

INSPECTION REPORT

SEABURN DENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108786

Headteacher: Miss Maxine Purdy

Reporting inspector: Dr Brian Male
14906

Dates of inspection: 10-13 June 2002

Inspection number: 198332

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Torver Crescent
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Sunderland

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Cllr Iain Kay

Date of previous inspection: 3/11/1997

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| 14906 | B Male | Registered inspector | English, special educational needs | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 19419 | S Boyle | Lay inspector | | How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents? |
| 2759 | D Sleightholme | Team inspector | Mathematics, art, religious education | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Equality of opportunities |
| 21034 | S Smith | Team inspector | Information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, | |
| 3942 | K Sanderson | Team inspector | Science, physical education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 30691 | K Coupland | Team inspector | Foundation Stage, music | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large primary school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years old, and is maintained by the Sunderland local education authority. At the time of the inspection there were 335 full time pupils in 12 classes. A further 50 pupils attended the nursery on a part-time basis. Many pupils start school with standards of attainment above those usually found. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also well below the national average. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minorities and for whom English is an additional language. These proportions are much lower than in most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

There has been an exceptionally large number of staff changes and absences over the last two years. This has inevitably affected standards of attainment, which are not as high as in recent years at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards of behaviour are very good and most children have very positive attitudes to school. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction and has been successful in instituting a number of necessary changes which have improved the quality of teaching so that it is now good overall, but the school now needs a period of staffing stability in order to consolidate new systems and to ensure that new approaches come through into improved standards. The effect of the improvements in teaching has been to a great extent counter-acted by the large number of staff changes and absences, and will need more time to impact on standards. The school receives an average income and, during this period of transition, provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall
- Standards of behaviour are very good across the school, and most pupils have very positive attitudes
- There are very good relationships across the school
- The school provides a rich curriculum and a good range of extra-curricular activities
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development and very good provision for cultural development
- The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction, and has introduced a number of changes that have improved the quality of teaching

What could be improved

- The school could build on its improved assessment procedures by linking them firmly to targets so that teaching can be sharply focused
- The arrangements for outdoor education could be improved at the Foundation Stage
- Now that behaviour is generally very good, the operation of the assertive discipline policy could be reviewed
- The school could build on steps already taken to strengthen its partnership with parents
- Above all, the school needs a period of staffing stability

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

The school has already recognised in its development planning the need to build on assessment, to improve the use of outdoor equipment and to review the discipline procedures. There are also plans to strengthen the partnership with parents.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997, and has made good progress since then. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen in English, mathematics and science, even though they are not quite as high as in recent years. Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to school have improved and are now very good. Standards have also risen in some other subjects. The quality of teaching has also improved and is now good overall. The headteacher has addressed a number of issues that needed tackling, and has been

successful in introducing a range of improvements. The school has successfully addressed all of the key issues raised by the previous inspection, except that the programme for refurbishing toilets is not yet complete.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 | |
| English | B | A | C | D | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| Mathematics | A | A | A | B | |
| Science | A | B | A | B | |

The school's scores in national tests for eleven year olds in 2001 were well above the national average in mathematics and science, and in line with the national average in English. These standards were above those in similar schools in mathematics and science, and below average in English. Standards in mathematics and science continued a four year trend of well-above-average standards. Standards in English have fluctuated, but 2001 scores were the lowest for over four years. Inspection findings suggest that present standards are higher this year in English, but slightly lower in mathematics and science. Standards in all three subjects are above the national average, and likely to be in line with the average of similar schools. The lower standards in mathematics and science are associated with the high staff turnover, and higher standards in English are associated with the very good quality of teaching in the "booster" classes in that subject.

The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds have generally been well above the national average, and above the average of similar schools for the last four years. Inspection evidence suggests that present standards are lower, being above average in reading and in line with the average in writing and mathematics. These standards are likely to be in line with the average of similar schools in reading, and well below that average in writing and mathematics. These lower standards are associated with the large number of changes of teachers, together with the usual fluctuations that can be found between year groups.

Pupils make good progress through the Foundation Stage, and standards are generally above average by the time children move to Year 1.

The school sets appropriate targets for its pupils and has been generally successful in attaining them. The standards attained this year represent appropriate achievement for the children at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. Standards should be higher at Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Most pupils have very good attitudes to their school. They are keen to learn and take a very good interest in their work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is generally very good in the classrooms and around the school. Pupils are polite and courteous, and thoughtful about others. |
| Personal development and relationships | There are very good relationships between pupils across the school. Pupils are considerate and caring in their approach to others. They work particularly well together in pairs and in groups. |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Attendance | The rate of attendance is above the national average. |
|------------|---|

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Aged 4-5 | Aged 5-seven years | Aged seven-11 |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Satisfactory | Good |

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

The quality of teaching is good across the school, and stronger at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The very high level of staff changes and absences over the last two years has counteracted the improvements that have been made in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is most effective, there is high challenge in the lessons together with a close focus on what needs to be learned by different groups of children, and a quick pace to learning. In many of these lessons, there is a sense of excitement that stimulates the pupils' enthusiasm. The school has introduced a number of new approaches, such as 'thinking skills' and paired work, that are proving very effective in promoting learning. Teachers are taking many effective steps to ensure that lessons are targeted at different groups of pupils, and are most effective where this "differentiation" is based on a precise analysis of the assessment data that the school collects.

Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2, and there are effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, particularly at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. The school is successful in meeting the needs of all its pupils, and there is appropriate provision for pupils who have special educational needs with some good support from teaching assistants. Pupils' learning is good overall at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2, and generally satisfactory at Key Stage 1.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, and a good range of extra-curricular activities. There is particularly good provision for activities and visits outside of the school. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum does not make full provision for the required outdoor element. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The school makes appropriate provision for these pupils and meets all the requirements of the national Code of Practice. Appropriate steps are being taken for the transition to the new requirements. There is some good support for pupils from teaching assistants. The targets on some of the individual education plans could be sharper. |
| Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language | There is a very small number of pupils receiving support, and this is mainly in the area of writing rather than speaking and understanding. The support is generally appropriate, but does not always link effectively to the work pupils do in class. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. There is appropriate provision for spiritual development, good provision for moral and social development, and very good provision for cultural development. The operation of the school's assertive discipline policy sometimes restricts opportunities for self-discipline. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | There is a generally good standard of care for children, although child protection procedures need updating. The school now has a range of methods for assessing levels of attainment and these now need to be more closely linked to the targets for different groups of pupils within lessons. |

A significant minority of parents feels that the school could have a closer partnership. Many steps have already been taken through parents' forums and other consultations, but many parents are reluctant to come on to the

school premises when bringing and collecting their children, and this prevents the informal contacts with the headteacher and other teachers that are so important to building an effective partnership.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides determined leadership for the school, and has instituted a range of changes that have improved the quality of teaching and educational provision. Her own very good teaching provides a valuable model for staff. The school now needs a period of staff stability in order to consolidate the improvements it has made. The role of subject co-ordinator needs further development in the core subjects, particularly in terms of monitoring progress. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governing body has some close links with the school, and maintains an appropriate overview. It ensures that all statutory requirements are fulfilled. Governors need to be fully aware of, and responsive to, parents' concerns. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school is taking many valuable steps to evaluate its performance through the analysis of test and other data and through the monitoring of teaching and learning. Evaluation is most effective where senior managers and co-ordinators have a sharp overview of the levels attained by pupils and the progress they have made. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school receives an average budget and allocates all resources appropriately. The principles of best value are observed. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour is good • Children are expected to work hard • Children make good progress • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school • Teaching is good • Children like coming to school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see closer liaison between home and school • Some would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities |

Parents were generally supportive of the school in their responses to the questionnaire, but a number of issues were raised at their meeting with inspectors. These included concern about the very high number of teachers who had recently left the school, the school's partnership with parents, and the implementation of the new behaviour policy which some saw as overly harsh. The inspection agrees with the positive points made by parents, and also agrees that the school could have a closer liaison, particularly in terms of parents coming into the school and playground on an informal basis. The range of extra-curricular activities being offered is already wider than many schools. The very high turnover of staff and number of absences over the last two years has impacted negatively on standards, and is a concern that is shared by all parties: parents, school, governors, local authority and inspectors. The inspection agrees with parents and the school that the implementation of the assertive discipline policy, which has been helpful in many instances, now needs to be reviewed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Many pupils enter the school with standards of attainment above those expected for children of this age. In past years, pupils have made good progress across the school and standards have been generally well above the national average, and above the average of similar schools, by the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven. These standards have represented good achievement for the pupils. Inspection findings indicate the standards are slightly lower than usual for the current Year 6 pupils, but are still above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The standards represent appropriate achievement.

