

# INSPECTION REPORT

**STAINDROP C OF E (CONTROLLED)  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Darlington

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114226

Headteacher: Mrs J M Brown

Reporting inspector: Mrs K W Halifax  
25439

Dates of inspection: 25 - 26 February 2002

Inspection number: 198300

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Black Swan Wynd Staindrop Darlington County Durham
Postcode:	DL2 3NL
Telephone number:	01833 660334
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Duncan Small
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Staindrop Church of England Controlled Primary School is a rural village school serving the parish of St. Mary's Staindrop. It is the only school in the village and takes pupils from the local area, including hamlets and isolated farms. The school caters for pupils aged four to eleven. With 154 pupils on roll, it is smaller than most primary schools. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Pupils are taught in the Reception class and five other classes. The school roll is increasing and this has necessitated an increase in the number of classes this year. The increase in numbers has meant the need for additional rooms. The hall is currently being used as a classroom. The building of a new classroom and office space is scheduled to start within the next few weeks. Pupils between the ages of five and seven, (the infant department), are taught in single age group classes. Classes for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven, (the junior department), have pupils of more than one age group. Almost all pupils are white and all speak English as their main language. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is below average. Twenty-six pupils have special educational needs. This is below average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is variable. Some pupils have limited experiences and poor grasp of number and language, and some have not attended nursery or playgroup because of parents' difficulties getting them there. In contrast, there are a number of children with well developed speech and language who have benefited from their pre-school opportunities. The consequences of the recent Foot and Mouth epidemic have affected a number of families. Overall, assessment on entry to the school shows attainment to be marginally above that expected of children of this age. Nevertheless, there is at least one pupil in each age group, and sometimes two or three, whose attainment is significantly below that expected. In a small school, this has the potential to affect results in national tests significantly.

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

This is a very effective school. Pupils achieve very high standards because teaching is very good and the work is demanding. The school is led and managed in a cost effective way. The headteacher, governors and staff are self-critical, continuously striving to improve. Staff know what they do well and what needs to be done to improve. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The partnership with parents is strong. Of necessity, costs are high for each pupil because this is a small school. Nevertheless, the school provides very good value for money.

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

- By the time they leave the school pupils' standards are high; standards in science are a significant strength.
- The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers cater very well for the pupils' wide range of abilities, enabling all to realise their full potential.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader; together with her second in charge, she manages the school very well.
- Pupils are very well behaved, their attendance is very good and they are keen to learn. This makes a very good contribution to their progress.
- Learning opportunities are very good. While there is a suitable focus on numeracy and literacy, importance is given to other subjects, especially art and music.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to aid pupils' learning.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and prepares them well to become responsible citizens.

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

- Information for parents about what their child is learning and what is expected by way of homework.
- Some health and safety procedures need tightening.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in October 1997. All the key issues identified by the previous inspection have been fully addressed, and in some areas, such as art and design, and information and communication technology are now strengths of the school. Standards have improved and are now well above those expected of pupils of this age. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly with no unsatisfactory teaching seen in this inspection. The percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching has increased considerably. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and is now very good. The hard work of subject managers and improvements to curriculum documents and guidance have contributed to improved teaching and standards.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	A	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	A
Science	A	A*	A*	A*

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

By the end of the Reception class, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals. By the end of Year 2, results in the 2001 national tests were well above average in reading and writing. Though national test results were below the national average in mathematics, when compared to their low attainment on entry to the school, pupils have made very good progress in the two years they have been in the infant department. Results in 2001 national tests for Year 6 were well above average in English and mathematics and in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in science. The teachers' assessments in science for seven-year-olds meant that pupils' performance was also in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Pupils' achievements in the junior department are very good. This is because of the hard work by staff and pupils. Results in national tests have been improving since the last inspection and have been very high since 2000. The school has set challenging targets for each year group of pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils love coming to school. They are confident and eager to learn. Pupils are proud to discuss their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous and polite. They are generous and open-minded, being very well behaved in lessons and at play. They show great respect for people and property.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Pupils use their initiative and show respect for the feelings of others. Pupils with responsibilities undertake their tasks conscientiously.

