

INSPECTION REPORT

HESLEDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hesleden, near Hartlepool

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114143

Headteacher: Mrs F Wrightson

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy
16173

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 February 2002

Inspection number: 195938

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hesleden
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Cleveland

Postcode: TS27 4PT

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Kell

Date of previous inspection: July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Provision for children in the foundation stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19727	Mr E Langford Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21045	Mrs S Walker Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Religious education	How well are the pupils taught?
22058	Mrs C Richardson Team inspector	Mathematics Art Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hesleden Primary School is situated near Hartlepool. Its 144 pupils, 67 of whom are boys and 77 girls, are drawn from Hesleden and a range of nearby villages. The number of pupils has risen since the last inspection in 1997, though the school is small by national comparison. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals (22 per cent) is above average for this type of school and is rising, whereas nationally the figures are falling. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs and in all 43 pupils are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, several of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties. This proportion is above average nationally and has risen considerably over the last five years. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage with a very small proportion of other European heritage though there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The attainment of pupils entering the school varies considerably but is well below average overall; this is a change since the last inspection but reflects the wide range of social and economic backgrounds of the pupils. Not all pupils admitted to the school will have attended the nursery. The school has experienced difficulties in appointing temporary staff to the extent that the headteacher had to teach a class part time in the autumn term of 2001. The school was awarded the Basic Skills quality mark in 1999.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school where the pupils achieve well because of the good and often very good quality of the teaching. The leadership is excellent and the school is very well managed. The standards attained by pupils are above average. The value for money provided by the school is very good.

What the school does well

- Children have a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes and by the age of 11 pupils achieve well because of the strong teaching throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is excellent; the pupils flourish and respond very well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour.
- Very good provision is made for the pupils who need extra help to learn well.
- Excellent links with the community, including a very good partnership with parents, enrich the very good curriculum.
- Leadership is excellent and the school has a shared commitment to achieving the best for its pupils.
- The care and welfare of the pupils are very good.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in religious education because it is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- The standards in reading so that they are consistent with the higher results attained in writing.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in 1997. The key issues identified at that time to improve standards in English and mathematics have been addressed well. Moreover, significant improvements have been made in the majority of areas of the school's work, though not in religious education, in which standards have fallen.

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	C	B	E	E
Mathematics	A	D	E	D
Science	A*	C	E	E

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

The pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and science. In English standards are broadly average with strengths in writing and relative weaknesses in reading.

As can be seen from the table above, results rise and fall year by year depending on the size and composition of particular year groups. Given the size of the school, it must be remembered that one pupil can account for a large percentage of the whole. This is an important factor when the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is taken into account. For example, in the present Year 2, half of the pupils have special educational needs and are likely to attain below average in the national tests. The remaining half are on target to attain sound standards and the higher attaining pupils to attain a level higher than is typically expected for their age.

Although many of the pupils come to school with limited linguistic skills, they get off to a flying start in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress in physical development and very good progress in all other aspects and are on course to attain standards expected for their age. This is built upon effectively in Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve well. The school met its targets last year and promptly set more challenging yet achievable goals for 2002 and is on course to meet them.

Standards are well above average in art and design and design and technology and above average in history, music and physical education by the end of Year 6. The pupils achieve particularly well in these subjects because of the rich, varied and practical curriculum. In religious education, standards are below average. Pupils have only a scant knowledge of the subject because it is taught in insufficient depth. Pupils who need extra help to enable them to learn achieve very well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are very keen to work hard and to take an active part in their lessons. This has a significant impact on their contributions to lessons and the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They work and play very happily and productively together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils act maturely and get on very well together. They have a keen understanding of the effect of their actions on others.
Attendance	Satisfactory: though sound overall, a small proportion of pupils have extended absences that slightly bring down the rate of attendance. Almost all pupils arrive on time and, as a result, lessons start punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The school meets the needs of all pupils very well indeed through the effective teaching. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. The well-structured approach to teaching basic skills means that the effective teaching in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is also used well in other subjects. Teaching is very good in art and design and design and technology. It is good in music. The teaching of history and physical education in Year 3 –Year 6 is also good. No teaching was seen for the Year 1 and Year 2 in history, geography or physical education. As a result of the strong teaching the quality of pupils' learning is good, for example in the brisk rate at which they learn and the quality of the work they produce. Pupils also have a very good understanding of their own learning and know what they need to do next to improve. Weaknesses in the teaching are in religious education, which is taught in insufficient depth and is unsatisfactory over time. Pupils with special educational needs and the children in the nursery and reception classes receive teaching of very good quality. In the reception class the teaching of physical development is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: it is interesting and stimulating and meets the needs of all the pupils. It enriches pupils' learning in many diverse ways. A very good curriculum is taught to the children in the reception and nursery classes though the provision for outside activities is underdeveloped.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: pupils are fully included in lessons and the life of the school is very full. Pupils receive effective academic help and very good support with emotional, behavioural or physical needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: the school makes very good provision for pupils' personal and social development. Provision for their moral and cultural education is excellent. Spiritual development is good and contributes well to the warm, supportive atmosphere in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well: the school has effective systems for checking, assessing and monitoring the pupils' personal and academic growth.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well: strong and supportive links with parents and the excellent links with the wider community enrich the pupils' education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the school is very well managed and the lead provided by the headteacher is excellent. The leadership is the foundation of the school's success. It makes clear the values that are important to the pupils' education whilst setting a firm direction for the achievement of the aims of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well: governors are proud of the school and fulfil their legal responsibilities. The governing body is very effectively led.
The school's evaluation	Very good: the school monitors its performance and is reflective in its

of its performance	approach. By this means, a range of information is used very well to help the school to continually improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: financial resources, including grants, are used extremely well to benefit the pupils' learning. The school consults widely about important matters, obtains resources at the most competitive prices and uses them in the best way to achieve its aims. It has a keen awareness of comparing its performance with that of other schools.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Good: there is a good match of staff to the needs of the curriculum and the provision of teaching and accommodation for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Resources for teaching and learning are good though the library is small and cramped.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Teaching is good and expectations high. • The standards reached by the children are good. • The way the school helps children to succeed. • The attitudes the school promotes. • The way the school responds to their requests and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils are expected to do at home.

The inspection wholeheartedly agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. A good range of homework is used well to extend what is learned in lessons. The well-attended after-school clubs for homework and reading build well on the children's work in the classroom and are an important factor in their achievements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In this small school, the low and varying numbers of pupils in each year group mean that the results of national tests can fluctuate tremendously from year to year, because one pupil can account for such a large percentage of the total. The varying composition of each year group is also significant. For example, over a quarter of the pupils in Year 6 last year had statements of educational need. This year half of the pupils in Year 2 are on the register of special educational needs. Such variations make it difficult to establish meaningful trends over time and to make reliable comparisons with test results in other schools. These variations must be taken into account when comparison of performance is made with other schools.

2. These factors need to be borne in mind in relation to the national tests of 2001 for 11 year olds, which were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar social and economic backgrounds, the school's results in mathematics were below average. Because of the sharp decline in the results last year the trend over the last five years has fallen below the national trend.

3. In sharp contrast, the school's performance in last year's national tests for seven year olds shows a very different picture. The results were above the national average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Compared with results in similar schools, the school's results were well above average in reading and mathematics and very high, that is to say in the top five per cent, in writing. In the 2001 teacher assessments in science for seven year olds, an above average number of pupils reached a high level for their age.

4. Children enter the nursery with low skills, especially in language and personal development. They get off to a very good start through the very effective provision in the nursery and reception classes, where the teaching and consequent learning are very good. By the end of their time in the reception class, children are likely to attain all of the early learning goals. The high quality of the overall provision is not reflected so strongly in the outdoor curriculum. In physical development children enter at a below average standard and make good progress in the development of their physical skills.

5. The work of the pupils currently in Year 6 shows that standards are broadly average in English, with strengths in writing, and above average in mathematics and science. In 2002, the school is well on course to meet its challenging targets for 11 year olds.

6. Seven year olds are unlikely to perform so well given the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in English, mathematics and science for seven year olds are below average for those that have special educational needs. For the remaining fifty per cent of the pupils in this year group, standards are sound overall with higher attainers reaching a level above that typically expected for pupils of their age.

7. Throughout the school, pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment and they make good progress as a result of the good teaching and the successful way in which the school promotes literacy through every other subject of the curriculum. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.

8. Importantly, pupils are achieving well overall and a good proportion are achieving very well. The school is on the cusp of very good achievement. From the low starting points, pupils make at least good progress because the curriculum is rich and engaging and because the teaching is good and often very good. The pupils develop a love for learning and are creative and adaptable.

9. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well because the national strategies are thoughtfully and carefully implemented. Extra classes to boost pupils' basic skills, the use of homework clubs and the support of the majority of parents ensure that the pupils make substantial gains. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment is raised through a practical approach. Pupils are good at investigating problems and drawing on a range of cross-curricular skills. The basic skills that pupils acquire are applied across a range of subjects so pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their growing knowledge. This is also the case in information and communication technology, which has a strong and practical role in the curriculum. Pupils are attaining average standards in information and communication technology because assessment is used well to identify gaps, for example, in data handling. The school is well placed to raise standards quickly given the interest, expertise and resources in the subject.

10. In English, strengths are in pupils' writing. This is so because in the past the school identified a weakness in writing and effectively addressed it. Now reading is the weaker aspect of English. The school has implemented a range of effective strategies to raise standards in reading. It is too early to see the results of these though indications are that they are working well. There is still more to do so that the pupils develop a stronger love of reading. Each classroom has a range of books, though these are often not displayed well enough. There is no discrete area in each class where a love of books can be nurtured and the school library is very small and not easily accessible to pupils, especially the older pupils. The home and school reading arrangements are inconsistent and lead to interest in reading dropping off for many older pupils.

11. The determination of the school to provide a very broad and rich curriculum is reflected in the management of the majority of the subjects; this results in considerable strengths in pupils' achievements. For example, by the age of 11, pupils' standards are well above average in art and in design and technology. This comes about because of the very good management which draws together a very broad and deep curriculum and teaching of very good quality. The outcome is that the pupils make substantial gains in their learning in both subjects. Also, in history, music and physical education, pupils achieve well by the age of 11 because the strong teaching also includes visits and visitors to the school and this helps the pupils to remember a great number of facts and master a good range of appropriate skills.

