

INSPECTION REPORT

BENFIELDSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackhill, Consett

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114045

Headteacher: Mr. D. Kerry

Reporting inspector: Graham Carter
4720

Dates of inspection: 29 April – 2 May 2002

Inspection number: 195933

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moorlands
Blackhill
Consett
Durham

Postcode: DH8 0JX

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. K. English

Date of previous inspection: 30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4720	Graham Carter	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievement</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
19740	Allan Smith	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Religious education</p>	
24805	Alison Cogher	Team inspector	<p>Foundation Stage</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Physical education</p>	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
10120	Philip Crookall	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Art</p> <p>Design and technology</p>	
29688	Mike Brammer	Team inspector	<p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Science</p> <p>History</p>	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
31175	Arthur Allison	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Benfieldside Primary School is co-educational, with 372 pupils on roll, including 39 full-time equivalent places in the nursery, and is of larger than average size. It is located close to the centre of Consett, on a large housing estate. The school's catchment area draws mainly from Blackhill, but also from Benfieldside, Bridgehill and Shotley Bridge. The attainment of pupils entering the nursery is broadly average, but varies from year to year. A national survey indicated that more than 60 per cent of the school's intake live in relatively poor housing conditions and suggests that the free meal entitlement of pupils is close to 40 per cent, which is higher than the figure estimated from pupils taking school meals, which is around 21 per cent, close to the national average. Over recent years, pupils have come from families living in increasingly poorer economic conditions. Many higher-attaining pupils transfer, at about the age of nine, to other schools in a neighbouring local authority. Similarly, a significant proportion of children complete their nursery year, and are then transferred to other primary schools which do not provide nursery education. A significant minority of pupils live in temporary accommodation and, as a consequence, remain on the school's roll for relatively short periods of time. During the last four years, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs has increased, particularly in the junior age range, and is now around 30 per cent, including those with statements of educational need. This is a higher proportion than the national average. Currently there are no pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language, and no pupils of ethnic backgrounds other than white.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Most pupils achieve well, despite the high proportion moving to other schools before reaching Year 6, and the significant number of pupils who move into the school for relatively short periods of time. This is because of the good quality of teaching, effective assessment procedures and very good relationships, which help the pupils to learn well. The quality of management is good, and the headteacher provides strong leadership. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching in the infant and junior classes is good and helps pupils to achieve well
- The quality of leadership and management is good and the headteacher provides strong leadership
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils and relationships in the school are very good. They contribute to the good quality of teaching and learning
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good

What could be improved

- Attainment in English, particularly that of boys, and mathematics throughout the school
- The quality of teaching and learning for reception and nursery children by:
 - using the results of assessments to plan tasks for children with greater precision;
 - strengthening the quality and quantity of information provided to parents about the curriculum and children's progress
- The quality of accommodation and quantity of resources for information and communication technology (ICT)

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1997, the school has made good improvements. The quality of teaching has improved, despite the difficulties due to the constant movement of groups of pupils described below. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved, and unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced. Although standards achieved by 11-year-olds have fallen in the last few years, this does not reflect the quality of teaching and learning. It is largely due to the increase in movement of pupils into and out of the school in the junior stage, resulting in an increase in the proportion of pupils with lower attainment and special educational needs. The school has made good improvements in those areas identified as key issues in the previous report. The quality of teaching in a Year 4 class has greatly improved. Short-term planning is good, and contributes to the good teaching and learning. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. Assessment procedures and the use made of assessment information are effective overall, but good in English, mathematics and science.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	E	D
mathematics	E	E	E	E
science	C	D	C	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the 2001 national assessments, the standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven were above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards in writing were well above average and, in reading and mathematics, were above average. Over four years, standards in reading and mathematics have fallen slightly, whilst in writing they have remained fairly constant. Girls have outperformed boys during this time, most significantly in reading. In the assessments for 11-year-olds, attainment was average in science and well below average in English and mathematics. During four years, there has been little improvement in these results, except in science, and girls have consistently outperformed boys. The differences in performance, between pupils at seven and 11, are mainly due to the changing groups of pupils, particularly in the junior classes, and the greater number of pupils with special educational needs. The school has taken measures to ameliorate these effects, particularly by introducing a good system of assessment in English, mathematics and science, which is already proving beneficial. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is below the national average in English and mathematics and about average in science at the age of 11. At age seven, it is about average in mathematics and science and below average in English. Nevertheless, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They show very good interest in their work and contribute well to class discussions and group work.

The attainment in all other subjects, including areas of learning for pupils in the nursery and reception classes, is at least in line with the nationally expected level. However, in religious education, art and design and physical education in the infant classes, attainment is above the nationally expected level. The school has set itself realistic and challenging targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and is on course to achieve these next year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils consistently show very positive attitudes and much enthusiasm for work
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have high levels of self-discipline, treating equipment and accommodation with respect
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to each other and adults and fulfil their responsibilities around school very well
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average.

Pupils act as monitors and take their responsibilities very seriously. They show great care for younger pupils in the playground and believe that it makes a good contribution to behaviour and safety.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good, but is more consistently good in the infant and junior classes. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The teaching of English and mathematics is good in most lessons. Where teaching is less successful, it is usually because the tasks for individuals or groups of pupils do not challenge them sufficiently or match their levels of attainment well. Most lessons are well planned, which ensures that the curriculum is effectively covered. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to clarify pupils' understanding and this helps pupils to achieve well. Classroom management is good and, as a result, pupils act responsibly in lessons. Teachers make good use of resources to make lessons interesting and to actively involve pupils in tasks. Classroom assistants are well briefed and make a good contribution to lessons. They give good support to pupils with special educational needs and help pupils to develop their language skills in many lessons. Sound opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, such as science, geography, history and religious education; numeracy skills are consolidated in such subjects as science and design and technology. Information and communication technology is not sufficiently used by teachers in many subjects, due to the limited number of computers available.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum coverage gives breadth and balance, and good use is made of visits and visitors to school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported in class and, when withdrawn to smaller teaching groups, they learn well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual,	Good. Lessons and assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pupils show care and respect for each other

moral, social and cultural development	and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils act responsibly in all aspects of their work.
Aspect	Comment
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. This is a caring school, where behaviour is promoted and monitored well.

The school uses good opportunities to make links between subjects and to make learning interesting. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities are good. Visits arranged by staff enhance pupils' learning well, for example when studying Tudor houses. Visitors to school also enliven the learning experiences of pupils. Good use is made of a residential visit for older pupils, which contributes greatly to their social and cultural development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by his senior management team (SMT) and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Governors and SMT have a good grasp of strengths and weaknesses based on successful monitoring and evaluation procedures.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants have been used well to improve the levels of support by classroom assistants for lower-attaining pupils.

The number and qualifications of staff are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. Although accommodation and learning resources for most subjects are at least satisfactory, they are unsatisfactory for ICT. The governors are achieving good value from their spending on services and resources for the school. The school gives good value for money.

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 make good progress. • Pupils behave well in school. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school is approachable about problems. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school helps pupils to mature. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regularity and amount of work pupils do at home. • The school working more closely with parents. • Information about how pupils are progressing. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspection evidence supports the positive views expressed by parents but not the concerns about extra-curricular activities and homework. The levels of extra-curricular activities are similar to those found in many similar schools. Homework is regular and appropriate to pupils' learning. However, inspection

evidence indicates that the provision of meetings and the quality of written information for the parents of nursery and reception class pupils are unsatisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery class with attainment broadly in line with that expected for their age, although this attainment varies year on year. Girls' attainment, on entry, has been consistently higher in most areas of learning. The attainment of pupils by the end of the reception year is at the expected level, and a majority of children are on course to achieve their early learning goals. However, the attainment of boys is often below that of girls in personal and social development, language development, and mathematical development. Although the achievement of pupils in these areas is satisfactory, it could be improved if teachers had clearer objectives for what they expected individuals and groups of children to achieve, particularly in those activities which are not supported by adults.
2. Since the time of the last inspection, standards achieved by Year 2 pupils have been broadly maintained in reading and mathematics, whilst in writing they have been raised. In the 2001 statutory assessments, the attainment of pupils was above the national average in writing and broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the attainment of pupils was well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. Over a four-year period, the levels of improvement in writing and mathematics were similar to the national trend but in reading they were below. Teachers' assessments in science indicated that pupils' attainment was broadly in line with the national average and this is reflected in the inspection evidence. The attainment of boys in reading and mathematics was significantly below that of girls but there was little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in writing. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is broadly average in mathematics and science but below average in English. These observations are consistent with the school's prediction of performance in the forthcoming statutory assessments. The differences in attainment between inspection evidence and statutory assessments reflect the significant variations in cohorts of pupils and the increase in the number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register. The combination of these factors make year on year comparisons difficult.
3. The standards achieved by Year 6 pupils do not reflect the attainment of pupils in Year 2, and the standards reported at the time of the last inspection have not been maintained. In the 2001 statutory tests, the attainment of pupils was well below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. When compared to similar schools, attainment is above average in science, below average in English and well below average in mathematics. In comparison with girls, the performance of boys has been consistently lower in all subjects, but particularly so in English. There are two important reasons why the assessment results of the oldest pupils do not reflect those of Year 2 pupils. A large proportion of higher-attaining pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 and transfer to a middle school whose pupils progress to a popular high school in a neighbouring local authority. These pupils are frequently replaced, in Years 5 and 6, by pupils living in temporary accommodation, frequently of lower attainment, who remain on the school's attendance register for relatively short periods of time before they move on to other schools. Also, the number of pupils with special educational needs has increased significantly. The school has taken decisive measures in trying to reduce the impact of these effects, including the introduction of good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science and well-managed

support for pupils with special educational needs. Inspection evidence of standards achieved in lessons indicates higher attainment than indicated by the statutory assessments, which is probably attributable to the positive effects of good teaching and the impact of the effective measures employed by the school. The school sets itself challenging targets to raise attainment in English and mathematics. Although these were not quite achieved in 2001, there are indications that they could be achieved successfully in 2002.

