout the school. She has very good knowledge of the subject, the needs of the age group and very high expectations of all pupils. Very good planning and thorough preparation ensure that lessons are taken at a lively and appropriate pace and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have the opportunity to participate. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through listening to music from other countries and cultures, for example, Hawaii, and from singing songs from around the world such as a Mexican folk song. Music also contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. They derive great joy from listening to music and in singing and a Year 1 group showed absolute delight when discovering the noise of the rainmaker! They have opportunities to entertain audiences, not only in their school concerts and productions, but within the community at supermarkets and in nursing homes.
123. Resources are very good and include a specialist music room, a good range of tuned and untuned percussion and a comprehensive collection of compact disks. The quality of the piano in the music room is poor and does not complement the pupils' very good performances. Assessment is ongoing and thorough, identifying strengths and weaknesses of particular groups. This informs the music teacher's future planning for the subject. The school's own scheme of work takes account of the national scheme ensuring that all elements of music are covered effectively. Music contributes well to collective worship with appropriate music being played. However, pupils often sit rather than stand to sing the hymns and songs. This can inhibit the good breathing and phrasing being developed in music lessons. Extra curricular recorder clubs contribute well to pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Standards are in line with nationally expected levels. The school has maintained its provision since the last inspection and has identified the need to develop the subject further. This is planned to take place from September 2001. Dance and games activities are the focus of this term's lessons and consequently no gymnastics sessions were observed, therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about standards specific to this aspect.
125. Pupils are able to use movement imaginatively responding to the stimulus of music. They make strong movements to depict thunder and travel using small, staccato steps to represent the rain while listening to the music of Vangelis. They remember, repeat and explore simple dance sequences with appropriate control and co-ordination. They are able to evaluate one another's performance sensitively, concentrating on making constructive suggestions. They have good control while sending and receiving a ball and cooperate well in small groups while playing games.
126. Teaching is variable, ranging from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. This variability has an impact on pupils' pace of learning. Where teaching is excellent, for example in Year 1, pupils achieve very well, their creative talents are fully developed when, for example, they perform to two contrasting musical compositions. The teacher has high expectations of their performance and skilfully teaches the importance of starting positions, the transition between movements and final resting positions. Most teachers clearly explain the skills to be learned and the tasks to be undertaken. Where teaching is less effective the pace of the session is too slow, space and resources are not maximised and expectations are insufficiently high. Although pupils work hard and apply themselves in this session they make limited gains in the skill of sending and retrieving the ball although they do consolidate this skill effectively and enjoy working together in small groups.
127. There is some variation in teachers' expectations while promoting fitness and health. In the best sessions the initial activities systematically and energetically warm up pupils' muscles and increase cardiovascular activity. Pupils feel able to comment; "we are worn out" and they are knowledgeable in their response to questioning about the purpose of exercise. Immediately, sessions progress to sustaining this physical activity through the objectives of the session. However, there is less emphasis on the importance of allowing the body to slowly cool down. Also, currently pupils do not always change their clothes before undertaking physical activity, continuing to wear some items of clothing for the rest of the day.
128. The provision for the subject is under-developed. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory and the school has already identified this and has planned an effective programme of improvements. The accommodation, comprising of a large hall and hard surface area, is appropriate. However, the hall is used as a dining area too and too much time is lost in setting up and clearing up and this restricts the time available for physical education sessions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. Pupils reach standards which are above those specified in the locally agreed syllabus. In the last inspection standards were judged to be in line with expectations, so there has been good improvement in this subject. The previous inspection also reported that "opportunities for promoting the spiritual dimension of religious education were underdeveloped". This inspection found that religious education contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual development.

130. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a good knowledge of some of the major beliefs, symbols and observances of Christians, Jews and Buddhists and can use the relevant terms and vocabulary. They have a growing understanding of bible stories and know that Jesus is special. This is evident in their accounts. For example, Year 1 pupils write sentences such as, "Jesus was unique because he could perform miracles" or "I like Jesus because he could put people back to life". In a Year 2 lesson exploring the concept of community in the Buddhist tradition, pupils showed their understanding and sensitivity to the Buddhist way of life and an awareness of how they worked together. Pupils were able to compare the 'sangha', (the community), with belonging to their own groups of Beavers, swimming clubs and football teams. They can give reasons for their choice of club too. For example, one pupil explained, "I joined my community, Brownies, to have fun!" Pupils handle artefacts with care and discuss prayer wheels, mandalas and other Buddhist artefacts and symbols knowledgeably. They are developing a clear sense of right and wrong and understand that people's views should be respected and rules kept. For example, in one Year 2 discussion, pupils could relate the Buddhist path, depicting the eight rules to overcome suffering, to their own behaviour in school. As one child explained, if you are a member of a football team your actions affect the rest of the team so you have to think of other people.
131. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and planning and preparation are thorough. Lessons are interesting, well-structured and varied. For example, to help the pupils recognize and feel the importance of reflection and stillness as experienced by Buddhists, incense is burned and pupils learn to meditate in a circle, focusing on sharing kind thoughts around the world. Teachers create a quiet, calm, meaningful atmosphere in which pupils can learn well. In one lesson, in which the function of the 'mandala' was explained, pupils listened in silence and with fascination showing very good understanding in the discussion which followed. One pupil volunteered that the sand carrying kind thoughts into the sea was "like the circle of life".
132. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and the work produced is good and well-presented. Very good displays and photographic evidence show visits to two different, local, Christian places of worship and to Durham Cathedral. These visits plus regular visitors in school, such as a practising Buddhist and an expert from the Jewish community, support pupils' learning and understanding of different ways of worshipping. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject and the new scheme of work, which has been drawn up with the local authority working party, is being implemented effectively. Religious education is linked with other subjects, such as literacy and music, in addition to contributing consistently to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.