

INSPECTION REPORT

HOWDEN-LE-WEAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Howden-le-Wear, Crook

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114061

Headteacher: Mrs V A McCourt

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock
25344

Dates of inspection: 17th – 21st September 2001

Inspection number: 195744

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Street
Howden-le-Wear
Crook
County Durham

Postcode: DL15 8HJ

Telephone number: 01388 763287

Fax number: 01388 763287

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Father S Irwin

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Equal opportunities Special educational needs English Design and technology Geography History Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12536	Mrs S Bullerwell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4926	Mrs T Aspin	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information communication technology Art and design Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This community infant and junior school caters for pupils from four to eleven years of age and is much smaller than most primary schools. There are 83 pupils on roll, 35 boys and 48 girls in five classes, two in the infant department and three in the juniors. Pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 are in single-age group classes but the rest are in mixed-age classes. Almost all pupils come from the village, which is in the rural area of Weardale to the west of Durham. The attainment of most children when they start in the reception class is broadly average.

At present, 27.7 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The school has 32.5 per cent of pupils on its register for pupils with special educational needs, which is above the national average and seven per cent with a statement of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. The mobility of pupils appears to be a significant factor for the school. Last year, for example, seven pupils were admitted and five left during term time and about one in five of all pupils did not start in the reception class. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where the many strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. Giant strides forward have been taken in many areas since the previous inspection under the guidance of the perceptive headteacher, who is providing a high quality of leadership and management. In spite of significant pupil mobility and an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily, in line with the national trend. However, pupils are not doing well in science by the time they are seven, and standards in music throughout the school and religious education for eleven-year-olds are below expectations. The quality of teaching is good. It is particularly effective for children below the age of six in the Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, enabling many to achieve nationally expected standards. All pupils show a very good attitude to learning and behave well in lessons. Most are working at or near to their capacity. Although the school has an above average level of funding due to the small numbers, when all other factors are taken into consideration, the school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good leadership and management by the headteacher is rapidly bringing about improvements.
- Pupils' achievements are very good as, by the time they leave school, they attain well above average standards in mathematics and science, and above average standards in English, history, information and communication technology and design and technology. Their use of computers is also commendable.
- The management of behaviour is very effective. It fosters the very good relationships, well above average attendance and very good attitudes to learning.
- The quality of teaching is good in a high proportion of lessons. It is very good for children under six in the Foundation Stage.
- Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development enhances their personal development.

- The partnership with parents is a strength.

What could be improved

- Standards in science by the time pupils are seven, in music throughout the school and in religious education by the time pupils are eleven.
- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was previously inspected in April 1997 shortly after the appointment of the present headteacher, six key issues were identified for improvement. There followed a period of change with all except one teacher being replaced. For the past two years staffing has been stable and much has been achieved. Behaviour management measures have resulted in a marked improvement in the control of all pupils and in particular, the small minority of disruptive pupils. Standards in reading are now above average for seven- and eleven-year-olds and significant improvements have been brought about in information and communication technology and design and technology. Teachers' planning is good, with clear objectives set for all lessons and the standard of pupils' work is assessed regularly. The latest curriculum guidance is being incorporated into detailed subject guidelines, developed immediately after the previous inspection. School priorities in the development planning are monitored and evaluated effectively but procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and standards in all subjects are still not sufficiently well developed to make an impact on raising standards.

The school has also successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and they are having a marked impact on standards, particularly in mathematics. The level of improvement, taking into account the standards achieved, and the much better quality of teaching, has been good. The school is well on course to meet its targets for English and mathematics in 2002. The continuing success of the school looks assured with the very strong commitment from all staff, who work well as a team, to maintain the momentum towards improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	C	A	
science	C	D	B	A	

Standards are improving steadily, resulting in a national award for improvement from the Department for Education last year. Pupils' achievements in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, shown above, have been maintained in science and improved upon in

English and mathematics in 2001. This is against a background of significant pupil mobility and above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. When the results in 2000 are compared with similar schools, that is to say those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' achievements are well above average in mathematics and science but below the average in English. Inspection evidence shows that, by the time pupils are eleven, overall standards in mathematics and science are well above the national average for all schools and above average in English. The unpublished national test results for 2001 confirm this picture. An analysis of pupils' completed work for the last academic year confirms that all pupils are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment and there is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Realistic and achievable targets have been set for English and mathematics.

Pupils with all types of special educational needs make good progress. Many achieve the standards expected by the age of eleven. In information and communication technology, history and design and technology, standards are above national expectations. Standards are in line with expectations in all other subjects except music and religious education where they are below.

By the time most children are six, virtually all achieve the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. By the age of seven, they achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and design and technology but standards in science are well below average and below average in music. Attainment in all other subjects is in line with expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, a view endorsed by parents in the questionnaires. They work hard to produce lots of neat work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There has been a vast improvement since the previous inspection. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was seen or reported. There have been seven fixed-term exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Mutual trust and respect are actively promoted with staff setting a good example. Pupils are given and readily accept responsibilities.
Attendance	Well above average. There has been no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good

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

In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Just over seven per cent was found to be unsatisfactory, with one third being good. There were no examples of very good teaching recorded. Teaching has improved a great deal since then, and the quality is now good. The highest standards of teaching were seen in the Year 6 class with seven out of the ten lessons observed being very good or excellent, and in Year 5 and the reception classes where about one third were very good. The quality of teaching overall in this inspection was satisfactory or better in all of the 42 lessons observed. In three-quarters of lessons it was at least good and very good or excellent in one-third.

There is a strong commitment by staff to give pupils the best possible education they can. Strong features of teaching are detailed lesson planning, high expectations of pupils and good class control. These features help to make learning effective for all pupils. In addition, good use is made of resources such as computers. Classroom assistants are used well and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The very good planning by teachers and very good support provided by classroom assistants for pupils with special educational needs, particularly during literacy and numeracy sessions, enables most to achieve nationally expected standards. The overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school in spite of the standards attained in music, religious education and science. As a direct result, pupils show interest in the tasks set for them and produce lots of neat work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the Foundation Stage but otherwise satisfactory. Statutory requirements are not met in physical education because no swimming tuition is available. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for such a small school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout. All are supported well in lessons by a part-time specialist teacher and the two classroom support assistants. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are, on the whole, clear, achievable and relevant.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school's aims and values are reflected well in all aspects of daily life. As a result, pupils show respect for the views and feelings of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for pupils' personal development are very good. Assessment procedures in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education are satisfactory. In all other subjects, they are at an early stage of development.

The vast majority of parents hold the school in high esteem. This was evident at the meeting for parents prior to the inspection and from the returned questionnaires.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Aply supported by her deputy and staff, the headteacher is rapidly bringing about improvements. The role of subject co-ordinators is developing well but procedures to rigorously monitor and evaluate standards and teaching are not yet securely in place.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Business is conducted efficiently and statutory requirements are met. All have the best interests of the school at heart and regularly visit school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Standards in national tests are closely scrutinised. Annual priorities are thoroughly evaluated.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The best value is routinely sought in all expenditure. Financial planning is very good and resources, such as computers, are used very well.

Staffing levels are very good, keeping class sizes low. The accommodation, which is spotlessly clean, is satisfactory despite the lack of a suitable outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage. Resources are good. There is a favourable ratio of pupils to computers and the library is well stocked and used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school. • They make good progress. • The amount of homework. • Teaching is good. • Information about how their child is getting on. • Pupils are expected to work hard. • Pupils are helped to become more mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • The approachability of the school. • School working closely with parents. • The way it is led and managed. • The range of activities outside normal lessons.

Twenty-three per cent of parents returned the questionnaires. Inspectors are in full agreement with parents' positive views. However, inspectors disagree with the very small number of parents who responded negatively on the five aspects above. Much has been accomplished on behaviour management, developing an effective partnership with parents and providing a range of activities for pupils to enjoy. Inspectors strongly disagree with those few parents who think the school is not well led and managed!

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of abilities. However, levels of attainment on entry are broadly average for most. Very good teaching enables all children to quickly settle into school routines and approach their learning positively. The teacher is supported very well by the talented classroom assistant, parent volunteers and on occasions, students. During the Foundation Stage, which covers children's time in the mixed-age reception and Year 1 class until they are six, children make good progress. Most are well placed to meet, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development; communications, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1. In the case of their physical development, the teacher has to work hard to compensate for the lack of a suitable outdoor play area or large play equipment.
2. In communications, language and literacy, children listen well to all adults, they respond to instructions and sit and listen attentively to stories. They answer questions politely, do not call out and listen to other children's answers in literacy sessions. Most write their own name, holding their pencil correctly and read short familiar words. In mathematics, all follow older Year 1 pupils well when counting forwards or backwards to 20 or in 10's to 100. On their own, they know the numbers to ten already and recognise simple geometric shapes. All enjoy using paint, making biscuits or handling modelling materials, developing creative skills well. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted effectively through topics about 'growth', their immediate environment and scientific facts about their body. In their physical development, children's progress is good despite the lack of opportunities to use large play apparatus and wheeled toys outdoors.
3. Great emphasis is successfully placed on children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching in this aspect is very good. All staff provide clear, positive and encouraging role models and treat children with courtesy, fairness and respect so that children learn to trust staff, behave well and get along together happily. Children learn to share resources such as books, to take turns and to listen to each other with interest and respect. These qualities promote helpful and supportive attitudes and children often help each other quite spontaneously. They understand clearly what is right or wrong, and thrive in the order and security that their good behaviour brings. Children are never idle or lost for things to do, and most attain the learning goals in this area by the time they leave their reception year.
4. Inspection findings show that attainment for seven-year-olds in English and mathematics is above average, and in science it is well below average. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection in April 1997 for English and mathematics, but the picture is exactly the same for science. The school has consistently tried to improve standards in all three subjects, with some measure of success in two of them. The successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and a marked improvement in the quality of teaching has had a good effect. However, comparisons between different year groups are unrealistic in such a small school, as some have a much higher proportion of pupils with

special educational needs. The overall trend shows that the school is keeping pace with improving trends nationally but variations do occur each year in pupils' performance in different subjects. Since 1999 the trend is rising markedly, except in science.

5. Results in the 2000 tests for seven-year-olds are based on the performance of only seven pupils and all of these were girls. It is therefore unreliable to place too much emphasis on these results but they do give an indication of the school's performance against national figures. In comparison with all schools, standards in reading were in the top five per cent nationally, above average in writing and well above in mathematics. When the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the extent of pupils' achievements can be appreciated more as their performance was very high in reading and mathematics and well above the average in writing. The results for last year's Year 2 pupils in science, based on teacher assessments, show 86 per cent achieving the expected Level 2 or above, which is below the national average, and none achieving at the higher Level 3, which is well below average. The unpublished results for 2001, involving more pupils, follow a similar pattern. On inspection, the overall attainment in science for seven-year-olds was judged to be well below average.
6. The results since 1997 show that girls did slightly better than boys in reading and writing but about the same in mathematics. This is reflected nationally. The trend since 1996 shows results fluctuated in reading, writing and mathematics, most likely due to the high mobility of pupils and the number of pupils with special educational needs. In the school's own analysis, comparing the predicted National Curriculum level using data from the assessments on entry to the school, pupils mostly do better than expected. The good start all children have in the Foundation Stage and good quality of teaching they experience throughout the infant section of the school are mainly responsible for how well pupils achieve in relation to their prior attainment.
7. In English, work seen during the inspection shows that, by the time pupils are seven, the standards that they attain are above average in reading, writing and in speaking and listening. Overall, standards in English are above average. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to express themselves in class discussions. Consequently, most pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Reading is taught effectively, allowing pupils to develop their technical skills well. They have good strategies, for example, to try to read unfamiliar words. As a result, most read with understanding. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read, is most certainly helping to improve standards. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to write in most subjects, and teachers are focusing effectively on spelling and sentence structures in an attempt to raise standards. In the literacy sessions pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities such as re-telling stories and writing letters or poems. Most pupils use a joined style of handwriting.
8. In mathematics, attainment is above average with pupils achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. They work out sums involving addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers up to ten very quickly. They count forwards and backwards in twos, threes, fives and tens accurately and have a good grasp of the qualities of regular two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. Much work of a practical nature is undertaken in science. In Year 2, for example, pupils know there are different types of food and are beginning to

understand what constitutes a healthy diet. However, there are weaknesses in the recording of results or observations and the overall standard of pupils' completed work is well below average.