4. By the age of seven, most pupils can follow instructions well and talk about stories they have read, but have more difficulty in responding to questions in more than a few words. They have average reading skills and, with encouragement from classroom assistants and teachers, lower-attaining pupils enjoy the challenge of reading. Although pupils write for a variety of purposes, many do not use punctuation effectively. By the age of 11, pupils listen well and generally speak confidently. Reading is a major weakness, despite the steps taken by the school to improve the quality and quantity of reading books, particularly those targeted at boys. Pupils write for different purposes in such subjects as science, history and religious education, but do not often spell or punctuate their work appropriately. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in acquiring literacy skills, and achieve well in many lessons.
5. In mathematics, seven-year-old pupils have average mental skills. All pupils can recognise and name numbers to 100 and higher-attaining pupils can do subtractions, such as 20 from 90. They all recognise simple shapes and record money accurately up to £5.00. By the age of 11, pupils know their multiplication tables well, and higher-attaining pupils can use effective methods to do multiplication, division, subtraction and addition. They are less confident when handling data, and have limited knowledge and understanding of shape and space. Pupils use their numeracy skills effectively to handle data in science, assist their work on Tudor houses in design and technology, and when drawing temperature graphs in geography. Most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in lessons.
6. Pupils make similarly good progress and achieve well in science lessons. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of plants and how they grow, and can identify well key organs and limbs of the human body. They know how magnets work and can complete simple investigations on materials. By the age of 11, pupils can explain which variable needs to be altered in order to maintain a fair test, when investigating germination and explain well the results of their investigations into heat insulators.
7. The attainment in all other subjects, including areas of learning for pupils in the nursery and reception classes, is at least in line with the nationally expected level. However, in religious education, art and design and physical education in the infant classes, attainment is above the nationally expected level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The school has worked very hard to maintain, and further improve, the positive aspects of pupils' attitude and behaviour reported at the time of the last inspection. All of these aspects are now very good, apart from attendance which is satisfactory. The school has a welcoming and caring atmosphere, which nurtures very good relationships.

9. Pupils settle very quickly into the school's routines. They have an enthusiastic and willing approach to learning from the time they enter the nursery. Pupils are well motivated and respond very well to the positive praise and encouragement offered by staff as a part of the school's positive behaviour policy. The pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school and respond very well to teachers and other adults. In a very few, isolated instances, a minority of pupils find difficulty in sustaining their attention and motivation. These are in lessons where the level of challenge does not meet the needs of all learners. Pupils are eager to share their work with staff, other pupils and visitors. For example, in a Year 5 religious education lesson, several pupils eagerly read out their efforts to the rest of the class.
10. Pupils' behaviour is mainly very good. They respond appropriately to teachers' requests in class and, when working in small groups, they do so responsibly and help one another. Pupils show great care for others. For example, during lunchtimes, two pupils gave continual assistance to a pupil who was on crutches. No aggressive or over boisterous behaviour was observed during the inspection. Typically, pupils are careful not to run too fast on the sloping playground, where their momentum might be difficult to control. In discussions with pupils, they said that they felt safe during playtimes and lunch breaks and none expressed any concerns. There have been two temporary exclusions from the school in recent times and these were for the same pupil for unacceptable behaviour. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied by all staff and helps to maintain a very orderly environment. A 'rap' poem, written by Year 6 pupils, succinctly captures their opinions of expected behaviour:

"We have rules we must obey
To keep us right at work and play
We must always do our best
When we get home then we can rest
We must not hit or kick or punch
We must not steal each other's lunch."

11. The personal development of pupils is good throughout the school. They are given greater responsibilities as they get older and are very keen to accept these. They have regular duties as classroom helpers, register monitors, door monitors, prefects, and playground 'buddies' with younger children. The school is very free from litter and graffiti, and this is due, in part, to the pupils' respect for the building and grounds. Relationships between pupils and between all adults and pupils are very good.
12. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. However, the school is aware that it has been below this level and is constantly seeking ways to improve the situation. For example, they are considering how to make earlier contact with parents, and at the same time make them more aware of the effect that good attendance and punctuality has upon their children's learning. However, the overwhelming majority of pupils are very eager to come to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching is good, but it is not consistently good across the whole school. In infant and junior classes, teaching is predominantly good and sometimes very good; in the nursery and reception classes, it is mainly satisfactory, with some occasionally good teaching. Fifty per cent of lessons were of good quality and a further eight per cent were very good. Forty per cent of lessons were satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the proportion of good and very good teaching has increased and the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has decreased

significantly. This improvement is all the more notable, given the high rate of turnover of pupils, particularly in the junior years, and the increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

14. Good and very good teaching is characterised by some key features. Teachers frequently use their good subject knowledge well to test pupils' understanding or to describe clearly how pupils can improve their knowledge or skills. In a good Year 6 physical education lesson, the teacher used her subject knowledge to improve throwing techniques by confident demonstration and timely intervention when working with smaller groups. In another very good Year 4 history lesson about long ships, the teacher used her knowledge of the Viking period very effectively when discussing life on board such vessels. Most teachers assess pupils' work effectively, and use the information gained to plan well so that planning is a strong feature in most lessons. This marks a positive development since the previous inspection, when planning was identified as an issue for improvement. Teachers manage their pupils very well. In the best lessons, expectations of behaviour and achievement are made clear and, as a consequence, pupils work responsibly and remain on task for long periods of time.
15. Most teachers use resources well. For example, in many mathematics lessons teachers make good use of appropriate equipment including pupils' whiteboards to involve pupils more actively in the introductory sessions. Classroom assistants are well briefed to support pupils with special educational needs. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson involving change from spending up to £5, the classroom assistant worked very effectively with a group of lower-attaining pupils, emphasising appropriately key language and questioning pupils' understanding. In a Year 1 science lesson, two volunteers provided very good help with pupils' language development in a lesson related to senses. This enabled the pupils to complete their tasks, contribute to the plenary discussion with more confidence, and achieve well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and individual education plans are relevant to the pupils' needs. The organisation of pupils into groups of different attainment (sets) for English and mathematics is successful in helping teachers to match work to the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs. Homework is used effectively by a majority of teachers to reinforce children's learning.
16. In the least successful lessons, teaching often lacks sufficient pace and lesson objectives for particular groups lack precision, so that learning outcomes are uncertain. In the nursery and reception classes pupils' achievement is sometimes restricted because teachers do not make sufficiently clear to children what they are expected to achieve. As a result, some children, particularly boys, are insufficiently challenged and soon lose interest. Teachers promote literacy skills effectively in such subjects as science, religious education and history, and encourage pupils to develop their numeracy skills in science and design and technology. Although satisfactory use is made of ICT in mathematics and geography, its use in other subjects is limited because of the withdrawal of computers in the afternoons into a central teaching area for ICT skill lessons.
17. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science and all other subjects, except information and communication technology, physical education and design and technology. In these subjects, teaching is satisfactory.

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

18. The curriculum is adequately broad and balanced. It covers all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school fulfils its stated aims in providing a welcoming, secure and caring environment in which all pupils have the opportunity to learn and succeed. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, especially in providing schemes of work, for all subjects, to support teachers' planning. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes has been implemented effectively. Children receive a satisfactory grounding that prepares them for their later learning.
19. The school has a sound framework for planning the curriculum, so that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are met. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively, and are improving pupils' basic skills. Work in the different sets for literacy and numeracy, for pupils in Years 2 to 6, is carefully matched to specific targets for each group of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs. In many other subjects, schemes of work draw on guidelines from the National Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and the school is in the process of evaluating these. Physical education is based on an appropriate combination of the local authority and national 'Top Sport' guidelines. The school successfully uses opportunities to exploit cross-curricular links between subjects but the use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
20. The curriculum is further enhanced by a good range of educational visits, visiting experts and specialist tuition. For example, specialist instructors regularly teach pupils to play the cello, violin and clarinet. Visitors include the local vicar who takes assemblies and experienced sports coaches who lead well-organised activities in physical education. Visits to local places of interest further support pupils' learning. For example, Year 2 pupils visit Pockerley Manor to support their knowledge and understanding of the Tudor period. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities which enhance pupils' learning. School clubs are regularly organised by teachers, some with the help of outside experts. They include football, rugby, cricket, athletics, a computer and design technology club, and an art club. The 'Thursday Club' successfully targets pupils who have social or behavioural problems or difficulties with motor control by offering a range of enjoyable and, sometimes, challenging group activities. The school choir attracts enthusiastic members and performs regularly for school productions and at local festivals.
21. The school has good links with the local secondary schools and pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary education. There are good links with the community. For example, pupils benefit from working with students from the local college in physical education lessons. Parents and trained, older members of the community, work regularly in school to support pupils in their learning. In turn, pupils contribute to their local community by raising money for local and national charities, and performing musical productions. Through their collection of paper which is exchanged for trees to plant in the school grounds, pupils develop a keen understanding of environmental issues, such as sustaining forests and levels of oxygen and water on the planet.
22. Personal, social and health education is appropriately incorporated into lessons and is fully supported by many activities. During lessons and assemblies, pupils talk about their feelings, discuss topical issues and aspects of health education. The school is in

the process of reviewing the current provision for drugs awareness, with the intention that it should be given greater prominence. Sex education is covered through science, with additional input for Year 6 pupils from the school's visiting nurse which is discussed appropriately with parents.

23. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. The school promotes spiritual development in assemblies through well-chosen music that accompanies the entry of pupils. The planned programme of themes, often delivered by the ministers of local churches, recognises the special occasions celebrated by the main faith groups in this country. Pupils celebrate such occasions through their enthusiastic singing of popular hymns or, for example, through a Buddhist chant, as they share with members of that faith a prayer stating that all people are essentially the same, despite perceived differences. Teachers capture a spiritual moment in Year 1, when the deputy headteacher, dressed as Florence Nightingale, magically visits them to answer questions about her life.
24. Moral development is promoted well. The simple values of right and wrong are taught through assembly themes, in religious education lessons, and in other lessons such as physical education when the need to share and practise fair play are stressed. The school also uses a teaching method known as 'circle time,' in which feelings towards others are explored and considered. All classes display classroom rules prominently, and these are regularly discussed with pupils. Around the school, there are posters that reinforce messages of sharing and care for the self and others. Adults provide very good role models as when they consistently join in prayers and hymn singing in assemblies. This is reflected in pupils' very good behaviour when, for example, they open doors for their visitors or make them feel at home by asking them how they are enjoying the school dinners.
25. Through assemblies and elsewhere, pupils are successfully taught to view themselves as part of a community. As a result, they show consideration for each other. The school is a place in which social awareness is well developed. Pupils learn to care for each other through the responsibilities they carry, such as acting as stair or door monitors. The 'buddies' scheme helps pupils to develop an awareness of bullying and of ways to combat it. There is a strong sense of 'valuing others' in the charity work that pupils undertake and in their visits to residential homes to entertain older people. Age Concern representatives visit the school regularly and pupils know about their work and its value in the community. They take part in a range of competitions with other schools, which brings them into regular contact with their peers.
26. Cultural development is successfully promoted. This is achieved well through subjects such as English, music, art and religious education. In art, pupils work with local artists to produce a range of work. In literacy, they learn poems from many different countries. In religious education, they learn about India and the impact of Mother Theresa on the life of the poor. In assemblies, pupils regularly celebrate the festivals of different cultures. In one assembly a minister wore a stole that was made in Central America and this prompted discussion about conditions suffered by the poor in that land.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. At the last inspection, there were some concerns about the quality of supervision in the playground and the management of pupils' behaviour in the dining room. The system of assessment in the infant and junior departments was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has reviewed and improved these issues so that they are now at least satisfactory. The procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour, promoting and

supporting pupils' personal development are good, and the provision and use of assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall.

28. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' needs and show great understanding and consideration towards them. This quality of care for pupils, the very good relationships, and the great confidence that pupils have in their teachers, all contribute well to the monitoring and support of personal development. The support and guidance for pupils who have special educational needs are good. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and show genuine concern for their welfare.
29. The induction procedures for pupils are adequate, so that they soon become aware of expectations and routines. There are good links with the two main secondary schools that ensure that pupils have a smooth transition to the next stage of their education. Good procedures for child protection are in place, and all staff are well informed about them. The member of staff with responsibility for child protection is well trained. There are plans for similar training for all teaching staff in the near future. Good relationships with outside support agencies benefit individual pupils and the whole school. There are suitably trained first aiders. There is an agreed health and safety policy, and risk assessment procedures are conducted regularly by suitable personnel.
30. The school achieves very good levels of behaviour and provides rewards for this and other personal achievements. There is a weekly celebration assembly during which pupils are presented with the headteacher's awards certificates which recognise achievement and endeavour in any aspect of school life. Good procedures are in place for the elimination of bullying and oppressive behaviour. Staff strive hard, and are successful, in raising pupils' self-esteem by emphasising pupils' achievements and their value to the school.
31. Attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored. The school is making sustained efforts to improve its broadly average attendance rates. Pupils with known attendance or lateness problems are carefully monitored and the school has a system to follow through any unexplained absence or regular lateness. The educational welfare officer reviews the attendance and punctuality rates during his routine visits to the school.
32. Procedures for monitoring academic progress, for assessing pupils' progress and for using this information are satisfactory, overall, and are very good for infant and junior aged pupils in English and mathematics and science. The use made of assessment for planning is unsatisfactory in the nursery and reception classes. The school has responded well to the particular needs of the high proportion of pupils who enter the school part-way through the junior stage and who frequently spend relatively short time on the school's roll. An on-line assessment procedure, which can be quickly administered to provide a rapid assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, is used in English, mathematics and science. This enables teachers to plan appropriate work for such pupils at very short notice and to allocate them to appropriate teaching sets in English and mathematics. The school also uses other national tests to monitor the progress of pupils in reading and mathematics, including those provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in Years 3, 4 and 5. The collected assessment information is used effectively to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school and to provide up-to-date information for parents in written reports. The success of the school's improved procedures has significantly contributed to the good quality of teaching and learning observed in infant and junior classes.

33. Assessment procedures, including the use of assessment, in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, are not yet well developed in all subjects, although the school is about to use its on-line system to assess the strengths and weaknesses in ICT. In other subjects, teachers allocate annual National Curriculum levels to pupils, based on their records. Subject co-ordinators are aware of the need to further develop assessment in order to raise standards. In the nursery and reception classes, formal tests are regularly used to assess pupils' needs but information is not consistently used to plan activities which match pupils' abilities and needs. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is well monitored and individual programmes are reviewed carefully on the basis of these assessments.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Parents receive regular newsletters about school activities. These include a half-termly information sheet ('Helping Hand') for each year group, in both infant and junior classes, which inform parents of what their children will be taught. However, in the nursery and reception classes, information of this type is insufficient to permit parents to provide effective support to children at home. There is a similar situation with pupils' annual reports for parents. In infant and junior classes, the reports are generally satisfactory. However, the school does not issue any formal, written reports in the nursery. The reports for reception pupils are insufficiently detailed about what they can and cannot do. Neither do they provide sufficient information on future targets to help parents to support their children at home. The school's 'open door' policy encourages parents to enquire about their children's progress but this is not always a suitable opportunity for detailed and confidential discussions, especially for those who are employed parents. The school reminds parents of pupils with special educational needs about review meetings, and there is ready access for them if they have concerns and wish to discuss pupils' progress and planning for their future needs.
35. The school intends to develop parental and school links, aimed at greater parental involvement. The 'Friends Association' has been replaced with a system of asking parents for help with specific social and fund-raising events which is working satisfactorily. There is a core of regular parental and other volunteer helpers in school and their efforts are greatly valued. For example, one retired volunteer, who makes a regular and valuable contribution, described the school as 'a warm and friendly place to be'.
36. Views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and on the questionnaire show that parents, generally, are satisfied. These views broadly reflect those of parents at the time of the last inspection. Responses indicate that pupils like coming to school; parents believe that pupils make good progress, that behaviour is good, that teaching is good and that pupils are expected to work hard. A small, but significant, number expressed concerns about the number of extra-curricular activities, how well the school works with parents, how well they are kept informed by the school and the level of work expected to be done at home. Inspection evidence supports all the positive views expressed by parents but not the concerns about extra-curricular activities, homework or the school's attempts to work in harmony with parents. The levels of extra-curricular activities are similar to those found in many similar schools. Homework is regular and appropriate to pupils' learning. However, inspectors support parents' concerns about the levels of information that the school is currently supplying to parents in the nursery and reception classes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the overall quality of leadership and management is good. A new senior management team (SMT) has recently been established, and its five members work well together to promote school policy and provide support and guidance for other, newer and less experienced teachers. Three members of this team have established roles as co-ordinators of teams of teachers in the nursery and reception years, Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 to 6. This helps to maintain an effective, daily flow of information, and promotes a consistent approach to curriculum and lesson planning for pupils of different ages. The very recently appointed deputy headteacher is already providing valuable guidance to less experienced colleagues through her classroom support, mentoring role, and contribution to SMT meetings. For those subjects with curriculum leaders they provide good support to colleagues and monitor curriculum planning well. They develop a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects by completing yearly audits which contribute to the school development plan.
38. A programme of classroom monitoring, introduced by the headteacher, has greatly helped to achieve improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. This is now being strengthened by members of the SMT, when they, as team leaders, monitor the quality of teaching as part of the process of the national 'performance management' initiative. Since his appointment two years ago, the headteacher has made good progress in minimising the profound effects of many pupils leaving the school part-way through their schooling and being replaced by others who, sometimes, remain for only short periods of time. This has been tackled, in part, by introducing a very effective system of Internet-based assessment in English, mathematics and science for pupils who are admitted to the school at short notice. This helps to provide information quickly about learning strengths and weaknesses which, in turn, helps teachers to plan and track pupils' progress more effectively in these subjects.
39. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities efficiently and makes a sound contribution to the direction of the school. The members are very well informed by regular reports from the headteacher and have a satisfactory grasp of the major strengths and weaknesses of the school, such as the provision for pupils with special educational needs and the need for a dedicated computer suite. They use this knowledge well when they agree targets for the school development plan and pupil attainment. Governors have responded well to the difficulties recently caused by teacher vacancies and have worked in close co-operation with the headteacher to fill these quickly and effectively. They have agreed new policies, resulting from the work of staff curriculum working parties and have made appropriate use of comparative data to compare the performance of the school with similar schools and to set realistic targets for improvement. Issues identified for improvement at the last inspection have been well remedied. A number of governors have taken on curriculum roles to monitor the quality of the curricular provision through school visits and discussion with co-ordinators. However, this process is not yet systematically linked to monitoring school development targets and requires further refinement. The overall provision for special educational needs is well managed. The pupils' progress is monitored. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is becoming well informed through school visits and discussions with the special educational needs co-ordinator about the level of support provided for pupils and the progress they make as a result. When pupils are withdrawn from classes for extra individual or small group support, a suitable timetable is provided to ensure that pupils' access to the curriculum, in the medium term, is not restricted.

