

# INSPECTION REPORT

## OTTERBURN FIRST SCHOOL

Otterburn

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122215

Headteacher: Mr G. Raffle

Reporting inspector: Mrs G. Crew  
22837

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 197528

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Road Otterburn Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE19 1JF
Telephone number:	01830 520283
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev B. McKay
Date of previous inspection:	15/09/97

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22837	Mrs G. Crew	Registered inspector	English Art and design History Physical education Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
19342	Mr T. Heavey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and personal development Partnership with parents and carers
25778	Mr A. Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Music	Quality and range of learning opportunities

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The number of pupils on roll of this rural school is 54, which is much smaller than the average primary school. Pupils attend school from age four to nine. The school mainly serves the local villages of Otterburn, Elsdon and Rochester, although a significant number of pupils come from further away. Due to the size of the catchment area, the majority of pupils are transported to school. The ethnic background of the pupils is white European and there are no children for whom English is an additional language. A very low percentage of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The majority of children attend a pre-Reception class when they are four, although the summer-born children begin school in the term following their fifth birthday. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is generally below average. Due to this, the school places a high emphasis on developing language and personal and social skills. There are currently no pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is well below the national average. However, the school does provide individual education plans for pupils when they feel this will benefit learning and achievement. Four pupils are currently identified as gifted or talented in mathematics.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. The implementation of the school's aims and values is good and securely reflected in the daily life of the school. Overall, the management of the school is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. He has a clear vision for the school, which is upheld by all staff and the governing body. A happy, caring community where all pupils are cherished and valued for their individual achievements and contribution to the school has been successfully created. At the end of Year 2, pupils do very well in writing and mathematics and well in reading compared with other schools nationally. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, they do very well in English and mathematics and attain the expected level in science. Teaching is good and this results in pupils learning well. They make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding in most subjects as they move through the school, especially given the level of personal development and literacy when they start. Very good use is made of the financial resources available to help pupils learn well and the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- High attainment in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher and the governing body manage the school very well.
- Teaching and learning are good, which leads to good achievement.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes, very good behaviour and their personal development is also very good.
- The care given to pupils, including the attention given to their protection, is very good.
- Parents value the school and the effectiveness of the school's links with them is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The way in which topics are taught.
- Assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then it has made good progress in addressing most of the issues raised. The curriculum for the youngest pupils is now good. Activities planned allow the children to learn through independent investigation or through direct teaching. Curriculum planning has developed to take account of pupils' individual needs and to ensure better progression in most subjects. Pupils' progress is monitored in English and mathematics and new assessment procedures are in place for science. Assessment in other subjects is still under-developed and cannot, therefore, be used to inform planning or set targets for pupils to further improve their attainment. The school worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy, but found that methods they had been using had a better effect on pupils' achievement. This is reflected by the dip in standards seen in 1999. The school adapted the National Strategy and combined this with methods that it found to be effective. The teaching of literacy is now well established and standards are back on track. Similar problems were not encountered when the National Numeracy Strategy was introduced. Standards in religious education are not as high as they were judged to be at the time of the last inspection and there is insufficient evidence to judge attainment in some other subjects. This is due to the approach to teaching topic work since the adoption of National guidance, which has resulted in fragmentation of teaching in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and a lack of recorded evidence. Staff and governors work together very co-operatively as a team and the commitment to further improve the school is good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

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

**Key**

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

Standards are average when children reach the age of six. Test results in writing and mathematics are consistently well above average at the end of Year 2, however the small number of pupils in each cohort does make year on year comparisons difficult. Standards in reading declined in 1999. Although above the national average in 2000, standards were below those for similar schools. The school reviewed changes they made to reading when they implemented the National Literacy Strategy and found the methods they had traditionally used to be more effective. Results of tests and assessments show no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls at the end of Year 2. Work seen during the inspection was above the expected level in English and well above in mathematics in Year 2. In science, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 indicate very high attainment. This is not reflected in work seen during the inspection. However, the school has only recently embarked on teaching a new scheme of work and evidence available did not show the whole range of material to be covered in two years. This is also



the case at Key Stage 2. During the inspection, work seen in science was in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2.

Pupils do very well in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4. They continue to make progress from the standards attained in Year 2 and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The school sets realistic targets for what pupils can achieve by the time they leave the school in Year 4. Each year a significant number of pupils are working at the level expected of eleven year olds by the end of the school year. In English and mathematics attainment is well above the expected level. In science it is in line with the expected level.

The school places a high emphasis on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy and half of the school day is dedicated to teaching these subjects. Subjects other than science are taught through a topic approach. The current methods do not provide sufficient evidence to judge pupils' attainment in some subjects. In addition, pupils have too few opportunities to use their well-developed literacy skills to record their knowledge.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good - pupils are enthusiastic about school and this makes a significant contribution to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good - flows from the attention given to moral and social development.
Personal development and relationships	Very good - pupils show respect, politeness and trust. They work well together and take responsibilities very seriously. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance rates are satisfactory.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 4</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching in the Foundation Stage has been reorganised since the last inspection and the young children learn well. The range of activities provided for them is structured effectively. The children benefit from focused time with the teacher and the opportunity to discover and learn through experimentation. In Key Stage 1 and 2 teaching of English and mathematics are strengths and a large proportion of the day is allocated to teaching the key skills of literacy and numeracy. As a result the pupils do very well in these subjects by the time they leave the school. In most lessons throughout the school, skilful questioning is used to good effect in encouraging pupils to think deeply about what they are doing. In Years 3 and 4, much of the teaching is challenging and exciting, and as a result pupils are motivated and their pace of learning is very good.

Methods of teaching literacy, numeracy and science are generally effective and frequently involve the pupils well. This has a positive effect on pupils' acquisition of new knowledge and understanding. However, teaching of literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 is slightly more effective than Key Stage 1. This is because the timing of lessons is too long. More demands could be placed on pupils if they were expected to do the same amount of work in a shorter length of time. In some lessons, particularly those involving investigations, pupils are over directed and they do not have enough responsibility for their own learning. The school has decided to teach art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education through a topic approach. Whilst the planning of lessons is satisfactory, the delivery is piecemeal and the links between topics is sometimes tenuous. This results in a lack of depth in coverage of some of the topics and whilst the pupils' general knowledge is good, there is insufficient recorded evidence of what pupils know and understand in each particular subject. Overall, teaching meets the needs of the pupils, including those who are gifted or talented, well and contributes to the standards being achieved.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good at the Foundation Stage and satisfactory at the other two key stages. Breadth and relevance is sound, but the balance is skewed by the present delivery through the topic approach. The curriculum is enhanced well by visits out of school and by visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There are no pupils currently identified as having special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Moral and social development feature as a strong aspect of pupils' personal development. Cultural knowledge is developed through subjects of the curriculum. Opportunities for spiritual development are seized when they occur, but are not specifically planned for.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care of the pupils is very good. Staff know the pupils very well and child protection procedures are very good.

The curriculum for information and communication technology has been developing recently and all the statutory requirements are planned for. There is some imbalance between the times allocated to different subjects through the current approach to teaching topics. There is a good range of assessment procedures in English and mathematics and new procedures in science, but these do not extend to other subjects. There is insufficient data to inform the work pupils are set in some subjects. The school works very well with parents and most are very satisfied with the provision it makes.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and teamwork between the small number of staff is a major force behind the school's ethos. The staff manage the curriculum in a collegiate approach and they do this with enthusiasm.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good - they are knowledgeable and have a very good understanding of their responsibilities, which they carry out to very good effect, as well as of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory - monitoring by the governors is well developed, but that of the staff is restricted, due to the implications of the headteacher being a full-time class teacher, and is generally informal.
The strategic use of resources	Very effective use is made of the financial resources. The budget is constructed in relation to the school's analysis of its needs and the outcomes are effectively monitored.

Accommodation and sufficiency of resources is satisfactory overall. The accommodation is well looked after, but the outdoor play surface is not level and the school is prone to flooding. The school successfully analyses its cost effectiveness and makes purchases and spending decisions in relation to the best value possible.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of leadership and management.</li> <li>• The care given to the children and the values promoted by the staff, which contribute to a family atmosphere.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching and how well the children learn.</li> <li>• That the pupils' achievements are celebrated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant areas were identified.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments on the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting. There was praise for teaching and management and the care and help provided by staff.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. *The standards pupils attain are related to a national measure, not what pupils could do before a given point. When making a judgement about standards a comparison is made to the measure for example, 'average' or 'meets the national expectation'. A judgement that is average means that the pupils are doing what is expected for pupils of that age. Achievement is related to what pupils could do before and indicates whether standards are high enough. Achievement is similar to the progress pupils make over time. Judgements for achievement use words like 'satisfactory' or 'good'. If achievement is satisfactory the pupils are doing as well as they need to attain the expected standards. The number of children in each year group is small. This makes the comparison between cohorts unreliable.*

2. For at least the past four years, seven-year old pupils have reached high standards in the national tests of writing and mathematics. Standards in reading over the same time were high, except for the dip in 1999. Teachers' assessments indicate that attainment in speaking and listening is high. Test scores for 2000 show that, as in earlier years, pupils reached standards that were above the national average in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards were above average in writing and mathematics, but well below average in reading because most pupils who attained Level 2, the expected level, did not achieve the highest-grade. Boys and girls reach equally high standards in the national tests.

3. Test results are generally consistent with the overall findings of the inspection, that at the age of seven:

- pupils reach above average standards in English and well above in mathematics;
- whilst attainment in reading fell for a short while from earlier high standards it has recovered again and is now good;
- boys and girls reach equally good standards.

4. In the tests taken by pupils in Year 4 in 2000, before they left the school, pupils attained high standards in English and mathematics. The scores show that pupils' achievement in these subjects is very good from the time they start school to when they leave.

5. These are very good results and follow the pattern seen in previous years. The more recent test results are consistent with the findings of the inspection, that at the age of nine:

- attainment in English and mathematics is well above the nationally expected level for pupils of this age;
- boys and girls reach equally good standards.