Attendance	Very good. Pupils arrive at school on time. This makes a good start to the day.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching ranged from good to excellent, being very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching was very good or excellent in well over half of the lessons seen. Teaching in Classes 4 and 5 was inspirational. Pupils in these two classes acquire new knowledge and skills at a remarkable rate. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Numeracy and literacy are taught well. Pupils make very good improvement in these areas because teachers plan for them to develop their skills in other subjects. Teachers are confident teaching all subjects. They plan their lessons well, taking care to match work to different ages and abilities within each class. Work is challenging for pupils of all abilities. As a result pupils make very good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Though there is a good emphasis on numeracy and literacy, staff work hard to offer a very wide range of learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school provides very well for all levels of abilities. There is a clear commitment to including all pupils equally in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Teachers plan very good opportunities for pupils to improve these aspects of their personal development. Though the school promotes Christian beliefs, pupils are encouraged to show respect for others whatever their religion or way of life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Staff know their pupils well and are very caring. However, some systems need to be more rigorous. Parents think highly of the school. Links with parents are good, but some parents need more information about what their child is learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is an outstanding leader who is ably supported by a hardworking, conscientious second-in-charge. Their commitment to high achievement is supported effectively by all staff.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are clear about their responsibilities and give good support to the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's view of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Careful analysis of national test results has shown where standards can be improved even further. Good use is made of the principles of best value. The headteacher and governors have consulted with parents, and compare the school's performance to that of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff, the accommodation and resources are used imaginatively and effectively. Staff have addressed the challenge of the lack of space creatively and with good grace.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The standards pupils achieve.</li> <li>• The dedication and approachability of the headteacher and staff.</li> <li>• The small class sizes.</li> <li>• Links with the church and the community.</li> <li>• Pupils are very well behaved.</li> <li>• The way their child is encouraged to mature and become independent.</li> <li>• The values the school promotes.</li> <li>• Pupils of all abilities are valued members of the school community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about what their child is learning.</li> <li>• The amount of homework their child receives.</li> <li>• The range of out of school activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concerns, there is room for improvement in the information about what their child is learning. Homework is set regularly and contributes to pupils' progress. However, parents are not always clear about the frequency of homework. The range of activities provided outside lesson time is satisfactory and comparable to that in other schools for pupils of this age.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards are high. Standards in science are a particular strength**

1. The children's attainment on entry to the school is marginally above that expected for their age. Children in the Reception class are eager to learn making good progress with most achieving the Early Learning Goals. However, each year one or two children do not achieve the expected levels in communication and mathematics. This is because of poor skills in numeracy and communication on entry to the school. Nevertheless, teachers' records show their rate of progress is very good. Pupils make very good progress in the infant department. Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2 showed that standards were above the national average in reading, and well above average in writing. Pupils' performance is well above that of those from similar backgrounds, schools with a comparable number of free school meals, in reading and writing. Though national test results are below the national average in mathematics, when compared to their low attainment on entry to the school, pupils have made very good progress in the two years they have been in the infant department. In the tests, two pupils missed the required standard by one mark, because this is a small school this has affected the results significantly. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level, (Level 3), in the national tests was well above average in reading and writing and from the teachers' assessments made in science; in mathematics it was average. Progress is very good in the first class in the junior department, with pupils making remarkable progress in the top two classes because of outstanding teaching. Results in the 2001 national tests for Year 6 in English, mathematics and science were very high when compared to national figures and when compared to similar schools.
2. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are of a very high standard because all adults take time to listen and talk to pupils. Pupils of all ages and abilities listen intently to their teachers and to other pupils. They follow increasingly complex instructions and listen particularly well in other subjects such as music and physical education. Pupils who have been identified as needing additional support to improve listening make very good progress because of support by a volunteer parent with an expertise in voice work. Pupils find the work fun and soon begin to recognise rhythm and pattern in sounds. Pupils in all age groups extend their vocabulary at a good rate because teachers emphasise key words when introducing new topics, such as 'repel' and 'attract' when studying magnetism in Class 3. By Year 6, pupils are articulate and confident speakers. When addressing the class they speak clearly, making eye contact with their audience, projecting their voice and using emphasis and intonation well.
3. Standards in reading are high in all age groups. Young children love stories and are keen to learn to read. Pupils in the Reception class and infant department have acquired a good number of ways to help them read new words. Pupils read for pleasure, and most read all kinds of texts, including poetry and non-fiction. By Year 6, pupils are fluent, confident readers. They read with expression and debate the merits of various authors and poets. This was the case when pupils in a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils compared works by Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck.