12. The strengths of the school's cross-curricular approach works very well in the majority of subjects except in religious education, where the lack of discrete teaching in the subject dilutes its effectiveness and as a result standards are below those typically expected by the age of 11.

13. Pupils make very good progress towards the challenging targets on their individual education plans and in the development of self-esteem and confidence because of the very good teaching they receive and the suitability of their targets. The school makes very good use of assessment information for target-setting on individual education plans and for the formation of groups. The result is that pupils who need additional support are identified as soon as possible and provided with help that they need. The school not only caters very well for the pupils who need a lot of extra help but also for the very high attaining pupils. Such pupils are identified and provision is made for them in class and through extra-curricular activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The attitudes, relationships and the behaviour of pupils are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Of worthy note, and a credit to the school, are the very positive attitudes to learning and the behaviour of the nursery and reception pupils. A warm and welcoming family atmosphere of consideration, care and tolerance of others permeates the whole school.

15. Pupils of all levels of attainment are keen to come into school and most quickly settle down to their work. Pupils develop good listening skills, which enable them to take an active part in lessons and make a valuable contribution to class and group discussions. However, there are a

small number of pupils who find difficulty in sitting for long periods of inactivity and can become restless in overlong lessons. For most of the time, the good and often very good teaching ensures that these pupils give of their best and make good progress in their learning.

16. In general, the pupils have high levels of commitment to their work and most are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Many are able to sustain high levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with each other in both group and paired activities. Of note are the mature attitudes demonstrated by most pupils.

17. The high standards of behaviour and discipline serve to enhance the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The very good, sometimes excellent, behaviour is very much the result of the good teaching and the consistency with which teachers monitor and effectively manage behaviour. However, there remains a minority of pupils who find self-control difficult and take up teaching time in refocusing their attention. The well-structured system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by pupils and is proving to be very effective in supporting the very good behaviour and discipline.

18. A major testament to the success of the procedures for managing the pupils' behaviour is the absence of any exclusions of pupils for the current year; there were two exclusions during the school year 2000 - 2001. The very good relationships between pupils, parents and staff have had a significant impact on pupils' behaviour in the school. An anti-bullying culture is actively promoted within the school and reinforced through time set aside for discussion and the programme of personal, health and social education programme. Discussions with pupils reveal their awareness of the impact of bullying and all know the correct procedures to follow should any incidents occur. Parents and pupils agree that past incidents of inappropriate behaviour have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.

19. Very good relationships exist between pupils, and between pupils and adults, and make an important contribution to the overall good progress being achieved by the school. Many pupils from all age groups have a natural sensitivity to and awareness of the needs of others and frequently give unsolicited help and support to other pupils and adults alike. Examples include a group of nearby pupils rushing to give help and comfort to a similar aged pupil who had fallen in the playground and hurt himself. Pupils offer to clear away the lunch trays of others, politely open doors for others to pass through, and regularly say "please" and "thank you" to others however small the reason.

20. Pupils throughout the school are friendly and polite to each other and are actively encouraged from an early age to consider the needs of others. The majority of pupils collaborate well with each other in their learning and play activities, happily take turns without question, and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care.

21. In general, the range of personal development opportunities offered to pupils is good. However, excellent opportunities are provided for Year 6 pupils to take responsibility and these make a significant contribution to their personal development for life after school. Within the nursery and reception classes, pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities for aspects of their own learning and the teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils are challenged to give of their best. Teachers across the school encourage pupils to volunteer to help in class. Pupils willingly accept and undertake their assigned tasks with vigour and pride.

22. The establishment of the school council provides Year 6 pupils with effective opportunities to review, discuss and influence the working life of the school. The introduction of the “buddy” scheme actively involves the Year 6 pupils in promoting and monitoring the behaviour and relationships of pupils in the school. Year 6 pupils’ involvement in the induction of the young pupils into school routines and the role they play in supporting the reading of Year 2 pupils have a significantly positive impact on their social and personal development and their understanding of citizenship. The very good range of responsibilities encourages pupils to use their initiative very well.

23. Pupils’ attendance at school is satisfactory. A downturn last year is accounted for by a significant outbreak of chicken pox, which had an adverse impact on attendance and reversed the trend of improvement the school was experiencing. Recent statistics describe a return to sound attendance levels as seen at the time of the last inspection. However, while the school works closely with the education welfare service to promote good attendance, a small number of parents continue to take family holidays during term time, which reduces their children’s access to learning in school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and punctuality within the school is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. The teaching is good overall. Almost four out of every five lessons were judged to be good or better and over one in three very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen, though over time the teaching of religious education is unsatisfactory because it is taught in insufficient depth. There is good teaching in every class and the quality has improved since the last inspection. There is good teaching in all subjects. For seven to 11 year olds the teaching is very good in art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of the four and five year olds is also very good.

25. The very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes gets the pupils off to a very effective start. Strengths are in the high expectations that teachers have of the children. Planning effectively brings together the areas of learning for the young children in a meaningful and exciting way. The choice of resources is particularly inspiring and readily engages children in their learning. For example, when planting seeds the pupils practise using gardening tools in compost and wet sand. They have a good range of seeds and plant pots to choose from to plant their seeds and an array of flowers and plants to use imaginatively in the sand and water activities. Shortcomings are in the teaching of physical development which is good but does not match the even better teaching in other aspects. This is because the provision is less well planned and the quality of discussion does not reach the standards found in other aspects. Relationships are strong and this means that children are keen to be adventurous and they make very confident strides in their achievement.

26. There are several common strengths in the teaching throughout the school. The subjects of English and mathematics are taught particularly well because staff have worked hard to embrace the national strategies for these subjects. As a result, staff are confident and skilful in the literacy and numeracy lessons and have a good understanding of how best to teach basic skills such as spelling and grammar. Literacy and numeracy are woven into most lessons very effectively and this gives pupils further opportunities to reinforce their skills. Information and communication technology is also used very well to enhance pupils’ skills in all subjects, especially in literacy and numeracy. This was clearly seen in a successful lesson in Years 5 and 6 when pupils used their word-processing skills adeptly to amend a text by inserting the correct punctuation. By using assessment procedures effectively, the teacher was able to pitch the range of texts to provide just the right amount of challenge for the pupils’ capabilities and they responded maturely in their pairs by producing accurate and thoughtful work.

27. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for very well through adult support of high quality when they are withdrawn from class to complete well-modified tasks to match their needs. Because tasks are pitched at the right level of challenge, pupils achieve success which lifts their

self-esteem and encourages them to try hard. For example, when ordering months of the year pupils were provided with a step-by-step approach together with alternative activities about time passing to keep their interest.

28. In general, staff create a calm atmosphere conducive to work through very good relationships with their pupils, and pupils concentrate very well, sometimes for lengthy periods. Pupils give of their best, even when they do not find learning easy. The teaching maintains good discipline in a positive and consistent manner and deals with any minor disruption to lessons quickly. Pupils generally conform to the high expectations of their teachers and get on with their learning.

29. Teachers use a variety of suitable methods and there are generally a good variety of approaches and activities in each lesson to hold the interest of the pupils, who for the most part concentrate and work hard. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 responded enthusiastically to a puppet asking them questions, while in Years 3 and 4 speaking and listening were promoted well in a religious education lesson that required pupils to brainstorm their ideas about Jesus. The good pace of most lessons keeps pupils on their toes. Good use is made of resources to make learning interesting and pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks.

30. In the best lessons, clear explanations by teachers are based on very secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Effective questioning extends pupils' thinking or assesses their understanding. Story-telling at its best has a spiritual element and creates a feeling of empathy with the characters. When this happens, pupils are spellbound and keen to contribute their own ideas in response to the story.

31. A common strength is the consistent way in which staff tackle whole-school issues such as planning and assessment. Good planning leads to well thought out lessons and efficient organisation, as seen in the effective literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils are stimulated and motivated to try hard.

32. Staff have high expectations and the pupils invariably rise to the challenge. Tasks are often challenging and well matched to the differing needs of the pupils. This aspect is particularly important as all classes cater for more than one year group and it is tackled well. In the best lessons, activities are ambitious and exciting, making learning enjoyable. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made bread to help them understand the chemical changes that take place when yeast and sugar are mixed together. High levels of concentration and co-operation prevailed during the lesson and pupils conducted themselves in a most mature manner; consequently, they broadened their understanding of scientific concepts and developed their social skills in group activities. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress when working in their small groups supported by adults. They too work on stimulating tasks and benefit from good quality teaching, which enhances their confidence and self esteem.

33. When weaknesses occur in the teaching it is often because the timing of the lesson is misjudged, resulting in lengthy periods of inactivity or pupils sitting for too long. When this occurs, pupils lose concentration in their work or become restless. Sometimes inefficient organisation wastes time in lessons, as, for example, when materials for lessons are not set out beforehand and valuable teaching time is lost in preparing and gathering resources. In situations such as these, pupils who find self-control difficult have opportunities to misbehave and further time is lost in admonishment. When classroom assistants are efficiently deployed, they complement the teaching considerably. However, in some lessons, the teachers do not provide sufficient guidance as to their expectations and opportunities are lost for the assistants to contribute fully. In some lessons, notably in music and religious education lessons, some teachers do not have enough subject knowledge to be able to advise pupils how to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not develop their skills as well as they might because of the lack of such guidance.

34. Teachers and support staff take good account in their planning of the targets for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with especially high attainment. Targets in individual

education plans are clear and achievable. Pupils are grouped according to their attainment and particular needs in numeracy and literacy. This ensures that tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils have very skilled support from experienced and committed teachers and support staff when working individually or in small groups and receive care and attention whilst working with the rest of the class. This means that work is very well matched to what pupils need. For example, the special needs teacher provides very good support for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs and very effective additional support through the social skills and specific physical activity sessions. Staff maintain very good records and there is regular sharing of information of high quality between all staff, who work together well as a team.

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

35. The whole curriculum reflects the school's aims very well. These are reflected well in the imaginative links with Hesleden village, business and the wider world, which make an outstanding contribution to the learning of its pupils. For example, they ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils including those with special needs and those who attain at a higher level. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the curriculum in that there are now guidelines for all subjects, teaching resources have improved substantially, and the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented effectively.