6. The school predicts levels for pupils to achieve at significant stages in each year and for raising performance overall. These are based on what the pupils already know and can do so that they improve their knowledge and understanding progressively. The school also sets school targets for attainment at the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics. The targets are demanding in the sense that they will not be reached unless work is suitably challenging and the pupils work hard, and realistic in the way that they are based

on pupils' earlier achievements. The school is on track to meet its targets for the next two years.

7. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and achieve high levels in the core subjects of English and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Higher attaining pupils, and those identified as gifted or talented, are set work that challenges them to achieve well. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 who attained Level 3, the standard expected of nine year olds, was above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. In Year 4, this level of attainment continues in English and mathematics. In science, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 indicate very high attainment. This is not reflected in work seen during the inspection. However, the school has only recently embarked on teaching a new scheme of work and evidence available did not show the whole range of material to be covered in two years. This is also the case at Key Stage 2. Work seen in science during the inspection was in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4.

8. Pupils' achievements are enhanced by the way the school uses their literacy and numeracy strategies, which are adapted from the National Strategies. Positive contributions to pupils' achievements are also made by the effective ways in which speaking and listening, numeracy, information and communication technology and citizenship are integrated into pupils' topic work, although more opportunities to use literacy skills for recording knowledge and understanding could be made across the curriculum.

9. When children start school at the age of four, their attainment is generally below the expected level as measured by the local education authority tests. Their personal, social and emotional development is in line with the expected outcomes of the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Year 1, largely due to the emphasis placed on developing pupils' attitudes to school and codes of behaviour early on. Attainment in all other areas (namely communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development) improves at a good rate and is within the normal range. The good teaching which pupils are currently experiencing puts a substantial proportion of the present Reception class on track to reach standards that are expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

10. At the end of Year 2, attainment is above average overall in English. Attainment in speaking and listening is good because of the substantial number of opportunities made for pupils to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully. Standards in reading are above average because it is taught interestingly, in ways that often enthuse pupils to participate and concentrate well. For example, in a Year 1 design and technology lesson, pupils followed a recipe for making a gingerbread man. They were very attentive because the teacher read the instructions interestingly. The level of pupils' interest ensured that when the teacher asked questions, pupils fully understood them. They replied in ways that were quite sophisticated for their age, with sentences of good length and detail. Pupils' reading skills benefited from this approach almost as much as speaking and listening. Standards in writing are very good; they could be even higher if the enthusiasm seen in literacy work were drawn on when pupils write in other subjects. Pupils progress very well in mathematics and reach high standards. The pupils' good mental and written calculating skills make a major contribution to pupils' high achievement. A practical and investigative approach is yet to be reflected in the new approach to teaching science and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, with current levels of attainment being in line with those expected for pupils of this age.

11. At the end of Year 4, attainment is well above average in all aspects of English, mainly due to the well-planned, skilled and enthusiastic teaching in Key Stage 2. This also ensures that high standards are maintained in mathematics. In this subject, higher attaining pupils reach especially good standards due to the arrangements to 'fast-track' pupils' learning. In science, pupils' attainments are presently in line with the nationally expected levels, but the school has yet to see the benefits of the newly introduced scheme of work and the effects that this may have on levels of attainment. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development by the time they are in Year 4 due to the high emphasis placed on developing citizenship.

12. Attainment in art and design is beyond the expected level, largely due to the practical approach to the subject and personal interest and expertise of staff members. In design and technology and history attainment is in the expected range at the end of Years 2 and 4. In physical education and religious education attainment is in line with expected levels in Year 2. Attainment in physical education is above the expected level in Year 4 due to the quality of teaching and enthusiasm of the teacher, but there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on attainment in religious education. In geography, information and communication technology and music pupils' attainment is rarely recorded in great detail and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about pupils' attainment. The current method of teaching subjects other than English, mathematics and science, along with the insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their well-developed literacy skills, restricts achievement at higher levels.

13. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is good. This is because work is provided that allows for the reinforcement and extension of skills based on pupils' individual progress. Good planning ensures that these pupils cover the same content as the rest of their year group. All pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy, where adapted work is provided for them based on prior assessment. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was identified as a key issue. Pupils' achievements are generally enhanced by the way in which the school has adapted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to meet the needs of mixed aged classes and has adopted published schemes of work to support this.

14. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment have generally been maintained. The dip seen in the 1999 national tests has been reversed and the school is well placed to continue to maintain or even improve on current standards.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development, which, together with the very good relationships throughout the school, make a significant contribution to their learning. These very high standards constitute a further improvement on the positive attitudes identified at the previous inspection and are one of the school's major strengths.

16. Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive, and their high level of enthusiasm is acknowledged by their parents, more than 90 per cent of them declaring that their children like coming to school. For their part pupils arrive punctually, greet one another happily at the school gate and are keen to talk to about their favourite subjects and activities. Very good attitudes in the classroom help pupils to listen to the teacher very well and concentrate on their work. Pupils' attention span improves as they move through the school. They listen politely to their peers, applauding their successes, thus increasing pupils' sense of confidence in their own ability to make progress. Encouraged by the clear

guidance from adults in the school they work and play very happily and effectively together, showing great sensitivity to the feelings of their friends. One parent, remembering the first day that his child came to school, described how two older children immediately took him under their wings as a new member of the school family. Such very positive attitudes, as well as enhancing learning also demonstrate a growing maturity and sociability.

17. The inspectors share the view of the overwhelming majority of parents that their children behave very well. The resulting atmosphere of calm provides a solid foundation for learning and contributes to the good levels of achievement as pupils make their way through the school. As soon as they enter the classroom they sit and read quietly while the register is taken, enabling all pupils to concentrate on their work, and allowing the teacher to make a speedy start to the school day. The very good behaviour extends to the playground where pupils play happily together, sharing toys and joining in games without any hint of over-boisterous play. There are no indications of oppressive behaviour, and there have been no exclusions for many years. In the dining room the atmosphere is relaxed, and the low noise levels allow for pupils to chat happily. They respond very well to the guidance of the lunchtime supervisor, raising their arm to ask for 'second helpings' or to request permission to leave the room.

18. The very high level of personal development shown by pupils as they move through the school owes much to the ethos of mutual care and personal responsibility exemplified by the staff team. Not only does it help to raise educational standards, but it also promotes the sense of personal responsibility and citizenship noted by parents in their response to the questionnaire. Pupils' readiness to queue in orderly fashion, to share resources, to apply themselves to their work, to care for the younger children, and to show great respect for adults in the school point to a growing sense of maturity that greatly aids their learning. Pupils' personal development is encouraged in the classroom. From the time children begin in the Reception class they are encouraged to work together in groups. In Key Stage 1 there are frequent opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs or groups. They show good levels of co-operation when doing this. In Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate high levels of collaboration when working together on tasks and also enjoy being independent workers when it is appropriate.

19. A special feature of the pupils' personal development is that not only do they accept responsibility that is offered to them, but they also vie with one another to volunteer their services. In the dining room for example, children begged the dinner supervisor to allow them to set tables, to scrape dinner plates and to tidy up after their peers. The result is a spirit of initiative that is more creative and spontaneous than the mere obedience to instructions. Following the example of their parents' efforts in the parents association, they are encouraged to demonstrate their care for others by raising money for the disadvantaged members of society. Thus the combined efforts of school and family make a good contribution to raising standards by promoting personal development of the pupils.

20. The attendance rate of 94.2 per cent is just below the national average of 94.4 per cent, while the rate of unauthorised absence (0.0) is better than the national average of 0.5 per cent. Attendance is therefore judged to be satisfactory. Punctuality is very good, confirming the view of parents that their children like coming to school. Registration procedures at both morning and afternoon sessions comply with legal requirements and are conducted in a brisk and orderly manner, giving pupils full access to the curriculum.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

21. The quality of teaching is good overall and as a result pupils learn well. A particular strength is the teaching for pupils in Years 3 and 4, which is slightly stronger than at The Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The teaching of mathematics and English are strengths. Teaching of English and mathematics at Key Stage 1 is slightly less effective as the length of lessons is too long. This results in the demands placed on pupils not reflecting the generally high expectations the teacher has of the pupils. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. During this inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons. Sixty seven per cent was good or better and twenty nine per cent very good or better. The quality of teaching overall is based on more than the observations of lessons seen during the inspection and care must be taken when interpreting data as percentages as each lesson represents four per cent.

22. At present, there are no pupils on the register of special educational needs or with English as an additional language. All pupils are taught well across the school and as a result, most make good progress overall. Due to the small size of the school and the knowledge staff have of the pupils, support is given within the classroom if pupils require additional help with their learning. There is careful consideration for adapting lessons to meet the particular needs of pupils. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 1 have extra resources for counting and visual aids to help them in mathematics lessons. In mathematics lessons in Year 3 and 4 the curriculum presented and targeted teaching of specific elements of lessons meets the needs of pupils identified as gifted or talented. This results in very good achievement. It is because of careful adaptations that the pupils learn well

23. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. The strength of the teaching is that the teacher has a good knowledge of how young children learn. Activities are presented at a level to ensure that the children are building on what they know and can do and they are achieving well as a result. When very good teaching was seen, children were totally enthralled, for example by their journey out into the school grounds to look at the changing seasons and 'hunt for treasure'. They were motivated and enthusiastic to give their opinions thus developing their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their language to describe this.

24. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects is good overall with strengths in teaching English and mathematics. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well overall and this makes a strong contribution to the good learning and high standards reached in English and mathematics. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply the well-developed writing skills in recording their knowledge of other subjects. For example, in geography, pupils in Year 3 and 4 are not expected to record their understanding of the formation of volcanoes adequately in their own words.

25. In the majority of lessons, teachers have good expectations of pupils and use their knowledge well to plan activities. They have a clear idea of what is to be taught, make this obvious at the start of the lesson and refer back to it as the lesson progresses. As a result, the pupils have a good understanding of the aims of the lesson and can evaluate for themselves what they are learning. A good example of this was seen in a literacy lesson. There was frequent reinforcement of the main teaching points associated with using the text to extract meaning before answering a question. Pupils learnt very well because of this.