40. The school development plan is generated from priorities identified by teachers and the senior management team, and provides important targets for raising standards and improving the level of provision. For example, the introduction of a more effective assessment system to meet the needs of the many pupils admitted to the school part-way through a school year has been clearly identified and appropriate action taken. Through appropriate targets in literacy, the school has also maintained its efforts in raising the attainment in English, particularly that of boys. Governors use the draft document appropriately for allocating available resources to agreed priorities. Performance management has been successfully introduced, and the procedures linked with the second annual phase of this process are firmly in place.
41. The school budget is well managed and monitored through the Finance Committee, with good support from the appointed LEA budget-monitoring officer. A significant carry-over of funding from the previous year's budget has been earmarked for the building works required creating a new computer suite. Special grants are well used, including those for special educational needs. For example, the government's 'Standards' fund has been carefully used to part-fund the role of co-ordinator for special educational needs, to increase the number of classroom assistants, to reduce the size of infant classes and to purchase new lap-top computers. The governors get the best value out of spending in a number of ways. They have recently consulted with parents over the purchase of playground equipment and have used the LEA's services to derive the best tender price in order to complete the school's double glazing programme. The school office staff provide good, daily administrative support for the headteacher and school staff, enabling them to work more effectively on the school's educational provision.
42. The quality of accommodation for most subjects is good, except for ICT which would greatly benefit from a dedicated computer suite for teaching ICT skills. The school has made good use of wall spaces to provide attractive, informative displays which enhance most teaching areas. In the nursery and reception area there are times when accommodation is not used effectively to minimise noise transmission for those activities that require greater attention to listening skills. Despite the recent turnover of staff, the school has sufficient, appropriately qualified, staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources are at least adequate in most subjects. However, there are insufficient computers to enable teachers to use ICT to support other subjects effectively. Given the school's slightly below average unit costs and the standards of provision which are achieved, under uniquely difficult circumstances, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. In order to improve the quality of provision the school should:

- (a) raise the levels of attainment in English, particularly that of boys, and mathematics throughout the school
(Paragraphs: 2, 3, 54, 55, 65 and 66)
- (b) improve the quality teaching and learning for reception and nursery children by:
 - using the results of assessments to plan tasks for children with greater precision;
 - strengthening the quality and quantity of information provided to parents about the curriculum and children's progress
(Paragraphs: 1, 45, 47, 48 and 50)
- (c) improve the quality of accommodation and the quantity of computers for ICT
(Paragraphs: 19, 42 and 110)

The school might also like to consider the following in order to further raise standards and improve the quality of learning

- improve the organisation and appeal of the library in order to enhance pupils' attainment in reading, particularly that of boys.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	6	36	29	2	0	0
Percentage	0	8	49	40	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	336
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20	124

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	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	24	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	16
	Girls	24	24	21
	Total	41	41	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (90)	98 (94)	88 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	24	21	24
	Total	41	38	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (92)	90 (91)	98 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
	2001	19	24	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	15
	Girls	18	13	21
	Total	26	21	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (65)	49 (50)	84 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	15	11	16
	Total	23	19	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (44)	44 (50)	60 (65)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	273
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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	142

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
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

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	2	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	2000-2001
	£
Total income	652685
Total expenditure	637003
Expenditure per pupil	1774
Balance brought forward from previous year	19933
Balance carried forward to next year	35615

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	409
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	36	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	62	3	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	59	21	3	2
The teaching is good.	40	57	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	13	50	32	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	40	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	52	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	15	53	26	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	29	49	7	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	54	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	36	15	11	15

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

44. The attainment of children entering the nursery and reception classes indicates that attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age, but varies from year to year, and within each year group of children. In particular, girls consistently attain higher levels than boys in all six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Boys achieve significantly less well in the areas of personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Since the time of the last inspection standards have been broadly maintained. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. All children have equal access to all activities throughout their time in the nursery and reception classes.
45. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory overall but it ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Teachers have a sound understanding of the curriculum and of how young children learn. Although planning has improved since the last inspection, it does not focus sufficiently on the needs of different groups of children and what they are expected to learn. As a result, a minority of children make insufficient progress. Teachers deploy nursery nurses and classroom assistants well to support children in small group work. Children are expected to behave well, act responsibly and work hard, and most children respond positively. However, in a few lessons where teachers' management of pupils is unsatisfactory, some children, and particularly a small number of boys, do not behave well. All adults provide very good role models. They work well together as a team and relationships are very good. Teachers assess children's progress effectively. However, insufficient use is made of information gained to plan activities with sufficient detail, to ensure that they meet the learning needs of all pupils. Basic skills are competently taught. For example, the introduction of a structured scheme to teach letter sounds has significantly improved children's early language development. All adults use open-ended questioning skilfully to develop children's thinking and language. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants make particularly good contributions to children's learning in this way and, in so doing, help to develop their confidence.
46. Accommodation and resources are good. Occasionally, however, noise from the nursery or the adjoining reception class causes distraction in the reception classes, and makes it difficult for children to concentrate fully on the task in hand. The outdoor play area is secure, well used and well equipped. Teachers provide interesting displays of children's work, but they are not always accompanied by text that helps pupils to ask questions and learn from them.
47. Although parents are invited to a meeting prior to the admission of their children, they are not provided with sufficient written information for future reference. Many parents talk to staff on a daily basis, to share information about their children. However, in the nursery, there are no formal procedures for parents to discuss children's progress and no written reports about their children's attainment and progress. Parents of children in the reception classes receive an end of year written report, although the quantity of information about children's progress is limited. Parents support the school by organising fund-raising events and by helping teachers in lessons. However, they lack adequate information and guidance, particularly in written form, to enable them to fully support their children's learning at home.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. Most children attain the levels expected for their age but girls make more progress than boys in developing social skills. Teachers regularly provide activities which encourage co-operative play in both the nursery and reception classes and, consequently, children make sound progress. With the support of adults, children learn to take turns, share and play together harmoniously. For example, in the nursery 'Café' adults help children to act out the roles of chefs, waiters and customers. In the reception classes adults support children as they act out the story of 'Goldilocks'. Relationships are very good. Children are well supported by teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants who take every opportunity to praise them for their effort and achievement. On a small number of occasions, when teachers do not make clear what they expect or when activities are inadequately supported by other adults, a small number of children, often boys, misbehave, spending only fleeting moments engaged in activities. On such occasions the misbehaving children spend only fleeting moments engaged in activities. However, most children develop satisfactory levels of self-control, learn to work and play together constructively and are usually very enthusiastic and keen to learn.

Communication, language and literacy

49. Most children make satisfactory progress, and the majority are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of their reception year. The attainment of boys is below the levels expected for children of their age. The quality of teaching of letter sounds is good. The use of a structured language scheme ensures that children learn well and, by the end of their reception year, most children know the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge when they are reading. Teachers help children to handle and explore books well so that, by the end of their reception year, most children understand that print carries meaning, and that the title of the book is printed on the front cover. They make satisfactory progress in reading and many can read common words and simple text. They listen attentively to a story when working with adults and most can also listen well in whole-class and small group situations. Through all activities, adults help children to broaden their vocabularies and to talk in complete sentences. Opportunities are provided for children to write freely during their role-play sessions. However, the quality of text available for children to copy and the writing equipment available often restrict children's progress.

Mathematical development

50. Whilst most girls attain the levels expected, many boys do not use number or solve problems well. In the nursery, practical activities help children to count and understand the concept of 'more' and 'less'. They learn the names of basic shapes and explore volume in the water tray. Children learn to sort and match objects, explore pattern through their creative work, and find different ways to measure through an interesting range of activities. Teachers, nursery nurses and other adults help children to learn by asking questions that emphasise and reinforce mathematical language. Children learn addition and subtraction in practical situations and when singing number rhymes. Although all children make satisfactory progress, many do not achieve as well as they could because the expected learning from activities is often not clearly defined and, as a consequence, children are insufficiently challenged. Opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics in other, less structured activities, such as the role-play area, are not fully developed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. Provision is satisfactory and most children are likely to attain the expected goals by the end of their reception year. In the nursery, the children learn appropriately through exploration and investigation but teachers do not always make sufficiently clear what specific groups of children are expected to achieve. Children do not have sufficient opportunity for problem solving through activities which are challenging. As a result, the progress made by individuals, and groups of children, is often not as good as it could be. Opportunities for children to work independently, using their senses to observe, manipulate and describe a variety of natural and man-made objects, are limited. These skills are taught effectively in more structured activities, as, for example, when children in the reception classes investigate which materials are most suitable for making a raincoat. However, children have few opportunities to select resources and techniques for themselves. Effective use is made of visits, the school grounds and immediate locality to develop children's understanding of the local environment. Children are beginning to understand what it means to live in a community and the wider world through stories and the celebration of festivals. They develop a sense of time through appropriate topics. For example, by observing a variety of teddy bears, they begin to understand the concept of time, in terms of old and new. Children learn to use everyday technology effectively through the regular operation of computers and tape recorders.