Children under five

2. Many pupils enter the school as four year olds with standards of attainment already above the national average. They receive a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes, and standards of attainment are above those usually found in all areas of learning by the time children move to Year 1.

Key Stage 1

3. In national tests for seven year olds in 2001, the overall standards, as measured by average point scores, were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These standards were also well above the average of similar schools. Standards in all three aspects have been generally well above average for the last four years and represent good achievement for these pupils.
4. Inspection evidence shows that standards this year are much lower, being above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. These standards are likely to be in line with those of similar schools in reading, but well below that average in writing and mathematics. The fall in standards is associated with the large number of staff changes experienced by these pupils, together with a need to focus more specifically on the learning of different groups, and the usual differences found between one year group and another.
5. Standards are above those usually found in information technology, art and music. Standards are generally in line with those usually found in science, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. Insufficient lessons were seen in physical education for an overall judgement to be made.

Key Stage 2

6. The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds in 2001 were in line with the national average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, these standards were below average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Scores in all three subjects had generally been well above the national average in previous years, and represented good achievement for the pupils. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are higher again this year in English, but lower in mathematics and science, being above the national average in all three subjects. These standards represent appropriate achievement for the pupils.

7. Standards are above those usually found in information technology, history, art and music. Standards are generally in line with those usually found in design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education.

Progress of different groups

8. The school is successful in providing appropriate challenge for all its pupils, and enabling them to progress. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress in meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The progress of boys and girls, and of higher and lower attaining pupils is in line with the general progress of the school. The very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language and requiring extra help for language are progressing well.

Literacy and numeracy

9. Within English, standards of reading and speaking are higher than in writing at both key stages. Pupils make good progress with writing through Key Stage 2, especially at the top of the key stage. Standards in numeracy are higher at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1 where most pupils attain the expected level (Level 2), but comparatively few attain the higher level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Standards of behaviour are very good across the school, and most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Relationships are also very good, with most pupils being considerate and caring in their approach to others. There have been two exclusions in the last year after a period when there was none.
11. Young children in the nursery and reception classes are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They respond well to the secure and welcoming environment where many are confident and eager to try out new activities. Older pupils continue their interest in learning and are keen to engage in activities during lessons. Some lose concentration when expected to listen for a very long time or when the tasks set are mundane, but this is to be expected. Where lessons are stimulating and provide opportunities for practical activities and investigations, pupils engage with enthusiasm and interest. Most pupils take pride in their work, and their effort and enthusiasm towards learning are apparent in most lessons.
12. Standards of behaviour are very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils generally listen attentively to their teachers and respect the rules of the class. They are polite and courteous; for example, holding open doors or standing back for adults. Most are particularly thoughtful of others and behave well out of respect; for example, making sure that others are included in games. Pupils play sensibly together in the playground and take good care of the school environment. They behave very well during the lunchbreak, making the meal-time a pleasant occasion. As with attitudes, behaviour was only less than good in lessons where pupils were expected to sit and listen for too long, or when the activities were mundane. Now that behaviour is very good, the operation of the assertive discipline policy could be reviewed. This review should ensure that sanctions are not used where the behaviour concerned stems from the nature of the lesson rather than deliberate disobedience.
13. The very good relationships are a strength of the school. Pupils work harmoniously as part of a group, taking turns and sharing equipment fairly. These strengths are an important element in setting a secure and positive climate for learning in lessons. Pupils are considerate and caring in their approach to others. For example, even the youngest children in the nursery will make a space in their circle so that another child can sit down. They work particularly well together in

pairs and groups, and this makes the many opportunities for discussion and co-operation even more effective. Year 6 pupils worked very well in pairs at computer workstations as they entered data and learned how to use spreadsheets. Year 3 and 4 pupils also worked very well in pairs in a history lesson on Tudor times. They showed very good co-operation, high levels of listening skills and discussed each other's ideas in a practical session that exceeded an hour.

14. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and most respond well to the range of opportunities provided. Nursery children are encouraged to take responsibility for clearing away and washing up after their food and drink. Older pupils help with routines associated with the day-to-day running of the school; for example, acting as classroom monitors. The Charity Club that raises money towards sponsoring a child living in more disadvantaged circumstances is effective in promoting a sense of care towards others, as well as helping pupils understand how organisations work. The recently introduced 'prefect' and 'buddy' responsibilities for Year 5 and 6 pupils have provided a valuable range of activities. Not all pupils have engaged enthusiastically in these, partly because participation was made compulsory.

Attendance

15. Attendance rates at the school are higher than average by comparison with other schools. Pupils generally arrive on time for school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good across the school, but is much stronger at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good or better in eighty percent, and unsuccessful in only two. Teaching was very good in over fifteen percent of lessons. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are successful in meeting the needs of all their pupils.
17. The key feature of the teaching in the school is the extremely high turnover of staff and high incidence of staff absences during the last two years. This has inevitably impacted negatively on standards of attainment in many classes. Many innovations and new approaches to teaching have been introduced, and these have significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning. Unfortunately, their effect has been to a great extent outweighed by the sheer number of staff changes. The improvements to the quality of teaching will, anyway, take time before they begin to impact on standards.

Foundation Stage

18. Children receive a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes where the quality of teaching is good overall. Children are involved in a good range of activities that cover the six elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum effectively, except that children in the Reception Classes do not have sufficient opportunity to engage in outdoor physical activities.

Key Stage 1

19. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, with a small number of lessons being unsuccessful, and many lessons good. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Teaching is good overall in geography, art and religious education. Too few lessons were seen in design and technology, geography or music for a judgement to be made.

Key Stage 2

20. Teaching is good overall at Key Stage 2. Teaching is very good in science and history. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, information technology, art, music, physical education and religious education. Too few lessons were seen in design and technology or geography for any judgement to be made.

General

21. Where teaching is very good, there is a high level of challenge and a brisk pace to learning. For example, a Year 4 science lesson looking at different animal habitats challenged pupils to consider relationships at a level usually attained by eleven year olds (Level 4) with some attaining even higher. The good quality of the practical field work supported this level of learning very well. Some information technology lessons for the reception classes also had high challenge, with children expected to open their own drawing programs and use them independently. There was more high challenge in information technology when Year 3-4 pupils used custom animation within a 'PowerPoint' presentation.
22. There is also some very close focus on learning objectives within these lessons. For example, in a Year 6 English 'booster group' lesson, the teacher had a very clear focus on some specific features of writing that would improve its quality. She used some very effective materials to ensure that the pupils understood these features and were able to incorporate them into their own writing. Where these learning objectives are very specific and are shared with the pupils themselves, they are particularly effective. In some cases, teachers return to the objectives at the end of the lesson in order to help pupils consider the progress they have made.
23. Many of the best lessons have good ideas and structures that stimulate pupils' interest, and take them through a careful sequence of learning. For example, a Year 2 English lesson built well on previous work about authors to ask pupils to think of the questions they would ask an author about their work. These were then used in an exercise about the punctuation of questions. A Year 5 and 6 history lesson used a particularly good range of maps of different ages to help pupils consider changes over time. Another Year 6 'booster' English lesson used drama to consider the emotions and feelings of the characters in a story and so deepened pupils' understanding and improved their subsequent writing. Very good use was made of the resources of the neighbouring secondary school to develop drama for another Year 6 English group. A Year 3 and 4 history lesson built very well on a visit to Alnwick Castle and used an inventory to consider the wealth of some people and the contrast between rich and poor at that time. A Year 5 science lesson used a range of practical investigations into features of flowering plants to build pupils' understanding through very good use of reference materials within the classroom.
24. There is some particularly good use of paired and group discussion to develop understanding across the school. This discussion requires pupils to sharpen their thinking as they need to explain their ideas to others. They also benefit from listening to other ideas, and learn to respect and consider other points of view. For example, some very high quality discussion in a Year 6 'booster' English group on the reasons why a character in a story might have run away from home, and what the feelings of his parents and sisters might be really deepened understanding. Hearing other pupils suggest that the parents high expectations and the sisters' success might have made things difficult for the runaway gave some pupils a different perspective. There was also some very good discussion in a Year 4 English lesson where pupils sorted out their ideas on whether school uniforms are desirable (there was a very strong consensus that they are not!) that helped the clarity of subsequent writing. The same method is also frequently used in mathematics lessons with pupils' understanding being enhanced

through discussion of the methods used. Where there is little immediate response to a teacher's question, they often suggest that pupils discuss the question briefly in pairs, and this almost always has the effect of increasing participation.