9. Pupils generally attain standards, which are in line with those normally expected for seven-year-olds in art, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for most. Pupils' attainment is above expectations in design and technology, mainly because of the quality of imaginative teaching, resulting from clear guidance and support provided by the subject co-ordinator. However, a lack of subject expertise in music, means that standards are below those normally expected.
10. The achievement of pupils after starting Year 1, and the standards they attain by the age of seven, are a reflection of how well they are taught and their very good attitudes towards their learning. Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, for example, is good, but in science it is unsatisfactory. Every parent who returned the questionnaire believes that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team recognised the strong impact that the consistently good quality of teaching is having on pupils' attainment. All school staff are deeply committed to improving standards and are succeeding in most subjects.
11. Pupils continue to make good progress in the junior classes and their level of achievement is very good, mainly because of the higher proportion of good and very good teaching in this section of the school. In Year 6, for example, seven out of the ten lessons seen were very good or excellent. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6 class, attainment in English is above average and in mathematics and science, it is well above average. This represents a significant improvement in science. Standards in all three subjects have improved in line with the national trend and are much better than in the previous inspection when all subjects, except two, were in line with expectations. It is unrealistic to compare the results with those achieved when these pupils were in Year 2 because of the number of pupils who have arrived or left each year since then. This mobility accounts for 20 per cent of pupils in the present Year 6 class, for example. Taking into account the mobility of pupils and the high proportion with special educational needs in the class, the standards attained show the effectiveness of the school and the high calibre of the teachers in the junior classes.
12. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-old pupils in 2000 showed that attainment was well below average in English, in line for mathematics and above average in science. However, when these results are compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds, they show a more successful picture for the school. Pupils' performance in mathematics and science is well above average but it remains below average in English. The headteacher and staff analyse all results very carefully and quickly identify weaknesses such as the quality of pupils' written work, which are then made priorities for improvement. This good strategy, along with the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive effect on standards for all pupils.
13. Pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments appears erratic over the past four years with the trend in results generally improving since 1997 in each subject. However, in 2000 the effects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and much improved quality of teaching have been instrumental in raising

standards. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for Year 6 pupils, based on the scrutiny of work from the last full academic year and the unpublished national test results for 2001, are above the national average for English and well above for mathematics and science. It is far too early in this academic year to predict the results for current Year 6 pupils. However, apart from the pupils with special educational needs, most are attaining standards expected for their age in all three subjects. In other subjects, standards of attainment are above those normally seen in history, information and communication technology and design and technology. This represents a remarkable achievement for the latter two subjects, which were key issues for improvement in the previous inspection. The increased level of resources, training to improve teachers' subject knowledge and effective co-ordination of both subjects are the main reasons for the improvement. In history, pupils produce a large amount of good work, using computers frequently to access interesting information. In art, geography and physical education, standards are average, but in music and religious education they are below expectations. There is a lack of teacher expertise in music and teachers have not yet come to terms with the newly introduced locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Overall, the school is effective as the vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

14. The good quality of teaching is an important factor in the progress most pupils make. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has undoubtedly helped to raise standards in English and mathematics throughout. Well chosen texts and the teachers' skill in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in style, structure and content improve pupils' reading skills and widen their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading remains strong and this also contributes effectively to the above average attainment and good progress pupils make in reading. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in the classroom from their teachers and the skilled classroom assistants. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills with parents playing a key role by showing interest and listening to reading most nights. Pupils read confidently and write fluently in a wide range of styles or contexts. In mathematics, they can work out sums with fractions and decimals, handle scientific data and solve problems involving numbers up to 1,000 successfully.
15. In science, pupils have many opportunities to investigate and conduct experiments independently. By the age of eleven, they know how to devise a fair test and record their results carefully, often using a computer to help them. The science co-ordinator manages the subject well, giving much advice and support to all teachers. All teachers in the junior classes show confidence when teaching science and are guided effectively by the good programme of work. Boys and girls both enjoy the practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. Science is one subject where the boys tend to out-perform girls in science in the national tests, though the difference is very small. No specific reasons for this have been identified by the school in their analysis of results or by the inspection team.
16. Pupils with all types of special educational needs achieve well. They make similar progress to others in their class, due to the careful planning by class teachers and the effective support of the classroom assistants. The school sets challenging targets for them and most are well on course to meet them. In most classes, those

with recognized behavioural difficulties achieve particularly well due to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and good level of class control and discipline.

17. The school does not, at present, identify or make special provision for any gifted or talented pupils. The school relies on the good quality of teaching to afford all pupils with every chance to reach their full potential. However, arrangements are well in place to further improve this, by planning additional work in lessons for pupils of exceptional ability or with special talents in any particular subjects. All pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in all aspects of school life with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. As a result, pupils feel valued and this in turn encourages them to do their best in everything. It is just one of the reasons why the school is so successful, with pupils achieving so well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, reported as good in the previous inspection, have improved and are now very good. This area of the school's work is a strength and makes an important contribution to the standards pupils' achieve.
19. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. This confirms parents' views expressed in the questionnaires sent out prior to the inspection. Pupils are interested in their lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. They concentrate on what they are doing and work well co-operatively. For example, during a Year 6 science lesson, groups of pupils worked well together to decide how they would weigh items in air and water and how to present their results. All used their initiative and showed a good level of independence with their learning.
20. Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils move around the school sensibly and purposefully. They enter assembly in silence and behave well throughout. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and respond willingly to their teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. However, as in most schools, a small number of pupils are not able to behave well at all times. These pupils are effectively managed and supported by staff, in line with the school's behaviour policy. In the playground, pupils are encouraged to play together happily and are supported by 'Buddies'. These are trained Years 5 and 6 pupils who are there to help everyone enjoy the playground. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. There were seven fixed-term exclusions in the last year, reflecting the school's expectations of good behaviour from all pupils.
21. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect and actively promoted by staff, who set a very good example for pupils to follow. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. A wide range of responsibilities within school strengthens pupils' personal development. For instance, roles as class monitors, setting up for assembly and helping one another in paired reading sessions. Older pupils are given more responsibility such as running the school tuck shop and being 'Buddies'. The school council has members from each class who meet the headteacher to discuss school and pupil issues. At the moment the council is considering how to build a school website. These roles of responsibility for all pupils boost their self-esteem and confidence and promote their sense of community and citizenship. Weekly team

meetings, when all pupils in the same coloured house meet together to celebrate individual and group achievements, enhance the very good relationships between all ages.

22. Pupils' attendance is well above the national average. This is a very good rate of improvement since the previous inspection when it was satisfactory. There is no recorded unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual, registration is quick and efficient and lessons start on time. This very good attendance makes a positive contribution to the good progress pupils make.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Just over seven per cent was found to be unsatisfactory, with one-third being good. There were no examples of very good teaching recorded. Teaching has improved a great deal since then, and the quality is now good. The highest standards of teaching were seen in the Year 6 class with seven out of the ten lessons observed being very good or excellent and in Year 5 and the reception classes, where about one-third was very good. High expectations of pupils, challenging tasks and very good control techniques resulted in effective learning by pupils in these lessons. The quality of teaching overall in this inspection was satisfactory or better in all the 42 lessons observed. In three-quarters of lessons it was at least good and very good or excellent in one-third.
24. There is a strong commitment by staff to give pupils the best possible education they can. Teachers cope well with the mobility of pupils, and this is helped by having such small class sizes. Pupils arriving during term-time quickly settle and benefit from the attention available with the small numbers. Strong features common to all teachers, which contribute to the effectiveness of teaching, are detailed lesson planning, high expectations of pupils, discipline and the support for pupils with special educational needs. This helps to make learning effective for all pupils. In addition, good use is made of resources such as computers. Classroom assistants are also deployed effectively and invariably make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The very good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly during literacy and numeracy sessions, enables most to achieve nationally expected standards. The overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school in spite of standards attained in music, religious education and science. There is a very strong determination by all staff to raise standards. Most have the knack of making learning exciting and fun, keeping pupils fully motivated and extremely busy. The result of this was that a copious amount of pupils' completed work was available to the inspection team for scrutiny.
25. Most aspects of teaching in the infant and junior classes are good. For example, all teachers' lesson planning is detailed, with clear learning objectives and effective links made between subjects. In Year 6, for example, a literacy lesson on Shakespeare's play Macbeth involved pupils using computers to write a play script and describing what life was like in Tudor times. Their linguistic and computing skills as well as historical knowledge were all put into practice. Expectations of pupils are generally high and pupils respond by behaving extremely well and working conscientiously to produce neat work. Pupils of all abilities are given suitably challenging tasks and strict time targets to complete them. A strong feature of most other lessons is the effective way teachers use support staff and resources. The very good attitude pupils in general have towards their work means that they can be trusted to work diligently. Praise is used well throughout to motivate or raise pupils'

self-esteem. The teacher in the reception class is particularly good at making boys and girls feel important and valued. It was also evident from all teachers' supportive comments attached to pupils' marked work. However, in some classes, few of these comments gave pupils any indication on how they could further improve their work.

26. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions is good throughout the school. All teachers use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions effectively when teaching other subjects. In a science lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills were developed expertly as they used computers to record data from their experiments on forces and print graphs. In Year 5, pupils adeptly used the Internet to research information on Greek gods. Very good links were made with their historical knowledge about the ancient Greeks. Pupils are frequently provided with the opportunity to use computer skills as part of their work in all subjects and this invariably involves literacy or numeracy skills. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils write about rivers in geography, record temperatures and produce graphs showing daily temperatures for their topic about the weather. The scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that pupils use computers extensively to support their learning in literacy and numeracy lessons. Children as young as four show good skills handling the mouse control and printing their completed work.
27. The consistently good quality of teaching accounts for the very good level of achievement for pupils by the time they are ready to leave the school. In English, teaching is good throughout and as a result, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve the targets set for them and many exceed them. In mathematics and science, standards are well above average as a direct result of the quality of teaching which is very good and good respectively. Pupils are also well taught in art, history and design and technology, and achieve better than average standards in the latter two subjects by the time they are eleven. In information and communication technology in particular, pupils' above average level of achievement reflects the vastly improved teaching which is good in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. In geography and physical education, teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in music, however, is unsatisfactory throughout. Most teachers lack knowledge and expertise in teaching the subject. Standards are also adversely affected in religious education for eleven-year-olds by the lack of knowledge of the newly introduced locally agreed syllabus and in science for seven-year-olds due to low expectations of pupils.
28. All teachers work hard to establish a very good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Much work has been undertaken to develop effective procedures following criticisms in the previous inspection. Most teachers now have very good strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. In the reception and Year 1 class, for example, the teacher often praises individual children and uses a good variety of reward systems. In Year 5, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks set. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and usually behave well. All have a very good attitude towards their learning. This results in a productive working environment in all classes.
29. Teachers use assessment well to guide their planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and this helps them to plan work which challenges pupils of all abilities. However, methods of assessment are inconsistent from class to class in most other subjects. This makes it difficult for each teacher to

build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and causes some work to be repeated needlessly, wasting valuable lesson time. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly with a few helpful comments to give pupils guidance on how to further improve their work. There were no gifted pupils identified by the school. However, teachers know their pupils very well in the small classes and there is a strong commitment to meet the needs of all pupils so that they can achieve their full potential. All are fully included in lessons and supported well. Teachers' success in helping all pupils is evident as virtually all meet or exceed the targets set for them. Lessons invariably build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with a wide range of resources readily available for pupils. These factors maintain pupils' interest and encourage them to use their initiative and to choose suitable materials to use when working independently in groups. In a Year 2 geography lesson about their own locality, the teacher provided enlarged maps and historical and modern photographs to help pupils appreciate the importance of maps and the changes over time in Howden. Pupils respond positively to all their lessons, sustaining very good levels of concentration. As a direct result, very effective learning occurs in virtually all lessons.