Physical development

52. Most children are likely to achieve the expected levels in this area of learning by the end of their reception year and children make satisfactory progress overall. They move confidently around the classroom and the outdoor play area. Teachers plan the use of the outdoor play area so that children can practise their skills of climbing, and moving over, around and through large apparatus. When taught in the hall, reception children learn to control their body movements when walking, marching and jumping in response to music. However, on a few occasions, the ineffective management of a small number of children who misbehave results in unsatisfactory learning for other children. During their time in the nursery and reception classes, children use a range of drawing, writing and painting equipment with increasing skill. They have access to tools from the beginning of their time in the nursery and become increasingly competent in the safe and effective use of scissors. Children use hand and eye co-ordination well when building a variety of structures, with both selected materials and commercial construction kits.

Creative development

53. Children achieve well in the nursery because planned activities allow them to express their feelings and use their imagination. Children continue to make satisfactory progress in the reception classes, although the range of activities provided is limited and, as a consequence, learning is not as good as it could be. All adults use skilful questioning to encourage children to talk about what they can see, feel and think. Children work co-operatively in role-play activities, using their imagination to act as characters in their story. A suitable range of materials is provided to enable children to express their ideas and work in two and three dimensions. For example, in the nursery, children mix white and blue paint to create a variety of shades, while children in the reception classes use collage materials to add texture to model teddy bears. Children make close observational drawings of familiar objects. They learn how to manipulate and mould malleable materials, and make models from selected materials and construction toys. Children sing a variety of songs and rhymes from memory, many of which are accompanied by actions.

ENGLISH

54. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain standards that are below the national average. Data from recent school assessments of Year 2 pupils show that this year's cohort is exceptional, in that it is expected to attain results, in national tests, that are below national averages. This is unusual because, over the last four years, pupils have achieved standards at about the national averages at the end of Year 2. Assessments of the present reception pupils indicate a return to national average standards by the end of their time in Year 2.
55. Over the past four years, Year 6 pupils have achieved test results that are below national averages. This apparent decline in standards since the time of the last inspection does not reflect the good teaching observed but is attributable to those factors associated with the loss of a significant proportion of higher-attaining pupils and the other related factors described elsewhere in this report (see paragraph 3).
56. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress in acquiring listening and speaking skills. They listen carefully to introductions to lessons and usually follow instructions well in the range of activities that they undertake in the school. Teachers provide opportunities for them to explore ideas arising from their work in the question and answer sessions that are an integral part of teaching in the school. In one Year 2 lesson, the teacher's use of a variation of 'What's My Line?' captured the pupils' interest and prompted careful questioning by them. Despite this, speaking skills, overall, remain below average and many pupils offer responses that are restricted to a few words rather than extended to sentences. Though they can relate the story or the content in the books they read, few move beyond this to offer opinions or to explain in detail why they like or dislike certain features. Their awareness of the listeners' needs or expectations is not well developed, although the school is beginning to use methods, such as drama, to tackle this problem. This was the case in a memorable history lesson, in which a teacher in the school played the part of Florence Nightingale, and pupils posed their pre-prepared questions to her. In another Year 1 lesson, a few pupils, stimulated by a taped drama programme, offered extended and thoughtful questions.
57. By the end of Year 2, the quality of pupils' reading is a relative strength, and the standards attained by pupils, excluding those with special educational needs, is about average. Teachers use reading schemes effectively to develop reading skills. Group and whole-class reading activities are used well in the literacy hour to promote reading for understanding. Those pupils who are identified as having particular difficulties with reading, including those with special educational needs, are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers listen to children read regularly, and this has a beneficial effect on their progress.
58. In Years 1 and 2, pupils tackle a good range of writing tasks. Higher-attaining pupils develop a sense of layout and content of more formal letters when they write to a charity about a lost dog. They write creatively about their dreams, but often fail to use punctuation effectively to delineate sentences, to denote pauses or to identify speech, despite being supplied with correctly punctuated opening paragraphs. Teachers encourage pupils with the use of praise, but do not always make the most of the opportunities they have when marking work to offer pupils advice about improving their writing. Lower-attaining pupils receive sound support in their writing. For example, teachers introduce stories with which pupils are familiar, as a way of building confidence. They read the stories and ask pupils to retell them. In order to stimulate the generation of apt vocabulary, they get children to add words around pictures of

characters and then write about them. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from specialist support in small groups which enables them to consolidate their learning. Nevertheless, standards in writing remain below the national average.

59. Spelling is a weakness for pupils of all ages. They make satisfactory progress in the use of punctuation, but this is also unsatisfactory throughout the school. By Year 6, for most pupils, handwriting is legible, joined up, and shows reasonable care in the formation of individual letters.
60. In Year 6, pupils listen well but the standards they achieve, in expressing ideas and speaking confidently, in a range of situations, are below average. Nevertheless, in a lesson about poetry from different cultures, they offered a range of enthusiastic and sometimes insightful responses. Similarly, lower-attaining pupils developed their own ideas about what the leopard in one poem might be experiencing and what it might be thinking. Higher-attaining pupils offered thoughtful and extended responses in a lesson in which they studied a formal letter, and were confident in identifying and describing its important features.
61. Assessments over a period of time show that boys have lower levels of attainment than girls by a significant margin. This is particularly the case in reading. In order to combat this, the school has, in the last two years, purchased books that appeal to boys. This and other measures the school may take to correct the imbalance have not yet had sufficient impact on the reading standards of 11-year-olds which are still below the national average. Teachers do not listen to older pupils read as often as they do in the infant classes. Though teachers encourage them to read, they do not intervene in their choice of books or assess the interest and enjoyment they derive from them. The library has an adequate stock of books and the school is committed to improving the quality and relevance of what it has. However, there is no identified member of staff to champion library use in the school. Year 6 pupils suggested that a display featuring 'author of the month' or pupil reviews of favourite books might increase their use of the library.
62. By Year 6, pupils' writing covers a good variety of forms but attainment is below the national average. They make sound use of the diary form to record their thoughts about the sinking of the Titanic and produce some lively writing in their retelling of the story of 'Beauty and the Beast'. However, their use of paragraphs is rarely consistent, even among higher-attaining pupils, and spelling and punctuation remain weak. Teachers encourage pupils, through a variety of means, to use a wider range of vocabulary, but the lack of an extensive bank of words from which to draw ideas limits pupils' ability to express themselves in writing.
63. The quality of teaching is good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented, and sound opportunities are taken to extend the range of opportunities to teach aspects of literacy, particularly speaking and writing, through other subjects of the curriculum, such as history and religious education. Teachers manage pupils very well. Teaching time is rarely lost through misbehaviour. Relationships are very good and, as a consequence, pupils enjoy lessons and participate with much interest and enthusiasm. Teachers set clear targets for the writing tasks they ask of pupils. Where this is most developed, pupils make good progress in their writing. Generally, the challenge that teachers present to pupils is appropriate. Lessons normally start with effective recapping of what has gone before so that pupils are made aware of what they are learning. Pupils are often asked to contribute to this process and frequently give interesting responses, which, in turn, stimulate others to make a contribution. Teachers monitor pupils'

progress well through questioning and discussion and classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to this process. Although marking is regular and encouraging, it does not often identify enough ways in which pupils can improve their work. Although some word-processed work is evident, teachers have not taken full advantage of ICT to support and extend pupils' writing. Homework, in the form of reading, is regularly provided and is appropriate to the needs of most pupils.

64. The subject is well co-ordinated. The library is adequately stocked for fiction but there is a deficit in the number and quality of information books, particularly those which might have particular appeal to boys.

MATHEMATICS

65. Standards of attainment are similar to the national average by the age of seven, but below this level by the age of 11. The attainment of seven-year-olds is similar to that in the previous inspection whilst the attainment of 11-year-olds is lower than previously. This is explained by the differences between different cohorts of pupils. There is now a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and, as explained elsewhere (paragraph 3), there is also a significant effect caused by pupils leaving the school and others arriving for short periods of time. However, the percentage of pupils who achieve the nationally expected standards of attainment (Level 4) by the age of 11 has increased since the previous inspection. The difference in attainment between boys and girls is not significant.
66. By the age of seven, mental skills are average. All pupils recognise and can say numbers to 100. Pupils of lower ability add and subtract mentally to 10 whilst the higher attainers add and subtract mentally to 20 with confidence. The higher attainers and some average attainers have effective strategies for adding and subtracting 20 from numbers up to 100. All pupils recognise and name simple two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) shapes and know some of their properties. They record money accurately to £5 and average and higher attainers add and subtract money to this value accurately. However, when attempting problem-solving tasks that involve reading and understanding text, they are less confident and less accurate.
67. By the age of 11, pupils have sound mental calculation skills. Most pupils know their multiplication tables and recall the facts quickly and confidently. The higher-attaining pupils have effective strategies for multiplying and dividing numbers, including decimal numbers, by 10 and 100 quickly. Average and higher-attaining pupils also have effective strategies for adding and subtracting 99 from three digit numbers such as 987. All pupils have a sound understanding of number skills, shape and space. Skills, knowledge and understanding in written work in number, space, shape and measure and data handling are less secure, particularly where this involves problem solving. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of 2-D and 3-D shapes is extended as they get older. They construct simple 3-D shapes and know that angles can be described as, for example, acute or obtuse, and use a protractor to measure and draw angles accurately. Satisfactory progress is made in data handling. Year 6 pupils use everyday situations, such as data about football matches, to consolidate their skills of drawing and interpreting graphs. However, only the higher-attaining pupils understand the meaning of the terms 'mode', 'range', 'mean' and 'median'. Data handling skills are used in some scientific experiments and this promotes the pupils' ability to interpret bar charts, line graphs and pie charts.
68. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily to support other subjects. In design and technology, for example, pupils measure accurately when making a Tudor house.