25. There are many occasions on which teachers focus their lessons on the learning needs of different groups within the class. For example, a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson on two and three dimensional shapes required pupils from the different year groups to study different aspects. This was also the case in a library lesson in the same class where the requirements were focused on the two groups. In many cases, however, although aspects of the lessons have a different focus for different groups (the jargon term is "differentiated") this is not always focused specifically on the information obtained from the much improved assessments being made of pupils' learning. For example, assessments of Key Stage 1 pupils in English indicate that pupils' attainment in one class ranges from Level 1 through Levels 2c, 2b and 2a to Level 3. The learning required to attain the next level is often quite specific, but does not always form the focus of the 'differentiation' within the lessons. A sharper focus on the groups identified by the assessment procedures would enable teaching to be more precisely focused, and extra support from teaching assistants to be arranged where necessary. The progress of the groups could then be monitored in terms of the specific learning required to attain the next level, and teaching and support refined.
26. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good and very good, it was usually the pace of learning that was slower or the challenge less high. This reduced the amount of learning. In some cases, the activities undertaken by the pupils were rather dull and undemanding, such as the completion of worksheets. The two lessons that were unsuccessful failed to engage the interest of the pupils and involved content they did not understand. In a number of lessons, pupils were expected to sit listening to the teacher for far too long before they engaged in practical activities. It was only in these lessons, and in those where the work was dull, that behaviour was less than good. Teachers used the sanctions of the assertive discipline policy, when it was the lesson itself that needed changing. In some cases, the assertive discipline procedures obscure the need to improve the teaching. In every case where lessons were stimulating and interesting, the pupils' behaviour was very good.

Teaching of different groups

27. There is appropriate teaching of pupils who have special educational needs. The national guidance is applied effectively and teaching assistants provide some good support for pupils with particular needs. The targets on some of the individual education plans are of a very general nature and are not always sufficiently specific to give good guidance. In some cases, they seem to vary significantly during the year. The use of a computer program to draw up these plans can sometimes be helpful, but does not always get to the heart of the special needs of particular pupils.

The quality of learning

28. The quality of learning, and the rate at which pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding, is generally good across the school, but better at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. Pupils are keen to learn, and they work hard in lessons, with many sustaining their concentration well, particularly where lessons are stimulating and interesting. Opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves through open ended and investigative activities are particularly good in some classes. Where learning objectives are shared with pupils and evaluated, they develop a good understanding of their own learning and so know how to improve.

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

The curriculum

29. The school provides a rich curriculum that involves the pupils in a wide range of activities both inside the classroom and outside the school. As well as the expected range of National Curriculum subjects, there are visits, residential visits and visitors to the school. Good use is made of the local environment, interesting projects take place and good opportunities are created for music and the arts. Opportunities are enhanced by good co-operation with the local 'cluster' of schools.
30. The issues identified as areas for attention at the time of the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The curriculum is now broad and balanced, and meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and locally agreed syllabus for religious education. However, insufficient opportunities are planned for at the Foundation Stage for pupils to engage in outdoor activities. The school provides effectively for personal and social education, including health education, sex education and attention to drugs misuse. A good emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy skills and there are effective strategies for the teaching of basic skills. The school is successful in providing equal access to the curriculum for all pupils, and is socially inclusive.
31. At the time of the last inspection, individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs were not sufficiently specific. This is no longer the case, but the targets in many cases could be sharper. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs and ensures that all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, have equal access to the curriculum. The school complies with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and is making appropriate arrangements for adjusting to the new requirements.
32. A significant number of clubs and extra-curricular activities contribute greatly to pupils' further development. The school provides further opportunities for pupils to learn a range of musical instruments, including violin and guitars, which enhance the music curriculum effectively.
33. Very good links have been developed with local churches, and the wider community.
34. Representatives, such as a policeman and ministers from a range of denominations, visit the school regularly and contribute to the many activities of the school. Visitors and theatre groups enhance the multi-cultural element. Good links also exist between the class teachers, parents and pre-school providers, which ensure pupils, enter school happily. Similarly, effective links are also forged with the school to which pupils transfer and these enable pupils to settle in quickly.

Personal development

35. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
36. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Acts of collective worship are well planned and involve pupils well, with older pupils often required to perform or to read poetry. All staff are present, and this helps to give a sense of community and of belonging. However, the singing, especially by older pupils, lacks enthusiasm, and times for reflection are sometimes perfunctory. Relationships in the school are generally very good and some staff are particularly effective at making pupils feel special. In this, staff are good role models because

they teach pupils about their place in the world and the valuing of others. However, not all staff have established such effective relationships with pupils and some can be at times rather negative or harsh in their approach. In some lessons, pupils are enthused by what they see and hear, but there are also some missed opportunities to marvel at the natural world and to appreciate values beyond the functional.

37. Provision for moral development is good. School rules are displayed prominently and pupils are aware of them and clear about what is expected of them. The assertive discipline policy has been used to establish good behaviour throughout the school, but where its operation is based on rewards and sanctions it does not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to make decisions based on whether or not something is right or wrong.
38. Provision for social development is good. There are very many opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons and to share their ideas and they do this well. This is particularly the case in drama where older pupils must work together if they are to be successful. The many extra-curricular clubs give pupils the chance to work together in a less formal setting. The school supports a number of charities and the recently formed Charity Club is helping to raise children's awareness of the needs of others and the responsibilities that we have for others. It also works well by helping its members towards an understanding of committees and how they work. Older pupils go on a residential visit for outdoor pursuits and learn about working and playing together in a setting away from home. Some attempts at involving children in the life of the school have not been so successful, for example the Buddy System has had to be abandoned temporarily because of staff absence.
39. Provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to perform music and drama and to watch others performing. Of particular note was the dedicated arts week in which pupils worked with professional artists and performed an opera. Instrumentalists such as the guitar group, and the choir frequently perform in assembly. The developing links with the secondary school are greatly enhancing provision for drama with pupils being taught by a specialist teacher in a drama suite. There is a good emphasis on poetry throughout the school and some opportunities for photography for example, Year 6 used a camera to make distorted images. Pupils learn about many different aspects of other cultures through stories, and through talking with pupils who have different belief systems from their own. The approach to religions is valuing and helps pupils towards an effective understanding of the beliefs of others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Assessment

40. Since the previous inspection the school has reviewed its assessment procedures and these have been improved. This process of "review" is on-going. Arrangements for baseline testing on entry to school and for the assessment of standards in English, maths and science at the ages of seven and 11 meet statutory requirements. In addition to statutory assessments, the school uses national test materials with years 3, 4 and 5. There are effective methods to ensure regular assessment of pupils' progress against key objectives in the foundation subjects. The school is also reviewing its use of assessment information. With some teachers, and in some subjects, marking is used to provide pupils with clear direction on how they can improve their work. However, this practice is inconsistent. Subject co-ordinators read pupils' assessment sheets when devising medium term plans, and endeavour to include a range of possible areas of study for different ability groups. However there is a lack of consistency, and rigour, in identifying groups at different levels of attainment, of targeting teaching at these

groups, of providing further support where necessary and monitoring the progress of these groups.