36. The National Curriculum is taught in an interesting and stimulating way so that pupils achieve well in most subjects. All aspects of subjects are taught across the school and this ensures that the school meets statutory requirements, including the arrangements for collective worship. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed guidelines, but there is inconsistent interpretation of the syllabus, and the subject is often diluted when it is linked with other subjects. This is an area for improvement. There are good links between many subjects, especially through aspects of literacy and art. For example, well-presented written work is an integral part of history and geography and the exciting displays of artwork reveal fascinating links with other subjects such as mathematics. The teachers make effective use of nationally recommended guidance for the curriculum and supplement this with the school's own guidelines for each subject. The result of this is that teachers' careful and thoughtful planning is of high quality and good use is made of available assessment procedures.

37. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. It is exciting, well structured and very practical. It uses educational play to work towards the early stages of the National Curriculum and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Underlying the curriculum is a clear focus on the development of speaking and listening skills and children's personal and social development. Weaknesses are in the provision made for outside play in the nursery. The outside activities are not as well planned as the rest of the curriculum and this means that, though the children have plenty of opportunities to play outside, the richness found elsewhere in their learning is insufficiently well reflected in the outside provision. In the reception class, the children have daily access to equipment such as skipping ropes and other resources, plenty of space to play and access to gym equipment in the hall.

38. Since the school was last inspected, the provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, has improved and is now very good. Provision is very good because of its relevance for all pupils with special needs and the level of inclusion in lessons and the life of the school. Pupils receive specific help in literacy and numeracy lessons, and very good support is given to pupils with emotional and behavioural or physical needs. There are very good programmes for pupils who join the social and physical skills groups, for example when pupils practise their hand and eye coordination through a series of exercises. There are individual and appropriately challenging activities for higher attaining pupils to ensure that their needs are met successfully. The school is monitoring effectively the progress of any pupils who may have special talents in, for example, art.

39. The provision for extra-curricular activities, both after school and through visits, is excellent. The school offers a very wide range of activities for pupils of all ages and these are well attended. For example, both boys and girls from reception to Year 6 benefit from reading and homework clubs. Very good use is made of visits and visitors into school to enrich pupils' learning. Older pupils have a week's residential visit, in which a wide range of opportunities for extended learning in geography, physical education and personal and social development are included.

40. Pupils of all ages and capabilities benefit from a curriculum that meets their personal and social needs very well. The content and organisation of the curriculum ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to experience all that the school offers. Pupils with special educational needs mix with other pupils very well in the playground and in the classroom. Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education, based on the recently introduced guidelines and the school's own programmes. The importance of good health is taught through science, visits of the school nurse and other visitors. The curriculum includes a sensitive approach to growing, sex education and drugs awareness through teaching links with the police and the school nurse. Teachers deal thoughtfully with any issues that arise at a level of understanding suitable for the pupils. The personal development of pupils is considered very important. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and consider difficult issues, such as their fears, friendships, or bullying, at special times during the week when they sit quietly in a circle to discuss them.

41. There are good arrangements for admitting children to the nursery and reception classes and transferring pupils to the secondary school. Curricular links with other schools and colleges are good. Links with schools in Middlesbrough and Japan have been extremely productive and have broadened the pupils' understanding of society. Pupils and staff benefit from increased contacts, which have a positive effect on pupils' learning because they extend their knowledge and experiences very well.

42. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the extensive links with the community and businesses. Purposeful links with the community make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning. For example, a local supermarket provided the food for a celebration of Diwali and a local business, which has developed extensive links with the school. It has been involved in the planning and building of a path around the field, a Young Enterprise scheme for pupils in Year 6 and a visit of schoolchildren from Japan. There is very good contact with people and groups in Hesleden and the local church. Pupils visit museums and galleries and have many visitors during the year. All of these contacts enable the school to play a full part in the community.

43. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall and is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection, when cultural development was by no means as good as it is now. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are calm, orderly occasions and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the world around them and respect individual differences. They are enhanced by the quality of the music played in assembly and the singing of the choir. Pupils consider the beauty of the world. For example, pupils in Year 3 asked and answered questions as they looked at the clouds moving slowly across the sky. Children in reception find the beautiful pictures of how plants grow fascinating. Displays around the school and the pupils' care for each other make a strong contribution to the positive climate of the school, in which pupils are encouraged to grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.

44. Provision for moral development is excellent. There is a clear code of behaviour in classes and throughout the school. It is used very effectively to promote moral and social development and pupils know how the rules are to be applied in the classroom and the playground. This provides a very good framework in which pupils can grow. The school has worked very hard to develop a learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision-making. The school's rules and use of rewards recognise, and comment upon, positive aspects of other children's work and behaviour. Pupils value the range of rewards and trophies they can earn. "The certificates aren't just a piece of paper, you know. They are worth having. You value certificates and medals because they are not just given to everyone, you earn them." This belief, that rewards are worth earning, is central to the excellent systems created to encourage good behaviour. The

very good relationships in the school provide pupils with very good examples on which to model their own social and moral behaviour.

45. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils work co-operatively, sharing ideas and helping each other as needed and they are given opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school by undertaking responsibilities. For example, Year 6 pupils train Year 5 pupils to act as 'buddies'. They consider the two most important aspects of this training are to ensure that Year 5 pupils know how to respond when someone is hurt and to know how to play games with the younger children. Pupils organise fund-raising projects for the school and develop their awareness of the needs of others in the world by participating in raising money for charities. The extensive links with the world of work and the wider community provide opportunities for pupils to meet and work with people from outside the school. They enjoy these links and their visits to museums and places of interest. All of these experiences make an exceedingly positive contribution to their development and learning.

46. There is excellent provision for pupils' cultural development. Stories, music, art and literature from this country and diverse cultures are used thoughtfully throughout the school to extend pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language. The celebration of Diwali was one of the highlights of pupils' study of India. The visits of some pupils to a Middlesbrough school, where they met children from a wide range of countries, and the return visit of those children to the school, gave insight into other cultures. In addition, through the partnerships with outside agencies and individuals and the visit of the children from Japan, pupils' cultural awareness was greatly extended. The extended study of the civilisation and culture of that country provided opportunities for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music, art and crafts, and to reflect on their significance. It provided pupils with an exceptional opportunity to learn at first hand about the diversity of another culture and met the school's aim to ensure that pupils' appreciate very well the multi-cultural nature of society in both this and other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school's provision for the care and welfare of the pupils in its charge is very good and a strength of the school. This represents an area of significant improvement over the findings of the last inspection.

48. The very good child protection procedures are well understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. The named person for child protection leads this sensitive area very well. Staff are vigilant in monitoring the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care. Governors are aware of the school's responsibility for child protection and the school has established very good working relationships with the various external support agencies.

49. Very effective strategies have been established to support those pupils with special educational needs; these ensure the regular review of their targets in consultation with parents. All pupils appear happy in school and most show they have the confidence and independence to approach staff to raise any queries and concerns they may have.

50. The school has established very good health and safety procedures that appropriately involve governors. The school has an adequate number of staff with first aid training and very good procedures are in place for the management and reporting of pupils' injuries which occur during school time. Effective management arrangements are in place for the correct recording and administration of prescribed medicines to pupils, as and when requested by parents.

51. Good procedures are in place to record and promote attendance and report pupils' absence. Weekly and monthly absence reports are used to review trends in absence and good systems are in place to quickly follow up any unauthorised absences. However, the school does not have a formal practice to report pupils' attendance to the governors' meeting each term or to involve them

in monitoring pupils' absence. The school's close working relationship with the education welfare service has helped to involve parents in reducing pupils' absence, in particular unauthorised absence. The daily registration practice in school fully complies with statutory requirements.

52. Very good and well-established routines to manage behaviour help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and contribute greatly to the very good attitudes to learning shown by the pupils. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school operates a number of incentives to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour, both in and around the school. The school reviews the behaviour policy annually with pupils and parents to ensure its continued appropriateness. The comprehensive behaviour policy is discussed within each classroom so that pupils understand the teacher's expectations and the process of rewards for good behaviour. The clear behaviour procedures are understood by pupils and parents and are applied fairly and consistently by staff and successfully used to promote the very good behaviour seen in and around the school. Of worthy note is the involvement of the Year 6 pupils as "buddies", in helping to monitor and promote a positive approach to behaviour.

53. The school has a philosophy of zero tolerance towards bullying and has worked successfully to promote a culture of anti-bullying among pupils. There are no recorded incidents of bullying for the current academic year and parents and pupils agree that bullying is not a problem in the school. During the inspection, there was no evidence of any oppressive behaviour or harassment of pupils. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and past incidents of inappropriate behaviour are judged by pupils and parents alike to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.

54. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and make the best possible provision to support them in their learning and personal development. Assessments of pupils with special educational needs are carried out thoughtfully and staff refer to the pupils' targets and programmes very well. The support for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs is of very high quality. Relationships between these pupils and staff are very good so that learning takes place in a purposeful, motivating and inclusive atmosphere. Staff work very well together to monitor and assess pupils' work and share the information gained well. The school complies with statutory requirements and liaises very effectively with external agencies. It is well on its way to implementing the revised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.

55. The school has good systems for assessing the academic progress of its pupils and this represents good improvement since the last inspection. Assessment systems are simple and effective, providing relevant and accurate information about the progress pupils have made and the levels at which they are performing in English, mathematics and science. This enables teachers to plan appropriately for pupils' individual needs and to group pupils to best advantage. Good use is made of additional assessments such as reading analyses and other optional tests to supplement the data on each pupil. The school tracks the progress made by each pupil in the National Curriculum with a simple checklist kept by each pupil in the back of his or her notebook. This simple system not only provides important information for the teachers but also enables the pupils to know exactly how well they are doing and what they must work on next to improve.

56. The school has recently introduced a comprehensive record for each pupil that puts to good use all the data that is available on each pupil to build up a helpful profile of each pupils' development. Although assessments of English, mathematics and science are now well established, the school is at an early stage in exploring methods of assessing pupils' progress in other subjects. Records of progress tend to refer mainly to the work that has been covered by the pupils rather than the quality or levels achieved. This is also the case in reading, where records simply list the books pupils have read but do not say how well or what they need to do to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive the highest quality of care and education during their time in school. The parents consider the school to be very open and that staff are willing to listen and talk with parents. A majority of parents are actively involved in their children's learning though the reading partnership for older pupils is inconsistent. Parents receive a very good level of information about their children's time in school. This represents an area of significant improvement since the last inspection and is a major influence on the pupils' achievement.