30. The quality of teaching for children under the age of six in the Foundation Stage, which comprises those in the mixed-age reception and Year 1 class, is very good overall. The class teacher's knowledge, enthusiastic approach and determination to get the best out of every child helps to give children a good start to school and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Planning of children's work is good and meets the new requirements of the Foundation Stage. Detailed early assessments quickly identify children with special educational needs and appropriate work is provided for them in each of the six areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage, enabling them to make good progress. The high quality of teaching, combined with a close working partnership with parents and close links between assessment and planning, means that children achieve very well in the reception class.
31. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the rest of the school is also good. Staff use expert advice and good assessment information to ensure that most individual learning plans identify precise and achievable targets in relation to literacy, numeracy and social behaviour. However, a few of these have far too many and some are imprecise, making it difficult to assess progress. Teachers take full account of pupils' individual targets when planning their lesson. They work closely with classroom assistants to ensure that the best possible use is made of their time and talents. As a result, these pupils consistently receive the help they need to make good progress in relation to their personal targets. Teachers and learning support staff continuously monitor individual progress, and further action is planned accordingly. A part-time specialist teacher also works with individuals or small groups in class or outside it to give additional support in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching in these contexts is never less than good. It is characterised by clear objectives, well-planned activities and firm but sensitive relationships.
32. Only one negative comment about homework was received in response to the questionnaire sent out to parents prior to the inspection. At the meeting for parents, again only one parent queried the amount set, wanting more to help a child with special educational needs. Inspection evidence shows that the amount and quality of homework provided is good. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers make good use of homework as

part of their very strong commitment to raise standards. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are well developed through exercises in English and mathematics. The amount and quality effectively supports pupils' learning.

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

33. The curriculum provided is satisfactory. However, for children in the Foundation Stage in the reception class, it is good. These children follow a curriculum that covers all the required areas of learning expected and they work towards the Early Learning Goals described in the most recent national guidance. A wide range of experiences is planned, and there is a suitable balance between teacher-directed tasks and self-initiated activities. Children are well prepared to begin work on the National Curriculum by the end of their reception year. The lack of a designated outdoor play area restricts the opportunities that can be provided for physical development although as much as possible is done to compensate for this, using the school hall and physical education equipment. There are plans in the pipeline to develop a much needed outdoor activity area for these children.
34. Good planning ensures that infant and junior aged pupils spend enough time on each National Curriculum subject, religious education and personal and social education, and that a suitable range of experiences is provided. However, there is an over-dependence on the latest national guidance and not enough work has been done to match the documentation to the specific needs of the school. There are still some inconsistencies in the quality of planning. The best example occurs in Year 6. The planning in this class means that lessons are very carefully structured so that no time is wasted and all pupils work at the right level, hence progress in learning is very good. The match of work to pupils' ages and levels of attainment has improved in most classes and subjects since the previous inspection but completed work shows that pupils with all levels of attainment are, on occasions, still given the same tasks to do in subjects other than mathematics and English. In these instances, pupils with higher attainment are not always sufficiently challenged. A satisfactory emphasis is placed on teaching literacy and the development of numeracy is good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established. Mathematical skills are used very well to support other subjects, for example science. Opportunities are lost to use literacy skills and develop them on occasions when too much use is made of worksheets that require few writing skills to complete, for example in religious education. Provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the previous inspection, due to the increasing expertise of all teachers and better resources. Opportunities are planned for pupils to use the skills they learn on a regular basis. All these factors are steadily raising standards throughout the school. A weakness in the curriculum provided for pupils aged six to eleven is the lack of opportunity for them to learn to swim.
35. There is an appropriate sex education policy. From an early age, pupils are taught how different types of drugs are misused, how to make sensible choices and the consequences of drug misuse. Inspectors support the views of some parents who feel that certain aspects, dealt with in Year 6, could be taught at a younger age. Suitable links are maintained with pre-school groups and families of children about to start school which helps teachers to provide the right sorts of activities in the reception class. Pupils are well prepared for secondary education, and care is

taken to make the transition from primary to secondary school as smooth as possible.

36. Many opportunities are taken to enhance pupils' learning through initiatives such as the links maintained with three European countries, the opportunity for older pupils to visit France in a school group, and additional sporting activities funded through the Sport Action Zone. School visits are also used well to improve pupils' first-hand experiences wherever possible, despite the distance of the school from most places of interest and hence the cost of these expeditions. Good provision is made for a good range of extra-curricular activities for a school of this size. These vary throughout the year and include sporting and musical activities.
37. Pupils with special educational needs have their own individual education plans that cover their specific needs. Activities that help pupils reach their targets are carefully included in everyday planning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum provided for these pupils is good and they are well integrated into the life of the school. The school is committed to the principals of equality of opportunity, and no pupils are excluded from any activity by reason of race, gender, social circumstance or ability.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural education is well promoted. In the previous inspection it was judged satisfactory. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Themes for the daily act of collective worship are well thought out, and pupils are given the opportunity to think about different issues. Teachers respond to pupils' concerns, for example worries raised in their minds following a recent disaster in the United States. The personal and social education programme followed by older pupils helps them to consider the impact of different actions on others and to respect their views and ideas. Pupils learn about many faiths and associated cultures. Local people contribute to the pupils' understanding by talking about their own way of life. The development of drama and its use to develop self-expression has rightly been highlighted in the school development plan as an area for attention.
39. The provision for pupils' moral education is very good. The consistent implementation of the behaviour management policy has improved pupils' attitudes. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions that are used to manage behaviour. Teachers ensure that the outcomes of pupils' inappropriate actions are reinforced during lessons, and they are given the opportunity to improve themselves. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and negotiate their own class boundaries. The need for pupils to help one another through difficulties is reinforced through the 'Buddy' system and the effects of bullying are carefully explained. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about the impact of smoking, alcohol and other drugs on the human body and about pollution of the environment.
40. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Many opportunities are offered for pupils to take responsibilities, for example running the tuck shop, representing their class at the school council, monitoring doors at break-times to keep a watch over younger children, and helping teachers prepare the classrooms for the next lesson. The youngest children quickly learn to take responsibility for keeping their classroom tidy and to share equipment, for example in the sand tray. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in pairs or groups, for example when using the computers. Independent research is a rapidly developing

area with the introduction of the Internet to pupils. An above average number of opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in competitions, for example the gymnastics festival, and work together as a team. Police, and other emergency services also contribute to pupils' understanding of citizenship.

41. Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about the development of their own culture, for example by visiting the New Victoria Centre as part of their studies in history. They also visit a centre to study about the life of the venerable Bede. In geography they study their own locality and visit contrasting localities. Much is done for example in Years 3 and 4 to help pupils appreciate the way of life in India, Indian music and designs on textiles. In art, they discuss the work of artists such as Cézanne and Steenwyck, and try to copy their styles. In music, they listen to work by different composers, for example Saint-Saens. The school makes every effort to provide first-hand experiences through visits and visitors to improve cultural awareness, although this is extremely difficult with the prohibitive costs of taking pupils from a small rural school the necessary distances to centres of learning or places of worship other than Christian.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. This is a very caring school that sees the health, safety and general welfare of pupils as an important priority. The school has improved its level of care since the previous inspection and this is now good. Three people have qualified in first aid to deal with accidents and administering medication. Governors regularly carry out health and safety risk assessments. A formal system to address the very few incidents of bullying is in place and the behaviour management policy, which was new four years ago, is now an integral part of school life. The headteacher has responsibility for child protection issues and all procedures are followed correctly. The policy statement covering this aspect is clear, giving precise guidance to all who work at the school. There are satisfactory procedures for the careful monitoring of attendance and any patterns of absence are quickly noticed.
43. Class teachers have the responsibility for the everyday needs of their pupils and know them very well. Procedures for dealing with bullying or oppressive behaviour, if it should occur, are very good. All pupils are aware of the 'rules, rewards and consequences' and are confident that if they are hurt or upset, they have someone to turn to. Teachers consistently promote good behaviour through the reward system, which positively influences most pupils. All good behaviour is rewarded and pupils try hard to please their teachers. For example, in class, putting marbles in a jar visually inspires pupils to continue with their efforts to fill the jar and receive a class reward. Teachers' records of pupils' social and emotional needs enable them to give good support to individual pupils. Pupils' personal development is carefully monitored alongside the curricular programme of personal, social and health education and supported by the very good provision for pupils' social and moral education. For example, Year 5 pupils talked with their teacher about how they would feel if someone called them names.
44. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' educational and personal support and guidance. Every opportunity is taken to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem by giving lots of praise and recognition for good work and effort. There are some very good displays of pupils' work celebrating their achievement across the curriculum, such as the one on India in the Years 3 and 4 class. The reward systems work very well. Pupils appreciate the special assemblies held each Friday

when their efforts are recognised. Staff know their pupils well and foster very good relationships and mutual respect which encourage pupils to do their best and to become mature and responsible.

Assessment

45. Assessment procedures for children in the reception group are good. A detailed assessment of their attainment on entry to the school is carried out in the first six weeks of their first term and used as a basis to assess progress at a later date. The children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals is assessed continuously and a record is kept of activities they choose, to make sure they have a balance of experiences. Legal requirements to assess pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6 and to report outcomes to parents are met. A suitable number of additional tests are carried out in these subjects to monitor pupils' progress through the school. Some tests are analysed in detail to help identify areas of learning needing special attention, for example forces in Year 6 science, and word problems in mathematics. This is helping to improve standards. Comparisons are made between test results from year-to-year to identify pupils not making suitable progress. Good procedures are in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs, for setting specific targets for them to reach, for monitoring their progress and for reassessing their needs on a regular basis. Marking of work, and hence the teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils' attainment, is inconsistent with too much marked right or wrong. Some teachers are better than others at giving guidance to pupils on how to improve their work further. Assessment procedures in all other subjects are in the early stages of development. A start has been made to collect work samples, for example in art and design and information and communication technology, to illustrate the standards that should be achieved at each level. However, most assessments in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are inconsistent from class to class. Not enough work is done to identify weaknesses in these subjects and in science, or in particular year groups, to help teachers plan to improve standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents have very positive views of the school. Every parent who returned the questionnaire or gave an opinion during the inspection agreed that teaching is good, their child works hard and good progress is made. Most parents said their child likes school, gets the right amount of homework and is helped to be mature, and they feel well informed about their child's progress. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.
47. A very small number of parents raised concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities, behaviour, leadership and management, approaching the school with any concerns and the school working closely with them. Inspection findings show the range of activities is good, behaviour is good and any misbehaviour is effectively managed; the school is very well led and managed. The school constantly strives to work in partnership with all parents and respond to their needs.
48. The school has very effective links with parents. Communication with parents is very good and they feel happy with all the school has to offer. Staff are friendly and welcoming and are happy for parents to help in school. The school brochure, regular newsletters and the school newspaper keep parents well informed of what is happening in school. Literacy and numeracy evenings inform parents how pupils

learn basic skills. However, some parents would appreciate more specific information on the school curriculum for the year, to enable them to be better prepared to help their child at home. Parents have regular contact with teachers through their child's reading record, which contains useful information to help them support reading, such as National Curriculum level indicators and words to show the 42 phonic sounds. Parents have two formal opportunities to talk to teachers about their child's progress and most parents attend these evenings. The quality of individual pupil's annual reports is very good. It covers each area of the curriculum and tells parents what their child is good at and where they need to improve. Pupils also make a contribution to the reports by evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses. However, the range of test scores provided are not explained, therefore some parents are not clear on how well their child is doing.