Pupils draw line graphs to show the temperature patterns in London and the Algarve and interpret these in terms of climate difference, so reinforcing their knowledge and understanding in geography.

69. The quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was identified as sound overall, with 20 per cent unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, it is good in three-quarters of the lessons and satisfactory in one quarter of the lessons. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good in over 85 per cent of lessons. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and all teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. This, combined with very effective assessment procedures, allows the school to place all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 in appropriate groups (ability sets) for numeracy lessons. The lessons are well planned to provide activities that match the prior attainment of pupils with different attainment so that all pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress. Teachers use the whole-class session at the end of lessons effectively to assess what pupils have learned, and use this information to guide subsequent planning. Sometimes, as in a Year 1 lesson, teachers ask pupils to explain what they can do that they could not do before the lesson. In a mixed Year 3/4 higher ability group, the teacher praised the pupils for their work and asked who thought they could confidently use a protractor to measure any angle in future. This strategy not only raises pupils' understanding of their developing skills but also their self-esteem. However, marking is not used sufficiently to give pupils guidance on how to improve.
70. There are a number of features that contribute to the quality of the good teaching. Teachers make clear to pupils at the beginning of the lesson what they are expected to do and understand by the end of the lesson, lessons are conducted with a brisk pace; teachers make good use of time and resources, including the deployment of classroom assistants or other adults, and they emphasise consistently the use of mathematical language such as the terms 'axes' and 'interval', as in a Year 6 lesson on data handling. During the introductory session on mental arithmetic problems, challenging questions, that make pupils think hard, reflect the teachers' high expectations. In a good, middle ability Year 3/4 lesson, pupils were challenged to identify two two-digit numbers that totalled 100 with the condition that neither of the numbers should end in zero. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, respond well to such challenges and this is reflected in their high levels of concentration, the pace at which they work and their keenness to answer questions. As a result, they make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Another feature of good teaching is how it is linked to other subjects. In the same Year 3/4 class, the teacher capitalised on the history topic – the Vikings – in which the pupils were very interested. All the problems, such as 'Erik the Viking has 38 coins. His wife has half as many. How many does she have?' related to the topic. This imaginative approach motivated all pupils who worked hard to complete their work. Homework provided helps to consolidate pupils' learning and particularly their mental skills.
71. In all lessons behaviour is never less than good, and is very good overall, partly because of the expectations of all teachers and partly because of the interesting tasks matched to pupils' prior attainment.
72. The school is making satisfactory use of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics. In one lesson, a teacher used an overhead projector very effectively to teach pupils how to measure angles accurately with a protractor. In an information and communication technology lesson, two pupils with special educational needs, supported by a classroom assistant, used a program that could be set to different levels of difficulty to practise the skill of adding coins. However, in a Year

6 lesson, where two pupils were using a program to reinforce their skills of subtracting, the examples given were too difficult for the pupils so they made little progress.

73. The headteacher is acting as the co-ordinator for this subject temporarily. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils, and monitors teaching and learning well through an effective programme of lesson observations. Good quality support is given to targeted pupils in Year 5 with funding from a national initiative and has been successful in raising their achievements. Resources are satisfactory. The school intends to improve the provision of computer programs to support learning of pupils with different attainment levels.

SCIENCE

74. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national average. It reflects the good teaching seen during the inspection. This is similar to the judgement reported at the last inspection. During the last four years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen broadly in line with the national trend. Given the marked increase in the number of pupils on the special educational needs register and the number of more able pupils who have left the school, this represents good progress by all groups of pupils. There was little difference in the attainment of girls and boys at the expected Level 4 but more girls than boys attained the higher level.
75. At the age of seven, pupils are competent at classifying different materials, such as natural and man-made, and can carry out investigations on materials, such as finding which material might be best for mending a roof. They have a sound knowledge of parts of a plant and know what they require to grow. In Year 1, most pupils know that there are five senses and can name them. Higher and average -attaining pupils can give examples and say why they are important. This encourages their language development. By the time they are 11, pupils have a sound understanding of the three states of matter, solids, liquids and gases and can describe boiling and evaporation using these concepts. They know that there are different food types and can suggest the components of a healthy diet. They understand why a fair test is required to compare the germination of seeds and can explain which variable they should alter to maintain fair test conditions. In discussion, most know that germination is the start of the growth process and that seeds are dispersed in a variety of ways. Pupils in Year 4 predict whether an ice cube will melt quicker or slower once it has been wrapped in material. Some think the material will warm the cube and others that it will insulate the ice from the heat of the room. They work well in groups, as they investigate and give reasoned explanations for what they have found. One higher-attaining pupil commented that bubble wrap was like double glazing with air pockets in it.
76. The quality of teaching is good. This is because teachers have good expectations of what pupils should achieve and how they should behave. They plan well; they have a good grasp of the teaching materials and they use resources well, including the deployment of classroom assistants to support lower-attaining pupils. In a good Year 2 lesson, the high expectations and effective questioning by the teacher extended pupils' learning by reviewing previous work on the eye. In a Year 4 class, the teacher's careful planning included a plan for the teaching assistant and an emphasis on key vocabulary such as the word 'insulator', which helped pupils to understand the term and to use it appropriately. Where teaching is satisfactory, tasks sometimes lack challenge. In a mixed, Year 5/6 lesson, the worksheets used to reinforce pupils' understanding of the stages of germination did not sufficiently extend the pupils' thinking. Scrutiny of past work indicates that teachers provide effective opportunities to promote pupils' numeracy skills when they collate data and record the results of experiments in

different ways. Literacy is also promoted satisfactorily when pupils use extended writing to record visits they have made. There are some good examples of marking that point the way forward for pupils, but it is not a strong feature across the school. Insufficient opportunities are provided to use the computer to extend pupils' learning, and opportunities for more challenging, investigative work are not consistently provided. From time to time pupils have homework which encourages them to research into things, such as materials, that helps them to put science into an everyday context.

77. The pupils' attitudes are very good. They work well in groups, on practical tasks, and use equipment carefully. Pupils co-operate well when preparing investigations and concentrate well on tasks when working independently.
78. The co-ordinator provides effective subject leadership. She has a good background in the subject and has attended useful training on the role of a co-ordinator. Pupils are assessed through tests related to half termly topics, and procedures are good. Information from these procedures is used effectively in planning future work. Target setting has been introduced for pupils in scientific enquiry but pupils do not know what they need to do to achieve the next level in the other attainment targets. Good use is made of visits and local competitions to increase the pupils' interest and improve the quality of learning.

ART AND DESIGN

79. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the standards of attainment in art and design are above the national expectation and represent an improvement since the last report.
80. By the age of seven, pupils develop good observational skills as they make high quality drawings of flowers and leaves. They use a variety of materials and techniques to create texture and apply these to produce detailed self-portraits after Van Gogh. Sketchbooks record observations and practice in drawing facial features. Block printing, tie and dye, collage and marbling techniques are used in square patch designs to create Joseph's coat. Work is frequently linked with themes and visits, using the environment to stimulate ideas. Pupils respond well to these visits; for example, the windows of Durham Cathedral produced imaginative results. There are appropriate links with mathematics through the use of symmetrical patterns.
81. By the age of 11, pupils continue to make good use of sketchbooks to record observations, rubbings, paint mixing and experimental work in textures and shading. There are good examples of sketches of plants and leaves which form the basis of designs in block printing, textiles, pencil and ink drawings. There are strong links with other areas of the curriculum, such as designs for a wall display based on a production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Designs for the Hindu 'Mandala' and a study of aboriginal art provide strong links with other cultures, and Tudor portraits and miniatures provide good links with a history project in Years 3 and 4.
82. The pupils' response in lessons is very good. They communicate imaginatively and explore and develop ideas with enthusiasm. The standard of behaviour is very good and pupils are keen to take part, taking pride in the quality of their work. They work very well together when required and contribute advice and support each other in practical work.
83. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to promote an appreciation of art techniques and artists. They develop skills in drawing portraits by studying facial features and the effects of shadow in creating three-dimensional effects.

Pupils are encouraged to experiment in colour and texture. Lessons are well prepared, with good organisation and class management. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and generally make good and sometimes very good progress. Teachers maintain a good pace in the lessons, setting challenging targets in task and time. Assessment is by observation and no record of achievement is kept to inform planning, although pupils portfolios are retained to pass on to succeeding teachers and to inform annual reports to parents. There are effective links with mathematics and humanities subjects, but information and communication technology is underused.

84. The subject is well led. This ensures clear goals and targets are set to improve teaching. The current target is to develop drawing skills and the effects of this are evident in the good quality of displayed work. Displays around the school celebrate the work of the pupils and provide a rich and stimulating environment. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is carried out by the headteacher and deputy but the co-ordinator evaluates the planning thoroughly and this ensures that tasks provided meet lesson objectives.
85. The resources for teaching art are very good and include a plentiful supply and range of consumables and artefacts to stimulate learning. In addition, the school makes good use of visiting artists to work with the pupils and has won recognition in local exhibitions. The central, open plan practical accommodation in the junior department is well used.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. The standards of attainment achieved by pupils at the age of seven and 11 are in line with the national expectation. Since the last inspection, standards have been broadly maintained.
87. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is based on a thematic approach. Pupils explore a variety of materials and techniques for construction and incorporate these in designs and constructions of the Witch's house in 'Hansel and Gretel', Rapunzel's tower and Sleeping Beauty's castle. Pupils make good use of textiles to make glove puppets and functional wheels are used appropriately to make vehicles such as fire engines, taxis and ambulances. Useful links are made with science, such as testing waterproof materials. Designs for hats show clearly the stages of preparation and choices of materials and methods of production.
88. By the end of Year 6, pupils use tools skilfully and accurately and can join various materials well with different fixings. A food project in Years 3 and 4 is well used to explore the making of breads of different kinds. Pupils compare effectively the qualities of rye, soda and nan breads with yeast recipes. Pupils record the results of their investigations well and include observations of the effects of heat on bread. Pupils know the health values of the different breads and can calculate and compare the amounts of protein and carbohydrates present. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop sound skills in cutting and joining wood to build houses in the Tudor style. The design stage incorporates evaluation of styles, accurate drawing, measuring, choices of components and ways of assembling. Further links with the Tudor project include weaving and a study of 'wattle and daub' constructions.
89. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in solving the problems presented to them. They work well together in small groups, taking turns and supporting each other. They talk confidently about their work and can describe setbacks and successes.