26. The very best teaching motivates interest and fully involves pupils. The pace and challenge are high and there is constant reinforcement of the teaching through skilled questioning, with extra challenge provided through open-ended questions. The methods



and organisation used by the teachers in these lessons are very efficient. Positive support from teachers lets the pupils know that all responses are valued and the pupils say, "it is alright to make a mistake-we build on it!" This was evident in a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4. A challenging mental starter session established a high work ethic early in the lesson. Pupils gave their answers quickly and then used each other's responses to work out the correct answer. The final part of the lesson reinforced and consolidated the teaching points and let the pupils know how the day's work would lead on to the next.

27. Although no teaching was unsatisfactory, there were common weaker elements in teaching. The most significant of these was the organisation of teaching methods for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Teaching methods were most effective where subjects were taught discretely and not through a topic approach that combined several subjects under one heading. For example, in Key Stage 2 the current topic is 'under the soil'. Within subjects the content planned is satisfactory, but due to the 'dip in and out' approach to teaching it is difficult to assess how these relate to each other, for example, how the geographical or historical aspects of units of work link to the design and technology.

28. The school has begun to identify difficulties in teaching through the current topic approach. For example, in assessing what it is pupils know about each subject. As a result, they have decided to teach science as a separate unit. However, pupils' work in other subjects is frequently disjointed and the links between their knowledge and understanding of each subject is patchy. In addition, pupils' specific subject knowledge is not recorded in sufficient depth.

29. The management of pupils is generally good and very good in Years 3 and 4. This has a positive effect on the very good behaviour seen in the school and enables good learning to take place. All staff have very good relationships with their pupils and this is based on mutual respect and a quiet, friendly approach. Teachers use genuinely positive remarks very well to build the pupils' self-esteem. Consequently, even when behaviour sometimes slips when the lesson is too long, the very good relationships and the respect for the teacher result in the positive ethos being restored quickly. Positive comments are further used to help pupils improve their work and know what it is they need to do next. However, these tend to be done orally and marking is frequently a tick or odd comment. This does not build into a good record of targets set for pupils.

30. The good use of homework contributes well to the standards achieved by pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. From the start of their school life, pupils have regular work to do that increases as they go through the school. Work is relevant and they are well prepared for their next stage of education.

### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

31. The school provides a good range of activities to meet the education of children in the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 experience a satisfactory range of worthwhile learning activities that address the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for religious education follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school ensures that the needs of all pupils are met effectively, and in particular makes good provision for a small group of mathematically gifted pupils in Years 3 and 4.

32. Planning weaknesses identified in the previous report have been satisfactorily addressed. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and

the National Numeracy Strategy, which contribute well to the high standards that pupils attain in English and mathematics. In other subjects, the school has successfully adapted its schemes of work in the light of changing national curriculum guidelines, and planning ensures that pupils systematically develop their knowledge and skills, as they get older.

33. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory, but the balance is skewed as many subjects are taught through a series of topics. Whilst the planning that underpins this work is satisfactory, it is hard for teachers to teach effectively the wide range of subjects covered simultaneously in each topic. Because this has adversely affected standards in science, especially last year, the school has decided to teach science as a discrete subject. The beneficial effects of this can already be seen, especially in Key Stage 2.

34. The school makes good provision within the curriculum for pupils' personal development. The school's aims set out the importance of good behaviour and high moral and social standards. This aspect of pupils' underpins the aims of the school. Although much support for pupils' personal, moral and social development is informal, it is effective because small class sizes allow teachers to get to know their pupils very well. School aims are reflected well in everyday practices. Teachers are very good role models, and set high standards for pupils to follow. Pupils are expected to behave well and to act in a socially responsible manner. Pupils know 'the rules' and the rights and wrongs of different situations are regularly discussed. The high standards they achieve are a good reflection of the effectiveness of the strategies teachers adopt.

35. From the time they start school, pupils follow a structured programme of personal, social and health education (PHSE) that includes appropriate attention to sex education, drug awareness and citizenship. This taught programme gives pupils good opportunities to discuss important issues such as their relationships with others. For example, a very good lesson for older pupils sensitively explored their understanding of bullying, racial harmony and family life. Pupils have good encouragement in their social development due to the community spirit in the school. Lessons often involve pupils working in pairs or groups. This helps them to learn to co-operate, to share and to help each other. Pupils' social development is also enhanced through the many opportunities pupils have to work together while undertaking responsibilities around the school.

36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about major faiths such as Christianity and Judaism in religious education lessons. School assemblies give pupils opportunities to reflect on issues such as what it would feel like to be someone else. Although not specifically planned for, teachers take advantage of opportunities as they arise, for instance to appreciate the beauty of the natural world when pupils pick up snail shells in the playground and examine them closely.

37. Pupils' cultural development is well provided for in many different ways and in different subjects. Many lessons involve pupils in finding out about other cultures and countries, their education, dress, and economy. Pupils study Ancient civilisations, for example the Romans, and learn how they influenced our lives today. They visit places such as Hadrian's Wall and Cragside, a Victorian mansion, to support work in history. Visiting theatre groups give pupils the chance to see professional drama performances on themes such as 'Stories and traditions from around the World'. Together with work on foreign places in geography, the study of British and foreign artists, the use of stories from around the world in English and the opportunities for studying music, these activities provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own cultural heritage and to understand the lives of others around the world.

38. The school makes good use of the local community to extend learning beyond the classroom and to draw visitors such as the local nurse and the village shopkeeper into the school to talk about their work. Despite the remote location of the school, links with other schools are good. The school takes part in joint activities such as sporting events. The link with Middle schools is also well developed and the pupils' transition to their next stage of education is made straightforward for them. In addition to lessons, pupils have access to a wide range of activities such as horse riding, a French club, keyboard and guitar lessons, professional sports coaching and Christmas concerts.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school makes very good provision for the welfare, health, safety and personal security of its pupils, resulting in a climate of confidence and well being that greatly promotes learning.

40. The very good arrangements for Child Protection are much improved since the previous inspection. The strong sense of 'family' promoted by the school means that pupils find it easy to approach the staff with any worries or concerns they might have. Very good arrangements are made for the personal security of the pupils, giving them a feeling of safety and confidence that greatly aids their learning.

41. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils, a judgement supported by parents. They report that the school cares for every aspect of pupils' development, and offers challenges to each pupil, regardless of ability. The atmosphere is very warm and welcoming, and the staff group know the pupils and their families exceptionally well. For example, the whole school celebrates pupils' birthdays, with a rousing chorus of 'happy birthday' in the dining room.

42. The good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have received the support of parents, who dutifully ring the school in the event of their child's absence. Pupils' reports give details of attendance over the year, and regular reminders are sent in communications to parents. The most recent attendance figures do not do justice to the school's efforts. Its hilly, twenty-five mile radius catchment area lies mainly in isolated rural communities adversely affected by bad weather last winter, and more recently, by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

43. The school's very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour impact effectively on standards and are clearly reflected in the very good behaviour and relationships noted throughout the school. Parents remark on how the school's intimate knowledge of each child, and how the very good communications between school and home enable parents to support the procedures. The small size of the school allows greater informality and flexibility in the application of the procedures. The emphasis is on personal responsibility and incentives, so that good behaviour promotes personal development and respect for others within the framework of the school rules. Pupils showed an awareness of the rules, but chose to emphasise the 'awards' system for effort and behaviour rather than sanctions.

44. The school has good systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress when they first start school and in English and mathematics. Pupils' reading is tested regularly, and samples of writing are collected systematically, so that teachers can accurately track how quickly pupils make progress. In mathematics, assessment is linked to the scheme used. Pupils are tested regularly, and teachers maintain good records of progress, linked to the levels of the national curriculum. A new system, similarly linked to the scheme just adopted, has been introduced in science, but it is not yet possible to evaluate its effectiveness. There are no systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects. Therefore there is insufficient information to guide planning or to set targets for improved performance. This weakness, identified in the previous inspection report, has still to be remedied. However, following recent changes to the curriculum, the school has plans to develop a system of recording based on the expected learning outcomes for each module of work.

45. Good use of the limited range of available assessment information is made in Key Stage 1. Each pupil has individual targets for improvement in their work and, where necessary, other skills such as behaviour or concentration. Targets are discussed with pupils so that they know what they are. They are reviewed and altered as necessary. However, there is no comparable system for older pupils. National test results are analysed each year to judge in a global sense how well pupils have done, and the information is used to identify talented pupils. However, much greater use of assessment information could be made to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, to set individual targets for all pupils and to inform the curriculum and teaching developments that are needed to enable pupils to meet them. Target setting is under-developed in subjects taught through the topic approach, as there are no assessment procedures linked to these that would provide comprehensive information on what pupils need to do next to improve.

46. The school's good procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development flow from its ethos of personal responsibility, self esteem and holistic education ideally suited to a small village school. Adults in the school skilfully use the strong sense of 'community' to promote mutual respect, tolerance and citizenship. Pupils contribute to their own Annual Reports by identifying areas for further effort, and setting their own targets.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

47. The inspectors concur with the view of the headteacher, confirmed by parents, that the very good relationship between home and school make a tremendous contribution to the raising of standards in the school, and is a strength. There has been an improvement since the previous report, not only in relationships generally but also, significantly, in communications between home and school.

48. Parents attending the meeting with the inspectors and those responding to the questionnaire expressed very positive views about the school. More than 90 per cent of them agree that their children like school, that they behave well and that they make good progress. They declare that teaching is good, that the school expects their children to work hard, that it helps them to become mature people, and that it is well led and managed.