Support, guidance and welfare

41. Generally the school makes good provision for the health and safety of its pupils. A governor with appropriate expertise takes a keen and vigilant interest, and a programme for risk assessment is in place. A good number of staff have had first aid training. Asthma inhalers are kept in classrooms and are fairly accessible; however, there is insufficient opportunity for children to take responsibility for their own equipment and to learn to manage the condition themselves. The arrangements for child protection are in place, but it is some time now since all staff have looked at the policy, and the person with responsibility has not had recent training to update her with developments.
42. The school is very effectively monitoring and promoting attendance, and has very good support for this from the educational welfare officer.
43. To promote good behaviour, the school has adopted an assertive discipline policy, and behaviour has certainly improved as a result of this. The use of assertive discipline is variable, with some staff using it almost to excess and others not using it at all, and in some instances its use has interfered with the establishment of effective relationships between staff and pupils. It was noticeable that pupils' behaviour was particularly good in classes where staff have established good relationships and used the positive aspects of the policy.
44. Those children who have had a serious illness and those who have disabilities are well catered for. Staff have been very supportive in these instances, and in many cases ensured that they have had suitable training to enable them to give appropriate support.
45. Some of the toilets that were identified at the previous inspection as being in a poor state have still not been refurbished. There is a rolling programme for their refurbishment that is due to be finished in the near future, but the process should have been completed more quickly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school has not fully established an effective relationship with all its parents. A significant number of the thirty parents who attended the parents meeting felt that communications with parents could be better and over twenty percent replying to the questionnaire felt that the school does not work closely with them. In particular, they felt that, although teachers were available and approachable they did not feel comfortable coming into school when bringing or collecting children. This, of course, means that opportunities for informal contact are lost. The school is aware that it needs to strengthen its partnership and has implemented many new initiatives to try and involve and inform parents more in their children's learning. However, many of these new ideas, although commendable, do not bring parents into effective daily contact with teachers, and so are often not well used by parents. An example of this is the orange card that the school introduced to encourage home school communication about day to day messages. In practice, many parents do not use it and feel its usefulness is limited. In order to strengthen its partnership with parents the school has appointed a teacher with responsibility for links with parents and the community. Links with the community are already strong and so the focus of the initiatives needs to be on the partnership with parents.
47. Information for parents is often good; there is a good range of communication such as the information technology newsletter, and the pupil profile books that give parents a flavour of the work their children have done. However, information in pupils' reports, although

comprehensive, is not always easy to understand. There is an over-reliance on educational language and the tone is often impersonal.

48. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is developing, particularly through the recently formed parents' forum group. This group consists of parents from each year group and meets regularly to discuss the parents' views and aims for the school. In response to the forum group's request for more information about the curriculum, and in particular the methods used in mathematics, the school has arranged 'numeracy for parents'. A good number of parents have shown interest in this.
49. Parents give good support to their children by helping them with homework and the response to the 'numeracy for parents' mentioned above is an example of the way in which parents are keen to find out how they can help. Another example is the 'dog' and 'cat' that go home with a reception class child. The children are expected to look after the toy animal and write about its care in the form of a diary. This requires great commitment on the part of parents who have entered fully into the homework by taking photographs to enhance the diary entries. There is good attendance from parents for events such as class assemblies and parent teacher consultation evenings. There is less support from parents for children's learning in school or involvement in the daily life of the school. Only a few help in classrooms, although many have gone on to train as classroom assistants. Parents were very supportive of the events organised by the friends association but the group was small and has lost its very effective leader and now its future looks uncertain.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher and senior staff

50. The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction and has introduced a number of necessary changes that have improved the quality of teaching. Her own very good teaching provides a valuable model for staff. The impact of her leadership, and of the changes instituted, have been affected by the extremely high level of staff changes and absences over the last two years. In some cases staff left because they did not agree with the changes being made, but the great majority of changes and absences have been for the usual reasons of changing posts, illness and maternity. What has been unusual is the sheer number in so short a period, and the severity of some of the illnesses involved. Sympathy is due to the staff and their families so involved.
51. There is some very effective management of subjects, particularly in information technology, history, geography and religious education. Monitoring of the core subjects needs further development, particularly in terms of the monitoring of attainment and progress and the identification of groups which might benefit from further support. The overview of English needs to be extended so that policies and procedures are well established and supported.

The governors

52. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities appropriately and are supportive of the work of the school. They have understood the need for changes in the approach to teaching and have supported the headteacher in implementing these changes. They need to be aware that a minority of parents have concerns, and consider ways in which their support can be enlisted.

Monitoring, evaluation and targets

53. The school is taking many valuable steps to monitor and evaluate its performance. The headteacher and senior staff have been successful in their programme of monitoring and

impacting upon the quality of teaching. A range of assessment and other data is analysed to monitor progress and to consider effectiveness. This could be done more thoroughly in the core subjects, particularly in relation to the National Curriculum standards attained and the actions needed to promote progress.

54. The school sets appropriate targets for pupils, and in its development plan, where most of the issues raised by this report had already been recognised. The actions taken to achieve the targets have been generally successful.

The budget and best value

55. The school's budget is managed well, and the school has been successful in obtaining extra grant funding. All funding is allocated appropriately.
56. The school's basic income per pupil is generally in line with the national average. Pupils make appropriate progress across the school and it therefore offers satisfactory value for money.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

57. There is an appropriate level of teaching and support staff; the issue for the school is one of stability. The school building is large and provides a good level of accommodation. The level of teaching and learning resources has been improved, and is now generally good across the school, and is particularly good in history and geography.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to build on and consolidate the range of improvements that have been made, and to raise standards, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1, the school needs to:
- 1) Build on its improved assessment procedures by linking them firmly to targets so that teaching can be sharply focused by:
 - using the assessment procedures to identify groups of pupils within each class at different levels of attainment
 - targeting teaching within lessons specifically to these groups
 - arranging further support for these groups as necessary
 - monitoring the progress of the groups so that teaching and support can be refined
(paragraphs 25, 40)
 - 2) Improve the arrangements for outdoor education at the Foundation Stage by:
 - planning for coverage of early learning goals in an outdoor setting each day
 - making more use of the very good facilities that the school already has
 - increasing access to the outdoor areas for Foundation Stage children
(paragraphs 30, 69)
 - 3) Reviewing the operation of the assertive discipline policy so that:
 - teachers build on the very good relationships that already prevail within the school
 - the programme for personal and social education is used fully to create a shared sense of responsibility
 - sanctions such as tracking are used only rarely
(paragraphs 12, 26)
 - 4) The school could strengthen its partnership with parents by ensuring that:
 - parents realise that they are welcome into the school premises when they bring and collect their children

- teachers and senior staff are available to talk to parents informally at such times
 - governors are fully aware of, and responsive to, parents' concerns
- (paragraph 46)*

Above all, the school needs a period of staffing stability during which changes can be consolidated. The school has already recognised in its development planning the need to build on assessment, to improve the use of outdoor equipment and to review the discipline procedures. There are also plans to strengthen the partnership with parents.

59. The school may also wish to address the following minor issues:

- Update child protection procedures
- Strengthen the role of some subject co-ordinators
- Sharpen the targets on some individual education plans

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 84 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 26 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 11 | 53 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 14 | 66 | 18 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

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

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) | 25 | 335 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 6 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 1 | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 1 | 36 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 4 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 7 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 4.5 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 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 | 26 | 16 | 42 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 24 | 23 | 26 |
| | Girls | 16 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 40 | 38 | 41 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 95 (94) | 90 (96) | 98 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 24 | 23 | 19 |
| | Girls | 16 | 15 | 13 |
| | Total | 40 | 38 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 95 (92) | 90 (94) | 76 (92) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 29 | 20 | 49 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 22 | 25 | 29 |
| | Girls | 18 | 17 | 20 |
| | Total | 40 | 42 | 49 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 82 (86) | 86 (91) | 100 (95) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 25 | 25 | 28 |
| | Girls | 18 | 18 | 19 |
| | Total | 43 | 43 | 47 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 88 (91) | 88 (81) | 96 (95) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 1 |
| Pakistani | 3 |
| Bangladeshi | 3 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 276 |
| 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 – Y6

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 14 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24 |
| Average class size | 28 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 101.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|---------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 25 |
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 47.5 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 8.3 : 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|------|
| Financial year | 2001 |
|----------------|------|

| | |
|--|--------|
| | £ |
| Total income | 686008 |
| Total expenditure | 713551 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2028 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 47773 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 20230 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 8 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 7.5 |