49. Parents' contribution to the work of the school is good. The friends of the school association organise events, which are very well supported by parents. Funds raised are used to improve the school environment, such as renewing the toilet areas and providing seats in the playground. Most parents try hard to support their child with homework. A small number of parents help in school. For example, over a course of ten weeks, ten parents made story sacks for the pupils to use in class. Individual parents offer their expertise to support the work of the school, such as building the school website. This involvement has a positive effect on the work of the school. Parents see the school as the main focus of village life. They appreciate the opportunity to get together with other parents and celebrate their children's achievements at events such as 'The Santa Special'.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The quality of leadership and management has improved considerably since the previous inspection, which reported a 'considerable number of positive changes being introduced by the recently appointed headteacher'. It is now very good in many aspects and this has a positive impact on the daily life of the school. The headteacher is very perceptive and has a clear picture of what she wants to achieve for the benefit of the pupils and community. As a direct result of her commitment, knowledge and high quality leadership, the school is moving forward quickly. Staff and governors share her very strong commitment to improve and work hard with her to meet the clear and specific aims of the school. These aims and values are strongly reflected in all aspects of school life such as pupils' very good attitudes to their work and good behaviour.
51. The effective delegation of responsibility to senior staff is a strong feature. The senior management team, which is the headteacher and deputy headteacher, is added to on occasions by individual teachers who are consulted for their expertise. It provides an effective forum in which the school's current successes can be evaluated and its future planned. The experienced deputy headteacher, for example, carries out her responsibilities very efficiently and effectively. Individual staff who co-ordinate the development of subjects within the curriculum and the special educational needs co-ordinator take their responsibilities seriously, giving much support to one another. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, answering a previous criticism. The newly formed Foundation Stage for reception aged children is currently managed as part of Key Stage 1. This is appropriate in such a small school. Non-teaching staff feel part of the 'school team' and value the guidance and support they receive from teachers. The quality of their work adds to the success of pupils' learning experiences.

52. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively and works extremely hard to support the school. The chair of governors has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through regular weekly meetings with the headteacher. Individual governors are linked to a specific subject of the National Curriculum as well as areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. This gives them a clear overview of learning in particular subjects. All approach their duties conscientiously and are proud to be associated with the school. Importantly, all appreciate the level of improvements brought about by the headteacher and express confidence in her. Minutes of the governing body's meetings indicate that meetings are well attended and business is conducted efficiently. The statutory requirements for the special educational needs Code of Practice and for the act of collective worship are met.
53. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a key issue in the previous inspection, is in place for the core subjects of English and mathematics and to a more limited extent in other subjects. However, few subject co-ordinators have a clear overview of their subject throughout the school. It means that they have little opportunity to spread good practice or to support colleagues in any identified areas of insecurity. The role of co-ordinators needs to be further developed so that the quality of teaching can be further improved, particularly in subjects such as music and religious education. This in turn will raise standards. In the recent national initiative to reward high performing teachers, the school's procedures and documentation for assessing their performance were satisfactory. The headteacher is constantly striving for high standards and has a regular programme for analysing national test results. However, the procedure to rigorously monitor pupils' completed workbooks to evaluate the standards being achieved has only recently been introduced. When the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were introduced, for example, careful monitoring enabled areas of difficulty to be quickly identified and put right. Alongside test results, this led to writing being identified as an area for improvement.
54. In the previous inspection, the school had six key issues to address. All have been tackled conscientiously, with varying degrees of success. Behaviour management measures have resulted in a vast improvement in the control of all pupils and in particular, the small minority of disruptive pupils. Standards in reading are now above average for seven- and eleven-year-olds, and significant improvements have been brought about in information and communication technology and design and technology. Teachers' planning is good, with clear objectives set for all lessons and the standard of pupils' work is assessed regularly. The latest curriculum guidance is being incorporated into detailed subject guidelines, developed immediately after the previous inspection. Very effective action is taken to ensure all of the school's priorities in its development planning are monitored and evaluated carefully but procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and standards in all subjects are not sufficiently well developed at present to make an impact on raising standards.
55. The school secretary runs the school office very efficiently. All her duties and responsibilities are carried out cheerfully and calmly and this helps to give a positive first impression of the school to visitors. Very good use is made of new technology in the office, with an electronic mail facility for parents and computer programs for managing the finances and registration. Government grants are used effectively and correctly. Government funds for computers, for example, means that there is a favourable ratio of pupils to each system compared to other similar schools and

money for booster classes and additional literacy support has been used wisely to maintain the small class sizes, benefiting all pupils. Both funded initiatives have helped to raise pupils' standards of attainment. The special educational needs co-ordinator is meticulous in making sure that funds are applied to the best effect. Overall financial control is very good. The large contingency budget has been reduced from 18 per cent to eleven per cent and will reduce further as a result of a drop in pupil numbers. The headteacher expects to be within a sustainable and acceptable level at the end of the current financial year by adjusting staffing levels. Local authority finance officers supply good quality up-to-date information for the headteacher and governors to use as the basis for financial planning. There has been an audit since the previous inspection and only a few minor items for improvement were found. These were promptly dealt with. The school buys its resources at the most competitive prices and pays careful attention to quality. Taking into account the very effective way in which the school is led and managed, the standards achieved, the good quality of teaching and pupils' very good attitudes, it provides good value for money.

56. The school is very well staffed at present, enabling class sizes to be kept low. The induction of new teachers into school is very good and training opportunities, identified through regular professional development, are always readily available for all staff. The school has established satisfactory links with a local university but is not used often to train new teachers. In the last academic year, for example, no trainee teachers worked in the school but some student nursery nurses were trained. The two outstanding classroom assistants work closely with class teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
57. The building, dating from 1978, is satisfactory overall. However, inspectors noted some areas requiring improvement to bring it up to acceptable modern day standards. The most notable is the lack of access to a designated outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage. This restricts their opportunities to develop their physical and social skills. Facilities for disabled pupils need to be upgraded and office space is at a premium, making it necessary for the headteacher to share accommodation with the secretary. On occasions, this compromises privacy for staff and parents. The grounds are spacious with a good-sized hard play and grass areas. The school caretaker, who takes an obvious pride in her work, keeps the school meticulously clean. She is supported well by a conscientious cleaner. Classrooms and corridors contain many interesting and colourful displays of pupils' work, adding interest for pupils and showing that their work is valued.
58. The range and quality of teaching resources are good overall, and they are used effectively throughout the school. Resources are particularly good in the spacious library and for information and communication technology. Pupils make very effective use of computers in virtually all lessons. Resources such as large wheeled toys for children in the Foundation Stage to use outdoors are poor. In addition, there is no suitable storage available for such items.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. Under the present very effective leadership and with the current team of hard working staff, this rapidly improving school has a bright future. Few major weaknesses exist, and most of those identified by the inspection team are already known to the school. For example, the lack of expertise in music and the need to

further develop the role of subject co-ordinators. In order to raise standards further, the key issues for the school are to:

- raise standards in music throughout the school by improving class teachers subject knowledge;
(paragraphs 9, 13, 24, 27, 119-122)
- improve standards in science by raising expectations of what pupils can do by the age of seven and developing their reporting and recording skills;
(paragraphs 4, 5, 8, 10, 24, 27, 88, 89)
- raise pupils' standards in religious education by the age of eleven by improving teachers subject knowledge and continuing to implement the new locally agreed syllabus;
(paragraphs 13, 24, 27, 127-131)
- make the role of subject co-ordinators more effective by:
 - developing rigorous procedures to check standards of attainment in each year group to identify any weaknesses;
 - introducing consistent methods for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects;
 - evaluating the quality of teaching in all subjects to identify weaknesses in subject knowledge.
(paragraphs 45, 53, 54, 81, 86, 92, 97, 101, 107, 113, 118, 122, 126, 131)

The following less important weaknesses, not included as key issues for action should also be considered by the school:

- ≈ as soon as possible, meet statutory requirements in the physical education curriculum by teaching pupils how to swim;
(paragraphs 34, 123)
- ≈ provide a suitable outdoor play area, with appropriate equipment, for children in the Foundation Stage.
(paragraphs 1, 2, 33, 57, 58, 59, 67)
(It should be noted that the school has already taken the first steps to address this and is exploring storage implications for equipment)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	13	17	10	0	0	0
Percentage	4.7	31	40.5	23.8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	27

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	4.3	School data	0
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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	7	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys		n/a	n/a
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	7	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (73)	86 (73)	86 (73)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	6	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (73)	86 (73)	86 (73)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	6	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	13
	Girls	4	5	6
	Total	12	15	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (53)	79 (63)	100 (68)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	2	5	5
	Total	9	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (42)	63 (53)	68 (53)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	83
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.2
Average class size	16.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

FTE means full-time equivalent

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	7	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 / 01
	£
Total income	247,722
Total expenditure	236,592
Expenditure per pupil	2,414
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,372
Balance carried forward to next year	45,502