4. Standards in writing have improved because of the good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy; pupils have very good opportunities to talk about what they intend to write and because of initiatives such as visits by authors. Pupils in all age groups write imaginatively using a wide vocabulary. They write reports and instructions; they record their activities and write for specific purposes such as invitations or letters requesting information. Handwriting is of a good standard in all age groups. Pupils sometimes draft their work then word process their final version. They are competent using a wide range of software, changing the font to match the mood of their work and using an art program to illustrate their work. This was used very effectively by a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils in their 'firework poems'.
5. Mathematics is taught consistently well. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of most aspects of the subject. However, there are one or two pupils in each year of the infant department who have a lot of ground to cover because they started from a low baseline. Staff have recognised that these pupils have difficulties when 'doubling' numbers, and sequencing large numbers and so are providing extra support when teaching these areas. Nevertheless, pupils of all ages and abilities have increased confidence in using the four rules of number, in telling the time, measuring and working with money. Pupils are equally confident solving numerical and word problems. Progress in mental mathematics is very good and especially impressive in classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6 because of the methods used and activities chosen. Lively activities, such as counting and using their knowledge of multiplication tables at the start of each mathematics lesson have resulted in pupils in these classes having highly developed mental skills when, for example using fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and are desperate to be chosen to give the answer.
6. Standards in science are very high. The Year 6 pupils' results in the 2001 national tests and the results of teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils in the same year were in the top five per cent in the country. The focus on practical science means pupils of all ages and abilities are confident when conducting an investigation. They discuss their ideas sensibly, know how to set up an experiment, predict what they think might happen and understand how to make their test fair. Older pupils are aware of what elements of their investigation can be changed. Following an investigation, pupils discuss their work at length, and reflect, before recording their findings later in the week. As a result pupils are not rushed and consider all aspects of their work, often doing further research at home before writing their findings. Investigations are meaningful. For example, pupils in the infant department investigated whether a coat would stop their snowman melting. Pupils formed their hypothesis, and many were very surprised by the outcome. Similarly older pupils investigated ways of keeping a hot water bottle warm, using wool, fleece, newspaper and corrugated card. They decided for their test to be fair they should pour the same amount of water in each bottle, and cover using only one layer of material. Visits to nature reserves and other places of scientific interest make learning real and contribute to standards.
7. Standards in science are particularly high because of the knowledge, skill and enthusiasm of the subject manager. It is the headteacher who undertakes this role. Her expertise has been used by the Local Education Authority to support teachers in other schools. She has produced a comprehensive document providing very useful guidance for teachers. The detailed planning is linked to other subjects where appropriate and great emphasis is placed on improving thinking and reasoning. Each area to be studied highlights opportunities for pupils to use and develop deduction and

reasoning, as well as observation. All lessons have some practical element. This challenges pupils of all abilities and leads to very high standards.

**The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers cater very well for the pupils' wide range of abilities, enabling all to realise their full potential.**