49. The school has established very effective links with parents, partly through the efforts of a very enthusiastic and committed governing body, and partly through improvements in the quality of information provided for parents. Annual Reports on pupils' progress, for example, include sections not only on all areas of the curriculum, but also on general conduct, contributions in class, care of books and equipment, progress and achievement, and future aims. This information is complemented by a comprehensive Governors' Annual Report to parents and by a helpful and user-friendly handbook. The school consults parents through surveys and questionnaires about school matters. The welcoming atmosphere in the school noted by parents at their meeting with the inspectors makes it easy for them to approach the school with any problems or concerns about their children.

50. The family atmosphere in the school encourages parents to help with their children's learning both in the school and at home. They told inspectors that they genuinely feel that there is a partnerships approach between them and the school that impacts greatly on their children's learning. They honour the home and school agreement, and help their children with the homework they regularly bring home. Parents report that they acknowledge the problems associated with day-to-day involvement in the classroom for a significant number of parents. Those living nearer to the school help out in the classroom by hearing children read. Many others, along with their children, support the activities of the parents association

in organising fundraising and social events both to raise much needed money for school projects and equipment and also to promote a community spirit in such a widely scattered rural community.

51. This very good partnership between home and school makes a major contribution to pupils' academic progress and to their growth in citizenship.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

52. Overall, the management of the school is good. The implementation of the school's aims and values is good and securely reflected in the daily life of the school. The importance of pupils' personal development, including moral and social development, has an important place within the ethos of the school. This is the foundation for all the work that the school does. The general aims of the school are understood by the school community and communicated to the children and parents so they can contribute to the fulfilment of them. The aims have a good impact on the work the school does to promote more than just academic learning throughout the school day. The school has improved well since the last inspection. It operates effectively and provides good value for money. All staff and governors are highly committed and the school has good potential to improve even further.

53. The role of the head teacher in leading and managing the school is very good. He provides a very good role model for staff and is clear about the school's strengths and its potential areas for further development. He has a firm commitment to raising standards further. In addition, he is a very good motivator, empowering governors to perform well and the staff to share in a collegiate approach to management of the curriculum.

54. The role of the co-ordinator is satisfactory. The staff share responsibilities for developing subjects and this is a sensible approach in a small school. Current arrangements are that each member of staff has the overall responsibility for managing and developing all subjects in the key stage in which they teach. While this means that they have a good knowledge of each key stage individually, it does dilute the staffs' knowledge of the overall picture, especially of standards in subjects where there is no performance data.

55. The governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties very well. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of its strengths and appreciate well where it could be further improved. A number of active committees contribute very well to the overall efficiency of the governing body and the school. There is a regular programme for governors to visit the school to meet with the staff to discuss issues or developments and to observe lessons. Feedback from these visits is given. This is particularly valued as the headteacher and teaching staff have no formal opportunities to do this at present. The governing body is also kept well informed through detailed reports from the headteacher and representatives of committees.

56. The school development plan is a substantial and practical working document whose construction involves staff and governors at the appropriate stages. The plan reflects the school's aims and values and drives the school forward in its continued development. Staff meet together regularly to discuss the progress of school development and teaching. However, formal opportunities for monitoring these are limited due to the full time teaching commitment of the headteacher and financial implications for releasing him from the classroom.

57. The school buys into the local authority scheme for financial administration and the headteacher and the governing body have a very good understanding of financial planning

and monitoring. This leads to very efficient use of strategic resources including money available to train staff in line with educational priorities. The principles of best value are applied very well by, for example, ensuring that all purchases are made after competitive tendering, by obtaining grants from local agencies and by carefully comparing its academic standards with those of other schools locally and nationally and taking effective action where appropriate.

58. The school is adequately staffed and increasing the amount of teacher time available for the youngest pupils has recently enhanced this. Accommodation is satisfactory, although the outdoor play surface is not level and the school is prone to flooding. Whilst these factors do not have an impact on teaching and learning or the standards pupils' achieve, they do present health and safety issues. There are sufficient resources overall for the delivery of the curriculum. There are strengths in the resources for art and for the majority of areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

59. The governors and staff should address the following matters in the writing of the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes yet further:

(1) Improve the way in which topics are taught by:

- finding ways to teach the range of subjects coherently and in sufficient depth.  
Paragraphs: 12, 27, 28, 33, 109, 132, 134, 136, 137, 155

(2) Improve assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science:

- developing a system of assessing and recording attainment and progress based on the expected learning outcomes for each module of work;
- using assessment information to identify pupils' strengths and areas for improvement, to set individual targets for all pupils and to inform curriculum and teaching developments.  
Paragraphs: 28, 29, 44, 45, 54, 121, 128, 133, 138, 142, 146, 155

In addition to the key issues outlined above, the headteacher and governors of the school should consider these other issues for inclusion in the action plan:

Make better use of pupils' literacy skills for recording knowledge and understanding in all subjects taught;

Paragraphs: 8, 10, 12, 24, 28, 97, 125, 132, 134, 152, 154

Make time available for monitoring teaching and school developments;

Paragraphs: 55, 56, 121, 138, 142, 146

Revise the length of literacy and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 1.

Paragraphs: 21, 29, 98, 104

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	63

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	9	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	29	38	33	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	54
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	0

#### 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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000			15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (92)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Figures have been omitted from the above table where they are 10 or fewer.

### ***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	54
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	136262
Total expenditure	129127
Expenditure per pupil	2348
Balance brought forward from previous year	8333

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.3
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	54
Number of questionnaires returned	15

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	20	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	53	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	47	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	47	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	20	7	7	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	40	7	7	7
The school is well led and managed.	73	20	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	13	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	27	0	0	7

Care should be taken interpreting these figures. Seven per cent is equal to one response. Where figures do not add up to 100 this is due to a zero response.

## **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**

#### **Context**

60. At the time of the inspection, there were ten children who were four or five in the Reception class. The majority of children have been to local playgroups before coming to school. The curriculum for the Reception-aged children is suitably adapted cover all the appropriate early learning goals for children of this age. The teacher, or support assistant, frequently teach the children as a focus group. At other times, children work independently on structured tasks or play activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The inspection took place very early in the school year, but scrutiny of past work shows that children make good progress in the first stage of their education. Most attain the nationally expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage. There are no children on the school's register for pupils with special educational needs. However, staff monitor children closely and identify those who may require additional support as they progress through the school. Homework is provided for children. At this stage it is reading and associated activities to develop reading skills.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

61. Children make good progress in personal and social development because the class provides a welcoming environment that helps young children to settle in quickly and feel part of the school. Those pupils, who have just started in Year 1, show confidence and relate to adults, with each other and older pupils they know well. This shows the progress pupils make while they are in the Foundation Stage.

62. Children in the Reception class who have only been in school for a matter of weeks are quickly learning to respond to class routines. By the time they are six, children have developed a good level of independence in choosing activities, in dressing themselves and in their personal hygiene. This was exemplified by pupils in Year 1. Children who have just started at school have taken on class responsibilities quickly and undertake jobs, such as tidying up, efficiently.

63. Teaching in this area of learning is good. The teacher provides a broad range of activities that successfully promote children's development in a variety of settings throughout the day. For example, there are opportunities for children to work alone with art resources, or in groups when they use similar resources to print wallpaper for Grandmas' cottage. Children are gaining confidence to try new activities and initiate ideas, but at present they need time to explore everything that is available rather than being able to sustain their attention on a task for some time. For example, when working in the play-house they 'play' by themselves for a short time, but do not take part in acting out stories together. Activities, such as role-play, sand and water provide opportunities for the children to develop their imagination at the same time as encouraging them to 'play' together co-operatively.

64. The staff and adults who help in the first class sensitively encourage children to participate in activities when they are required to sit and listen to others. At this stage, they are very eager to participate and are keener to contribute than listen. They are learning the 'rules' for classroom behaviour and are beginning to understanding that they need to take turns. Opportunities are provided for children develop this. For example, when children

share their news good interaction from the teacher encourages them to talk about their experiences one after another. Higher attaining children demonstrate an ability to listen attentively and share in turns to talk, for example, at story time when they have the opportunity to express their feelings. Other children all have something to say, but are yet to develop the skills of listening carefully to others and valuing their contributions. Children's self-esteem is developed as staff value each child's contribution.

65. Staff set very good examples for children to follow. They work together very well as a team and children can see the value of co-operating with each other as a result. They have high expectations for good behaviour and this encourages the children to behave well. All children are taught to be independent as they are given regular opportunities to select from a range of activities on offer. Some children are quite dependant and reliant on staff choosing for them initially, but they very soon understand that they are 'allowed' to make their own choice at certain times during the day and can change their activities when they are ready to do so. Good examples of this were seen during the inspection. For example, children moved from sticking information into the birthday book to the construction area when they were ready to experience a different activity on offer in that session.

66. Children attend acts of collective worship with the rest of the school. This helps them to get to know pupils in other classes as well as developing the understanding of the different needs of other people. A pupil who had just turned five demonstrated this when talking to inspectors about people in other countries who needed their help. He said "Sometimes I think of children in other countries when I get something new to play with." Children have the opportunity to mix with their friends or brothers and sisters at break-times. These opportunities help the children to develop their social skills in a range of different situations and to consider the needs of others as well as their own.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

67. Children become competent in key literacy skills, gaining confidence in speaking and listening, reading simple texts and writing for a range of purposes. They also develop language for clarifying thinking so that they can reason for themselves. For example, they are encouraged to work out why it is fair to share the toys and how to do this. Their achievement in this area of learning is good by the time they are six. This is due to good teaching of a structured programme of work and well-planned choice activities. Good progress was exemplified by the work of pupils who had just moved into Year 1. The teacher in the Reception class recognises the need to provide a language rich environment for the children. She takes every opportunity to model a variety of vocabulary and language forms.

68. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are linked to all focussed teaching and choice activities. Children acquire new vocabulary from listening to their teacher, support staff and each other. Children's ability to use a range of interesting vocabulary at this stage in the school year is limited. However, from discussion with pupils in Year 1 it is clear that their speech improves in fluency and expression as the year progresses.