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

23 Per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out

87

Number of questionnaires returned

20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	25	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	60	15	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	60	0	5	0
The teaching is good.	55	45	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	50	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	45	10	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	45	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	15	70	15	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	10	70	10	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	55	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	60	15	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage, which covers those children under six in the mixed-age reception and Year 1 class, builds a good basis for their future learning. The previous inspection report on children under five reported attainment and progress to be satisfactory in five out of the six areas of learning. It was good in the area covering their knowledge and understanding of the world. The school's provision has improved significantly since then enabling children to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. Children's physical development is made more difficult as the school does not have an outdoor play area or any large wheeled toys and staff have to compensate for this by using the hall or grassed areas when the weather is suitable. The very good quality of teaching, much in evidence during the inspection, ensures that children enjoy their full curriculum entitlement in this and all other areas. At the time of the inspection, eight children were under five in the reception class, and none of the ten Year 1 pupils had passed their sixth birthday.
61. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The class teacher and support staff provide carefully structured routines, a well-organised and stimulating environment and very warm, caring and friendly relationships. This ethos helps children to settle quickly and happily, and they soon develop the confidence and skill to participate purposefully in different activities and to show what they know, understand and can do. The class teacher's commitment, energy, enthusiastic approach and determination to get the best out of every child has ensured that the Foundation Stage is a very effective phase, preparing children very well for the next stage in their education.
62. The reception teacher plans in great depth a good variety of interesting activities and experiences that support children's development towards the Early Learning Goals recommended for children of this age. Activities are linked by broad themes such as 'Growth and Change'. The quality of teaching is very good with the classroom assistants making a strong contribution. All staff are skilled at identifying individual needs, planning for them and observing the progress children make. They are also effective in deploying parent helpers and students so that they have clear and productive roles. Imaginatively designed and resourced areas such as the 'baby clinic' provide a very good quality and range of learning opportunities across all areas of learning. The high quality of teaching, combined with a close working partnership with parents and close links between assessment and planning, means that children achieve very well in the reception class. By the end of the reception year, when most children will be five, virtually all achieve, and some exceed the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. The school places great emphasis on this area of development, and provision begins before children start school because of a very good induction programme that includes a meeting for parents and good guidance booklets. Teaching is very good. All staff provide clear, positive and encouraging role models and treat children with courtesy, fairness and respect so that children learn to trust staff, behave well and get along together happily. Children learn to share resources such as books, to take turns and to listen to each other with interest and respect. As a result, a climate of appreciation grows in which children are aware of their own and

others' achievements. This promotes helpful and supportive attitudes and children often help each other quite spontaneously. Staff value the processes of play, and they encourage children to be curious, to explore different roles, investigate, share ideas and take charge of different aspects of a task such as baking 'funny face' biscuits. Staff are well organised and place great emphasis on independence and responsibility. Children get out resources for themselves and use them carefully, and put them away efficiently at tidy-up time. Children are expected to observe clear rules and expectations of their behaviour are high. Clever reward systems such as putting marbles in a jar to gain a class treat when it is full or having a record card stamped to get individual recognition, help to reinforce required behaviour. Children understand clearly what is right or wrong, and they thrive in the order and security that good behaviour brings. All staff use questions and positive comments to draw children confidently into social talk so that they learn to converse, be aware of others and form good relationships. Children are never idle, sullen, isolated or lost for things to do, and most attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave their reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Teaching and learning are very good in this area, especially in the development of speaking and listening skills, which are strongly promoted in all activities. Staff skilfully provide a wide range of ways for children to listen and talk, for example by showing interest in what children do and prompting them to talk about it. Children flourish in this setting, and the good daily practice with an attentive audience develops their ability to speak clearly and string thoughts together to tell the story of their morning. The teacher and classroom assistants prompt each child calmly and encouragingly, drawing out their ideas and feelings and showing great sensitivity to the needs of children who have language difficulties.
65. Staff ensure that pupils are able to see lots of print and have good access to books in the classroom. Attractive displays such as those showing nursery rhymes, stencil letters and postcards from holidays help children to appreciate the importance of writing. The class teacher reads stories very well, bringing its characters to life. This makes children eager to listen and respond, sometimes commenting or predicting or pointing to recognised features of print or illustration. All children take books home and are encouraged to read regularly with their parents. They make good progress in reading simple common words and matching letters to speech sounds. Some children in the reception year are already able to write their own name, holding the pencil properly to form legible letters in correct sequence. They make their own little books and arrange pictures in suitable sequence to tell a known story. They use sentence makers and different degrees of adult support to produce written sentences. All but a few are expected to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Mathematical development

66. Teaching of very good quality enables children to make good progress in this area and, in all but a few cases, to develop the expected knowledge, understanding and skills by the end of the reception year. Staff support the learning needs of all children well by providing a rich variety of opportunities to develop basic concepts of number, shape, space and measure. For example, children count coloured sweets as they decorate their biscuits. Most children count accurately to ten and recognise written numerals to nine. When working in groups to play games involving numbers, they count carefully in sequence. As they use scoops and jugs to fill containers during water play, they pick up the teacher's cues and begin to estimate 'just one more', 'more than one' or 'less than one'. A few higher attaining children

count confidently to 20. Staff find opportunities everywhere, counting for example, how many candles on a birthday cake or spots on dice. Children respond eagerly to these constant challenges and enjoy proving that they understand mathematical language and can count quickly and correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Teachers place great emphasis on this area and the quality of teaching and learning is very good. All staff use photographs, objects and visitors well to help children to learn about their school and neighbourhood, and about people, occupations and the environment. They benefit from visits by the school nurse and local police. Using books, objects and stories, children point out examples of different body parts, foods, seasons, creatures and musical instruments. They act as doctors and nurses, using the 'baby clinic' imaginatively as they dress, undress, bathe and measure dolls. A strength of teaching in this area is that it challenges children to investigate and find out for themselves, and to predict, describe and explain from what they observe first hand. Paintings completed by older pupils depicting their intended occupations and photographs of the class teacher as a child promote interesting discussions about children's own early experiences and wishes for the future. Staff strike a good balance between structured guidance and free exploration, and always use opportunities to stress health and safety issues. Children knew, for example, that they had to wash their hands before baking. Children have constant access to computers and cassette recorders, and develop the skills to use technology for different purposes. All these activities provide a strong foundation for learning in science, technology, history and geography, and help children to achieve a knowledge and understanding of the world that is at least typical for their age.

Physical development

68. By the end of the reception year, most children reach the level of physical skills and co-ordination expected for their age largely due to the very good quality of teaching in this area. The teacher has to work hard to compensate for the lack of a designated outdoor play area and no large wheeled toys to encourage physical activity. Nevertheless, children develop movement and balance well whilst responding to music in physical education sessions in the hall. All show a good awareness of others and of safety. They are becoming quite good at dealing with aprons and coats, zips, Velcro, buttons and shoes during class routines. When playing outside, children are active and often energetic, and they hop, skip, jump and run in their games with each other. Adults give close support and clear guidance as children learn the finer skills of cutting, joining, sticking, drawing and writing. Most children hold pencils, brushes and scissors correctly but some have difficulty in exerting suitable pressure and achieving precise control of movement. Children have good opportunities to work with a range of construction equipment. They show good skills in building and threading, and they use and develop their learning in other areas in doing so. For example, children count and describe shapes as they cut out pictures of objects they had as babies from catalogues.

Creative development

69. Very good teaching enables children to make good progress in this area. Staff plan and resource many and varied opportunities for children to explore colour, texture, shape and music creatively in relation to the current theme. As a result, the creative development of four- and five-year-olds is at least typical for their age. The classroom has dedicated areas where children can access paint and craft materials, explore sound and rhythm, and dramatise various roles imaginatively. Opportunities

are well structured and supported so that children are challenged in terms that they understand and can achieve. At the same time, children are encouraged to respond personally to their sense impressions and to express their own ideas confidently in different media. Children explore what happens when they mix colours, and make them thick or thin. They cut and stick pictures to make bright displays of favourite toys and perform a similar task using the class computer to select and print objects of their choice. All show a good level of skill, loading the program, using the mouse control confidently and printing, often unaided, their finished work. The pictures made by reception children are often bold, confident and expressively colourful. They regularly experiment with dough, using cutting tools to make geometric shapes and other three-dimensional models. Music enriches the day and children enjoy singing responses during registration at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

ENGLISH

70. Standards in English are above average for both seven- and eleven-year-old pupils. The school has improved standards since the previous inspection when standards were described as satisfactory across the school. The consistently good and often very good quality of teaching, particularly in the junior classes and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy have been the key factors in helping all pupils to meet their full potential and achieve the standards they do. In addition, clear learning objectives for each session, stemming from teachers' very good knowledge of the subject and effective support provided by the classroom assistants enable all pupils to develop skills well across all areas of English. As a result, their level of achievement is good in comparison with their prior attainment.
71. The unpublished results for the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds show that virtually every pupil achieved the expected standard in reading and writing with 17 per cent achieving the higher Level 3 in reading. However, none managed to reach the higher level in writing. This is one reason why writing has been made a priority for improvement by the school. The scrutiny of pupils' completed work from the last full academic year confirms the above average standards achieved in the national tests. No valid comparison can be made with pupils who took the tests in 2000 as there were so few pupils in the year group. Boys and girls do equally as well as one another. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently at the beginning of Year 2 are maintaining a steady rate of progress and attaining the standards expected for their age.
72. A scrutiny of work completed by pupils who have just completed Year 6 shows that they achieved above average standards in English. The unpublished national test results for 2001 confirm the above average standards with three-quarters achieving the expected standard and a third attaining the higher Level 5. This represents a significant improvement on pupils' performance in 2000 when the 19 pupils' results were well below the average for all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. The large proportion of boys over girls (13 and 7 respectively) and number of pupils with special educational needs adversely affected the overall performance. Each pupil represented five per cent of the total and only four managed to achieve at the higher Level 5. Inspection findings show that about half of the pupils beginning the current Year 6 are on the register for pupils with special educational needs and around a quarter are still working within Level 2, which is well below where they should be for their age. However, they are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment because of the high quality of teaching

and support from classroom assistants and the part-time teacher responsible for helping pupils with special educational needs. The results for previous years in the national tests show that most will achieve the expected level by the time they are ready to leave the school. Test results overall have risen over the past four years at a similar rate to the national trend. Inspection findings reflect this improving picture for English.

73. Standards of speaking are above average for seven-year-olds, with most showing confidence to answer questions using more than a single word or short phrase. Pupils listen well to stories and most are able to follow instructions about their work. All are keen to contribute to discussions. Pupils in Year 1, for example, were able to recall the main points from the story 'We are going on a bear hunt' and join in with a discussion about events. As pupils get older they gain in confidence, maintaining the better than average standards. By the time pupils are eleven, their speaking and listening skills are above average and this is due to the many and varied experiences that teachers provide for their pupils in the junior classes. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils readily volunteer more expressive words for a poem and in Year 6, define phrases like 'malignant laughter' from Shakespeare's play, Macbeth. Regular experiences of addressing the class give junior pupils increased confidence when speaking to an audience. The previous inspection report noted pupils' ability to explain things clearly.
74. Standards in reading are above average for seven-year-olds and also for pupils who are eleven. This represents a significant improvement for older pupils as standards were reported as below average in the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. A strong contributory factor for this is the close liaison that exists between school and the many parents who hear their children read on a regular basis. Texts read in the literacy lessons are skilfully exploited to extend the pupils' range of techniques to tackle unknown words. For example, pupils in Year 2 read the poem, 'A dark stormy night' competently. They knew how to sound out individual letters of longer words, break them into syllables or look for clues in the sentences to work out what they say. As a result, many develop an interest in reading and gain much pleasure from books. Most pupils have definite views on favourite authors and enjoy reading aloud, using good expression and voices for different characters. Reading books are invariably well matched to each pupil's ability. The school library is very well used on a regular basis. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are well taught how to quickly find information using the library index. This helps them to carry out research in different subjects.
75. Standards of writing for seven- and eleven-year-olds are above average. The consistently good quality of teaching for all pupils and the added support pupils with special educational needs receive, means that pupils achieve well considering their prior attainment. Well-planned targets are set for every class. They include the use of increasingly more complex sentences, improving levels of punctuation and the development of children's handwriting. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 lay the foundations for good standards in writing later. Most seven-year-olds produce work which is correctly punctuated. In the Year 2 class, for example, all recognise and use full stops, commas and question marks. Some knew about speech marks but not all use them correctly at this stage. Skills in recognising and using nouns, verbs and adjectives are very well taught throughout the school, often using computer programs that are carefully linked to the literacy hour's daily objectives. In all classes, there is a very good supply of dictionaries and thesauri to improve spelling and word selections. This

provision helps to improve the quality of pupils' written work. By the age of eleven, most pupils produce written work in a range of different styles which include imaginative stories, autobiographies, play scripts and poetry to above average standards. Year 6 pupils, for example, enjoyed writing a play script on the class computer based on the story of 'The railway children'. Handwriting standards are above average throughout. The school's clear policy statement gives good guidance to teachers and parents on the school's particular style. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils form their letters correctly and produce neatly presented work in their books. By the time pupils are eleven, most write fluently and neatly.