8. Teachers are dedicated, hard working and enthusiastic. Support staff are skilled and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. All staff have demonstrated patience and resourcefulness during the difficulties presented by the accommodation and are looking forward to the building of additional rooms in order to improve their already very good practice. Teachers transmit their enthusiasm to their pupils, so pupils are hungry to learn and eager to please. This was demonstrated well in Class 1 when pupils endeavoured to pass on the correct message in a game of 'Chinese Whispers', designed to improve pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Teachers are adept at adapting their style to suit the needs of the pupil. They recognise that different pupils learn in different ways and so provide numerous practical activities in addition to challenging written work. As a result all pupils learn very effectively. One such example is a pupil who has a limited knowledge of number, yet he was the first in the class to make sensible suggestions how to measure the width of the classroom. Teachers make learning fun and plan activities to delight pupils. This was seen in a lesson where pupils thoroughly enjoyed 'keep fit' mental activities at the start of their mathematics lessons and made very good gains in their mathematical knowledge whilst being physically active.
9. The quality of learning of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs is very good because of the support and patience of all adults, and because teachers plan for them to be leaders of groups and succeed. This was so in a physical education lesson in the junior department where a pupil with special educational needs was chosen for team leader. Similarly in a mathematics lesson in the infant department, a pupil who found concentration difficult was chosen to help the teacher count the number of pupils who answered questions correctly. Work provided is, initially, well within pupils' capabilities to give them confidence, before moving quickly to more taxing tasks to make pupils think and extend their knowledge. More able pupils are equally challenged in the additional work that is set for them, or where appropriate in a very small number of cases, taking their numeracy and literacy lessons with older pupils in order to stretch them.
10. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously clearly identifying the knowledge and skills pupils will acquire. They make sure pupils are aware of what they will learn and that there is a structure to all lessons and a time which allows for recap of previous learning as well as checking what pupils have learned at the end of each lesson. Lessons have a sense of urgency and teachers continuously challenge pupils to improve their performance. This was the case in a games lesson where very well planned activities allowed pupils to progress by throwing a ball more accurately, improving catching and to pass and receive the ball while moving, all within a 15 minute period.
11. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the standard of work they produce. When discussing methods of working, pupils near a display 'How to do my best work' merrily chanted "making sure it's neat, checking my spellings, checking I use interesting work, and checking grammar" without looking at the sheet. Teachers constantly challenge pupils to improve their performance. An example of this is pupils' recording on a graph of how quickly they recall multiplication facts. Pupils strive to beat their previous times with the result that pupils of all abilities have almost instant

recall of multiplication and division.

12. Teachers expect pupils to think and reason. Questions are used skilfully to ascertain pupils' understanding and to further their knowledge. When considering inference in poetry, the teacher gave a very good example of imagery using the example, 'the wet thin dog limped over the shiny cobbles' and questioned pupils as to why they thought the dog was thin. Pupils of all abilities were able to give opinions such as "the dog is ill" or "the dog is underfed" and recognise that all opinions are useful. Later in the lesson, pupils were challenged to think deeply about phrases such as 'drunk with fatigue' in a war poem and made thoughtful contributions about why this should be, such as "their equipment is heavy", "they are tired because of the weight of sludge on their boots", and "they are battleworn".
13. Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers use resources imaginatively and effectively to make learning more real. Such was the case in the use of hymnbooks in a religious education lesson to consider the meaning of hymns, and of papyrus in a history lesson about Egyptian scribes and writing materials. Pupils were fascinated and eager to find out more. A science lesson where pupils investigated the effectiveness of various detergents in different water temperatures appealed to older pupils because they associated the products with television advertisements. Referring to the jingles for the various brands, they predicted what they thought might happen and recognised the need to repeat investigations because the first outcome might be a 'fluke'. Video tapes are used selectively to illustrate teaching points as was the case in a history lesson. In addition to improving their historical knowledge, pupils improved their writing as they were expected to make notes using bullet points.
14. Teachers of older pupils give good advice on how to tackle national tests. Strategies such as 'free gifts' in mathematics were reinforced with pupils making them aware of 'inverse operations', for example  $7 \times 8$  equals 56 as does  $8 \times 7$ . Conversely 56 divided by 8 is 7. Pupils are warned not to be overwhelmed by detail and know to "Chill, read and pick out what you need". When presenting arguments or giving opinions about literature, pupils know to back their answers by examples from the text.
15. There has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Teachers plan in detail the knowledge and skills they expect pupils to acquire. Assessment procedures are clearly identified and the results used when planning further lessons. The quality of marking has improved with all staff setting targets to help pupils improve their work. This is contributing to high standards.