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 250 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 108 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 60 | 37 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 52 | 42 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 53 | 45 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 34 | 51 | 10 | 2 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 48 | 43 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 44 | 38 | 16 | 1 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 57 | 27 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 60 | 32 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 36 | 40 | 17 | 4 | 4 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 32 | 50 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 48 | 44 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 35 | 14 | 4 | 10 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. Children receive a good start to their education at the Foundation Stage, and the good quality of the teaching enables them to make good progress. They are involved effectively in the Foundation Stage Curriculum, except for children in the reception classes who do not have sufficient opportunities to engage in outdoor physical activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Pupils make very good progress and by the end of the Foundation Stage it is likely that all children will achieve the national Early Learning Goals. The teachers and support assistants have high expectations of behaviour and enjoy good relationships with the children who know the daily routines well, and develop good levels of concentration.
62. Children enjoy coming to school, and are confident and happy. Adults consistently and successfully encourage children to share and show consideration for others, and children respond positively to the caring ethos of the class. They show respect for school equipment, tidy up efficiently at the end of lessons and show increasing levels of independence in all areas of their learning. They learn to take turns and share and co-operate well when working on the computer, playing with Mobilo or in the role-play corner. Resources are well prepared, attractive and inviting. Children are given appropriate encouragement and praise to raise their self-esteem. They show pride in their work and take good responsibility for their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Teaching in this area is good, pupils make good progress, and most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals, with a few children working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. Books are displayed prominently to encourage children to browse and share them with friends as well as adults. Children enjoy listening to stories and the majority contribute well to class discussions, confidently sharing their experiences with adults and their peers. For example, children in the nursery class talked enthusiastically about wheels, and correctly used the vocabulary, 'spokes, tyre and tread' to describe the parts they are examining. The majority of pupils in the reception class hold a pencil correctly, form their letters accurately and know the names and sounds of the most commonly used letters. They write their names neatly. Some recognise frequently occurring words, read books in the school reading scheme and write simple sentences which demonstrate their understanding of appropriate adjectives for example "deep and cold" when describing a river and "sticky and slimy" when describing the mud in the 'Bear Hunt' story. In all classes, the teachers support the children well and encourage them to speak about their experiences in a variety of situations through skilfully asking open questions and by giving them opportunities to 'read' their writing. Children accurately sequence pictures and name 'Cinderella' as a chief character in a story read by a grandparent.
64. Effective use is made of role-play to support language development. For example, in the nursery children acted out the roles of the travel agent and a customer as part of the holiday project. In a reception class, pupils demonstrated the work of a vet, as she works in the examination room making her diagnosis of a pet. Children are encouraged to take reading

books home each night to share with their parents and evaluative comments are written on their homework sheets. The teaching assistants effectively support children including those with special educational needs, enabling them to make sound progress.

Mathematical development

65. Teaching in this area is good, and as a result children make good progress, and the majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Year 1, with some pupils working on the early stage of the National Curriculum. The teachers take every opportunity to use numbers daily and encourage the children to see pattern in number. In the nursery classes, most children match objects to numbers accurately, and correctly place missing numbers into the sequence of numbers to ten. Most children confidently count backwards and forwards to 20 and can calculate simple problems involving addition and subtraction mentally. In all classes, mathematics is linked very securely into themes; for example, counting the spots on a ladybird, or the spokes on the wheel in the transport project. In the reception classes, some know their numbers to 100. The majority understand 'one more than', and 'one less than', and there is good use of mathematical language when children correctly use the terms plus and minus add and subtract meaningfully.
66. In the nursery classes, children confidently recognise simple shapes such as circle, triangle, rectangle and square, and are developing their understanding of three-dimensional shapes, such as cube and cone. Some children in the reception class recognise hexagons and discuss how they may fit together. Children with special educational needs are given good support in the class, and they make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Teaching in this area is good. In the Nursery, there were some very effective activities planned around the theme of 'Wheels' that increased pupils' knowledge and understanding of objects and how they work. Pupils playing in the sand investigated the differences that occur when large or small amounts of sand are poured into the wheel. They discovered that in order to make the wheels turn more slowly, they had to pour less sand into the funnel at a slower rate. Children in the reception classes also make good progress, and most will achieve the Early Learning Goals before they move to Year 1. Children have a sound understanding of the world around them, many of them building on experiences from home. For example, they confidently talked about the recent visit of Bob Johnson, the TV weather forecaster. They have a good understanding of weather symbols, for example, sunny, cloudy, rainy and foggy. By the end of the reception year, pupils use the computer very confidently to play games and to support work in English, mathematics and art. They understand instructions well, can successfully load a programme, create pictures and label and move text. They know how to restart the program and are confident with printing procedures.
68. Teachers use questioning well to probe children's understanding and pupils displayed good levels of independent skills as they diligently search for information in carefully chosen books in their study of habitats. Children confidently described the polar bear as 'an animal that has fur to keep it warm because it lives in a polar land, where the white of his fur provides him with camouflage'. Children's work is regularly assessed and their progress is celebrated through pictures, writing, and photographs.

Physical development

69. Although teaching is good in this area of learning and most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals before they leave the reception class, insufficient time is allocated for outdoor activities in the reception classes and the range of opportunities is limited in both classes.
70. Children in the nursery control their movements well with an increasing awareness of space, and children in reception classes develop skills in moving with control in a lesson where they use their imagination well to demonstrate different body shapes. They move confidently, using space sensibly, avoiding others allowing them to express their ideas well. They show good language skills; for example, when pretending to be a snake one described his movements as “slithering along in the jungle making for the camouflage of the trees”.
71. Children show good control when using small tools such as scissors, glue and paint brushes. Nursery children were able to use knives with growing independence as they smoothed a variety of spreads on their bread and then carefully rolled up the bread. In the new purpose-built kitchen, children display good language and numeracy skills as they explain how the sandwiches are prepared, correctly noting the shape of circles made by the rolling action and counting the number of pieces they cut from it. At the end of the activity they display high levels of personal care as they take themselves off to wash their hands and tidy up. In reception classes, children are becoming more skilful when attempting jigsaws and assembling Lego to construct an enclosure for the bear in their story.

Creative development

72. The majority of pupils will achieve the Early Learning Goals in creative development before they leave the reception class. The quality of teaching is good and careful monitoring ensures that a good balance of activities is achieved, with every child having numerous opportunities to express themselves. Children work confidently with large brushes as they mix colours, paint and print. They gain skills in cutting and sticking activities; for example, when they cut out circles and carefully position the spokes on the wheels with glue. Older children use fabric crayons effectively for their design drawings and a wide variety of textures to present food on a plate. Pupils are able to sing simple songs from memory, accompanied by a variety of musical instruments; they correctly identify instruments such as maracas and tambourines and identify which ones make the quietest and which the loudest sounds.

ENGLISH

73. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards of attainment already above average. They make satisfactory progress across the school, and by the end of Key Stage 2, standards remain above average. Some good teaching through Key Stage 2 is quickening the pace of learning and there are signs that standards are rising. These standards are higher than those found by the previous inspection, but at Key Stage 1 not as high as in recent years. The fall in standards this year is associated with the large number of staff changes together with the usual fluctuations found from year to year.

Speaking and listening

74. Standards of speaking, in particular the ability to express more complex ideas and give explanations, are well above average, particularly at Key Stage 2. Most pupils are articulate and confident in expressing their ideas, and listen carefully to what others have to say. Many are particularly adept at taking account of what others have said, and responding accordingly.

The many opportunities offered across the curriculum for pupils to discuss things in pairs and small groups has been very successful in promoting these standards. For example, there was good quality discussion in Year 4-5 about school uniforms, and the standard of discussion in a Year 6 group talking about the reasons why a character in a story had run away from home was very high indeed. Drama is also used effectively to encourage oral expression and to build confidence.

Reading

75. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds have been generally well above average in reading. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year are above average. Almost all pupils attain the expected level (Level 2) and a good number attains the higher level (Level 3). Pupils are able to read simple texts with accuracy and understanding. Good focus through the national Literacy Strategy on different ways of approaching new words and sentences has enabled pupils to use more than one strategy to establish the meaning of words. For example, pupils consider the sounds of letters as well as the words position in the sentence and clues from accompanying pictures when trying to work out what it says. All this makes the process of reading more complete. Teachers use 'big books' effectively to draw pupils' attention to features of literary form. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher used the book 'Dear Greenpeace' well to focus on the story structure. She also made effective use of 'letter fans' to enable pupils to demonstrate their spelling. Pupils' progress in reading is enhanced by the support that they receive at home. Where pupils take home books daily and read regularly progress is good. The policy and procedures for taking books home needs to be consistent through the key stage.
76. The school's scores in national tests for eleven year olds were in line with the national average in 2001. Inspection evidence suggests that standards have risen this year and are now above average, with almost all pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) and a good number attaining the higher level where they understand meanings beyond the literal and can support their opinions from the text. The teaching of reading to older pupils is well focused on the higher-order skills such as the use of inference and deduction to look for 'hidden' meanings. The range of literature has been greatly enhanced recently, and this has widened pupils' appreciation of literature and their ability to understand a range of styles and techniques. Good use was being made of Anne Fine's "Killer Cat" in Years 3 and 4 to look at meaning beyond the literal, and to work out what is likely to happen. This proved a very effective book for this purpose as much of humour depends on unstated events and the readers' knowledge that things are bound to go wrong. Many pupils have developed a love of literature and have their favourite authors and books that go beyond the usual Roald Dahl. These good attitudes to reading come from their good teaching and the good range of literature available.