58. The school has established very good links with parents to involve them in all aspects of their children's education and personal development. All parents have signed the home and school agreement and the termly parent and teacher consultation meetings are well attended. Parents agree that teachers are more than willing to meet with them to discuss the progress of pupils and value the opportunities for informal exchange between parents and staff, when staff accompany pupils to the school gate at the end of each day.

59. Termly parent and teacher consultation meetings are well attended and provide good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's learning and development. The school has a very good practice of canvassing, and taking note of parental views and comments on the work of the school and the governors' plans for the future. Of note are the list of questions the school gives to parents to ask their children about in order to evaluate what the pupils have learnt when they return from an out-of-school visit. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed and have regular opportunities to discuss targets and reviews with the school, which they appreciate.

60. Shining examples of the school's proactive approach to involving parents in pupils' learning include the "positive parenting" classes, organised by the nursery teacher to develop parenting skills, and the "Learn East" family learning project, designed to enable parents and pupils to work together in developing literacy and communication skills. Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with these events and also with a "maths challenge" day organised by the school. Parents stated that they had now gained confidence in helping their children to learn at home and felt much more involved as partners with the school in their children's education.

61. Of particular benefit to pupils' learning is the voluntary involvement of parents and governors in the work of the school. Teachers greatly appreciate the valuable contribution of a significant number of parent volunteers, who are able to provide weekly support by listening to pupils read, helping less able pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and generally supporting pupils' learning in the classroom. Many more parents willingly volunteer to accompany pupils on field trips and out-of-school visits. A very active "Friends of Hesleden" association, organises regular fund-raising and social events, all of which provide informal opportunities for communication between teachers and parents. In addition, the association provides a valuable conduit for making parents' views known to the school.

62. The very good level of parental involvement in the work of the school has a positive impact on the quality of the learning environment and on the achievements of individual pupils. The school has worked very hard and fruitfully to bring about significant improvements in its partnership with parents. It has achieved much by encouraging greater parental involvement in the pupils' learning and the successful use of imaginative initiatives to promote a closer partnership with parents. However, despite the good efforts of the school, there remain a small minority of parents who show little interest in the school or inclination to support their children's learning or development.

63. The quality, timeliness and range of information provided to parents are very good. Of particular note is the "Village Voice", a sponsored newspaper produced twice yearly by the school in which all the articles are written by the pupils. The paper is delivered free to all households in the village and provides a valuable insight in to the work and achievements of the pupils. Parents are kept well informed about all aspects of school life, including the progress their children are making. The end-of-year progress reports provide parents with good levels of information about what their children know and identify targets for improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. Leadership has improved since the last inspection and is now excellent. It provides clear educational direction to the school and secures a team approach to improvement. All those connected with the school understand its philosophy and how this is realized in practice. The thoughtful and reflective approach to change is well planned within a clear timescale and handled sensitively. Parents at the meeting held prior to the inspection were quick to point out that the headteacher provides a good role model for all to follow. Parents are very happy with the way that the school is led and find the staff very approachable. The leadership inspires others and provides the driving force for raising standards.

65. The management structure contributes very well to the success of the school. It is clear cut and thorough in its approach. Not only are responsibilities delegated effectively but they are also very well monitored and the outcomes evaluated, always with a view to further improvement. 'Only the best is good enough for our pupils' is a quote often heard at Hesleden. Importantly, very well planned actions, careful attention to detail and very effective use of a range of resources improve the standards. Continuing professional development helps the staff to keep up to date and also provides well for academic discussion and debate. The factors explained above have impacted very well on the progress the school has made since its last inspection.

66. The management, through its administrative procedures, ensures that useful projects can be taken on board without the staff being drowned in paper work or electronic mail. The administration is very efficient but unobtrusive and this allows the headteacher time to work with pupils and to monitor the quality of education provided through a range of strategies including the management of the staff's performance against challenging yet achievable targets.

67. The school, though small in size, is very outward looking in its views. This is the case, for example, in the innovative approach to the curriculum. It is also well illustrated by the excellent links forged with a school in Japan and the excellent links with the local and business community. These mean that by the time the pupils leave Hesleden they are very well prepared for the next step in their education.

68. The governing body appreciates the guidance from the headteacher and the chair of governors, which enables the governors' strategic role to be executed very well. The governing body go far beyond their statutory duties and have a good understanding of how the school improvement plan linked to the budget drives the work of the school. The school uses a good range of information to make sure that decisions are well founded and right for the present and future. For example, questionnaires are used to gain the views of parents and pupils, the school measures its progress against that of other schools locally and nationally and has effective systems for making sure that financial resources are spent wisely, monitored and accounted for. Financial planning is handled very well and effective systems are in place and used consistently to set and monitor the budget. The small deficit in 2000 - 2001 came about when the funding for pupils' with special educational needs changed. The school has allowed for this from its next budget, which is well on target in 2001-2002.

69. The special needs governor is fully involved in the life of the school and ensures that special educational needs are discussed regularly at governing body meetings. The co-ordinator is very efficient and knowledgeable and is very well supported by the special needs teacher. Any additional funding for special educational needs is spent appropriately and the school uses money from the general budget to supplement the costs of the provision. Money has been very well spent on the provision of additional skilled teaching support and of resources of high quality. Arrangements for the revised Code of Practice are very well in hand.

70. The school employs a good mix of qualified and experienced staff, who are deployed in a

flexible and effective manner to make best use of their skills. The school experiences difficulties in appointing temporary staff of good quality to such an extent that for one term the headteacher had to teach three days each week to make sure that each class received appropriate teaching. Changes in staff also impact adversely on the allocation of subject responsibilities to individuals and mean that at times some staff have a large workload. Classroom support assistants are well trained and keen to use initiative in the support of pupils' learning in the classroom. Of note is the governors' decision to allocate a full-time teacher to support pupils with special needs and the employment of trained nursery nurses to work with children in the foundation stage, both of which add quality to the pupils' learning. All staff co-operate well with each other to provide the full range of activities for the pupils. Effective induction procedures have been established for new staff and good systems are in place to inform and ably support the staff working in the school.

71. The accommodation is good and provides a range of interesting and stimulating learning environments for the benefit of the pupils' learning and personal development. Of note are the very good facilities in the reception class, which enable teachers to provide an imaginative curricular experience for the pupils. An additional classroom is used well by the special educational needs teacher to support pupils with specific learning difficulties. However, the transfer of the library to smaller accommodation has restricted the ease of pupils' access to opportunities for pupils' independent and personal research. Examples of pupils' work, photographs of their achievements and a mixture of colourful educational support materials provide attractive and informative displays that stimulate and enrich the pupils' learning. Pupils benefit greatly from a large grassed playing field, complete with an all-weather walkway and attractive willow weave tunnel and "millennium dome" designed by the pupils. The school provides an appropriate nursery playground though this is not used to best advantage, awaiting improvements to the soft surface area for the pupils.

72. The range and quality of educational resources are good; those for religious education are satisfactory. With the recent addition of the computer suite, the school now has good resources for the teaching of information and communication technology. Effective use is made of a very good range of learning resources to support pupils with special needs. Though storage space in the school is limited, good use and organisation of the space available enables teachers to have easy access to required learning resources prior to their use in lessons.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. The school should:

- (1) raise pupils' attainment in religious education;
(paragraphs 147-150)
- (2) *improve the standards in reading to match those achieved in writing.
(paragraphs 10; 90 and 94)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also consider in its action plan:

*the development of the outside activities for children under the age of five (paragraphs 37; 83 and 85).

*already identified by the school as areas for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	17	26	12	0	0	0
Percentage	5	29	45	21	0	0	0

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

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)	20	124
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	43

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	7	6	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	92 (95)	92 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	92 (91)	92 (100)
	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	12	7	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (87)	74 (67)	79 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (87)	63 (73)	68 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* Numbers omitted where the number of boys and girls is below 10.

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	116*
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. *At the time of the inspection eight children in the reception class were not yet of compulsory school age.*

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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1
Average class size	24.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	0.7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.75
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	360,626
Total expenditure	367,714
Expenditure per pupil	2,284
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,018
Balance carried forward to next year	-3,070

Recruitment of teachers

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

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	50	8	4	6
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	31	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	12	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	29	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	33	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	24	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	36	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	32	0	0	2

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

74. An exciting; very well structured and very well taught curriculum is a mark of the work in the nursery and reception classes. The quality of teaching is good in physical development and very good in all other aspects. As a result children learn very quickly. Even though their attainment when they are admitted to the nursery is well below average overall and below average in physical development, they are on course to attain standards expected of their age by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. The children's very good achievement is supported through their very good attitudes and behaviour. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. Children have low skills on entering the nursery but make very good gains in their development. This is in part because of the very well structured routines that promote independence and in part because of the high expectations of the teaching staff. Children learn to take turns and to complete one task before moving on to the next. The provision encourages the children's curiosity as when they each planted seeds in the nursery and with much pride, pointed out their own plant pots. They are very self-centred at this early age, mostly playing independently alongside others. By the time they are in the reception class, the children have grown in confidence and made very good headway in working together with partners and as a larger group. The higher attaining reception children are able to empathise with characters in stories and with each other's sadness and happiness. One child sighed after listening to a story about loneliness and commented, 'It's just so nice to have a friend.' Middle attainers know that adults and other children will help them and they are confident in asking for support. Their attitudes to work improve because from the beginning they are taught to see the value of endeavour and the enjoyment that can be gained from hard work and the accomplishment of particular tasks. Children in the reception class develop a strong sense of belonging to their class and to the wider school community because the foundation stage is very well managed.