**The headteacher is a very effective leader; together with her second in charge she manages the school very well.**

16. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and very clear direction for the work of the school. She is very strong and dedicated, knows her staff and pupils very well, encouraging them to give of their best at all times. She uses the strengths of her staff well. This allows staff to be confident and to be successful in their work. There is a commitment to very high standards. Whilst having very high expectations, she is fiercely protective of staff and pupils, giving them new skills and the confidence to fly. Staff report though there is no doubt who is leading the school, they are treated with respect and given every opportunity for professional development. The headteacher has a very high profile around the school, checking what is happening in classrooms and giving support to pupils who may be having a trying time at home. Her monitoring of results in national tests has allowed very challenging targets to be set for pupils of all abilities. She has been very successful in keeping staff buoyant during the past

couple of years when teaching space was at a premium and some staff were working out of boxes because of the limited storage space.

17. The headteacher is supported by a very able second in charge who gives herself tirelessly to the work of the school. She too sets high standards, yet is calm and purposeful when working with staff and pupils. She is a very competent teacher and a very good example to other staff. Her expertise has been recognised by the Local Education Authority, in the compilation of County guidelines to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. She, and another member of staff are regularly observed by teachers from other schools as examples of good practice. In addition, she provides much appreciated practical support and advice for staff. This is especially evident in the work she has put into producing high quality curriculum documents and the comprehensive staff handbook.
18. The headteacher works closely with the governing body and staff to ensure the school's aim of 'children reaching their full potential socially, morally, spiritually, culturally and academically in preparation for wider community life' is fully met. Governors support the headteacher well. Reporting to the governing body is thorough, and clearly linked to standards and the needs of school. The decision to appoint additional support staff especially in numeracy and literacy has been effective in allowing all pupils of all abilities to be fully involved in lessons, thus improving the quality of learning and raising standards further. The key issues from the last inspection, to review documentation and staff roles and responsibilities have been met. Detailed schemes of work that are relevant to pupils' interests, and take account of mixed age classes, are in place in all subjects. Roles and responsibilities were redefined as soon as the staffing complement was accomplished. Robust systems are in place to help the school improve further. Visits by the Local Education Authority link adviser are used effectively to focus on what might be improved.

**Pupils are very well behaved, their attendance is very good and they are keen to learn. This makes a very good contribution to their progress.**

19. Parents report their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils have a thirst for learning. They readily join in all activities, showing high levels of interest in lessons and at other times. They co-operate very well with teachers and apply themselves well to their work. Pupils show good initiative in their learning, completing homework neatly and on time, and often undertaking additional research. Pupils of all ages and abilities take a pride in their work. This was seen in the reception class when children beamed with pride as they showed the inspector their Mother's Day cards.
20. Behaviour is very good. Pupils behave sensibly in classrooms, during assemblies and at break-times. They move around the school calmly and cheerfully. Bullying is very rare. In order to prevent this, each class has nominated a pupil to be 'Class Friend', whose photograph is prominently displayed and whom pupils are encouraged to go to if they feel lonely or need help. Pupils are very polite and respectful towards all adults, taking a genuine interest in visitors and quickly engaging them in conversation. Behaviour management is very good with teachers using a variety of effective strategies. Pupils understand the system of rewards and are proud to receive their merits. School rules are clearly displayed around the premises and stated in the home and school agreement. These factors are successful in creating a good atmosphere for learning and giving pupils a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. There have been no exclusions for many years.
21. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Teachers know their

pupils very well and enjoy working with them. Pupils get on very well with each other and work together amicably, as when working in pairs on the computer. Pupils listen to, value and respect each other's contributions in lessons. A good example of this was seen in a geography lesson when pupils in Class 1 were working in groups assembling a map to show prominent features and routes. When faced with the problem of having to distinguish between two churches, pupils discussed their options sensibly and solved the problem by deciding to use two different colours. The pupils' personal development is very good. Parents are especially pleased that their child is growing in confidence, maturity and independence. Pupils of all ages and abilities respond very well to the responsibilities they are given. Register monitors, bus monitors, overhead projector monitors and those carrying out special tasks for teachers do so conscientiously. Pupils who are house captains take their role seriously and talk about the value of the weekly 'house meetings'. Those given additional responsibilities in lessons rise well to their teacher's expectations. This was seen in a science investigation in Class 5, where pupils in the role of 'observer' showed great maturity as they observed the relationships and workload in their group recognising, for example, "The group planned well with lots of ideas and no-one was left out."