Writing

77. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds have been generally well above average in previous years. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year are much lower, being only in line with the national average. Almost all pupils attain the expected level (Level 2) and an average number attain the higher level. Of those attaining the expected level, a large number only just manage to do so and their writing is still in need of much development. The lower standards are associated with the large number of changes of teachers that these pupils have experienced together with the usual changes between year groups. Teaching within the Literacy Hour addresses the skills of writing generally effectively, but does not focus sufficiently on the needs of different groups within the class. For example, having assessed some pupils as having attained Level 2c and others 2b, groups are not always formed on the

basis of these assessments, and teaching and support is not always focused on the specific elements that would enable the groups to attain the next level.

78. The school's scores in national tests for eleven year olds were in line with the national average in 2001. Inspection evidence suggests that standards have risen this year and are now above average, with almost all pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) and a good number attaining the higher level. Some of the writing by older pupils is of a good standard in terms of the sensitivity and expression of emotions even where these are understated; for example, a Year 6 pupil wrote, "It was the day of the funeral, and the first night she had ever slept at her grandmother's house. Except that she could not sleep." Some writing shows a good feeling for language; for example "...eventually he floated out of a swirling sky and landed in a dazed heap in the branches of a tree."
79. This good progress through Key Stage 2 has been promoted by a good focus on the skills of writing that explores the structures of a range of different forms such as stories, poems, letters and persuasive pieces. Teachers are often very clear in their teaching of these structures, and help pupils to revise and amend their work so that they understand the different requirements and forms. For example, in one particularly good Year 6 'booster group' lesson, there was extremely clear focus on the specific requirement of the higher level of attainment through some well devised comparative texts and the identification of the sort of adverbs and adjectives that gave the writing its quality and style. Pupils were then encouraged to use this in their own writing. As with Key Stage 1, the closer identification of the writing standards of different groups of pupils and the features that are required to improve these would enable teaching to be targeted even more specifically.
80. The management of the subject has ensured that resources have been improved and that pupils have access to a good range of literature, both in the school library and in classroom book areas. However, policies and procedures, such as arrangements for taking books home, are not well monitored and established. With so many changes of staff it is even more important to monitor such procedures. In particular, the subject manager needs to be more thorough in monitoring progress and standards of attainment across the school and ensuring that support is targeted effectively at different groups.
81. The recent improvements in teaching, such as the increased use of paired work and discussion, and the closer focus on writing techniques, together with the improved range of resources has built a good platform for improvement. The improvement in the range of literature available has already been successful in encouraging positive attitudes to reading.

MATHEMATICS

82. In 2001, the school's scores in the national tests taken by pupils at both ages seven and 11 were well above both the national average and the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at ages seven and 11 was well above that found in most schools and above that found in similar schools. This is a significant improvement in mathematics standards since the last inspection.
83. Inspection evidences suggests that, standards of attainment of seven year olds are in line with the national average, but are likely to be below the average of similar schools. By age 11, standards are above the national average, and likely to be in line with similar schools. These standards are lower this year than in recent years. One reason for the decline is the significant amount of staff changes. Another factor is that the leadership of mathematics has lacked

continuity with three co-ordinators involved during the past three years. The current subject leader was appointed from January 2002.

Key Stage 1

84. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced effectively. The high number of teacher changes has disrupted the programme and impacted negatively on progress. By the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the number element of the subject are in line with those usually found. Most pupils know the elementary tables, and can add mentally numbers in a range to 100 and then round these up or down to the nearest ten. Pupils recognise everyday coins and some are confident in writing down correctly amounts of money beyond £1 such as £2.20, knowing that it is important to be able to calculate change correctly when shopping. Some are not yet fully confident in calculating numbers within a range to 20, and still need support material such as dominoes to help them to add and subtract. Most pupils recognise two and three-dimensional shapes, and can describe shapes using the correct terms such as edge, corners and faces. Some can describe position in terms of "left bottom" when using a grid. In investigations and problem solving, most pupils can calculate the cost of chocolates and lollipops and complete a table summarising the results of their investigation. Higher attaining pupils can tackle a shopping sum involving two purchases and change from £1. When doing simple shopping problems lower attaining pupils can select a number of coins to make an amount such as 7p and they can relate this verbally to their teacher.

Key Stage 2

85. The quality of teaching is good overall at Key Stage 2 and sometimes very good. Almost all pupils have attained the expected level (Level 4) and an above average number has attained the higher level. In number work, most pupils can mentally calculate doubles of numbers within a range to 1000, and are confident in understanding the relationship between larger numbers; for example, using the 'inverse rule'. A good number have attained higher level where they can halve numbers such as 5,600, and work quickly and accurately when setting these down in calculations. Most pupils can calculate using fractions, decimals and percentages well. Some have attained the higher level where they know how to use ratio and to consider chances using probability techniques. They can apply their knowledge of number in practical situations; for example, to calculate the area of irregular shapes based on square centimetres. A good number of pupils understands the relationship between increasing the size of a shape and the number of times its area is multiplied. There are some good opportunities given for practical and investigative work; for example, using the football results of their local Sunderland team. Pupils have investigated percentage reductions in shopping sales lists and using a spreadsheet the best value when comparing well-known cereals. Some have attained the higher level where they can devise a formula that helps them complete this task on a computer.

General

86. In the most successful lessons there are clear objectives and a high level of challenge. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher overcame the difficulty of teaching two year groups by ensuring that work was appropriately challenging for each year group. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils were faced with increased challenge during the early mental activities of the lesson as the teacher stretched them towards a better understanding of inverse calculations using addition and subtraction. Pupils became excited as they eagerly responded to the quick-fire questions skilfully posed by their teacher. A well organised summary at the end of a Year 6 lesson pupils focused well on the learning objectives, as pupils were asked to reflect on what they had learned as they reported the results of their investigations to each

other. This evaluation session reinforced learning and made pupils aware of what they had learned and what then needed to do next.

87. The many opportunities where pupils can work in pairs helps pupils' social development as well as their understanding. Pupils also work well independently and exercise good personal responsibility. They respond well in most mathematics lessons and enjoy the work that is provided. They particularly enjoy challenging investigations that involve thinking and reporting skills.
88. The recently appointed and enthusiastic co-ordinator is establishing a clear view of what needs to be done to improve standards. A closer monitoring of the standards and progress of different groups will help focus teaching and resources more effectively. When the school was last inspected, unsatisfactory resources were identified as a factor hindering teaching. There are now sufficient resources for delivery of the numeracy programme, although there are few materials to challenge higher attaining pupils.
89. Pupils gain from opportunities to consolidate mathematics through their work in several subjects; for example recording data in graphs and tables in science. The Charity Club enables pupils to use their number skills to measure quantities and the time when baking cakes, and to be responsible for the sales and keeping of accounts. The school has also successfully introduced programmes designed to boost pupils' mathematical skills. Increasingly pupils are making good use of the improved computer facilities to improve their mathematical skills such as data entry and devising a simple formula to use with a spreadsheet. Classroom support assistants, who work at times with individual pupils with special educational needs, make a positive contribution to these pupils' progress.