Communication, language and literacy

76. The children's poor skills in speaking and listening when they start the nursery are developed very well through the very good teaching and clear focus on conversation and the written word. Basic skills are taught particularly well and the effective methods of assessment and record keeping mean that work can be planned to meet the individual child's needs. Not only this, but when the children transfer to the reception class, no time is lost because the records are unambiguous. By their reception year, even the below average attainers have confidence to speak to adults and the class group, though they tend to speak in short phrases and skip from subject to subject. Higher attainers converse confidently because the teaching has developed their vocabulary very well. The teaching also generally deploys other adults very well to provide many extra opportunities for children to converse with adults. On occasion, however, adults join in large group discussions when their services could be better used to provide two smaller groups, thus enabling more children to contribute to discussion.

77. The opportunities provided in the reception class through the more formal teaching of literacy means that children build well upon their earlier work in the nursery. Higher attaining children are beginning to use the sounds of letters to read simple unknown words. They read with intonation copied from the teacher and make good gains in building up a sight vocabulary of familiar words. Less able children also enjoy reading and take cues from the pictures because the teaching has spent much time on this aspect of reading. The gifted and talented are able to attend a weekly reading club after school where a number of adults are ready to provide very good guidance to their reading. Parents also play a strong part in helping their children read at home.

78. Children become confident writers because they have many opportunities not only to write

for a range of purposes but also to read their efforts aloud to the class. Higher and middle attainers have developed a reasonable pencil grip, though the below average children have yet to master the technique to produce a flowing hand. The teaching is very clear about the formation of letters though support staff are at times less alert to mistakes in handwriting. The breadth of activities set out invitingly and the often excellent choice of resources mean that children always have lots of ideas to develop in their writing. They are proud of their efforts and make very good gains in understanding about their own learning. This is helped through their most positive attitudes and very good behaviour. It means that no time is lost.

Mathematical development

79. The children make substantial gains in their mathematical understanding because the activities are very well planned and take a step-by-step approach, which caters very well for children of differing attainment. For example, in the reception class, a counting game enabled the best mathematicians to count to a 100 while those in the middle range were able to count to 20 with reasonable confidence. The teachers' expectations are excellent and they insist on pushing the children to reach their maximum. Questions are matched very well to challenge individual pupils. Very good resources engage children and encourage them to form an assessment of the work of others. For example, when children match numerals to sets of objects others in the class count and check for accuracy.

80. The wide ranging activities are linked together through a topic which means that the children approach their work in number from many starting points and take great delight in realising, for example, that, when involved in role play in the classroom garden centre, they have been applying their counting skills to counting flowers and coins. They listen carefully to each other and check for accuracy!

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. The nursery and the reception class make very good use of visits both locally and further afield to broaden the children's understanding of the world about them. Visitors to the school extend the children's views about a range of topics. In the nursery, children begin to notice the weather because of the regular routine built into each session where children in turn check the day's weather and choose appropriate symbols to record it. Children acquire increasing precision by the time they are in the reception class through the daily weather forecast read, in the role of a television weather forecaster, by a child. Thus, each day children are chosen to present the weather using a computer to place appropriate weather symbols throughout the UK. The 'commentator' then begins with 'Good morning, this is BBC Hesleden with the weather forecastthe weather is stormy in London but sunny in Hesleden so the best place to be is Hesleden in the North East of England!'

82. Children become adept at using computers because staff are deployed very well to enable small groups of children to use the suite of computers. The tasks are linked extraordinarily well to classroom work. For example, children finding out about the growth of seeds used a program where they had to sequence events from germination of the seed to flowering. Higher attaining children used the keyboard well and used the mouse to drag items across the screen, being able to use the computer as a tool to their other learning. Lower attaining children needed more discussion and prompts to help them and worked at a slower pace but nonetheless, by the end of the short lesson, had managed to achieve their objective, while those who worked faster had extended their thinking by sequencing other life cycles such as that of a frog or butterfly. This came about because of the thoughtful and very well organised lesson planning and the very good relationships. The children were very responsible and took great care when using the expensive equipment. This was because the teaching assistant explained everything very carefully and the adults' very good skills in computers were brought to bear on the children's learning.

Physical development

83. From a below average starting point pupils in the reception class make good gains in their physical development, though their progress is limited because in the nursery the provision for

outside play is not as well developed as the activities inside. Children have daily access to outside play and, by the age of five, are able to skip, catch a large ball and throw underarm. Higher attaining children have developed sound hand and eye coordination, which helps them to catch balls over a longer distance and to throw a ball with a greater degree of accuracy. Reception children have a good amount of space to run and jump and play with their friends, though resources such as sand, water and wheeled toys are not readily available outside. In the nursery, resources are available but the organisation and quality of interaction between adults and children are insufficiently well developed. Adults rightly pay good attention to safety but concentrate less on developing children's potential. As a result, nursery children make sound gains, often consolidating their actions rather than improving them. For example, children can pedal on three wheeled trikes but their skills at steering and manoeuvring do not develop as quickly as they might because the layout of the outside area does not always encourage more precise control. The skills of using small tools to develop finer control develop well and help the children in their writing.

Creative development

84. A mark of the creative curriculum is the way in which the teaching makes it exciting and fascinating. Such activities as working with dye in the nursery not only engaged the children but the participating adult too and the joy was shared across the group. In the reception class, story telling by the teacher enthralled the children as they found out about the life of Vincent Van Gogh. You could have heard a pin drop such was the children's interest and empathy with the characters in the story. Children then went on to describe parts of Van Gogh's painting with similes such as 'the sky is wriggly like a mermaid's hair'. This teaching provided excellent opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and to appreciate the spiritual breadth to life. The outcome in terms of creativity in art was that the pupils learnt to apply thick paint by loading their brushes and improved on the technique as they built up enormous sunflowers with shades of yellow in the style of the famous artist. One child, totally enthralled by the process, said about the paint, 'It's blobby but just what we need to be Vincent!'

85. Creativity in outside play is not promoted as well as the creative aspects developed in the classrooms. Adults encourage children to take part in games and such as throwing and catching a ball and skipping but the provision for using the environment to develop the children's aesthetic and scientific growth is under-emphasised.

ENGLISH

86. There are particular strengths in the teaching and learning of English, including:

- the use of assessment to identify areas of weakness in pupils' learning. For example, the school identified the need to improve writing. This area is now a strength in the subject;
- the attitudes that pupils have to their work;
- the use of literacy in other subjects;
- effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy;
- the contribution of the subject to pupils' spiritual and cultural development;
- extra classes after school to continue to raise pupils' attainment; and
- teaching of good quality that results in effective learning.

An area for further development is:

- to improve standards in reading.

87. Pupils achieve well over time because of the effective teaching, which provides well-planned lessons and teaches basic skills adeptly. Pupils who need extra help with their learning achieve very well because of the very good provision and very good teaching they receive. There is no marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Since the last inspection good

improvement has been made.

88. Pupils apply what they learn in English to other subjects well. They use their reading skills, for example in other subjects and become increasingly proficient in deciphering and comprehending texts. They have frequent opportunities in which to practise their writing in other subjects such as history. Information and communication technology is used extensively to develop pupils' skills in writing and pupils are able to produce attractive and accurate word-processed work on a number of topics.

Speaking and listening

89. Pupils achieve well as they become more confident speakers over time. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to talk through question and answer sessions in class, by reading out the work they have written and in group activities. This builds up the confidence of the pupils and helps to develop their vocabulary. Although a minority remain passive during discussions, the majority are keen and confident to share their thoughts and ideas, for example to answer questions or describe the task they have been doing.

90. Pupils aged between seven and 11 achieve standards that are typical for their age and continue to make good progress. They build up their vocabulary through taking part in a variety of class activities such as drama and when they join in discussions to share their thoughts and ideas. By the time they are 11, most pupils have the confidence and skills to discuss a topic sensibly or to take part in performances. Higher attainers use spoken language with confidence, for example to explain their work or to answer questions in class, often using a mature turn of phrase. Lower attainers are more unsure and use language in a more limited way with a narrower vocabulary.

Reading

91. Standards of reading throughout the school are average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know how to build up words using letter sounds and are reading their books with developing confidence and accuracy. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to read with expression in their voice and to show a good understanding of the text by talking about the characters and story line. By contrast, lower attainers are still struggling with very simple texts and require a considerable amount of prompting to encourage them to tackle new words. Those who find difficulty with their reading are often hesitant and not yet able to hold a conversation about what they have been reading.

92. By the time they are 11, most pupils are no longer working from a reading scheme but are proficient enough to make their own choice of material. Most pupils read with relative accuracy and increasing fluency but only the higher attainers read expressively. A significant proportion of pupils still experience difficulty with their reading and are more hesitant and erratic. Although a few high attaining 11 year old pupils indicate their love of reading as a pastime by describing their favourite authors and characters, a number of pupils are reluctant readers who confess that they rarely read books at home. Only a minority are able to discuss the books they have read in any real depth and most pupils are familiar with the work of only a narrow range of authors for their age. Older pupils have a sound knowledge of how to access information from books using indexes and contents and information from the Internet.

Writing

93. Standards in writing are a real strength. They are in line with the national average for seven year olds; for pupils aged 11 they are above average. This represents very good achievement overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are becoming increasingly independent in writing for different purposes. Through regular practice, they improve their skills in spelling and punctuation and are becoming more proficient in getting their thoughts down on paper and then re-drafting into a final copy. By the time they are seven, most pupils are conveying their own ideas or writing a simple story with relative accuracy. Pupils with special educational needs do not find writing easy but achieve very well because they receive good support and encouragement to help them to succeed. They do not yet use punctuation with any real consistency, and spelling is erratic, but pencil control becomes more secure as they get older and their handwriting improves over time. For example,

some letters that were indistinguishable at the beginning of the school year are now written with consistent accuracy.

94. In Years 3 to 6 pupils complete a large volume of written work over time and they use their writing for a wide range of interesting purposes. They use dictionaries competently to enable them to check their spellings and, through their daily work in the literacy hour, improve their repertoire of writing skills. Spelling and punctuation are relatively secure and presentation is generally neat and orderly. Pupils are good at drafting and re-drafting their work and are prepared to work on a piece over several days in order to produce a piece of writing of quality. By the age of 11 years old, most pupils write confidently in a range of genres, often using descriptive language, imagery and a mature turn of phrase, as illustrated in this example.

‘...Falteringly she lit a match. A warm flame. The matchseller cupped her hands over the match. As she did so magically she saw in its light a burning stove. Poor thing. In just a few seconds she caught a glimpse of what life had denied her; Warmth. Food. Her eyes filled with tears. She lifted her gaze to the lit window...’

95. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and are familiar with the demands of the literacy hour. Basic skills are taught well and as a result pupils make good progress. Teachers make good use of time and incorporate a balance of direct teaching and individual work that maintains the pace of the lesson. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They maintain their concentration through literacy lessons and strive to meet the high expectations of their teachers, even though a significant number do not find learning easy. Just occasionally, when teaching lacks sparkle, some pupils become restless and lose interest in proceedings or resort to calling out, but most listen attentively. In most classrooms, teachers make good use of displays to promote language and to provide pupils with useful points of reference so that they are able to write fluently and independently. Older pupils have a clear knowledge of how well they are doing in the subject and know what they must work on to improve their work. Most pupils are keen to do well and take their targets seriously. In good lessons, the teaching provides crisp and clear explanations to pupils and the best provides a very good model of spoken English for pupils to follow, with clear diction and precise articulation of all consonants. Because teachers use assessments well to provide a clear picture of the needs of each pupil, teachers are able to provide work that is well matched to the pupils’ needs. In a good lesson in Year 5 and 6, pupils modified a written text on the computers. They worked very co-operatively in pairs on different texts of varying complexity, matched well to their levels of attainment. They made good progress because they were engrossed in the task and well challenged. The subject makes a good contribution to the school’s spiritual and cultural provision.

96. The school has invested considerable time and effort into improving standards in writing and this has paid rich dividends, as can be seen in the rising trend in standards year on year. The challenge to raise attainment in reading to the same level as in writing is a continuing part of the school’s development planning. The school has taken effective steps to raise attainment in reading by providing homework clubs for pupils to practise their reading and in ‘booster classes’, in which pupils who need a little more help are withdrawn from lessons read intensively. These strategies are working well and helping to raise standards year on year. However, there is more that could be done to develop in pupils a love of reading and to promote literacy. For example, book corners in classrooms are insufficiently inviting and do little to promote reading as a pastime or to introduce pupils to a range of authors. The school library is very small and does not lend itself to regular use in class sessions. The school has yet to consider how the newly relocated library is to be used, but currently pupils have little access to it to borrow or to use books. There is some inconsistency in the way in which the home and school reading system is applied, especially in Years 3 to 6, where not all pupils take books home to read to adults regularly. When they do take books home, the school has no consistently applied system for recording and monitoring progress or strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ development. As a result, the impact of the parental support to reading is not as strong as for the younger pupils.

MATHEMATICS

97. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection because of the strengths in the teaching and learning of mathematics which include:

- a programme of work that places a strong emphasis on practical mathematics and using number patterns to solve problems;
- use of assessment of pupils' performance in all tests, including statutory assessment tests, to identify areas of weakness in pupils' learning. For example, the school identified the need for more detailed work on shape and space and measures in all years. This area is now a strength in the subject;
- the tracking of pupils' progress year on year;
- effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
- carefully planned extra classes to boost pupils' attainment; and
- consistently good teaching with careful attention to the use of subject specific vocabulary.

An area for further development is:

- more use of information and communication technology in data handling.

98. Achievement in mathematics is good and has improved since the last inspection. In most lessons, pupils make good progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants are sensitive to their needs, set them suitable tasks and encourage them to gain skills and to take part in most lessons with the class. Support given in groups withdrawn from the classroom is very focused and effective. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged because teachers have clear expectations and enable these pupils to achieve in line with their capabilities. Challenging targets have been set for this year and 2003 and these targets are likely to be reached so that standards will be higher.

99. Pupils attain an average standard by the age of seven. Pupils in Year 1 count in sets of two to 20 and know most of the double numbers up to 10 add 10. They enjoy the song and actions that accompany these calculations. Pupils improve their understanding of odd and even numbers, lower attaining pupils benefiting greatly from the practical activity provided for them. Pupils in Year 2 can complete sequences of odd or even numbers from any starting point and complete addition sums to 50. Higher attaining pupils work successfully with tens and units to 99. All pupils know some lines of symmetry in basic shapes and the majority know the names of six three-dimensional shapes, such as 'cone' and 'cylinder'. Pupils measure accurately in centimetres and many can tell the time at least to half past the hour. Pupils confidently work out objects that are lighter than, or heavier than, another object. Pupils match coins of similar value and higher attaining pupils add pence accurately.

100. By the time they are in Year 6 standards are above average. Pupils are clear about addition and subtraction using large numbers. They solve problems correctly and work confidently with decimals and fractions. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 and 6 completed a 10-minute mathematics test of their understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals under examination conditions. Pupils achieved well in the test, most improving on past performance and a third of the group having over 40 out of a possible 46 marks. They used a wide range of scales to measure the weight of several items and check the actual weights against their estimates in grams. Higher attaining pupils had the additional challenge of working out the weight of a stock cube when none of the scales recorded so light a weight. They made a good attempt at this, having some interesting ideas.

101. The quality of teaching and the consequent learning are good. Enjoyment of mathematical learning is created by the teachers' interest and enthusiasm and this is evident in the ways they succeed in making learning fun. As a result the pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. Their

positive attitudes make them keen to participate and learn. For example, pupils enjoy the challenges they are given. Pupils in Year 3 worked out how long a paper chain they could get out of a piece of A4 paper. In Year 4, pupils worked out how many sweatshirts were needed to find two with the same variation of a set pattern. Pupils in Year 6 made an investigation into fire hazards, working out a formula to show how quickly a forest fire could spread. They produced a range of different graphs, calculating how many trees would be destroyed and their potential value. This activity was completed by a calculation of how many fire fighters would be needed to put out the fire. This was an extremely relevant, challenging and interesting investigation for the pupils.

102. Teachers are very good at not giving away the right answer so that pupils have to think and justify their reasoning. They pick up pupils' responses very quickly and persevere when pupils find it difficult to explain their ideas clearly. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils' thinking. Planning is good so pupils are clear about what they are learning in the lessons. The marking of work is mostly helpful so pupils know how they can improve their work. Teachers plan more advanced activities for higher attaining pupils, and lower attaining pupils are given work that helps them to consolidate their learning well. Good relationships with the pupils that ensure that most lessons proceed at a lively pace.

103. The structure of the daily mathematics lessons is used effectively. The initial mental mathematics sessions are used well to sharpen pupils' thinking and to set up the group activities that follow. Teachers are skilled at using different mathematical terms and work hard to get pupils to use these in their explanations. For example, the teacher uses 'calibrate', 'activate' and 'suspend' when introducing the various scales to be used in the lesson and encourages pupils to use these terms in their discussions.

104. The subject is managed very effectively and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well. Resources for the subject are good and good use is made of information and communication technology. Numeracy is used effectively in subjects such as history and art. For example, pupils sequence events and calculate from dates in history. There is a wealth of mathematics in art, particularly through the use of shapes and pattern and in the display of investigations. Mathematics makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because of the many opportunities provided for pupils to work together in harmony, making discoveries about patterns and having fun in working with numbers.

SCIENCE

105. Particular strengths in the teaching and learning of science include:

- a curriculum that includes an investigative approach;
- effective leadership; and
- consistently good teaching which promotes enquiry.

An area for further development is:

- independent writing in the recording of the pupils' work.

106. The above average standards by the age of 11 found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained through good teaching. Standards attained by seven year olds are satisfactory though lower than at the time the last inspection. This is because this particular year group has over half of the pupils on the register of special educational needs. The quality of teaching is good across the school and pupils achieve well. Higher attainers are set to reach levels higher than those typically expected for their age. The subject is well led and appropriately resourced

107. The curriculum is very practically based and the majority of the activities include

experimenting and problem solving. For example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 made good headway in understanding about forces when they investigated how a force can change the shape of an object or material. The good teaching quickly engaged pupils' interest with an eye-catching start to the lesson as sheets of paper were twisted. The tasks were matched well to pupils' differing levels of attainment and, as a result, pupils could work quite independently at their tasks, allowing the teaching to continue with particular groups. Pupils with special educational needs were withdrawn for part of the lesson but because they had listened to the introduction, when they re-entered the classroom they quickly became immersed in their task. Higher attainers came to a better understanding of how to use Newton meters to measure force while lower attainers developed their understanding of how some materials will go back to their original shape and others will not. Teaching assistance is well deployed and promotes the use of scientific thinking and scientific language well, often guiding pupils through a simple recording sheet to help them remember their findings. Pupils' attitudes are good and pupils are at their best when they are expected to listen for a short time and when they are actively engaged in their work. When they are expected to remain seated for a more extended length of time, their concentration wanes and they become fidgety.

108. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 build well upon their earlier understanding. The strengths are in the work of the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, where strong teaching raises standards considerably. This was the case, for example, in a Year 6 lesson investigating changes when materials are mixed together. Clear and accurate exposition, demonstration and high expectations linked well together and promoted a very good rate of learning. The very good relationships enabled the teacher to use humour in the cut and thrust of questioning, which encouraged pupils to work even harder. Resources are used very well; for example, in one lesson a honeycombed chocolate bar was used to illustrate the effect of chemical reaction. The pupils were intrigued and raised many questions. They also enjoyed eating the chocolate at the end of the lesson!

109. On occasions, lessons are less well planned and when this happens the lack of forethought adversely affects the rate of pupils' learning. When Year 4 and Year 5 pupils investigated how the earth, sun and moon move in relation to each other, instructions were unclear and resulted in a slow pace of work on the part of the pupils, particularly the lower attaining pupils, who lacked the structured approach provided in the better teaching.

110. An inconsistency in the teaching of science is in the use of writing. There are varying practices in the amount of independent writing expected from the pupils. For example, in one class, the majority of writing is copied from a central source. This makes the books quite useful for revision but limits the pupils' skills in recording their findings in their own words. In other classes, pupils are encouraged to attempt their own recording with little support while, at other times, pupils are provided with a range of methods to support their independent writing.

111. The co-ordination of the subject has recently changed. The new appointee has quickly got to grips with the work and is guiding the subject well making sure that pupils use information and communication technology as a tool to their scientific tasks.

ART AND DESIGN

112. By the time they are seven, pupils produce work that is above national expectations. By the time they are 11, pupils produce work that is well above that found nationally. The high standards are due to the very good teaching they receive across the school. Pupils use a range of media and techniques and develop their skills systematically year on year. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well because the activities are planned thoughtfully and pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas.