**Learning opportunities are very good. While there is a suitable focus on numeracy and literacy, importance is given to other subjects, especially art and music.**

22. While maintaining good emphasis on numeracy and literacy, resourceful timetable arrangements, imaginative planning and the commitment of staff have allowed pupils of all abilities to benefit from the wide range of learning opportunities. The key issue identified by the previous inspection to improve provision for art, design and technology, and information and communication technology has been suitably addressed. The focus on topic work across a number of subjects has made learning more meaningful to pupils. This is evident, for example, in Class 5 where pupils are learning about Spain as part of their studies in geography. To support this, pupils have used the Internet and CD Rom to find out more about the life of a schoolchild and the history of Spain. Displays are relevant and contain examples of foreign currency, flags and paintings of Spanish scenes. Pupils have listened to traditional Spanish music, then composed and performed their own work using a number of instruments including coconut shells for their piece 'Bullfight' and castanets for 'Fiesta'. Similarly, while studying Australia, pupils in Class 2 learn to play the didgeridoo, using their scientific knowledge of 'sound' to recognise, the longer instrument the lower the sound. Through their geography studies of Lindisfarne in

Class 1 geography, pupils link their work to their knowledge of Saint Cuthbert in religious education and Grace Darling in history.

23. Visits by artists and links with the community have resulted in high standards in art, design and technology. Pupils are experienced in using a very wide range of materials and have produced high quality murals, banners and mosaics that make the school attractive and support learning. When working with textiles, pupils talk enthusiastically about their weaving, and how they learnt the art of making a 'proggy rug'. Activities are designed to be purposeful. This is seen in the 'stepping stones' designed and made to include wild life features for the 'quiet garden'. Alongside this pupils have designed tree sculptures and an arch for jasmine and honeysuckle to climb up. Links with the community were strengthened when pupils designed and made flower pots for the church flower festival. Pupils discussed their design and colour of flowers, and talked proudly of the colourful display that lined the path to church. Older pupils ventured further afield after they designed and made lanterns, they talked excitedly about taking part in the Teesdale Lantern Procession.
24. Music is used to help pupils develop their talents. Pupils of all ages and abilities take part and perform to a high standard in the spectacular concerts, talent shows, Christmas productions and carol service. Pupils with a particular musical talent have the chance to learn a number of instruments through school and the Local Education Authority music service. Visits by strings, brass and woodwind groups, the 'Rock School' and a jazz group; coupled with out of school visits to concerts such as to the Wynton Marsalis workshop depicting the Life of Louis Armstrong widen pupils' knowledge and appreciation of music. Pupils attending the after school singing club, sing to a high standard, projecting their voices well, harmonising and performing rounds. The use of CDs such as 'Handel's Fireworks Party' which tell the story to music, give pupils a greater understanding of classical music. The school has recently been nominated for the prestigious 'Arts Mark'.

#### **Information and communication technology is used effectively to aid pupils' learning.**

25. Opportunities for pupils to use information technology were very limited at the time of the last inspection. A key issue was to raise staff confidence in using the technology and to improve resources and provision. The appointment of a part-time technician has contributed significantly to its use in school. Teachers now have confidence that the computers will work and attempt more challenging tasks because of the support and helpful tips given by the technician. Very good progress has been made in this subject, much due to the enthusiasm and dedication of two subject managers. Pupils are fascinated by computers and use them whenever possible to support work in other subjects.
26. Word processing is used very effectively to enhance the high quality displays in all classrooms. Pupils use text boxes, graphics and borders. They resize their work, insert digital photographs and use colour fill techniques. Pupils are confident when editing, saving and printing their work. In Class 1, pupils used computers effectively to produce information pamphlets, for example, 'animals' and 'diggers'. A music lesson in a Class 2 was made more relevant when pupils used a CDROM to investigate the sound made by a didgeridoo, before attempting to play it. Pupils in other age groups use CDROM to aid their research. This was the case in a Class 3 lesson, where pupils used a number of different sources in their search for evidence about the Ancient Egyptians.
27. Work in art and design is supported well by the use of commercial packages as when

Class 4 designed greeting cards, and repeated patterns using different tones and shades. Similarly children in the reception class used computer art imaginatively to produce 'seaside postcards'. Older pupils confidently used the Internet as their inspiration for chalk compositions of planets and galaxies. Pupils in the junior department used their knowledge of spreadsheets and data handling to conduct a survey into their favourite films and games consoles in mathematics. After collecting the information, they created a spreadsheet which they later converted into a graph.