90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Effective planning ensures that pupils build on what they have already learned. Activities are suitably matched to the learning objectives, with clear instructions and appropriate resources. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, and promote the development of basic skills through support and guidance sheets which outline the design process. Consequently most pupils make solid progress, including those with special educational needs, and achieve well. Sound questioning techniques stimulate the pupils' thinking and extend their learning. Teachers support and encourage their pupils to produce good designs and finished items. Pupils' work in planning and communicating designs is well recorded in files and exercise books but pupils' evaluations of processes and products are not always evident. Health and safety procedures are observed and pupils are carefully supervised when using tools.
91. The subject currently lacks a co-ordinator. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance is unsatisfactory. There are no arrangements for appropriate assessment and recording procedures to establish the effectiveness of the progress made by pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is delivered as a two-year cycle to take account of the mixed age group classes. The school has satisfactory resources and accommodation and the central practical area provides a useful base for junior aged pupils. Materials and tools are stored centrally but are readily available to all classrooms. The subject does not make effective use of information and communication technology, although pupils in the technology club have the opportunity to use control techniques in modelling.

GEOGRAPHY

92. No lessons were observed, but analysis of past work, displays, policy documents and discussion with pupils in Year 6, indicate that standards of attainment match the standards expected of children at the age of seven and 11. The school has maintained the standards expected of 11 year olds identified in the previous report. The standards of attainment of the seven-year-olds are lower than those identified in the previous report. This is partly because of the difference between the groups of pupils and partly because of the changes in the curriculum due to national initiatives that result in less time for the subject.
93. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of where places are located and early map reading skills. They mark their route to school on a street map. They draw maps of the classroom. They identify physical and human features of the locality competently and recognise different types of housing. Through a study of an island home they compare Consett with a different locality confidently. They extend their knowledge and understanding of the world by identifying places on a map of the British Isles and on a map of the world visited by a soft toy (Barnaby Bear). During the inspection, a postcard from Barnaby was received from Malta and pupils listened with interest as the information about the climate and a visit by a member of the royal family was read to them. By the age of 11, pupils used their knowledge appropriately to compare and contrast Consett with other localities, including a village in Kenya and the Richmond area of North Yorkshire. They distinguish between human and physical features of the environment well and know how people can affect the environment. They research information about mountains of the world. Pupils design a leaflet about mountains and tourism that reinforces their learning in the literacy hour. On a map of the world, they locate the main oceans, deserts, mountains and mountain ranges and rivers. They know the main features of rivers, using terms such as gorge, tributary, meander and estuary. They draw maps with reasonable skill, using some of the

ordnance survey symbols to represent, for example, churches and railway lines, and understand the importance of contour lines. This learning is promoted by visits and through the use of secondary sources such as books, maps, photographs, CD-ROMs and the Internet. The evidence indicates that all pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve well, overall.

94. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning. Seven years olds use the Internet to research information about Consett Park. Videos and CD-ROMS are available for a number of topics, for example 'Rivers'. Map reading skills are promoted through the use of programs such as 'Map Detectives'.
95. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that they enjoy the subject and have a very positive attitude to learning, particularly when this is linked to an educational visit.
96. The co-ordinator has been appointed only very recently, but the effective audits of the previous post holder have provided much information to assist planning for future priorities. Resources are satisfactory. The school follows the latest national guidance that ensures that work provided for pupils builds on their previous learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The national guidance helps the teachers to identify skills, as, for example, linking village settlements to the history topic about the Anglo-Saxons. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection. There are no systematic assessment procedures in place to record the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils. Marking does not consistently include comments that will take forward pupils' knowledge and understanding. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through their study of contrasting locations and lifestyles.

HISTORY

97. By the age of seven and 11, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally. This reflects the position at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
98. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the story of Florence Nightingale. They know why she is famous, when she worked and have good recall of a 'magic granddad' video they have seen. When 'Florence Nightingale' unexpectedly enters the classroom in full costume the pupils are wide-eyed with wonder and listen eagerly as she points out differences with the time when she lived. This makes a good contribution to their spiritual and cultural development and encourages positive attitudes to the subject.
99. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils distinguish between the effects of wealth and poverty in Tudor times. Higher-attaining pupils draw up the will of a rich person. Average and lower-attaining pupils look for differences between a modern kitchen and a Tudor kitchen before drawing up a menu for a banquet for Henry VIII. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson gave thoughtful answers to questions about what life would have been like on a Viking longboat after they have watched a short extract from a video.

100. Teaching is good overall and is occasionally very good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well in discussions and when questioning pupils. This helps to reinforce their learning. Tasks are well chosen to match the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Good opportunities are taken to reinforce literacy skills, as for example when pupils in Year 4 were asked to write a diary entry about a day on a Viking ship. Teachers make good use of resources to facilitate learning and pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers. There are good examples of marking that encourage pupils to think further and so promote their learning.
101. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and several talk about how much they enjoy the work. Very good relationships are evident both between the pupils and between teachers and pupils. This helps the pupils to persevere well and so enhances the learning.
102. The subject leadership is effective. A national scheme of work is followed which ensures that planned work builds readily on what pupils have learned. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Sound opportunities are provided to promote literacy through empathetic writing, and effective links to music, art and design and technology are evident. Well-planned visits to Beamish Museum help to sustain interest and enhance learning. Little use is made of information and communication technology. Assessment is at an early stage of development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. The standards of attainment of pupils at the age of seven and 11 are in line with national expectations. The school has maintained this standard since the last inspection, in a subject that is continually creating increasing demands on resources and teaching expertise.
104. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use computers to write short pieces of work and develop their keyboard skills. They use lower and upper case letters, different fonts, and control the mouse effectively. Skills are developed through the use of strong thematic links. Pupils use a simple art program well to create pictures involving shapes and colour, providing early links with art and mathematics. Pupils know about the Internet and use it in geography, by studying local information and aerial photographs. In Year 2, pupils send and receive e-mails from Barnaby Bear on his travels around the world. The topic, 'Ourselves', is well exploited in the display of graphical information. Pupils can operate the robotic, wheeled toy (floor turtle) to move forward, backwards and turn through right angles.
105. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue early work in word processing, extending skills in presenting information, using a variety of fonts, styles, alignment, and colour. They use the 'clip art' programme skilfully and can copy, paste, move and rotate shapes. Poor key board skills in years 3 and 4, however, slow down the rate of writing, particularly when pupils are working in twos or threes. Pupils have a good understanding of databases and binary branching programs, using examples of animals and musical instruments. They are familiar with, and make effective use of 'fields' and 'records', but below average writing skills restrict the amount of information that can be stored in a given time. Pupils have not yet been taught that more frequent saving of work in individual files on floppy disc will allow pupils to build up larger files of data for future processing. Spreadsheets, used to calculate area and perimeter, and control experiments, using sensors and requiring simple programming techniques, are

introduced to older classes. Work in composing web pages is still at the design stage and much time is spent drafting on paper due to limited access of pupils to computers.

106. Pupils make satisfactory progress because there is an up to date policy and scheme of work which ensure that pupils build on previously taught work. Planning is well documented and covers a two-year cycle, to take account of the mixed ages of pupils in some classes. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the lessons, work in mixed ability pairs and make satisfactory progress.
107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Not all teachers have a secure subject knowledge but all are pursuing a programme of training. In the only unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher lacked confidence in her own ability, but in another very good, lesson, challenging tasks were set, involving programming sensor devices. Many lower-attaining pupils receive good support from classroom assistants and other adults. In most lessons, teachers are well prepared and this helps to promote pupils' skills and understanding. They maintain a good pace by setting targets and using skilful questioning. Pupils are encouraged to understand the purpose of ICT and use appropriate language. Lessons are usually well planned but have to take account of the limited resources for large classes and provide support tasks for pupils unable to have 'hands on' experience. The teaching of computer skills is linked with other curriculum areas in class sessions in the 'practical area', but greater use could be made of the ICT facilities in the classrooms. The use of ICT in other subject areas is limited.
108. Pupils respond very positively to teaching and the standard of behaviour is very good. They work well in pairs, sharing ideas and taking turns to operate the computers. They enjoy the tasks and use their knowledge well to meet the challenges offered. Pupils join in discussions sensibly and are prepared to listen to the views of others. The younger pupils, in particular, enjoy the excitement and wonder of the world of technology.
109. Good management and support for teaching staff has enabled the school to establish a firm base on which to develop its provision for pupils. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning and is well situated to give help and support if needed. Assessment and recording procedures are under developed. Opportunities to use the technology to keep class and pupils' work files stored on disc for complete records of progress have not yet been taken. Computers are used strategically to give maximum use. Unfortunately, the movement of computers for the afternoon skills lessons prevents them from being used for other subjects in the classrooms. The after school club provides opportunities for further work in control technology and preparations of contributions to the school Website. The magazine club produces an annual school magazine, showing high quality skills in desktop publishing.
110. Areas for development include the improvement of accommodation for the teaching of ICT and the provision of sufficient computers to allow for their greater use in classrooms to support and develop other subjects of the curriculum.