76. The overall quality of teaching in English, taking into account all aspects such as planning, homework and discipline, is good throughout the school. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen and all lessons in the infant department were good. In the junior classes, the quality of teaching was very good in two of the three lessons seen and good in the other. In all of the literacy sessions seen, clear learning objectives, showing a very good knowledge of the subject and good support for pupils with special educational needs, ensured pupils gave 100 per cent attention.
77. All teachers plan lessons thoroughly. Particularly effective is the rapid pace in many of the introductory sessions and the use of resources, including support staff. Pupils respond very well to the many interesting challenges set for them, maintaining a good level of concentration. Pupils in the Years 3 and 4 class, for example, enjoyed using a Thesaurus to find synonyms for words such as 'said', 'old', 'jump' and 'frightened'. Well-directed questioning leads to high standards of discussion involving all the pupils. For example, children in Year 5 combine ideas to decide on more adventurous vocabulary to use in a poem. Teaching skills of a high order are demonstrated, as pupils are enthusiastically encouraged to re-draft their written work on computers. Such high expectations encourage pupils to express their ideas accurately. In all lessons, pupils are given a clear understanding of what it is that they are expected to learn through clearly identified lesson objectives. At the end of sessions, teachers discuss with pupils the extent to which these objectives have been realised and analyse exactly what has (and has not) been learned.
78. Good class management skills are a feature of all lessons, resulting in pupils being motivated to do their best and to concentrate well on the tasks set for them. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a small number of pupils, reported previously, was not evident this time. The calm orderly working atmosphere in English lessons now enables teachers to target one specific group to teach, whilst other groups work independently on individual or paired assignments. Pupils' work is well displayed, both to celebrate achievement and to help raise levels of understanding. For example, in the Year 5 classroom there was an attractive display of poems by three modern poets.
79. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is good. In virtually all the lessons seen, pupils were set interesting tasks, well matched to their capabilities. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that homework is set at least once a week and all pupils carefully complete it. Juniors receive progressively more to do as they get older. Teachers mark all homework thoroughly. The effective use of homework helps to increase pupils' rate of progress in reading and writing. Parents support the school very well, listening to pupils read at home regularly.
80. Good assessment procedures are in place to identify and record pupils' progress in writing, spelling and grammar. A detailed analysis of the annual national tests each

year identifies areas in need of improvement and the wealth of information effectively guides the school when setting targets for the future. Samples of pupils' work are graded accurately to determine levels of the written work. Assessment is well used to adapt planning in the light of experience and to improve specific skills, identified as weak, for individual pupils. Although the quality of marking is good, comments usually praise or give added encouragement. There were few examples of helpful comments on how pupils could further improve their work.

81. Pupils with special educational needs on the whole have good individual education plans with clear targets and areas for development. These are incorporated well into teachers' lesson planning, answering a criticism in the previous report. A few, however, have far too many targets and some of these are not very specific, making it difficult to measure success. Work is well focused, with most receiving additional help both in classrooms and by being withdrawn from class to work with the specialist part-time teacher, either individually or in a small group. Appropriate work is set to enable them to make good progress. Care is taken to fully include these pupils and make sure that they have the same equality of opportunities afforded to all pupils. For example, they are invariably expected to contribute to discussions; their group work is often featured in reviews at the end of lessons and they also have the same regular opportunities to extend their literacy skills through work on computers.
82. The management and co-ordination of English are good. The headteacher and co-ordinator have clearly identified the areas for development and have instigated changes that are starting to raise standards in those areas, the quality of pupils' writing being a prime example. There are good procedures in place to make a detailed analysis of pupils' achievements each term and this information is now used well to inform planning. The co-ordinator and headteacher also regularly and thoroughly evaluate teachers' planning and the quality of teaching so areas for improvement are quickly identified. Much has been spent to improve the level of resources for teachers to use in their lessons and these are good, with, for example, a plentiful supply of reading books and dictionaries available to pupils in class libraries. The central library has been improved and is up to the modern-day standards expected with study facilities. However, it would further benefit from a quiet area with comfortable seating where pupils can relax and enjoy reading a book. Many pupils were seen to be using it well for research purposes during the inspection period, and it is open after school on Wednesdays for parents to use with their child. The new shelves contain a good range of books with none over 20 years old following a recent review of the stock. It is evident from this and other improvements that there is a very strong commitment from all staff to improve the quality of both the teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

83. Almost all pupils who have just completed Year 2 achieved the nationally expected standard in number, shape and space and data handling. This is reflected in the unpublished national test results for 2001. No comparison can be made with pupils who took the tests in 2000, as there were so few pupils in the year group. Almost all pupils just beginning Year 2 also attain the nationally expected standards for their age. About a quarter of pupils just beginning Year 6 do not attain the standards expected for their age as they have special educational needs. However, they make very good progress in mathematics and achieve well. A scrutiny of work produced by pupils who have just completed Year 6 indicates that those pupils

achieved well above average standards in mathematics. Early indications from national tests in 2001 confirm this picture, and indicate that almost half of pupils attained standards that are above the national expectation. This is a direct result of very good teaching and excellent teaching in Year 6. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be in line with those expected throughout the school. Standards have varied since then but over the last four years there has been a very good improvement in the standards attained by the time pupils leave the school.

84. By the age of seven, all pupils, including those with low attainment have begun to understand place value. Those with average and high attainment add two digit numbers mentally and competently and order numbers to 100. They recognise and name simple shapes and are beginning to use standard measure. They have few higher order skills, and although they can recite numbers going up in two's and five's do not understand how to use this knowledge to work out tables. Previous work shows that too much time had been spent filling in worksheets, doing tasks that lacked challenge and limited opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical communication skills.
85. By the age of eleven, pupils have a breadth of knowledge in number, shape and space and data handling and use different strategies to help them solve problems. They use their mathematical skills very well and frequently in science, and when appropriate in other subjects. Pupils who are just beginning Year 6, except those with special educational needs, have good mental arithmetic skills for their age. They present most of their work neatly and clearly. Although presentation of numerical work is generally good, diagrams are not accurate enough. Not enough use is made of a ruler, particularly in work on topics like symmetry. Pupils with special educational needs, whether for academic, physical or behavioural reasons make at least good progress and are well supported,
86. Teaching is good. It is satisfactory overall for pupils aged between five and seven and very good for those aged between eight and eleven. Teaching in Year 6 is excellent. Most lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. In the very good and excellent lessons, planning is detailed and carefully structured so that no time is wasted. The teachers maintain a lively pace that keeps pupils alert, particularly in the mental skills development section. Teachers are establishing very good relationships with their classes. In almost all lessons there are high expectations of behaviour and of work to be completed in time. This leads to responses such as that of a pupil in Year 3 who was desperately keen to complete the task before the lesson finished. In many lessons teachers encourage positive attitudes to mathematics and try to make it exciting. This was particularly evident in a very good lesson in Year 1 where pupils were highly motivated to beat an egg timer when putting numbers in order. Teaching is least effective when the lesson organisation and its impact on pupils is not sufficiently thought through. Marking in some classes consists of superficial ticking or crossing, without any explanation of how to put the work right. Assessment and recording of attainment to track individual progress is good. Effective analysis of previous national tests helps teachers identify areas of weakness in teaching.
87. A new co-ordinator has just been appointed and not fully established in the role yet. In spite of this, co-ordination is good largely due to the intervention and level of support provided by the headteacher. The headteacher maintains a good overview of standards and of progress made, improving standards from year to year.

Planning and teaching are looked at regularly to see what improvements can be made. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support mathematics. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

88. In the national tests in 2000, eleven-year-old pupils attained standards above the national average. A scrutiny of last years work shows that standards of pupils who have just completed Year 6 are well above average. Provisional unpublished test results for 2001 indicate that almost half of pupils attained standards above the national expectation. Standards of pupils leaving the school have increased dramatically since the previous inspection when they were judged to be broadly in line with the national average. This is due to the quality of teaching for pupils aged eight to eleven. Pupils who have just started in Year 6 attain standards that are broadly average overall, as there are a large number of pupils with special educational needs in this small class. The progress of pupils in this class is nevertheless very good.
89. In 2000, teachers assessed seven-year-old pupils as having standards below average although the same pupils did well in mathematics tests. No teacher assessments were available for 2001, but a scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicates that standards of pupils just starting Year 3 are well below those required. Pupils with otherwise high attainment barely achieve the national expectation although on entry to the school their attainment was generally average. Those pupils just beginning Year 2 attain standards that are broadly in line with the national expectation for their age and are working at the right level for their age in lessons taken by a temporary teacher. Insufficient progress has been made in raising standards since the previous inspection when attainment was judged 'just satisfactory' in lessons. There is no difference between the performances of boys and girls.
90. By the age of seven, pupils have very limited retention of scientific facts. They name parts of the body, the senses and the parts of the body to which they relate. They identify objects that require pushing or pulling to make them move. However, recording skills are poor and pupils have little understanding of how to test ideas. They remember little about different sorts of materials. Pupils with high attainment identify the need for sun, water and soil for a plant to grow. The attainment of pupils just beginning Year 2 is in line with the expectation for their age.
91. By the age of eleven pupils have a broad background in experimental procedures, life processes, the properties of materials and physical processes. They know, for example, how muscles work, what causes condensation and how sound is produced. They understand what is a fair test. They record results well, demonstrating good mathematical skills in measuring, and in presenting and analysing data. They use information and communication technology effectively to research facts and to record and analyse data.
92. Overall, teaching is good. It is satisfactory for pupils aged between five and seven and good for pupils aged between eight and eleven. Lessons are well planned and resources well organised. In most lessons, pupils know in advance what they are

expected to learn, but this does not always occur. Teachers use good questioning skills to review previous work and draw information from pupils. This was particularly obvious in a lesson in Year 2, when pupils were discussing components of foods such as grains. Wrong answers were corrected sensitively and pupils' contributions valued and used to move the lesson on. Opportunities are provided for pupils to make their own decisions and develop an inquiring mind and self-confidence. In the most effective lessons, pupils are expected to complete the practical tasks in a given time and to record their results sensibly. Their growing relationships with their new class teachers make them want to meet the teachers' targets. In some lessons, speaking and listening skills are developed alongside scientific exploration. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were encouraged to make their own predictions about what causes night and day and explain their thoughts to the class using a model. Where additional help is available in the classroom it is used well. Classroom assistants are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to learning. Those with special educational needs make the same progress as others in the class. Classroom management skills are good and teachers are taking care to establish good routines early in the year. This is setting clear boundaries for future work so that time is not wasted. Pupils treat equipment responsibly and tidy up quickly so that no time is wasted in lessons. Marking in some classes is not always rigorous enough to give pupils clues how to improve. Assessment of attainment is satisfactory, and national tests are carefully analysed to find the key weaknesses in the subject knowledge of the pupils and hence teaching.