113. By the time they are seven, pupils use paint, collage, pens and pencils to create an interesting range of imaginative and illustrative work of high quality. For example, pupils in Year 1 create exquisite observational watercolour paintings of flowers. These are exceedingly mature

pictures. By the time they are seven, they colour squares of fabric, designing interesting patterns by sequencing colours and shapes. Pupils check that what they have done is similar to what they planned to do in their original design. Higher attainers produce intricate work. In one lesson the pupils painted half a page of their paper, very deliberately, mixing colours as they worked. They visualised the finished product and anticipated that, after folding their paper, they would be able to see the whole of their pattern emerge. Some delightful patterns were produced and the idea of symmetry was reinforced well in the lesson.

114. Seven to 11 year olds learn effectively, making good use of their developing skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 looked thoughtfully at paintings by a range of artists to see how different cloud formations are depicted. They watched the clouds hurrying by outside and worked with pastel, chalk and wax crayons to create their own cloud pictures. Several were tentative at first, unwilling to work freely with the pastels, but gradually they were inspired by others' efforts and the praise they received from the teacher. A beautiful collection of pastels was produced, some of the sunsets following the style of Turner. Pupils produce superb colour effects in chalk and pastel when drawing stormy weather scenes in the style of Van Gogh and Monet. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate how well their observational drawing skills develop as when they complete delicate watercolour sketches of Durham Cathedral. They make attractive stained glass windows, looking carefully at the Islamic designs they have used in their planning.

115. Pupils look forward to art and design lessons. They develop a very good perception of how artists use colour and shape and this gives them the confidence to attempt their own designs in a similar manner. Pupils' confidence grows in the lesson, especially that of those pupils with special educational needs or with a low opinion of their own drawing ability, because of the warm relationship between adults and the encouragement they receive from each other. All are absorbed in their tasks, improving their work as the teacher skilfully questions them, encouraging them to extend their answers further when they have difficulty in expressing their opinions or responding to the activities. Teaching and learning in art and design are very good so pupils enjoy their lessons and give of their best.

116. Art is used extensively in subjects such as history, geography and mathematics. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used skills learnt in art to produce their illustrated letters and pupils in Year 4 composed a striking collage about Rama and Sita as part of their study on India. Many classes produce attractive shape patterns in paint and collage. There is well-planned use of information and communication technology. This is used well for pupils throughout the school to prepare different designs. Teachers suggest how pupils' work can be improved. This encourages pupils to reflect on their work and to try to improve it.

117. The subject is very effectively managed and staff share the co-ordinator's enthusiasm for raising standards and ensuring that pupils improve and extend their skills and understanding. Artistic experiences, such as workshops and visits to museums, provide valuable opportunities for learning new techniques and working together. The work produced in 2001, when the school had visitors from Japan and an emphasis on Japanese art, is exceptional. The school has a superb collection of work, including high quality drawings of Bonsai trees, some of which are outstanding, and the delicate dabbing of brushes has enabled pupils to produce graceful branches laden with pink blossom. The school is rightly proud of the quality of work produced during the project. Pupils' work is displayed very effectively around the school and classes have interesting displays of two and three-dimensional work. Art makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. This subject has developed well since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with the national expectation. Standards by the end of Years 6 are now much higher and pupils' attainment is well above the levels normally expected. Pupils achieve very well because of

the interesting range of projects they undertake and the very good teaching. By the end of Year 2 the pupils achieve standards that are above average for their age. The teaching and consequent learning are good, and right from their first days in the school pupils are introduced to a range of materials and opportunities to design and make things. As they get older, their skills become more sophisticated because they have frequent opportunities to use them in challenging activities and teachers encourage them to produce items of good quality.

119. The range of work on display in the school is of a high quality and is used very effectively to illustrate topics in a variety of subjects. As part of their work studying Japan, pupils in Years 4 and 5 produced beautifully crafted collages of a Japanese picture of a tsunami or great wave. The work incorporated a careful match of shades and texture and featured delicate sequinned embellishment to represent the sparkling of the water. Pupils learning about the Victorians in Year 6 produced very effective replica tiles of fire surrounds. After careful designing, each clay tile was cut to uniform shape, incorporating precise measurement, and the finished tiles were painted with great attention to detail and authenticity.

120. There are strengths in the way pupils are resourceful and imaginative in their designs, as, for example, when making model replicas of items used during World War II. Because they understand the importance of the design process and have worked with a range of materials over time, they have come to know the potential of the materials. Pupils are therefore able to make realistic designs for their replicas. They know how to achieve the effect they want. For example, pupils who made gas masks chose to mould the shape in papier-mâché to achieve a curved effect. Similarly, pupils who made wooden photograph frames were able to suggest a range of imaginative and practicable embellishments to decorate their frames. Higher attainers are particularly good at evaluating their work.

121. The teaching is particularly strong when staff have confidence in the subject and choose exciting activities that capture the interest of the pupils. There are very good links with other subjects and this helps to make learning relevant to the pupils. When making their wooden photograph frames, pupils were encouraged to draw effectively on their mathematical skills to draw and measure the sides of their frames and to cut the wood to the required length. They used tools sensibly and drew upon their knowledge from previous lessons. One pupil pointed out that the end of the wood should not be snapped off or it would splinter. Teaching makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, exploiting the fact that they are able to achieve success in a subject that does not always depend on academic prowess.

122. The coordination of the subject is effective. The school uses national guidance as a framework for the programmes of study for the pupils but it has been adapted well to suit the needs of the school. The subject is given due prominence in the curriculum and is used very effectively to support work in other subjects such as history and geography. There are plenty of resources to draw upon. The subject makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual and cultural provision in the school; for example, beautifully crafted Japanese Noh masks illustrated well things pupils had been learning as part of their Japanese project.

GEOGRAPHY

123. The quality of teaching and the resulting quality of learning are satisfactory. Attainment of pupils aged seven and 11 is in line with that typically expected for their ages and with standards reported at the last inspection. Girls and boys, including pupils with special educational needs, gain an increasingly wide knowledge and understanding of the subject. They develop sound skills in geographical research and observation because of the wide range of opportunities provided in the lessons.

124. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of how to follow a route around the local area to come to school. They make good observational drawings of houses and plan a perfect

playground for the village, “which would have lovely things”. High attaining pupils include much detail.

125. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their knowledge of climate and weather around the world. They learn much from a weather forecaster who visits the school and this inspires them to create their own very interesting reports. One pupil wrote, “Today in Hesleden it is wickedly wild – but it is not over yet!” Pupils know the symbols on weather maps and study different places around the world, such as, for example, Brazil, India, North America and Barcelona, and they work out what the weather will be like and what they should wear. Pupils make very good use of books, videos and information and communication technology to obtain their information and present their work well. There are very good links with other subjects through this topic; one which pupils particularly enjoy is the creation of a series of musical weather compositions. These are lively and an enjoyable addition to their work.

126. Pupils build soundly upon their work about other countries such as India and know how to research various aspects of Indian life. They enjoyed the story of Rama and Sita and the study of Hinduism that culminated in a colourful Diwali celebration. Pupils discovered many words that are of Indian origin, such as, for example, shampoo and pyjamas, and considered thoughtfully some similarities and differences between life here and in the Indian village of Chembakoli. Pupils in Year 6 carefully answer questions about the river cycle, spelling important words correctly and writing in well-structured sentences. They produce their own glossary of the terms used in this study and work in groups to investigate different aspects of rivers. Pupils work very thoughtfully on the construction of cross-sections of the river and write in a lively style about the different uses of water, such as hydroelectric power. Above average attainers are particularly adept at providing reasons for their particular views

127. The quality of teaching for Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons that are well matched to the topic being studied. Teachers expect pupils to remember and apply knowledge from previous lessons. They plan some good links with other subjects, such as art in Years 3 and 4 and literacy through note taking and opportunities to carry out independent research. Pupils are interested in the topics studied and their understanding and geographical knowledge increases year on year and their work becomes more thorough. Teachers’ marking often indicates how well a pupil has understood the lesson and there are some good examples of ideas to improve the quality of the work. Written work is usually presented carefully because pupils think about their spelling, punctuation and presentation.

128 The curriculum is well managed. It makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through visits, field studies and visitors.

HISTORY

129 By the time pupils reach the age of seven their attainment is in line with expected standards for pupils of this age. By the age of 11, pupils’ attain standards above the levels expected because of the quality of their writing about the various topics. Standards attained by older pupils have improved since the last inspection and they achieve well.

130. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a good sense of the past in discussions about yesterday, last week and last year. They know that Florence Nightingale was born a long time ago in Italy and that she wanted to be a nurse. “A nurse had to be good to her patients,” one pupil wrote and a higher attainer commented on the time the nurse spent making the hospitals clean. Pupils know that we celebrate Bonfire Night because Guy Fawkes tried, and failed, to blow up the Houses of Parliament.

131. By Year 6 pupils use books, artefacts, pictures and stories to develop their basic skills of historical enquiry effectively. They build on earlier research, for example, on Henry VIII by using all of these resources. They recall their work on where the important events of World War II took place and the countries involved in the war. They are moved when they take a walk into the village to look

at old Anderson shelters. They develop an understanding of what it meant to be in London or the country during the war. A group of Year 4 pupils read the script for a play about evacuees with expression and the rest of the group listened very thoughtfully. Pupils in Year 6 use independent research to find out facts about the Victorians. They write with feeling about the lack of bathrooms and the poor conditions in which many children lived. Pupils write their own version of 'The Little Match Girl', using the skills they learn in English well. Pupils assemble accurate information about Victorian inventors and fashions by using books, pictures, artefacts and information and communication technology. High attainers give clear accounts drawing well on their research. Pupils of all abilities use historical evidence well to support their arguments. They write letters of thanks to the museum where they dressed as Victorians and had their photograph taken. "I felt like a Victorian model," wrote one girl and everyone found the visit to the schoolroom fascinating, making good observations about all that they saw. They described clearly many of the artefacts they saw and looked forward to creating an impressive 'Victorian Toyshop' in design and technology lessons.