MUSIC

111. There was limited opportunity to observe lessons during the inspection. However, observations of assemblies, analysis of work, observations of peripatetic teachers and discussions with pupils were also taken into account.

112. Standards have been broadly maintained since the last inspection. Overall, pupils aged seven and 11 attain the levels expected nationally, and a minority of pupils exceed them. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall, and have equal access to the subject. In lessons, pupils often make good progress in singing and playing instruments. They are confident performers, and most achieve well in lessons. Music makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.
113. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 responded well to the music for 'Peter and the Wolf' by Prokofiev. In Year 1, pupils create 'mood patterns' to depict feelings such as happiness and fear. In Year 2, pupils explore the sounds made by a range of instruments to create specific moods, and match them to the characters in the story. For example, they describe 'grandfather's music' as sounding grumpy, and 'Peter's music' as sounding like an adventure. Pupils in both year groups learn about body percussion. When exploring the sounds they can make with their hands, they use terms such as click, slap and tap to describe the quality of the sound made. Pupils enjoy singing. They are tuneful and show an awareness of patterns that are repeated in songs. Year 1 pupils learn that symbols can be used to represent instruments. They begin to develop the skills of performing as a large group and learn to respond to the instructions of a conductor. Pupils in Year 2 successfully add percussion accompaniment to songs. They confidently repeat beat patterns by clapping and using instruments, and develop an understanding of how music can be used to produce certain moods and effects.
114. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop steadily as they move through the school. In Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of musical notation and can compose for a variety of purposes. For example, when studying the Tudor period, pupils learned about the music of the time and composed their own short pieces in the same style. When creating an accompaniment for Puck's song 'Mischief, Moonlight and Magic' from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', pupils confidently experimented with a range of percussion instruments to find those most suitable for depicting the moment he cast his spells. Pupils sing confidently and learn new songs very quickly. They are very aware of the repeating patterns found in musical works and are quick to identify not only the patterns, but also the actual notes being used.
115. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy music and respond very enthusiastically. They sing tunefully, with enjoyment, and are very well behaved in lessons. When given the opportunity to use instruments and perform to others, pupils are willing and eager to be fully involved.
116. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good features. The scheme of work provides non-specialist teachers with good support. Lessons are planned carefully, with clear learning objectives. Pupils are well managed and supported in lessons, which ensures that a purposeful atmosphere is maintained and that pupils learn well. Resources are well used and are of good quality and range. Pupils are provided with opportunities to listen and respond to a variety of music in lessons and assemblies. Visiting musicians are used effectively to raise pupils' awareness of music. Good links are made between music and other areas of the curriculum. These links are particularly strong in English, including drama, history, and art and design. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress from one year to another are in place. The use of ICT to support learning in music is limited.

117. Additional instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities make a positive contribution to pupils' experiences. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn to play violin, cello and clarinet. These lessons are taken by specialist teachers from the local authority's music department. Pupils show perseverance in these sessions and a commitment to succeed. Pupils are encouraged to join local performing groups and have regular opportunities to perform in assemblies. The school choir performs regularly to a range of audiences and takes part in local festivals.
118. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has a clear vision for the further development of the subject. She provides good support for teachers. The successful co-ordination of music across the school is achieved, in part, because of good liaison between teachers who have personal skills in music. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. They include the integration of national support materials into the scheme of work and closer monitoring of teachers' planning. Assessment procedures are not yet well developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils aged seven and 11 attain the levels expected nationally. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, and in some lessons they are good. In lessons where pupil management is not consistently effective, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils are suitably challenged in lessons and those who demonstrate specific talents are encouraged to pursue them, both at school and in the community.
120. In Year 1, pupils learn to throw and catch with increasing skill. Most pupils work hard in lessons and some achieve well. However, a minority do not achieve as well as they should because their behaviour is not always acceptable and they do not carry out the instructions given by their teachers. Pupils in Year 2 develop their skills further, and many are able to throw and catch whilst travelling. Pupils understand the importance of warming up before taking part in physical activity and the effect that exercise has on their bodies.
121. In Years 3 and 4, pupils develop the skills required to perform long and triple jumps. They work hard to improve their performance and work co-operatively in small groups. By taking their own pulse rate before and after exercise, pupils become increasingly aware of the effect that exercise has on their bodies. The swimming lessons for pupils in Years 3 and 4 meet the requirements of the physical education curriculum.
122. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils continue to develop their skills in a range of athletics activities. They run and jump, and learn the techniques required for throwing a javelin and a discus. Pupils work hard to improve their own performance and work co-operatively in pairs as they record their best times and distances using stopwatches and tapes. They respond well to the encouragement and advice given by their teachers. Additional teaching support provided by students from a local college has a positive impact on pupils' learning in Year 6. In these lessons, pupils make good progress in developing throwing, catching, bowling and batting skills. Additionally, they learn the techniques needed to pass a baton in a relay race and the importance of tactics and teamwork in small team field games. Pupils work enthusiastically and co-operatively.

123. Good links with local clubs and institutions provide pupils with opportunities to work with experienced and skilled coaches in a range of physical education activities. This additional support is provided in lessons and during extra-curricular activities. For example, Year 2 pupils work with coaches from a local football club, Years 5 and 6 with a rugby coach and pupils in Year 3 with a tennis coach. These links make a significant contribution to the school's provision and pupils' achievements, and are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in a good range of seasonal extra-curricular activities, and to represent the school in team sports, and as individuals. A strong feature of physical education lessons is the importance attributed to teamwork and improving personal performance. This approach makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
124. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons. Overall, they behave very well and work hard. Pupils co-operate and work well individually, in pairs and in small groups. Pupils support each other and respond well to the praise and encouragement of their teachers and classmates. All pupils have equal access to the subject and lessons make a significant contribution to their enjoyment of physical exercise.
125. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and use resources effectively. In the best lessons, pupils are well managed and good use is made of pupil demonstration to exemplify the aims of the lesson. Learning objectives are clearly communicated to pupils; activities are purposeful and conducted in a controlled and safe manner. In these lessons pupils' learning is good and they achieve well. In lessons where pupil management is less effective, lessons are not as productive as they could be. Teachers organise lessons well and make good use of the outdoor spaces. Indoor lessons take place in the school hall. Despite the poor acoustics, which has a significant negative impact on the overall quality of lessons, teachers manage lessons effectively in this space. Teachers evaluate pupils' performance during lessons and adjust their planning for future lessons in response to pupils' achievements. Pupils are appropriately assessed against the nationally expected levels at the end of each year.
126. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has clearly identified areas for further development of the subject. He has completed an audit of the subject and has taught every class in the school. As a result, he has a secure understanding of the standards pupils achieve and how the subject is taught throughout the school. He provides valuable support for teachers. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained, additional experts now support teaching, and the integration of the Top Sport programme into the school's scheme of work is beginning to have a positive impact on the overall quality of provision for the subject. Resources are good overall and are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. The attainment of pupils by the ages of seven and 11 is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
128. The syllabus provides pupils with opportunities to learn about the main religions practised in this country and so makes a good contribution to multicultural awareness in the school.
129. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught the significant stories told in the various sacred texts. These include Buddhist tales such as one about the lion and the jackal in which the interdependence of creatures is stressed. They learn about common human values

such as being sorry and about the humility needed to apologise. They are introduced to the symbols and artefacts held to be special by the main religions and are introduced to the value placed on them by people with belief.

130. By Year 6 pupils have been introduced to experiences that build on previous learning. They learn about the beliefs and teaching that are common to the major religions and how these make a difference to the lives of common people. They learn, for example, that contemporary Christian martyrs such as Oscar Romero are motivated by a deep respect for individual human life that is a feature of the teachings of the major religions. They understand that the teachings of Jesus motivated people such as Mother Theresa to dedicate their lives to helping to relieve the suffering of the poor. Visits to local places of religion enhance the curriculum, as do the visits of local ministers who work with pupils to develop their understanding.
131. Teaching is good, overall. Teachers manage the behaviour of their pupils well and consequently little teaching time is lost. Teachers show sound knowledge and good commitment to the teaching of religious education. They put a lot of energy into their teaching, as, for example, when they read expressively and bring stories alive to enhance learning. They make sure pupils' learning builds on previous knowledge by recapping the progress made in earlier lessons and, as a result, pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. They introduce elements of drama, to extend understanding, through exploration of themes. However, teachers are not yet sufficiently confident in drama teaching techniques to allow pupils the freedom for much self-expression. Insufficient use is made of role-play to explore and discover the motivations and feelings of significant religious characters. Teachers use discussion well to explore themes, though answers to questions are often limited by pupils' relatively weak speaking skills. They also promote literacy effectively by getting pupils to respond empathetically in writing. For example, Year 2 pupils were asked to take the part of a trapped animal and write about its imaginary feelings. This task was successful in enabling pupils to understand the plight of others by relating their own feelings to the events of a story.
132. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and show good respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. They respond to new experiences with curiosity. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers.
133. The subject co-ordinator is an enthusiastic champion of the subject who manages it well. There is a clear policy and scheme of work that guides teachers' planning. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Opportunities to use ICT have not yet been effectively developed.