93. Although the role of the co-ordinator is developing, in that planning is checked to see that teachers intend to cover all the areas of science, there is insufficient monitoring of standards through checking work in pupils' books and of teaching. Resources are good, easily accessible to teachers and used well in lessons to give pupils first hand experiences.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Standards in attainment in art and design are broadly in line with those expected throughout the school, with boys and girls achieving satisfactorily. Judgements about standards are based on artwork seen around the school, a scrutiny of samples of work, and lessons. Standards were judged satisfactory in the previous inspection.
95. Throughout the school, pupils experiment with a range of different media. They learn about the work of different artists and try to copy their styles. By the age of seven they produce good impressions of underwater scenes in the style of Seurat. They carefully experiment with colour and shades to create scenes depicting night and day to support their work in science. They look at picture postcards and add their own colours to an outline of their choice, using a colour fill tool on a computer program. They use a computer program competently to produce pictures using hot and cold colours. They experiment with paper weaving, and use different materials to make interesting collages. Overall, satisfactory standards are achieved.
96. By the age of eleven, pupils look at meanings behind still life pictures created by Cézanne and Steenwyck and try to create their own using oil pastel. They study pictures and information, sometimes using the Internet, about urns and containers used in Ancient Greece, and the patterns used by Greek potters. They create their own pictures, experimenting with colour washes to get the appearance of clay, and

adding their own Greek style patterns. They look carefully at different containers and try to produce shaded pictures of different views. They make coil pots, although the standard in clay work is not high enough. They experiment with printing techniques and learn to use the correct brushes and pencils for different types of work.

97. No art lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. Teaching of pupils aged between eight and eleven is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the skills they wish to develop, and demonstrate well, which gives pupils the confidence to try for themselves. This was obvious in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were learning to use a stipple brush to stencil and to get interesting effects by over-painting. It was also evident in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were learning clay techniques from a very low baseline, and in which they made very good progress in their learning. Class control is very good, pupils learn to handle equipment with respect and tidy up quickly and efficiently without wasting time. Good quality resources matched to the task, for example, correct drawing pencils and rollers to add paint to printing blocks help pupils improve their skills. Pupils enjoy practical activities and show this by the attention they give to the tasks. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Activities in art make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are often linked to other subjects, reinforcing knowledge and understanding, thus making efficient use of time.
98. The role of the subject co-ordinator is in a developmental stage, being satisfactory overall. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance, however, is unsatisfactory. Planning is monitored to make sure that the curriculum is covered but assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as they are not consistent throughout the school and the quality of teaching is not routinely evaluated at present. Resources are of good quality and quantity and well organised. Very early steps have been made to keep a check on standards throughout the school and to assess and record pupils' attainment. However, the quality of teaching is not monitored sufficiently. No opportunities are provided for pupils to meet artists or visit galleries due to the prohibitive costs for a small school a long way from a large town.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Previously, it was reported that standards were 'in line' for seven-year-olds but 'unsatisfactory, especially in design', for eleven-year-olds. Decisive action by the subject co-ordinator has significantly improved standards since then. Standards are now above national expectations for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. Evidence is limited as only two lessons were observed during the week of inspection. However, a scrutiny of work, photographs and displays of pupils' models, show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, progressively develop their understanding and skills, from Year 1 through to Year 6. Pupils' level of achievement throughout the school is good.
100. In the previous report, many areas for improvement were identified and these resulted in unsatisfactory progress being made by older pupils. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in the junior classes because of unchallenging tasks, inefficient use of time and insufficient emphasis being placed on designing before making models. There was no programme of work to guide teachers and no assessment of pupils' work to enable teachers to build effectively on skills or pupils' understanding. Furthermore, pupils did not routinely evaluate their work. Much needed to be done to improve the subject and raise standards. Teachers' planning,

lesson observations and the displays of completed work show that all areas have successfully been corrected. Teachers are guided well by a detailed policy statement and annual programme of work for each year group and as a result, pupils designing and making techniques are developed well. This was exemplified by the design sheets produced in Years 3 and 4, for example, where pupils designed sandwiches for healthy living and evaluated not only the finished product but the bread, for taste, smell and texture. In Year 6, pupils completed the teacher-produced design sheets for musical instruments they had made, evaluating their finished work and listing possible improvements. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and the practical nature of the subject means that they achieve similar standards to other pupils.

101. Overall, taking into account teachers' planning, which is very good, and the quality of pupils' finished work, the quality of teaching and learning is now very good. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, with lessons being well planned and organised with appropriate challenges for the pupils. The quality of teaching has a direct impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the good standards they achieve. Year 2, for example, design and make a Technicolour Dreamcoat for Joseph, wind up toys, vehicles with moving parts and puppets in cloth. They successfully use a wide variety of materials and produce models of a high quality. The push/pull moving pictures, for example, show how carefully they can use scissors. The quality of Year 6 models shows a very good progression in skills as they incorporate cam mechanisms in working models, design musical instruments after examining component parts of violins, and design make and evaluate Viking death masks. The high standards they achieve in designing and making were exemplified in the lesson when making a pair of slippers. Their designs considered function, safety and cost. All pupils experienced taking apart ready-made slippers and copying the shapes to create templates for their own use. Good links are effectively made with other subjects. In Years 3 and 4, for example, their Viking masks links effectively with their history topic on the Vikings. Computers are used well to design and record the steps followed. The quality of the displays and finished models throughout the school indicate a high level of enjoyment and application on the part of the pupils in response to the interesting tasks set by class teachers.
102. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has developed a programme of work which is firmly based on the latest National Curriculum guidelines. It is effectively developing pupils' designing, evaluating and making skills. These are assessed satisfactorily at the end of each term. Statutory requirements for all aspects, including design are now met. The headteacher and co-ordinator monitor the quality of planning and pupils' completed work each term. However, no time is set aside, on a regular basis, to evaluate teaching, as it happens in lessons. The accommodation is spacious allowing pupils plenty of room to work in safety. There is a good range of resources, including tools, construction kits and materials for modelling and these are now used effectively to support pupils' learning. Good use is made of computers throughout the school to promote pupils' designing skills. In Year 6, for example, pupils skilfully combine scanned pictures and text. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection, largely because of the very strong commitment by all staff to improve standards. Their collective efforts are proving to be successful.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Timetabling arrangements by the school and the inspection team meant that only two lessons were seen, one in the infant department and one in the junior. However, a scrutiny of pupils' completed work covering the whole of the last full academic year and displays around the school show that standards of attainment in geography are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is the same judgement as reported in the previous inspection. However, improvements have occurred in the level of resources, curriculum guidance and teachers' planning. As a result, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan work effectively making good links with other subjects, such as mathematics and history. The use of computers has improved a great deal as pupils now use them much more to help with their work in geography. The level of achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory throughout the school.
104. By the time pupils are seven, they are familiar with the main features of their own area, drawing maps of their route home and drawing plans of their school grounds, classroom or a room at home. They know the countries of the United Kingdom, compass directions and how to carefully and methodically make weather recordings. All show good gains in their geographical knowledge as they move through the infant classes. In Year 2, most could identify features to be found in and around Howden on a large scale ordnance survey map and locate their own house. The added support during the lesson for lower achieving pupils provided by the classroom assistant was particularly effective in enabling pupils in Year 2 to maintain a good level of concentration and complete the task set for them.
105. Pupils' interest in the subject is maintained throughout the junior section of the school because of the well-planned curriculum. In the mixed age Years 3 and 4 class, for example, a lively discussion between pupils and their teacher showed how much they knew about the Adivasi people living in the village of Chembakolli in the south of India. They covered topics such as the weather, religion, industry, shops and homes. All demonstrated good mapping skills as they found features of the area such as rivers or mountains and tried to explain the differences between this area and their own. However, all pupils were given the same written work and this whole class approach meant that some pupils had to rely heavily on their teacher's help. This approach also limited the opportunity for more able pupils to show independence or initiative and produce work of a higher quality in line with their ability. In Year 5, pupils map the course of the river Wear and conduct traffic and type of shops surveys. By the time pupils are eleven, they use maps confidently, know about scale and recognise symbols used to show different features. They have studied the area around Seaham harbour and Chembakolli in India, comparing these places with their own village. Pupils' achievements in geography in this section of the school are also satisfactory, largely because of the quality of teachers' lesson planning, their use of resources such as maps, photographs, textbooks and computers. As a result, all pupils have a good attitude towards their learning and work hard in lessons to produce neat work.
106. Good links are established with other subjects. For example, pupils use different websites on the Internet to gather information about the river Wear and use skills taught in English to write it down. Year 6 use mathematical skills well when charting population changes in the nineteenth century and Year 5 are able to produce graphs following their traffic survey in Seaham. Attractive displays of work around the school contribute positively to the standards achieved. These include one on

India in the Years 3 and 4 classroom showing examples of Indian artefacts and printed cloth, reinforcing links between geography and art and design.

107. The standard of teaching overall is satisfactory, with one example of good teaching seen in a Year 2 lesson. A secure knowledge for the subject well prepared, and an interesting range of resources and the way maps and photographs were linked were the main strengths of this lesson. This resulted in effective learning for pupils. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that all teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and most plan lessons carefully, matching activities closely to pupils' individual capabilities. Good use is invariably made of a wide range of resources to hold pupils' interest. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged, often researching information on their own either at home or in lessons, using reference books or computers. Skilled questioning challenges pupils constantly as in the discussion in the Years 3 and 4 class, and carefully prepared worksheets keep pupils interested and motivated. All teachers plan their lessons well, with clear objectives identified and good links made with other subjects. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, concentrate well to finish the tasks set for them and in the junior classes in particular, produce copious amounts of neatly presented written work. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, benefiting from working as part of a group or the support of parent helpers or classroom assistants.
108. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Following recommendations in the previous inspection report, guidelines to help teachers plan their lessons have been developed and have been further updated to take account of the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines. They now give teachers a clear framework for their lesson planning. Pupils' progress is assessed in a satisfactory way at the end of each year and plans are well advanced to further improve the information about pupils' achievements by monitoring their performance on a termly basis against the specified learning objectives. Teachers' planning is checked termly by the headteacher and co-ordinator but as yet there are no procedures in place to rigorously monitor the standard of pupils' completed work or the effectiveness of teaching as it happens in the classroom. Resources are satisfactory and the school effectively uses visits to contrasting areas such as the seaside to enhance the curriculum further. As with all subjects in the school, there is a strong commitment shown by all staff to raise standards.

HISTORY

109. Standards in history are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and above expectations for eleven-year-olds. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when they were in line with expectations throughout. The criticisms in the previous report over the quality of some aspects of teaching, such as the lack of clear objectives and the use made of different sources of evidence, have been put right. The quality of teaching has improved markedly, particularly in the junior classes, where it is good throughout. Strengths are: the use of support staff to help pupils understand their work and complete worksheets; the use of artefacts and a wide range of resources, including computers. Pupils of all ages show a very good attitude towards history, work hard in lessons and produce a large amount of work. As a result, the level of achievement in relation to their prior attainment for eleven-year-olds, including those with special educational needs, is good.