132 The quality of teaching and learning is good for the seven to 11 year olds. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are planned to help pupils learn, as well as to cover the syllabus. Teachers encourage good thinking skills when they ask older pupils to identify what they already know about a new topic and what they would like to learn about it. The enthusiasm of the teacher captures the interest of the pupils and they respond very well. There is planned use in history of literacy and subjects, such as art and information and communication technology. Teachers make good use of videos to support pupils' learning. Presentation of pupils' work is good and varied.

133. The subject is well managed and the curriculum has been revised to be in line with national recommendations. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' written work carefully. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through visits, visitors and opportunities to handle and examine artefacts of the periods being studied.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Since then the school has broadened the curriculum it provides, however, and has made very good improvement in the provision of a suite of computers, which is in regular use and great demand.

135. A strength in the provision, and consequently in the rate of the pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge, is the application of information and technology to a wide range of other subjects. Indeed, the teaching of information and communication technology is an integral part of other subjects. As a result, pupils use computers as a tool for their learning across a range of other work. They are taught the computer skills and immediately apply them to particular tasks. The pupils are very mature and responsible and become engrossed in their work making this approach very effective. For example, in history, Year 5 pupils made gains in their word processing skills by using e-mail to send messages as though from evacuees in World War II. This helped them to develop empathy and understanding of the circumstances of evacuees.

136. The very good teaching of the older pupils is confident and reflects the training that staff have received to keep themselves abreast of the subject. The planning builds well upon earlier lessons. Good account is taken of the wider experiences of some pupils and work is well matched to the individual. The very good relationships mean that pupils are very confident to ask questions and to work with other pupils, as when higher attainers designed their school's web site. They readily agreed the allocation of tasks and the type of information they wanted to include. Their understanding of how pages on the web site need to link together improved very well. The teaching of the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils is good. Staff are deployed well so that small groups of pupils have much individual attention to help them develop their computer skills. Teaching encourages independent learning; 'Have a go' and 'Don't forget.' are phrases often heard in the computer suite. This becomes a way of life for the pupils and the good rate of learning for Year 1 and Year 2 sets

them up well for the increased expectations later on. It also means that the school is well set to raise standards quickly.

137. Previous gaps in pupils' attainment are quickly being addressed through the very good teaching. For example, a relative weakness in Year 6 is the pupils' understanding of data handling. In one lesson, pupils made very good headway in setting up a new database to collate information about rivers. Pupils soon learnt the function of the 'sort' key and experimented in altering their lists. The teacher intervened regularly to make sure that the pace of the lesson was sustained. The use of an overhead projector to show examples of data was very effective in that it enabled time to be used well. Pupils knew by the end of the lesson that the information entered in the data base needs to be correct to provide reliable results.

138. The coordination of information and communication technology is very effective. It provides clear leadership and ensures that the school is forward looking in its use of the subject. A minor weakness is the lack of provision of information charts in the computer suite and the use of aide-mémoires for the pupils as they work their way through their tasks.

MUSIC

139. Standards throughout the school are above those typically expected. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with expectations. At that time, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to compose music and to use musical vocabulary correctly. Since then the curriculum has widened to provide more experiences in which pupils use their knowledge of musical notation to write and compose music. Singing, which was judged to be of a high standard in the previous report, remains a strength.

140. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because the teaching has considerable musical expertise and provides well-chosen activities to develop pupils' musical skills. Pupils sing together enthusiastically and respond to the teacher's actions as they learn about rhythm and patterns of sounds. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge of musical notation becomes well established as they use it to record their own compositions. The standard of singing by the choir is a real strength. Pupils sing confidently with very good breath control and clear diction. They modulate the tone of their voices to match the words of the song and give a very polished performance. The quality of singing is reflected in class lessons where choir members enhance the quality of performance considerably. Pupils enjoy singing and join in the songs in their increasing repertoire with relish. The school has thriving groups for keyboards, brass and strings and pupils make good progress. For example, a group of pupils who have been learning to play violins for only four weeks are already reading simple music and playing on open strings to a piano accompaniment. Those who learn to play instruments persevere with practising and are keen to improve their skills.

141. The quality of teaching varies throughout the school but it is good overall. Where teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, they make lessons lively and enjoyable for pupils, who respond with enthusiasm. This was seen in a lesson in Years 1 and 2, where pupils explored ways in which sounds can be represented by symbols on a grid. Pupils made good gains in learning because there was variety in the focus of the activities. They progressed quickly from helping to record sounds on the teacher's grid to working in groups making their own grids. Where the teacher's expertise is more limited, pupils do not make as much progress because the teacher does not always know how to improve the quality of the singing. In a lesson in which pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 rehearsed their songs from World War II, the teacher relied heavily on choir members to keep the pace of the singing going, instead of giving a lead to sustain the rhythm and to pitch the singing accurately. The result of this was that the singing lacked the quality heard in other performances and did not markedly improve as the lesson progressed. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They enjoy making music together and give of their best even when struggling with a very challenging libretto.

142. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and contributes successfully to the

spiritual and cultural provision. There are several after-school clubs in which pupils learn to play instruments and sing as well as plenty of opportunities for pupils to take part in musical performances such as a joint concert with other schools and in the Christingle service at Christmas. A recent project in which pupils have composed a song about the village of Hesleden with a local songwriter has provided a valuable and enriching element to the pupils' learning as well as contributing to the school's cultural provision.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Pupils, by the age of 11, achieve above average levels of attainment because of the very effective coordination of physical education which has brought about improvement since the last inspection. The leadership of the subject is well focused on providing a rounded and extended curriculum. The quality of teaching and the consequent quality of learning is good overall and very good in Year 6. The pupils' very positive attitudes and their very good behaviour contribute very well to their achievements. No formal teaching was seen at Year 1 or Year 2, though pupils' attainment in games as observed in outside play is broadly in line with that expected for their age.

144. Strengths in the teaching that bring about the good quality of learning are highlighted in the use of demonstration both in the teaching and by pupils. Thus, when Year 6 pupils were stretching their muscles prior to energetic exercise, the teacher, by example, made sure that the pupils were really reaching out with their limbs and moving in time to music, which was well chosen for the exercise. Very clear instructions - 'This is what I want you to do...' mean that lessons can go ahead at a fast pace and still provide sufficient time to practise and refine the movement. Pupils' very good behaviour, close attention to detail and a keen will to succeed mean that lessons are enjoyable and satisfying. The subject knowledge of the teaching comes through well as when 'tips' are provided to help the pupils improve. Skills are developed and then time allowed for experimentation. Very good relationships mean that pupils are confident in the teaching and are willing to 'have a go'. This was the case, for example, when Year 6 pupils developed a sequence of movements and produced a polished performance at the end of the lesson. The programme of swimming enables all pupils to achieve well and, by Year 6, standards in swimming are higher than found in most schools.

145. Relative weaknesses in teaching that is otherwise satisfactory occur when the lesson is insufficiently well planned. As a result, the step-by-step approach found in the stronger teaching is not evident and the pupils' skills are not always built upon well and do not develop as quickly as they would otherwise do. The excessive use of a whistle and the lack of clarity in instructions reflect a lower degree of subject knowledge than in other teaching. The deployment of teaching assistants during lessons is unsatisfactory because they are not allocated a particular role. Pupils are taught about health and safety and know how to look after themselves and to be aware of others in their work. They handle apparatus well and lift items carefully and safely. The pupils' maturity in these respects enables lessons to move at a good pace.

146. The curriculum is enriched through a range of visiting sports coaches and other specialists and through a number of clubs. Opportunities to work alongside other primary schools as in the forthcoming Children's Commonwealth Games, in which this school is representing Trinidad and Tobago, broaden the pupils' outlook and provide an audience for their dance. The pupils worked as a team to develop a dance routine based on movement in cricket. Exaggerated running and bowling steps and rhymes helped the pupils to move well in time to the upbeat music. Pupils had a high level of commitment and good cheer as they worked in this large team and enjoyed the intellectual as well the physical challenge.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147 Standards are below average by the time pupils reach the age of 11 and pupils'

achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection. By the time they leave the school, pupils have only a perfunctory knowledge and understanding of the subject and their experiences in religious education are not as broad as they should be. This is because religious education is under-represented in the curriculum. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards or teaching for pupils in Year 2 because no lessons were observed and there was very little recorded work in evidence.

148. The recorded work of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is broadly linked to the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education but much of the work is of a superficial nature. Recorded work tends to include several disparate topics, but none is taught in any real depth. As a result, by the time they leave the school, pupils have little recollection of things they have learned. For example, most pupils in Year 6 recall making Islamic patterns but have little other knowledge of aspects of the religion. Most pupils have in their books photographs of places of worship from other religions such as a Sikh Temple or a synagogue, but few were able to indicate any real knowledge of beliefs and practices of the religions represented in the photographs. Their understanding of the symbolism and practices in the Christian religion is limited even though this unit of study is covered in more than one class. Much of the work in religious education focuses on moral development and consideration of human behaviour and this is done well, making a very positive contribution to the school's provision for moral and social development. There are times when religious education is used as a vehicle to teach other subjects, such as art, rather than a subject in its own right. When this happens, it dilutes the religious education aspect of the lesson and pupils do not make sufficient gains in their learning.

149. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall. It is good in lessons where the teacher has secure knowledge, feels comfortable with the subject and provides stimulating activities to make pupils think. For example, in a good lesson in Year 3, pupils developed their understanding of symbolism well. Through effective group work, they shared their ideas about the importance of three everyday items in their lives and through the teacher's clear explanation came to understand that Jesus is sometimes represented symbolically as bread or as light or as a shepherd. The lesson provided very good opportunities for speaking and listening and the teacher's questions were thought provoking. This generated much discussion and helped pupils to learn well. By contrast, pupils in Year 6 were engaged in a very challenging activity reproducing stained glass window. The lesson was very effective in developing their skills in art, design and technology but the religious component of the lesson was under emphasised and this limited the extent to which pupils made progress.

150. The school has rightly focused much attention on developing literacy and numeracy and so religious education has not been a high priority recently. The Agreed Syllabus is not put to best use to support non-specialist teachers and there is little monitoring taking place to assess which aspects need further improvement. Staff are aware of shortcomings in the subject and the need for further training to enhance the skills of the teachers and to develop their confidence.