69. The organisation of literacy lessons provides children with opportunities to share in a whole class session. This is followed by independent activities or a focus group with the teacher. Good emphasis is given to word and sentence work and, as a result, all children, including those of lower ability, learn to recognise and link individual letters by name and sound. For example, children could tell the teacher words that began with the letter 't'.

Questions aimed at the less mature or lower attaining children encourage them to respond and give them confidence to participate. This results in good achievement.

70. Children have many opportunities for hearing stories that they have chosen themselves or that the teacher chooses to link with other areas of learning. Staff use this time to promote an enjoyment of words and pictures and develop good reading habits. At other times, the higher attaining children are taught as a group so that they can share rhymes, stories and non-fiction books that help them to learn to use and read familiar words for themselves.

71. Before long children recognise their own names in written form. The higher attaining children know their friend's names or can read familiar words around the room. By the time they are six, children know that print carries meaning. They understand the importance of the beginnings and ends of stories, that events happen in a sequence and that information can be found in 'non-fiction' books. However, at this stage in the school year they prefer to listen to stories and poems and join in familiar stories, which they do with enjoyment, rather than read for themselves.

72. Children are encouraged by staff to 'write' for themselves from the time that they start school. Early writing skills are promoted through the children learning to write their own names, labels and captions. They use their knowledge of letter sounds and the alphabet to write common words and begin to construct sentences, sometimes using full stops correctly by the time they are six. Children are provided with many and varied opportunities to practise the skills they have learned. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children write for a range of purposes and in different ways.

### **Mathematical development**

73. A range of mathematical experiences is provided through the structured choice activities that are available on a daily basis and the opportunity children have to participate in a daily numeracy session. As a result of all the experiences the children encounter, they achieve levels of attainment appropriate for their age and make good progress from the time they start at school.

74. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. The management and organisation of lessons and activities is good and staff are used to the best effect to support children's learning. In a similar way to literacy, children are encouraged to participate in the whole class aspect of lessons at an individual level appropriate to their abilities. Following this, the children take part in activities that build on their previous experiences so their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts is taught through practical activities, daily routines, speaking and listening activities and opportunities for structured play.

75. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of number initially by learning about numbers around the classroom. By the end of the Foundation Stage, they count from 0 to 10 in order and recognise the numerals associated with the numbers. Early in the Reception class, children match objects, for example when doing jigsaws, and as their skills develop they sort and match objects to reorder them depending on pattern, size or shape. Water and sand activities give children many opportunities to experiment with volume, when they fill and empty containers of different sizes, and weight, when they compare how heavy containers are when full or empty with sand.

76. Children enjoy joining in number rhymes and these help them to talk about and recreate patterns and use mathematical language, such as 'more than' and 'less than', 'bigger' and 'smaller'. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children talk about 'sums', adding to and taking away, the characteristics of shapes and solve simple problems. When it is appropriate, children are taught to record their observations or findings in a range of ways, for example as 'sums' or in a graphical form. Whenever possible, numeracy work is linked to other subjects and there are planned opportunities for children to explore, think and develop as mathematicians.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

77. Children learn about how to make sense of the world around them and this lays a good foundation for later work in science, history, geography and technology in various forms. The quality of teaching is good. Children are presented with appropriate activities, which are enjoyable for the children, and consequently progress in learning is good.

78. Most of the activities that contribute to this area of learning are based on practical experiences, which encourage the children to develop skills, knowledge and understanding that is appropriate to their age and individual ability. A trip out to the school grounds during the inspection exemplified this. The teacher had planned activities so that the children could feel, smell, observe and move around in a different physical environment. She capitalised on the children's findings to develop their knowledge and understanding and language. Due to this, exploration, observation, problem solving and discussion were promoted. For example when a child exclaimed, "look what I've found! I think it's a shell, but it's got glue on", the teacher asked the children to try and describe the shape and colour of the object as well as explaining that it was fungus and the dangers of touching it.

79. The teacher promotes geography through the study of their immediate environment initially. Children talk about routes through the school and grounds, the buildings they know and why they were significant. During the inspection, the children explored the school field and searched for 'treasure' (familiar classroom objects previously hidden by the teacher). They made good use of their senses to seek out hidden objects and to locate leaves that showed signs of autumn. They described the colour changes and also identified other objects that indicated a change in the seasons, for example, pine cones that had fallen to the ground. Higher attaining children knew the name of these and that they came from "a spiky tree."

80. The children's sense of the past is also promoted through local study. For example, a higher attaining child pointed out the old foundations of a building and could tell the others that her brother had been to playgroup there. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children talk about features of the village and the farmland that are important to their parents or grandparents and give some indication as to why.

81. The teacher plans many opportunities for children to express their knowledge and understanding, for example in model making, painting, drawing, writing and by talking about what they know with their friends or staff. Children find out about, and use, technology. For example, they use construction equipment to make models of buildings. During the year, they have the opportunities to use food ingredients to create and assemble edible products. Whenever possible, staff encourage children to use information and communication technology to help them practise skills or to use their knowledge to solve problems that are associated with learning in other areas. For example, children use the computer independently to practise matching skills that promote mathematical learning. Children are

confident to use the computers, either as a choice activity or when opportunities are planned to enhance learning in other subject areas.

### **Physical development**

82. Within the classroom, children move around with confidence and safety as the room is organised well and there are distinct areas that are dedicated to promoting learning in particular aspects of the curriculum. The quality of teaching is good. However, progress is satisfactory overall, as the resources available do not allow children to develop the skills necessary to work on moving apparatus, such as trikes and trolleys, that can be used out of doors. In addition, there are limited opportunities for children to work on large apparatus from choice during the day. This is due to the lack of a designated play area and apparatus.

83. Children are taught to handle pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors with control and safety. They have good control when manipulating these tools by the time they are six, although at the time of the inspection the majority of children were still experimenting. There are suitable daily opportunities for children to use and practise their fine motor skills and teachers intervene appropriately to enhance these. For example, many children hold their pencil incorrectly when they start school, but intervention by staff to teach them the correct way helps the quality of handwriting.

84. Children are helped to understand the importance of exercise through physical education lessons in the hall and at break-times when the staff or older pupils play singing games with them. Whenever possible the teacher makes the opportunity for children to use the large outdoor climbing apparatus. During the inspection the confident children were seen climbing, crawling, sliding and jumping on the apparatus, but at this early stage show little attention to doing this taking the safety of others into account. Many of their movements are still quite clumsy. The children who were less sure of experimenting stayed near to the ground and did not take any risks.

85. The children's awareness of space is developing, but they still like the 'comfort' of their own area. This was seen in a lesson in the hall when they repeatedly returned to the same spot after each activity. The teacher makes opportunities for the children to learn about the importance of using the space around them. For example, they enjoy running about in large open areas, as seen when they visited the school field. However, when in the more confined area of the hall they are unaware of each other and frequently cross-paths and even bump into one another.

86. In designated physical education lessons children are taught the importance of warming up their bodies and cooling down after exercise. The teacher uses simple language, visual resources and demonstrations to explain tasks to the children. Children followed directions to walk on different parts of their feet. They could do this easily when using a flat foot or the balls of the feet, but found it difficult to maintain their balance on their toes. The teacher suggested good ways to help them improve, but only the higher attaining children could walk well with their arms outstretched to help them to balance.

### **Creative development**

87. Evidence available indicates that children make good progress from the levels they attain on entry to those they attain at the end of the Foundation Stage. The higher attaining children, and most of the middle ability group, achieve levels appropriate for their age by the time they are six.



88. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, children were provided with many opportunities on a daily basis for pupils to 'act out' either make believe or real scenarios that contributed to their creative, and frequently social, development and this was due to good planning. Even when an activity may be a 'choice' by the children, a good level of interaction from staff is always provided if required to further promote learning and develop children's ideas.

89. Children have good opportunities to 'play' in the role-play area. This stimulates their ability to make believe and be creative and enhances many other areas of learning. For example, personal and social skills and number skills were enhanced when they set the table for themselves and a group of friends in the play-house. Children also have many opportunities to 'act out' familiar stories. During the inspection they dramatised their favourite book 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. They pretended to make their way on the expedition and joined in the phrases they remembered like 'squishy squashy'. However, their attention span was too short for the majority of them to join in the actions throughout the entire story.

90. Art activities are matched to children's interests and stage of development well. Demonstration by staff is carried out if it is required. Following this they are provided with more opportunities to consolidate learning and children have the chance to experiment. Examples of children's painting show that they have been encouraged to consider style and presentation when doing their own work following the study of a famous artwork. This contributes to their knowledge and understanding.

91. Creative development is also fostered through the music curriculum. Children learn about rhythm, through clapping and tapping, and by using percussion instruments. They participate in singing, initially by joining in the words with which they are familiar, and then the verse or chorus. By the time they are six, children sing with confidence and enthusiasm.

## **ENGLISH**

92. Pupils' attainment is above average by the age of seven and well above average by the age of nine. The results of the most recent standardised tests confirm this and affirm continued improvement of pupils' performance. Standards are high because of the quality of teaching pupils receive, with very good teaching in Key Stage 2, and the planned programme of work that places a high emphasis on the teaching of skills. Regular good assessment of what the pupils know and can do that informs what will be taught next is a strong contributory factor.

93. Standards in English, although similar to those reported in the last inspection, are now consistently above average throughout the school. Strengths lie in the improved resources, which provide a progressive scheme of work that allows pupils to make consistent progress as they move through the school whatever their ability or gender. The headteacher regularly examines all lesson plans and the staff regularly discuss how lessons have gone. Samples of work from each year group are checked to see if they match the objectives in the planning. Results of the national standardised tests are analysed and teaching of certain aspects of the subject is adapted accordingly to help the pupils learn well. As a result, pupils achieve well by the time they are seven and very well by the time they are nine.

94. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' are keen to talk and listen to each other. They speak up in front of the class and are very enthusiastic to discuss topics that interest them. A low attaining pupil in Year 1 approached an inspector and confidently said "I want to tell you about the bird that came into my garden." By the time pupils are seven they are very

confident speakers, especially when they are talking about things familiar to them. In literacy lessons they develop a more 'formal' vocabulary. Pupils learn to use subject specific language, such as 'prediction' in science, as the teacher role models this well. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are provided with many varied opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. In discussion they show understanding of the main points. For example, when re-capping on the formation of a volcano pupils developed their ideas thoughtfully, described the events systematically and conveyed their opinions. Pupils understand that they need to be aware of the needs of the 'listener' and vary the use of vocabulary and depth of detail as a result.

95. By the age of seven, pupils read a wide range of material confidently and accurately. They express opinion about the books they read and can say why they prefer particular types of text. Pupils read independently, but also like to read with each other and look at the pictures that accompany stories. Pupils know how to locate books that will help them find out information and what the contents and index are for. By the age of nine, pupils reading has improved in accuracy and fluency. They show a high level of understanding of events and characters in stories and they refer to material they have read to explain their ideas. This was seen when pupils discussed new characters in a story they were studying and the implications that the introduction of them might have on the plot. They were could also see the 'double' meaning in some sentences.

96. From the examination pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 it is clear they are taught to write with increasing accuracy in the use of grammar and description. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 wrote poetry including phrases such as 'the beautiful flower opens its soft, silky petals'. The work is generally neatly set out in pupils' books, although worksheets are of a more variable standard, and handwriting is generally well formed. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 write for a range of different purposes and understand the importance of writing to interest the reader. For example, a pupil at the end of Year 3 wrote a piece entitled 'Our wettest trip ever!' This title encouraged the reader to read on and the writer kept the reader interested by using sentences such as 'after I finished exploring the labyrinth we walked past Cragside House and it's massive!' Pupils write diaries, reports, instructions, poetry and descriptive pieces with equal attention to detail. For example, younger pupils use phrases such as 'bees buzzing on a flower' and 'green grass swaying in the breeze' to improve their poetry. Older pupils use humour to entice the reader and make their work more interesting. For example, a pupil in Year 4 wrote 'when my Dad was little he went to the shop to get some sausages for breakfast and on the way home he cooked them under the bonnet!' The pupils are taught to take care with their handwriting and present their work with care. Letters are formed well and as the pupils reach the end of Year 4 they are developing individual style.

97. Literacy is taught through other subjects such as personal and social education, science, history and geography. An area for development is the use of pupils' well-developed writing skills to record what they have learnt about other subject areas. For example, no recorded evidence was available for religious education. Pupils use information and communication technology for drafting their work and for word processing 'published' work for display. They have few opportunities to use the rich resources of the Internet for research or to communicate with others using electronic messages.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is good for six and seven year olds. The teacher plans lessons that interest pupils and gives them suitable challenges. The length of the sessions is rather too long for pupils to keep up their pace of working. As a result they do not always meet the challenges expected of them. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Year 2 began her work enthusiastically, but her motivation flagged. She could have

completed the task in far less time if targets to do so had been given or the time allowed was less. Pupils learn to co-operate as a group, pooling their ideas and resources. This was seen when pupils in Year 1 recognised words that rhymed and chose suitable ones to fit into text. Pupils had to think hard about why the words rhymed, so that the poem made sense, and to think carefully about how to spell the words correctly.

99. The quality of teaching and learning for the older pupils, those in Years 3 and 4, is very good. It clearly enables pupils to achieve well above the average standard. In lessons planned to specifically promote reading skills, pupils work in groups to determine suitable vocabulary to insert into a story so that it makes sense to the reader. The teacher expects pupils to use specialised vocabulary that they have heard when listening to stories for example, pollution. Pupils are set work that is matched to their ability and subject matter is carefully chosen to interest both boys and girls. As a result they understand how to do their tasks. Higher attaining pupils can explain that they are using their reading skills, using their knowledge of the story so far, using vocabulary that is familiar to them and trying out and experimenting with words. Lower attaining pupils in Year 3 understand that “different words can make the story make different sense or can make the story seem in the wrong order.” The teacher concentrates on developing pupils’ writing ability through well-chosen tasks and his own lively approach, which engenders enthusiasm. Pupils say they really like literacy because the teacher makes it interesting and when he reads them stories or poetry he makes it exciting.

100. Pupils cover a wide range of work by the time they leave the school. Throughout the school, teachers support all pupils individually if this is appropriate. Pupils who require extra support or challenge are worked with on a one to one basis, if this is appropriate, or within a small group. Pupils who are higher attaining are encouraged to progress and in Key Stage 2 they are particularly well challenged by the teachers’ probing questioning and expectations of them. Pupils are encouraged to record their work in a variety of different ways such as bullet points or detailed informative sentences. Teachers’ marking in workbooks and worksheets is brief. However, during lessons all pupils have the attention of the teachers at some time. During these interactions, questions are stringent and require pupils to think and develop work for themselves. Praise is also given and encouragement to improve work. Teachers clearly expect that all pupils can and should attain highly.

## **MATHEMATICS**

101. Pupils’ standards in mathematics have been consistently well above national averages for several years. In 2000 and 2001 all pupils reached the level expected for seven year-olds in the national tests, and in 2001 half of the pupils reached higher standards. This result continued the steady year on year improvement that the school has made. Tests taken at the end of Year 4 show that pupils leave the school well above the levels expected for pupils of their age. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school, and achieve very well, from below average levels of understanding when they start school.

102. The quality of mathematics teaching and pupils’ learning is good. The school has successfully adapted the National Numeracy strategy to take account of the fact that classes include pupils from more than one age group. Teachers organise lessons so that pupils are taught as two different year groups for much of the time. They make good use of a well-structured commercial scheme of work to support teaching, and ensure that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged by the level of work they are set. Whenever possible, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use information technology to practise skills or record information. In Key Stage 1, each pupil follows an individual mathematics

programme on the computer that allows them to work at their own pace and develop skills appropriate to their own level of attainment.

103. Examination of pupils' completed work shows that over the whole school year, teachers maintain a good teaching pace. Particularly in number work, they revisit key themes and concepts frequently to consolidate learning and to develop further understanding. However, teachers pay insufficient attention to work that allows pupils to apply what they know in problem solving activities, and pupils consequently make less progress in this strand of the subject than they could.

104. Satisfactory teaching seen during the inspection was rather slow-paced. Pupils are unable to concentrate for long periods of time and, as a result of a long lesson introduction sitting on the carpet, they began to fidget. Once set their written work, they quickly organised themselves and settled well. However, once again they found it hard to remain focused on their work later in the lesson and, overall, the lesson was too long.

105. When teaching was very good skilful questioning throughout the lesson enabled pupils to develop their mental calculation skills, and also enabled the teacher to assess their understanding. Pupils' very good attitudes and high levels of motivation contributed well to the brisk lesson pace, and made class management seem effortless.

106. Teaching is good overall and as a result pupils learn well and reach high standards. By the time they are seven, pupils have a secure grasp of number. They confidently add and subtract numbers up to 100 or more. With the school year barely started, pupils already work out sums such as  $68 + 20$ , using their understanding of place value effectively. In the lesson seen, a higher attaining pupil confidently added and subtracted 13, and used a computer to complete other addition sums to 100. Pupils apply addition and subtraction skills accurately in simple shopping activities, including calculating change, and when measuring objects such as pencils in centimetres. They are developing a sound knowledge of multiplication tables, including using them for division.

107. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 4, pupils develop good mental and written calculating skills. They add and subtract numbers up to 1000 or more, including decimals, using standard written methods. They develop sound understanding of simple fractions, including equivalents of halves and quarters, and they add fractions in simple cases. Pupils use their knowledge of multiplication tables to good effect in calculating the area and perimeter of shapes such as rectangles. They know the names of common two-dimensional shapes such as pentagons and hexagons, and they describe shapes such as isosceles and equilateral triangles accurately, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.

108. Discussion with a talented Year 4 pupil shows that, with much of the school year still to go, he has a secure grasp of area and perimeter, he knows that measurements can be expressed in different forms such as 150 cm or 1.5m and, with help, can explain how to calculate sums such as  $17 \times 12$ .

## **SCIENCE**

109. The practice of teaching science through a topic approach, with other subjects, has not been effective, particularly last year. It led to a fragmentary approach to teaching, which has proved ineffective in addressing the broad programme of study that is required. The school recognises what has happened, and as a direct consequence, has chosen to teach science as a separate subject from September 2001. This is already proving beneficial in Key Stage 2 and is improving the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and

understanding, but there is insufficient evidence yet to judge in Key Stage 1. The new scheme of work has assessment units linked to it. This will help the school to build up a profile of pupils' attainment and progress and supply information for setting pupils targets for improving their performance.

110. In Years 1 and 2, pupils investigate materials to determine whether they float or sink, and whether they are magnetic. They carry out simple investigations, but record little of what they do, other than drawing very simple illustrations. They label pictures of skeletons to name bones such as the elbow and kneecap, and they make up a booklet to show how they grow from birth to childhood. However, work lacks detail, and although the level of factual knowledge is at an appropriate level, the overall effect is one of superficiality.

111. Similar weaknesses are apparent in Year 3 and Year 4 work from last year. For example, a topic on 'animals' embraces work on predator/prey relationships and adaptability to their environment. Pupils know, for instance, that penguins live in the Antarctic, and that they live on fish, and that crocodiles catch and eat live prey such as wildebeest. However, work lacks depth, and pupils do not display the knowledge that they should by this age.

112. Already, the adoption of specific science lessons is beginning to have an effect on raising standards. In the short time since the start of the school year, pupils have studied rocks and soils. They use scientific vocabulary correctly. They know for instance that "metamorphic rocks are igneous and sedimentary rocks have been changed by heat and pressure under the Earth." They have carried out a scratch test to investigate the hardness of materials such as sandstone and slate. In the lesson seen, they investigated how the particle size of soils affects water retention and drainage. One pupil concluded that clay soils take longer to drain than gravelly soils because "tinier holes make it difficult for the water to get out." There is little evidence available as yet to show how information technology supports scientific learning.

113. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching on the basis of the single lesson observed, especially in view of the recent changes adopted. The lesson seen was satisfactory. It was well organised, and the teacher used a poem effectively to stimulate interest in the topic. The lesson placed an appropriate emphasis on practical investigation work. However, pupils were given insufficient opportunities to take responsibility for this work for themselves, since the teacher and classroom assistant directed the distribution of materials. Although pupils were encouraged to observe closely and explain what happened, the teacher placed insufficient emphasis on pupils making predictions beforehand, so that the investigation would become a test of their hypotheses.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS**

114. *Due to the timetabling arrangements and the very short duration of the inspection because of the size of the school, lessons were not observed in all other subjects. Judgements about the overall quality of teaching and standards could not always be made. Where judgements have been made, these are based on a careful scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, photographs, through looking at teachers' planning, from talking to staff, parents and pupils and from observing lessons.*

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. Pupils' attainments are above national expectations in both key stages. Pupils achieve well for their abilities and make good progress as they move through the school. This is partly due to the strong focus given to developing skills progressively so that they build on their achievements and also because of the interest of the staff in promoting the subject. A good example of this was on display during the inspection. All pupils had carried out still life drawing. In the Reception class, children drew each piece of fruit in a separate position and colouring ranged from 'splodges' to the beginnings of shading. In Year 4, drawings were very accurate in grouping, size, shape, detail and perspective. Sensitive use of watercolour indicates pupils have used their knowledge and understanding of materials to communicate their ideas and make the images exciting.

116. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn to use a range of tools such as brushes, glue spreaders, pencils and crayons. They learn to use a variety of materials and techniques, including printing, painting and drawing on paper and card, and they have used clay to make 3D sculptures. Low attaining pupils in Year 1 explored the texture of clay and moulded it into shapes to make dogs. They used water, to make the clay sticky, and attached the main body parts and then legs, ears, tails and even noses.

117. In the lesson seen teaching and learning was good. The pupils were presented with a range of work of famous artists, which they looked at closely to make comparisons and discuss differences. The teacher skilfully questioned the children so that even the youngest could say what it was they liked or didn't like and chose their favourite. Following discussion about the different media artists use the pupils made decisions about would be the best for their 'job'. They made choices from paints, pastels and crayons. The pupils choose the size of their paper carefully, positioned their work well on the paper and proportioned parts of their drawings well, because the teacher offered good suggestions about how to do their work to a good standard.

118. During the lesson the teacher offered good praise to pupils and encouraged those who found the task more taxing. For example, two lower attaining pupils said "you have given us a hard one!" and the teacher replied "well, look at each shape carefully first and take it one shape at a time." She went on to build on this when the pupils had achieved the first shapes. She told the pupils "now think about the size of the next shape and where to place it." The pupils were helped to make good progress. The higher attaining pupils were introduced to the concept of superimposing and they recalled how they had drawn or painted backgrounds before. They used this on their work if they thought it was appropriate. Throughout the lesson pupils were encouraged to assess their achievements with questions such as "how do you think this compares to the original?" A pleasant relaxed and purposeful atmosphere created by the teacher also contributed to the quality of learning.

119. By the time they are nine, pupils have broadened their experiences well. They use pen and ink, pastel colours, watercolours, chalk and charcoal effectively in their work. The majority of pupils produce pictures to express a particular mood. They have developed the use of tone, shading and colour. Whilst no lessons were seen, there was sufficient evidence available to the judge the quality of teaching and learning as good. The higher attaining pupils can draw pictures with a very good sense of perspective, and all pupils have practised this sufficiently to introduce perspective drawings into their work routinely. They have painted in the style of other artists such as Monet, Renoir and Van Gogh. Pupils have sufficient art experience in the styles of other countries and cultures such as African painting.

120. Due to the teachers' personal interest and expertise pupils in Years 3 and 4 experience working in some more unusual media. For example, in work linked to religious education pupils work in egg tempera, which creates a glossy finish. The finished pieces of work, that represent stained glass windows, show pupils have observed very small detail and have applied delicate brushstrokes to their work. Work seen in the inspection suggests that pupils have not had sufficient depth of experience in 3D artwork; their experience is limited to clay or wire frame models. However, these are of a good quality as seen in the tiles pupils have created in clay. Pupils talk about the techniques they have used, confidently demonstrating expertise and a good level of understanding. They told inspectors about the range of printing work they have carried out and talked about 'dipping and spreading' to create 'smudge' prints - linked with mathematics work on symmetry - and 'block' printing with card - linked to literacy work on the book 'The Indian in the Cupboard'. They could also describe the processes they undertook to use their knowledge of 'block' printing to make 'lino' prints with increasingly complex designs.

121. The leadership and management of the subject are good because of the personal interest and expertise of the headteacher. This contributes to standards and the high profile of the subject. The resources are good. These are used effectively and the results can be seen in some attractive displays around the school. Monitoring of art and design is generally carried out by looking at the final pieces of work or by the headteacher reviewing plans for what will be taught. Pupils are not effectively assessed for how much progress they are making over the course of a term or year. The headteacher has no time to monitor teaching and there are no procedures to measure pupils' attainment against learning outcome outlined in planning. The lack of assessment information also means that teachers cannot use this information to change what they intend to teach in the future, or how they intend to teach it more effectively. This subject has changed little since the last inspection, including the lack of systematic assessment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Pupils' standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. As they start school with limited practical skills this represents good progress and achievement over the time they spend in the school.

123. In Key Stage 1, pupils make card and paper houses that clearly represent buildings such as bungalows and blocks of flats. Models are robustly constructed, and openings, for example windows and doors, are accurately cut out. Models are painted in appropriate colours to represent the materials that are used in the construction of the real thing.

124. A satisfactory cooking lesson was observed during the inspection, where pupils learned to make 'gingerbread men'. The lesson was well organised, so that all pupils could take an effective part in the practical work. They also practised reading skills as they followed the recipe, and weighing skills as they measured ingredients. Although teaching focused well on the development of simple practical skills, the teacher missed opportunities to explore and explain what happens to the ingredients during the mixing and cooking processes. For example, a discussion on how melting treacle and margarine results in a mixture where it is no longer possible to extract the individual ingredients, would develop pupils' understanding of the cooking process and would make good links with their learning in science. In Key Stage 2, pupils make chutney when they study the Romans. Descriptions of their work and the recipes they used are on display, and discussion with pupils shows that they clearly enjoyed their work.

125. Pupils follow a simple design process when they make their own products, although little is recorded other than original design intentions. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils

design and make fairground rides, driven by a system of gears and pulleys, and powered by a variety of systems such as a string pull or electric motor. Diagrams of what pupils intend to make are clear, although written descriptions of how their ride works, such as 'using a stick going through a cog', are not good enough. The finished products are good. They are attractive and well constructed, with sufficient accuracy so that the mechanisms work.

126. A satisfactory lesson was seen where pupils began to design a cover for a floor robot, which was to adopt the role of a space probe. The lesson linked design and technology well with English and science, since the context of the lesson was taken from a space story based on the theme of exploration and pollution. Future lessons will take this a step further and link into mathematics and information and communication technology when pupils actually program the robot to find its way round a 'hostile' environment.

127. The teacher referred well to principles of design in the early discussion, drawing pupils' attention to the need to work with suitable materials. The lesson encouraged pupils' creativity and imagination well, but later discussion showed that few pupils are yet able to develop designs beyond a simple illustration. However, a small number did progress as far as considering what materials they will use and how they will join the various parts of their designs together. Pupils clearly enjoy design and technology lessons. The teacher gives them many opportunities to talk about their work, and values their contributions in discussions. Consequently, pupils are receptive, they are considerate towards each other, and they work hard.

128. As part of a general review and development of the curriculum, national guidelines have been adopted as a planning framework. These provide a satisfactory range of experiences, although an associated system of assessment and target setting has yet to be developed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

129. There is limited evidence available on which to judge pupils' standards, or the quality of teaching, in Year 2. In Year 4, standards in the work seen are in line with national expectations, and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve well in relation to what they know when they start school.

130. Pupils draw simple plans and maps of the immediate area, and show, for example, the positions of desks and doors in a classroom plan. In work on weather, pupils have a secure understanding of topics such as the Beaufort scale to measure wind strength, and the symbols used on weather maps. They know also, for instance, that some people in Tunisia have adapted their way of life to live in underground homes to escape the fierce daytime heat.

131. A very good Year 3 and Year 4 lesson was observed, during which pupils learned how volcanoes form. Skilful questioning and explanations covered concepts such as cross sectional drawings, how islands are created and the structure of the Earth. Pupils made many good contributions to the discussions, based on their own general knowledge. Because these were welcomed, pupils were keen to participate in the lesson, and worked very well. Work shows that pupils have a good understanding of volcanic processes. They draw satisfactory diagrams to show their structure, and they explain that "when the lava gets too hot the volcano erupts" for instance.



132. Although standards of work are broadly in line with national expectations, they could be better. In adopting a topic approach to teaching geography, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to explore themes and concepts in depth or to record their knowledge and understanding sufficiently. For example, a display of work on 'Countries around the World' shows that pupils have a good general knowledge of features such as terrain and customs, but work is too descriptive. Pupils describe a range of features, but do not yet explain, for instance, what impact the local terrain and weather has on communications or farming.

133. The headteacher manages the subject satisfactorily, but inevitably has had higher priorities in recent years. However, new curriculum plans have been developed to take account of recent National Curriculum developments, although the associated assessment and recording system to keep track of pupils' progress and set targets has yet to be established.

## **HISTORY**

134. Pupils' attainments are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 4 and are the same as those reported in the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve well in relation to what they know when they start school. Although standards of work are broadly in line with national expectations, they could be better. The topic approach to teaching history does not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to explore themes and concepts in depth. There is limited recorded evidence available. This is attributable to a combination of factors such as history being taught as an aspect of a topic and limited use of literacy skills to record knowledge and understanding.