110. Pupils in Year 1, for example, can identify changes over time, using photographs of themselves as babies, comparing toys, clothes and what they can do today with what they could not manage then. By the time they are seven, they show a good understanding of what it was like for children who lived in Victorian times and are familiar with the events from famous peoples' lives such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. In Year 2, good links are made with science as they discuss materials which will burn easily when studying the Great Fire of London.
111. In the junior classes, the quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was good and very good respectively. As a result, pupils' level of interest is high and their productivity and pace of working is very good. Year 5 pupils, for example, were keen to research information from books and the Internet on Greek gods, showing a good factual knowledge. In Year 6, a wide range of historical evidence from a video, books and the Internet, coupled with the class teachers' very good subject knowledge and obvious enthusiasm for the subject, enabled pupils to study in depth life for school children in ancient Greece. The element of fun, as pupils used the Greek alphabet to send a short message to a partner, added much interest. Along with the exceptionally good support provided by the classroom assistant, who was helping lower achieving pupils, it meant that all pupils learnt much in the lesson. Sampling Years 3 and 4 pupils' work shows just how much is covered in history lessons as topics about Egyptians, invaders of England from pre-Roman times to the Normans, the Tudor period and events in World War Two have been studied.
112. Good links are made with other subjects such as geography, religious education, design and technology and English. Using maps to examine the growth of Howden village links well with geography and designing and making period costumes to dress card figures uses skills taught in design and technology. Computer skills are used extensively as pupils research information about gods in ancient Greek times and write factual stories about life for miners' wives in Victorian times.
113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infant classes but good throughout the junior classes. This has a direct impact on the quality of learning for pupils, which is good for eleven-year-olds. The very good subject knowledge, use of support staff and resources and the effectiveness of teachers' planning are the strengths that are largely responsible for the effective way basic skills are taught and the good progress pupils make. All lessons are planned carefully with clear learning objectives identified, answering criticisms over this in the previous inspection. Pupils' work is also more carefully matched to their age and ability level, with all teachers making better use of different types of historical sources. Year 2 pupils' interest level increased markedly, for example, when pictures of the Great Fire of London were shown. All work is marked thoroughly, with some but not all teachers including comments on how pupils could further improve their work. Homework is used extensively to support pupils' learning and this has a big effect on maintaining their interest and improving the quality of their work.
114. Management of history is good overall. The school's policy for history has been reviewed to incorporate the latest curriculum guidance and precise programmes of work now assist all teachers in their annual planning. An assessment of the standard work covered and procedures to assess the level of attainment for every pupil have just been introduced in an effort to further improve standards. However, no time is yet provided for the co-ordinator to assess the quality of teaching throughout the school, particularly in the infant classes, where less work of a lower

standard is produced. Resources are satisfactory and the curriculum is enhanced by some trips to places of historical interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are broadly in line with national expectations by the age of seven and generally above by the age of eleven, although there is one area of weakness caused by a shortage of resources. Pupils do not have the equipment to monitor events or use programmable toys. Apart from this, the improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged below the national expectation, has been very good. Since then the National Curriculum has become far more demanding. Teachers have developed their subject knowledge considerably and this, together with improved resources, has made a very good contribution to the increased standards. Evidence is based on discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of work samples, discrete information and communication technology lessons and observations of computers and other resources being used in other lessons.
116. By the age of seven, pupils use a mouse with confidence, lifting, dragging and dropping accurately. They use a keyboard well. They know how to print. They use a variety of programs with confidence, and understand how to use icons and drop-down menus. They use a tape recorder to play stories, and understand how to pause and rewind. They know that information can be conveyed in different ways. No opportunities have been provided for pupils to learn how to use a programmable toy due to a lack of resources, although one has recently been purchased.
117. By the age of eleven, pupils create a newspaper using width settings, font sizes and drop-in pictures for effect on those who read it. They send e-mails and research information through the Internet. They use a multimedia system to make a presentation incorporating moving pictures and sound. They are competent using data-handling programs, including the use of formulae to calculate rapidly on a spreadsheet and have a suitable understanding of the place of information technology in society. They take photographs using a digital camera. They lack skills using control equipment. Information and communication technology is used well to support mathematics, English, science, history, geography, design and technology, art and activities for children in the reception class. Little evidence was available during the inspection of its use in music and religious education. Older pupils set up the audio system selecting different tracks for assembly.
118. Teaching is very good. In the two discrete lessons seen for pupils aged eight to eleven teaching was very good, and the one lesson for younger pupils was good. In teachers' planning and in lessons there is a good balance between the development of specific information and communication technology skills and its use to support other subjects. For example, in a lesson to introduce pupils to a new drawing package and to experiment with the tools, the task was to create a picture representing the orbit of the earth and moon supporting work in a previous science lesson. Discrete lessons to introduce pupils to specific skills and tasks are well planned and organised. The pupils respond enthusiastically to the interesting activities provided. Even when there was some disruption from pupils with particular behavioural difficulties in one lesson, the class listened to explanations. Pupils work well at computers in pairs or small groups and help each other. It is difficult for pupils to see the small demonstration screens even though classes are

small. Hence some instructions are not clearly understood by all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress alongside other pupils in the class.

119. Some aspects of co-ordination are very good. Much work has been done to ensure that all teachers are aware of the value of different programs in supporting National Curriculum subjects and identify weaknesses in resources. However, the role of the co-ordinator in evaluating standards in each year group, in ensuring that there is consistency in assessment of attainment and in monitoring teaching, has yet to be developed. Suitable security systems are in place for the protection of pupils using the Internet. Government funding has been used well to improve the opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology. This is improving standards. The school anticipates improving resources still further.

MUSIC

120. In the few activities seen during the inspection, pupils did not attain the standards expected for their age. There has been deterioration since the previous inspection when standards were judged satisfactory.
121. By the age of seven, the pupils sing enthusiastically, adding actions to the songs. They know a suitable range of hymns by heart. However, pupils just beginning Year 3 have difficulty echoing simple rhythm patterns, or maintaining a pulse to a tune with a clearly identifiable beat. They also do not sing in tune. By the age of eleven, singing is poor. A small number of older girls sing tunefully and enthusiastically, but boys avoid singing if possible and the enthusiasm for singing has gone. Pupils just beginning Year 6 have very little knowledge of composers, of styles of music or of musical notation.
122. No judgement can be made on teaching. In the one lesson seen and in the hymn practice for younger pupils, teaching was satisfactory. In a hymn practice for older pupils there was no development of singing skills although teachers tried hard to generate enthusiasm. Planning shows that activities that include composition and performance and musical appreciation are provided. The unsatisfactory standards attained are due mainly to the lack of expertise of teachers and their dependence on taped music as accompaniment to musical activities. As a first stage in improving the standards in music the school has rightly decided to develop dance and drama to improve rhythm and performance. No evidence was found of pupils using information and communication technology to support learning in music. Assessment of attainment is not satisfactory.
123. Excellent violin tuition is provided in the school for pupils who wish to play. Co-ordination of the subject is limited by the lack of subject expertise in the school. The co-ordinator is fully aware of the low standards, but other areas for development have necessarily taken priority over increasing the musical expertise of teachers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain the standards expected. This is similar to the findings in the previous inspection where they were reported as 'generally sound'. The two classroom support assistants play a vital role in enabling all pupils to take a full part in, and enjoy games, gymnastics and dance, as well as, for the older pupils, athletics. However, no swimming tuition is currently provided due to a major structural fault at the nearest pool. Due to this

circumstance, which is beyond the school's control, statutory requirements in the physical education curriculum are not met. Previously, standards in swimming were good with all Year 6 pupils achieving the expected level.

125. By the age of seven, pupils know the importance of warming up before exercise and the effects of this on their heart and muscles. Year 1 pupils show a good awareness of space, running, skipping and jumping around the hall. They move with confidence, demonstrating control and co-ordination. Balance and control are further developed in Year 2 as pupils take part in dance, showing emotions of anger and excitement through their movements when responding to the words of a poem read by their teacher. By eleven, pupils successfully develop ball skills, catching, throwing and passing, and showing satisfactory levels of control. They also develop tackling and marking skills to be used in games such as netball or basketball. This enables them to play with a good degree of tactical understanding. They have a good sporting approach to team games and are supportive of one another's efforts. Pupils in Year 5 learn how to follow rules and show good skills when dodging and feinting to avoid an opponent with the ball. However, on occasions, the activities are practised in whole-class groups and this limits individual pupil's involvement.
126. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In some of the lessons seen, the teaching was of a higher quality and as a result, high standards were achieved. Year 6 pupils, for example, quickly mastered the chest and shoulder passing, adding pivot and brake movements when developing netball skills. In Year 1, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm successfully encouraged pupils to do their best by providing activities which were challenging, imaginative and enjoyable. Planning files show that all teachers have a good understanding of the subject and of how pupils learn and develop their skills. This is in part due to the school's involvement in a Sport Action Zone, based on Wear Valley District Council. Teachers' expertise benefited from specialist teaching support and training in gymnastics. Pupils did well in a local competition as a result. The next focus is to be on dance. The quality of planning allows for a steady development of skills as the pupils move from class to class. Teachers have high, but realistic, expectations of pupils and are very sensitive in encouraging those whose skills need more developing to improve. This sensitivity to people's feelings is reflected by the pupils, who are supportive of one another and who have good attitudes towards the subject. When teaching is enthusiastic, it encourages the pupils to be enthusiastic about improving their skills and understanding, as it did in the mixed reception and Year 1 class lesson. The quality of teaching is well maintained by regular in-service training for teachers. This is particularly effective as it includes support staff as well as the teachers. Assessment of pupils' attainment is undertaken at the end of each teaching unit, but shows no consistency of approach from class to class, making it difficult to accurately track individual pupil's progress.
127. The management of the subject is satisfactory, overall. The curriculum guidance for teachers is informative and kept up-to-date. However, few opportunities are provided for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching during lessons. The grounds are generous in size with adequate hard play areas to supplement the grass. The resources provided are good and well cared for. Taped music is used effectively in dance lessons but the school does not have its own video camera to record pupils' actions for a more detailed evaluation of their performance. Additional sporting activities such as football, netball and cricket outside of normal school time broadens pupils' experiences and helps to raise their self-esteem as well as improving their competitiveness and games skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. During the previous inspection, standards were judged to be in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The syllabus has recently been changed and, due to unavoidable circumstances, teachers have not yet received support training for the new syllabus. There are weaknesses in the expertise of some teachers in the knowledge of religions. Standards are broadly in line with those required by the age of seven but below those required in the new syllabus by the age of eleven. Much work is done to help pupils of all ages explore their own attitudes and those of others in all aspects of school life and this is a strength in the teaching of religious education throughout the school.
129. By the age of seven, pupils understand that different people have different beliefs and associated customs. For example, they know that for Jewish people the Sabbath begins on Friday evening with a special meal, and that the Sabbath is a day which celebrates God's day of rest after creating the world. They know that beliefs can cause changes in attitudes, for example the change to a very simple lifestyle that occurs when someone becomes a Buddhist monk. They respond well to the concerns of others and express opinions about different beliefs without ridiculing them.
130. By the age of eleven, pupils ask questions about matters of right and wrong and demonstrate an understanding of moral and religious issues. This was very evident in their response to world events following the destruction of the World Trade Centre in the United States. Pupils have learned many facts about Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity, associated places of worship and some key festivals but forget them quickly and do not know key beliefs or easily compare and contrast them. However, they do have a genuine respect for other people's beliefs. This was clear in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 when they were discussing the Hindu god Ganesha, his attributes and associated symbols.
131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching about the Hindu religion in Years 3 and 4 is good. This is due to the very good subject knowledge of the teacher about the faith and the excellent array of resources used to stimulate pupils' interest and make them think. In this lesson they made good progress because they enjoyed learning. They were fascinated by the teacher's description of her experience when going to look at a statue of a god on a visit to India, and understood the importance of respecting places that are holy to other people. This made a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the lessons that were satisfactory overall, weaknesses included the lack of subject expertise and insecurity of the teachers. This led to a slow pace and some incorrect information being passed on to pupils. In the scrutiny of work it was obvious that too much use is made of simple worksheets that lack challenge and that insufficient use is made of literacy skills or information and communication technology skills to support learning.
132. The co-ordinator's role is not fully developed. The new syllabus is incorporated into teachers' planning and is being implemented. However there is no monitoring of standards or teaching and no consistent assessment of attainment. The school has a good supply of resources to support learning.