28. Science investigations are now even more interesting to pupils through the use of a computerised microscope. This allows pupils to examine live insects in specially provided dishes, producing an image for them to record. Pupils in the infant department rubbed their hands with glee as they described how they had seen 'mini beasts squirming around' getting a very clear view of all the insects' features. The purchase of white boards that interact with the computer has enriched numerous lessons. Pupils' are captivated by the variety of illustrations and examples in the introduction to their lessons. The board was used particularly effectively in a Class 5 English lesson exploring the underlying meaning of 'Dulce et decorum est' by Wilfred Owen. Pupils were visibly moved by the poignant images of soldiers who had been blinded shuffling along, and of the hidden messages in the well-known poster 'Your Country Needs You'.
29. Pupils of all ages and abilities use the Internet to email pupils who have left the school and moved abroad. A number of classes sport eye-catching displays of photographs of past pupils in their new schools in Australia, Spain, Ireland and Indiana. Photographs of pupils' work and events in Staindrop are taken regularly using the digital camera and transmitted to their friends abroad. Others use a scanner to send interesting tit-bits gleaned from the local newspaper. The weekly computer club for older pupils is very well subscribed. Pupils attending the club are in the process of designing a web page for the school.

**Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and prepares them well to become responsible citizens.**

30. There has been very good improvement in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development since the last inspection. Daily worship in class and in the hall allows pupils to develop a reverence for prayer. Pupils of all ages are familiar with the routine of prayer, saying grace before lunch and evening prayer at the end of the day, as well as compiling a book of their favourite prayers. Pupils learn a good a number of prayers because each class has its own prayers that are suitable for the age of pupils. Worship is planned on a two year cycle, linked closely to the church calendar. Topics are relevant to pupils' interest. An assembly, held during the inspection, had pupils chuckling as the headteacher fussed, pretending to clean the hall in preparation for the inspection team. This linked aptly to Shrove Tuesday, the meaning of 'shriven' and the need for a 'clean start'. Weekly assemblies taken by the local vicar have a tremendous impact. Pupils are spellbound by his stories of the diary of Maximus, the church mouse. Older pupils develop a very good understanding of the teachings of Jesus through class assemblies such as 'The Whopper Picnic' when they are encouraged to consider the feelings of those directly involved in the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Pupils in Class 4 discussing the meaning of hymns as part of their work in religious education, thought deeply about their favourite hymns such as 'What a friend we have in Jesus', commenting "Jesus is friendly and it is an honour to pray to God". Pupils are encouraged to appreciate beauty in nature, as they focus on a spectacular cherry tree outside the hall window. As part of the history programme and link to World War 2, pupils take part in a service of remembrance,

reflecting on the enormity of war and the precious gift of life. A very good understanding of other major world faiths is encouraged through the study of Buddhism, and through a most informative visit by a practising Sikh.

31. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is equally very good. Pupils become increasingly independent through school routines and through opportunities to take part in activities out of school, including residential visits. Pupils have their own notice board, and important information of interest to pupils is discussed at the weekly house meetings. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others and willingly support the local home for senior citizens, Seeds for Africa and collect clothing and boots for children in Lithuania and Romania. Pupils often raise money for charity on their own initiative. This was seen when a pupil suggested a 'Blue Peter Bring and Buy Sale', writing off for the package to the BBC and doing the organising himself. Pupils have a healthy respect for the environment with each class choosing and planting a tree. It is not unusual to see animals such as dogs and horses in the school grounds as pupils learn how to be responsible pet owners and care for animals. Pupils gain a good insight into global issues and contribute to the care of one acre of rain forest, and by sponsoring three wild animals. Following a democratic vote, pupils decided to support a tiger, an elephant and a dolphin, rejecting the white rhino and the whale.
32. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy in body and mind through work in science, physical education, religious education and personal and social education, for example by considering issues such as substance misuse. All are conscious of the need for healthy eating and make sensible choices at lunchtimes. Older pupils, discussing the merits of fast food, wrote to major supermarkets and restaurants researching healthy options. Disappointed by some of their findings they discussed food preferences with others in their class before planning and making a healthy meal for a class of 27 for a cost of £35.10. Staff and pupils are busily working towards the Healthy Schools Standard.
33. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' cultural development. Pupils gain a very good knowledge of the village through work in history and geography, and of life in the past through visits to museums such as Beamish. An awareness of wider cultures is gained through the many travels of Barnaby Bear, for instance to Dublin, Australia, Peru and Israel; many of these accompanied by the vicar. Barnaby always manages to take his camera and has been photographed wearing a 'keyfiyeh', traditional dress, sitting next to a prickly pear close to an amphitheatre in Israel and high in the mountains of Peru. Pupils in the reception class locate holiday destinations on a map and have an awareness of some French vocabulary for food and drink. Very close links with pupils who have moved abroad extend pupils' awareness of school life in a number of countries. Pupils talk respectfully of their celebrations of festivals of other cultures such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.
34. A love of literature is fostered through the very wide range of texts read in English lessons, through book reviews and through visits by authors such as Anne Fine. Pupils learn to appreciate the work of many famous artists as they study, for example, the work of Clarice Cliff. Following discussions about her work and conditions in factories in the 1930s, pupils in Class 2 produced coil pots and slab pots. Music is used well to create an atmosphere for worship and through visits by a very wide range of musicians.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Information for parents about what their child is learning and what is expected by way of homework**

35. Overall parents are pleased with the information they receive. They appreciate the termly meetings to discuss the progress their children make and to set new targets for improvement. However, more information is needed about the topics their children are studying in some classes, and changes in routines as pupils move from one class to another.
36. Though the school prospectus gives parents some indication as to what homework is given in both the infant and junior departments, and a homework survey has been conducted by schools in Teesdale, a significant number of parents responding to the inspection questionnaire and attending the meeting expressed uncertainty as to when and how much homework to expect. While homework is given and does support learning, there is no regular pattern in some classes.

### **Some health and safety procedures need tightening**

37. Staff care for their pupils. However, a number of systems need tightening. For example, though serious incidents and accidents are recorded by the headteacher, no record is kept of minor accidents. Practice emergency evacuations of the building are carried out, but the results are not recorded. There is no signing in book so there is no record of visitors in school in case of emergency evacuation.
38. Staff and many parents are becoming increasingly concerned about the thoughtless parking of a significant number of parents at the start and end of the day. In addition to being an inconvenience to neighbouring properties, the cars present a hazard to pupils and an obstacle to buses needed to transport pupils to outlying farms. In order to address this, two parents and a local council representative have organised a 'walking train'. However, more support is needed from parents to make this a fully effective system.

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

39. In order to improve further, whilst maintaining the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:
- (1) Provide further information for parents about what their child is learning and about the frequency and amount of homework expected in each year group.
  - (2) Formalise health and safety procedures for recording incidents and accidents, emergency evacuations and visitors in school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	5	7	0	0	0	0
Percentage	25	31	44	0	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 six percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	26

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	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

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
	2001	14	6	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	17	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (82)	95 (86)	90 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	18	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (86)	95 (82)	100 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Separate data for boys and girls is omitted owing to the small number of boys and girls taking the national tests in the school in 2001.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	10	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	18	19	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (95)	95 (95)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	18	18	18

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (95)	90 (89)	90 (95)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

*Separate data for boys and girls is omitted owing to the small number of boys and girls taking the national tests in the school in 2001.*

### **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	153
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25.7

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **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	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### **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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	304,997
Total expenditure	281,186
Expenditure per pupil	1,900
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,183
Balance carried forward to next year	47,994

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	154
Number of questionnaires returned	73

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	53	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	47	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	54	19	4	4
The teaching is good.	51	41	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	41	25	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	32	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	0	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	38	43	16	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	50	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	31	29	10	7