135. Through discussion with pupils in Years 3 and 4 it is evident that they develop a sense of chronology in Key Stage 1 through a well-sequenced day and by learning about 'old' things such as toys and the history of their school. They can talk about their own past, how they themselves have changed, and how some other things have changed. They have learned about some famous people, the events they are associated with and how they lived a long time ago. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 so it is not possible to comment on the teaching and learning in lessons.

136. By the end of Year 4 pupils have a secure knowledge of some periods in Britain's past. They have made satisfactory achievement in aspects, such as the Romans in Britain, Victorian homes - linked with geographical study - and The Blitz. They have begun to learn to conduct research into past events and periods using books and computers, but the spread of their knowledge is not enhanced by regular access to the Internet. Several aspects of history have not been approached in enough depth due to the way in which the subject is taught. For example, whilst the pupils have copied art from the medieval period, there is no evidence that they have knowledge about how this period influenced life today. Pupils have some understanding that different time periods have their own characteristics, and reasons for being as they were, and the higher attaining pupils can recall, or suggest, reasons why people acted as they did in the past. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 so it is not possible to comment on the teaching and learning in lessons.

137. History is linked to other subjects that are taught. Pupils' finished work shows they were all well motivated by learning about the Romans and by the task of writing a letter home as if they were a Roman legionary, describing their life, clothing and weapons. The drawback was that this work was completed in a history lesson when it could have been covered in a literacy lesson and freed up more time for teaching history skills. Pupils use their literacy skills to record key points, for example about 'The Battle of Otterburn'. Pupils

describe a range of facts, but do not yet explain, for instance, what impact this had on the local communities. History is also linked to design and technology - when pupils make chutney to a Roman recipe - and science - when they study coal mining. However, the approach to teaching the subject means that the teaching of the required historical content and skills is frequently compromised and not covered in sufficient depth. For example, there is little evidence where pupils have used artefacts or secondary sources of information to hypothesise.

138. The management of the subject is satisfactory, but the collegiate approach means that no one has an overview of teaching or standards across the school. The school has adopted aspects of national guidance as a scheme of work, but there is no time available for the co-ordinator to monitor whether the approach to delivering the curriculum is effective. Assessment of pupils' progress is not measured against the objectives for pupils' learning and teachers' knowledge about pupils' progress is not used to change what they plan to teach in the future or set targets for improved performance.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

139. There is insufficient evidence to judge the overall standards that pupils reach in information and communication technology (ICT). However, in the restricted range of work seen, standards are in line with national expectations at all stages throughout the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve well in relation to the skills they have when they start school. No ICT teaching was observed during the inspection, but the quality of the work that pupils produce suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory.

140. Pupils use the computer mouse and keyboard confidently and they have appropriate operating skills for their age. Younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 use the computer to write poems with titles such as 'Purple' and 'The Lizard'. Work is attractively set out, for example centred across the page, and uses appropriate letter styles and sizes. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils write more extensively, and on a wider range of topics. 'Alex's Accident', 'Star Signs', letters from Roman soldiers, and explanations of how they completed 'egg tempera' paintings all feature in work on display around the school. Work has clearly been edited to correct spellings and punctuation and to ensure that the layout, such as the use of paragraphs, is correct. This work is at the standard expected for their age, and shows how ICT can be used effectively to support learning in other subjects.

141. Although there is little other printed evidence of pupils' work in ICT, discussion with them shows that they use computer resources for other work. They learn mathematics through a computer programmed-learning system, and they use computer reference sources to find materials when working on the study of foreign places in geography. Younger pupils learn simple rudiments of control technology by programming a small 'robot' to move about the floor. Pupils throughout the school have not yet used computers to any significant level in work on data handling and computer modelling.

142. The curriculum for ICT is satisfactory. It is relatively new, and follows national guidelines. It is planned on a two-year cycle, which accounts for gaps in pupils' current knowledge. As yet assessment of pupils knowledge and understanding is under-developed and there is insufficient monitoring of the subject to ensure that the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of standards across the school. The school has sufficient computer resources for what it teaches at present, and has good additional equipment such as a digital camera and scanner. However, as the curriculum expands over the next year or so, additional resources, such as a reliable Internet connection, and a greater range of software, will be needed.

## **MUSIC**

143. It is not possible to assess pupils' overall standards in music. However, pupils' singing is broadly at the standard expected for pupils of their age. They sing hymns such as 'He Gave Me Eyes so I Could See' and 'Who Put the Colours in the Rainbow' in assembly. Although the standard overall is satisfactory, singing lacks polish because teachers do not know how to teach it effectively. Attention to details such as variations in dynamics and note length would improve the quality substantially.

144. No lessons were observed and so it is not possible to judge how well teachers teach music. However, music has been identified as a development priority, because the school acknowledges that teachers lack confidence and expertise.

145. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and addresses all of the requirements of the National Curriculum for music. Christmas concerts and instrumental teaching in guitar and keyboard give pupils good additional opportunities to take part in music making, and contribute well to their personal development. The school has sufficient resources to support class teaching, and the range of recorded music available is sufficient to support pupils' understanding of their own and others' societies, although it is not possible to judge how effectively this is used.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

146. Pupils are attaining in line with national expectations in Year 2 and this is satisfactory achievement from their ability when they come into school. By the time they are nine, pupils attain levels that exceed those expected and achievement is good. This is partly due to the very good attitudes pupils have to the subject, their behaviour and the opportunity to participate in activities outside lessons. The pupils also benefit from the teachers' confidence and expertise, which contribute to good learning. The teaching of physical education is not formally monitored and performance is not formally assessed. Pupils' progress is not documented and so it is not used to set pupils targets for improvement. Pupils' achievement in activities outside lessons and in local events are recognised and celebrated.

147. By the end of Year 2 pupils have begun to develop their skills in rolling on the mats, running, hopping and jumping, as well as finer skills in throwing and catching a ball. They use small equipment such as beanbags and hoops well. They develop increasing confidence through the key stage, seen in the comparison of pupils in Year 1 and 2 during a lesson, and derive much enjoyment from this subject. They learn to start and stop on command, and listen carefully to instructions.

148. Good teaching seen in the lesson observed introduced pupils to new challenges after a quick practise of what they had learnt before. Pupils had to concentrate hard to avoid each other and hoops on the floor. They demonstrated that they have learnt to control their movements well. The teacher reinforced what it is the pupils were trying to achieve as the lesson progressed and also built in new things to try. This was done at regular intervals and the teachers' expectation for the pupils to make progress was evident. They learnt to balance more precisely and move more confidently in different directions and at different speeds. Throughout the lesson, the teacher gave time for practise, used demonstration to show a new skill or celebrate achievement and asked pupils to review their own performance. The teacher was skilful at balancing high rate activity exercises and stationary ones, which helps her to monitor performance and behaviour.

149. By the end of Year 4 pupils have developed their confidence and competence very well, especially in team games, where they have learned to co-operate very effectively with each other, are well organised, and understand ideas of team tactics and team spirit. They are appropriately competitive with each other in individual activities and games. Pupils have experience of athletics in the form of throwing, running events and the long jump. They also take part in orienteering activities on the school fields, finding their way from one marker to another with increasing confidence. During the past year pupils have almost all managed to swim twenty metres, and can jump into deep water. Some can dive, a few can swim distances of well over a hundred metres, and they can float in different positions.

150. The lesson observed in Key Stage 2 was very good. It was well-organised practise of throwing, catching and interception skills with pupils in groups of differing size, good use of resources, and with good games skills built in. There were opportunities for pupils to develop their skills individually and in teams. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and intervened appropriately to demonstrate and explain to individual pupils or groups. The pace and challenge were very good, with a strong sense of drive and purpose to the whole lesson. Pupils' performance developed as the games became more tactical and pupils became more competitive. However, they did this with a very good sense of fairness. Pupils were included in the games equally whether they were boys or girls or higher or lower attaining. Pupils were encouraged to assess how the games could be improved, but not how they themselves had done. Throughout the lesson, pupils had to think hard to work out the best tactics and use a high rate of physical stamina to keep up with the rate of play. Behaviour was very good and pupils really enjoyed the lesson.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

151. Standards are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven, but there is insufficient evidence to judge attainment overall in Key Stage 2.

152. By the age of seven, pupils understand that stories may have a deeper meaning and can discuss this well. They can remember parables and recount meanings, which shows a satisfactory level understanding. They discuss and write about their friends and family and helping other people. They understand that they belong to a community where you all work together. Pupils are beginning to understand about 'differences' and they say, "it is important to love one another whatever you are like." They know about different the festivals of different faiths and special clothes associated with different religions. Pupils rarely record their knowledge to help to make their lessons meaningful for them or as a record of their achievement.

153. By the age of nine, pupils understand and present issues in a variety of ways. For example, animal rights and bullying. They study the lives of people who have had a significant impact on the lives of others. They competently discuss the challenges these people faced. Pupils explore their own beliefs and feelings in sensitive and sensible way. They write about things that are sacred to them. However, this work is more usually taught through PHSE lessons rather than religious education. Through discussion with pupils inspectors were able to judge that they have some understanding of the rites of passage in different faiths and go on visits to sacred buildings, such as a church and a synagogue, and understand the importance and the beauty of the buildings.

154. No lessons were seen, but the lack of documented evidence suggests that there is insufficient emphasis on recording knowledge and understanding. There is limited evidence in other subjects, for example, in art pupils have sketched the village church and studied

church windows and the events of significant importance represented in them. There was no evidence of pupils using their literacy skills to record their knowledge and understanding.

155. The school has adopted the Locally Agreed Syllabus, but this is not reflected sufficiently in planning to have led to good progress being made and high achievement. The staff try to teach religious education within the topic approach. This is leading to scant coverage in some areas, for example knowledge of stories from world faiths and the importance of sacred writings for religious people. However, other areas are suitably covered, for example responses to personal and social issues in order to encourage development of attitudes and personal values, because of the links with PHSE. Other factors affecting the standards attained are that systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and target setting are under-developed, resources do not provide a wide variety of artefacts from different faiths and there is not a wide range of reference books.