SCIENCE

90. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment are in line with national expectations by the age of seven, and are above the national average by the time pupils are 11. This is an improvement for the seven-11 year olds since the previous inspection. Although there have been many recent staff changes, the teaching of science for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very good and largely accounts for the good standards these pupils achieve.
91. Whilst there are no national tests in science for seven years olds, teacher assessments for 2001 showed the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 to be well below the national average, whilst the number achieving the higher Level 3 was above average. National tests for 11 year olds in 2001 showed the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 to be well above the national average, and the number attaining the higher level (5) was above the national average. Pupils' performance at eleven was well above average when compared to similar schools. Although inspection evidence suggests results may not be quite as high this year, nevertheless the school's performance is higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
92. Inspection evidence suggests that the age of seven, standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils understand that we need exercise in order to stay healthy and that eating the right kind of food is good for the body. They describe the changes occurring during the "life-cycle" of various animals and plants. Pupils are introduced to the skills of scientific enquiry. They make simple predictions, are encouraged to use appropriate scientific language when describing findings and are introduced to the idea of "fair testing".

They have a sound knowledge of materials and their properties and can classify them as “natural” or “man-made”.

93. By the age of 11, standards of attainment are above the national average. This is as a result of a well planned curriculum, and very good, knowledgeable and confident teaching which creates lots of opportunities for pupils to participate in investigative activities. Pupils have a good level of knowledge and understanding of a wide range of scientific topics including food chains, why we have a skeleton, how sound is produced and the physical changes in materials. They are aware of such techniques as “filtration” used during an investigation into “How to get dirty puddle water clean”. During an investigation into the temperature of different size potatoes when they had just come out of the oven, one pupil predicted that the large potato would cool down more slowly than the rest because there was more of it to cool.
94. Pupils are confident in making predictions; they draw conclusions from recorded evidence and some can draw on their scientific knowledge to explain findings. Some readily appreciate the value of repeating experiments in order to get a more reliable set of results. By the end of Year 6, pupils use apparatus well, organise their work more purposefully and quickly assimilate new scientific terms into their language. In a lesson with older pupils looking at life cycles of different plants, pupils quickly understood and used terms such as “edible” and “tuber” in their conversation and writing.
95. Teaching overall is satisfactory in Years 1-2 and very good Years 3-6. Where teaching is strongest, there are a number of significant strengths. Good subject knowledge enables teachers to ask provoking questions and make pupils think. This is very evident from scrutiny of work where some teachers when marking work continually try to help pupils develop their understanding. Such comments and questions as, “Think about the shape of the boat, could you change it to make it float?” and “Perhaps you could explain the ‘ice grip’ in terms of resistance and friction”, help initiate further steps in learning. Teachers plan well in year group teams, and the most successful teachers highlight clear learning objectives with challenging work, varied teaching methods and a shared sense of purpose on the part of teachers and pupils. Very good use of a range of resources and well thought through tasks provide first hand experiences and equal access to all activities for all pupils. All of these elements help to capture and sustain pupils’ interest. Consequently attitudes to science are very good overall, especially from the older pupils, and in the majority of lessons learning is at least good.
96. Teachers place increasing emphasis on pupils’ undertaking their own experiments and investigating for themselves and because worksheets are seldom used, pupils have good opportunities to organise and present their own work, using text, diagrams and a good range of charts, tables and graphs. This improves their enquiry skills and helps develop literacy and mathematical skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Teaching and support staff are very aware that although some pupils may have weaker literacy skills, they can succeed in the practical aspects of science and can make useful oral contributions.
97. Provision for the subject has improved since the previous inspection. There has been recent revision of the planning framework with a specific focus on providing more investigative work including field trips. Good links have been established with the local secondary school, with the older pupils having opportunities to use the facilities there.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Standards of attainment are above average at seven and 11. This is broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection. These standards are promoted by the good quality of the teaching across the school and the good ranges of materials and techniques with which the pupils are involved.
99. By the age of seven, most pupils can use a good range of art materials including crayon, paint and fabrics to produce interesting and colourful work that is well displayed around the school. For example, Year 1 pupils have carefully woven paper strips into colourful weaving patterns using colours that blend together well. Most pupils can paint a portrait showing attention to detail in the reproduction of eyes, hair and expression, and have developed this when using art software on a computer. The pupils use a range of art skills to illustrate their work in other subjects. When faced with the challenge of making a winding mechanism in design and technology, the pupils used pencils, crayons and felt tipped pens to produce plans showing the details of their construction. Pupils in Year 2 extended a photograph successfully, retaining the proportion of the original and adding detail with good accuracy for their age. They showed good effort as they extended partial images of cars, houses and gardens and achieved effective results that they then compared with the original.
100. By the age of 11 pupils have a good understanding of how colours can be chosen to blend harmoniously or contrast well to produce appealing results. Most use the skills they have acquired well to produce good quality two and three-dimensional art works. Pupils can mix paint carefully to produce the appropriate shades for landscape and portrait work. The regular use of a digital camera has provided the pupils with quick access to a photographic image of their arrangements of artefacts that they use for still life. Year 5 and 6 pupils could see the outcome of their collaborative discussions on how screws, hinges and chains could be re-arranged artistically to create impact for an advertisement of a sale in a do-it-yourself superstore. Sometimes the pupils work in the style of a well-known artist such as Van Gogh. Year 6 pupils demonstrated their ability to carefully mix more sophisticated shades when they painted a portrait of the artist and achieved good standards of reproduction in the choice of colours for the face and the background. There are some good opportunities for using art in other subjects; for example, pupils skilfully used pencils and crayons to illustrate a board game of Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world in history.
101. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have a good understanding of art techniques relevant to different aged pupils, and they are confident in demonstrating these skills regularly in lessons. For example, effective demonstration by a Year 5 teacher of the use of a charcoal pencil helped the pupils to realise the standards that were expected and showed them the quality of work to aim for. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in pairs or small groups and this promotes good social development. Useful prompts during lessons help the pupils to avoid mistakes, and encourage them to achieve results that they will be eager to show to each other.
102. Subject leadership is shared by two members of staff who jointly plan the work to be taught each half term. The leadership they provide is satisfactory in terms of its support to colleagues through provision of planning and resources. The organising of an Arts Week provided pupils with opportunities to learn about different artistic periods and cultural backgrounds. Regular visits are made to the National Glass Centre in Sunderland and this provides pupils with the opportunity to try engraving skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Pupils make satisfactory progress, and standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. This is broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection. However, the subject now has a higher profile on the curriculum plan and the revised schemes of work make it much better placed to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Too few lessons were observed at either key stage to judge the quality of teaching.
104. Pupils are involved in a good range of materials and techniques at Key Stage 1. For example, making moving bears, using split pins, fridge magnets and pizzas. They investigate joins using a range of glues and tapes and experiment with construction kits to make simple models of brick walls. In Year 2 pupils research the operation of wheels and axles, and use this knowledge to design and make model vehicles with simple axles from card and wood. They are beginning to learn to use appropriate tools under careful supervision to ensure they understand the importance of safety. The good range of completed models and pupils' design and evaluation sheets show them to be working within Level 2, the average for their year.
105. The good range of work continues through Key Stage 2. In some particularly good work in Years 3 and 4 pupils have experimented with moving monsters using simple air pressure mechanisms to lift jaws. Much pre-design and make work had preceded these models pupils had experimented with air-pressure mechanisms. Making skills are good, but evaluation and design skills still need developing. In Years 5 and 6, the classes had investigated commercially produced slippers, and then planned and designed their own slippers. A good range of designs, working, drawings and finished products were on display. Research reports and pupils evaluation sheets are below the expected level for the end of the key stage but finished products were at least average, and the majority were above.
106. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has spent her time encouraging her colleagues to get the pupils to design and plan rather than go straight into making. Displays and design sheets reflect the progress she is already making. She has been able to monitor pupils' work and has rightly identified weaknesses in the basic skills of cutting, measuring and accuracy. She has brought enthusiasm and commitment to the subject, has ensured regular time-tabled teaching sessions and ensured that projects are finished. The children are now planning, doing and making and using appropriate tools safely. She has used her budget wisely to resource the subject with tools and materials and is providing good subject leadership both in planning and teacher support. The recent science and technology week gave a good focus to the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Standards of attainment are in line with those usually found at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
108. The subject has benefited from the broadening of the curriculum and the implementation of thinking skills and first hand visits. This was especially evident in Years 5 and 6 where pupils use key questions as learning objectives, jigsaw activities to build up knowledge of the water cycle, pupils deducing information and explaining it to a partner and then the class followed by practical fieldwork on what happens to rainwater in areas of the school. This approach also appears in Years 1 and 2 with the emphasis on paired talk, and in Years 3 and 4 where opportunities to use different forms of group organisation are being undertaken.
109. Year 1 pupils were able to plot points on a map of the school, after walking around the school and looking at safe and unsafe areas and then using pictorial resources to highlight where these areas are on the map. Pupils have studied the local shops using a questionnaire to find out

similarities and differences. This work has good challenge and promotes the higher level of attainment (Level 3). Pupils have studied the Isle of Struay, looking at physical and human features, and comparing them to Sunderland. Fieldwork around the school and on the seaside locality is a feature of geographical working. Barnaby Bear's travels and big book activities are also beginning to have an impact on the subject and on pupils' understanding. Barnaby Bear had also visited a Buddhist Temple, effectively linking geography and religious education

110. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2 during the inspection but through scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils it can be seen that pupils have a sound knowledge of their locality and the wider world. They have made glossaries of geographical vocabulary to support work on rivers, draw and label sketch maps from clues on Ordnance Survey maps of the River Wear and Sunderland. They have contrasted these sketch maps effectively with previous work on the River Severn. They study the locality of the school to look at the physical process of rainwater and water uses around school. With this knowledge they design fantasy wet and dry playgrounds. The school puts good emphasis on enquiry skills and practical fieldwork. Years 3 and 4 had recently undertaken an environmental walk looking at the positive and negatives features of the Seaburn coastline, especially focussing on pollution. This was contrasted with a study of environmental changes to Cardiff Bay. Pupils confidently talked about how humans effect their environment. Secondary resources include photographs and maps, support learning effectively and enhance experiences gained from fieldwork and the study of video programmes.
111. The co-ordinator, although only in post since September, is having a significant impact on the subject. She already has an effective development plan, and a secure overview of her subject. She has reviewed the curriculum entitlement plan and provided detailed schemes of work. Again she has monitored and supported teachers' planning modelled and demonstrated lessons and collected evidence of designated pupils work to ensure coverage and monitor progression. There is a good range of resources including video support, pictorial and text based evidence and a good range of maps and library book resources.

HISTORY

112. Standards of attainment are generally in line with those usually found at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection. It was not possible to see any lesson at Key Stage 1 so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching there. Some very good teaching at Key Stage 2 is beginning to promote rising standards.
113. Pupils cover an appropriate range of historical topics at Key Stage 1. They use newspapers of the day to collect fact about the periods studied, and group these appropriately under 'what, where and when' lists. In Year 1 pupils have researched how "Polly Put the Kettle on" in a Victorian kitchen and have made tea as she would have done. Displays show observational drawings of artefacts, collected by the school, which were used in this kitchen. There are strong ICT curriculum links that allow pupils to search and enquire through the Internet both at school and home, and also provide teaching resources.
114. The influence on the thinking skills project is having a positive effect on pupils' learning at Key Stage 2. Pupils clearly understand the learning intentions and embark enthusiastically on exciting partner oral activities. For example, telling partners what they did yesterday, what they would do if they won the lottery, what is happening from a newspaper headline or what they can deduce from a sequence of old maps. These activities lead onto sequencing events,

artefacts, maps or photographs into correct order, or reading differentiated texts or evidence about the same event. Pupils share their findings with one another, in groups (snowballing) or the whole class. These sessions feature high levels of oral activity, much excellence in attitude and behaviour with pupils confidently discussing their evidence or sharing views in a positive way over long periods of time. Findings are usually recorded on prepared 'writing frames', and these seldom reflect the vitality of learning that has taken place throughout the oral sessions.

115. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is often very good. Teachers use skilful questioning to encourage pupils to reason and interpret their findings. Explanations and direct teaching is lively, pacy, entertaining and the teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject is a highly motivating factor. Planning is detailed and this is supported by the use of good resources and a scheme of work that provides progressive skill acquisition. Teachers manage time well and pupils know what pupils are expected to learn. Visits to places of historical interest enrich pupils' studies, and are a real strength of provision. This was particularly clear in the Year 3 and 4 lessons where references were made to their visit to Alnwick Castle and their work on rich/poor people in Tudor times. The use of these visits, the ready access to artefacts and good quality evidence including real life local events (such as the Victoria Hall disaster) are experiences that stimulate history enquiry.
116. The co-ordinator's own enthusiasm for the subject and new specific teaching methods has brought great improvements to the subject. This has been achieved through the provision of an appropriate development plan, revision of the curriculum to cater for National Curriculum 2000. Alongside this, she has provided training to staff in using artefacts and employing thinking skills, developing questions and purposeful questioning strategies. Detailed schemes of work have been developed which focus on the progression in skills of investigation and enquiry and she has provided support to medium and short-term planning and modelled demonstration lessons. Teachers' planning continues to be monitored to ensure that the importance of practical work is emphasised and that good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects especially literacy geography and information technology. Resources are now good, and are continually being built up.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Standards of achievement are above national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils overall make good progress because of the quality of resources and the teaching they receive.
118. ICT has featured as a priority in the school development plan, and resources are now good. There is now a computer suite, which is regularly used on a time-tabled basis supported by a computer in each classroom, and many classes use a range of equipment such as television, digital cameras and programmable roamers. All staff have received appropriate training, and this, together with very good support from the co-ordinator, has ensured that the majority of teachers are confident in teaching all aspects of the subject. Pupils are encouraged to visit the computer suite at lunchtime to finish work, take part in a multi-media club or to continue work at home. This is supported by excellent newsletters from the co-ordinator, which give the parents clear guidance and information.
119. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident when using the computer and learn to use both hands as they develop basic computer keyboard skills. The majority of pupils can log on and open up programs independently, using a complex system of commands to access programs.

Reception pupils were confidently using paintbrush to draw and colour in wild animals and then adding text labels and sentence descriptions. They were able to drag text and change size and font. They all have a good understanding of the technical vocabulary of the subject and were observed using terms such as icon, click, double click, file, folder, log on, log off and save as when talking about their work with other pupils or with their teacher. The majority of pupils are able to re-organise text by using the insert and delete functions and can save or print their work independently. In using data handling, programs pupils have created bar graphs and pictograms. Pupils know about terms such as folder and file and have had experience in programming a 'Roamer' programmable toy to follow a simple route. There is also evidence of control technology activities where pupils have discussed how household items respond to signals. Pupils use tape recorders to listen to stories and have access to video and CD Rom activities in their own classrooms.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are very knowledgeable about the use of computers to organise and present information. They have developed sound keyboard skills when composing pieces of written information and reorganise their work to alter text, style and the order of words. They are experienced in importing graphics into their work, such as when they are composing leaflets for the visit to Alnwick castle. They use databases and graphing packages to illustrate work in science on shadow lengths and history to show population growth over time in Sunderland. They use logo in mathematics to program the 'turtle' to draw mathematical shapes. Pupils confidently use terms such as 'hot links', 'hyper links' and know that hot links open documents, hyper links open websites. They knew how to explore a website and how to select slides for PowerPoint. They confidently use cut and paste techniques to insert text and graphics and describe the process of a multimedia presentation. Some pupils even included sound into the pamphlets.
121. The quality of teaching is good overall, although one seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory. This was due in part to a contrived cross-curricular link in literacy and partly to hardware failures. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and are supported by very good schemes of work, detailed lesson plans and an able co-ordinator. They plan achievable learning outcomes for lessons that are clearly explained at the beginning, displayed on the whiteboard and finally revisited in the plenary. Good use is made of the computer link to give clear explanations and demonstrations of what pupils are to do. It is also used as an intervention tool to gain attention for more explanation or to show pupils good works. Individual and paired work is a feature of lessons with teachers giving good support to all pupils whilst allowing them to explore and find out for themselves.
122. Sufficient time is available to all classes and work is often followed up back in the classroom or at home. Good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects especially literacy, mathematics, history and geography. Teachers make sure they use appropriate technical vocabulary and this aids pupils understanding of the subject. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator. He provides exemplar planning, demonstration lessons, pre-prepared discs and pages to support activities or file documents. He monitors teachers planning to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered and has very good assessment procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of the pupils. He has observed and taught alongside many of his colleagues in the computer suite and when commitments allow is a specialist teacher across the school. There has been a strong emphasis on improving the provision for the subject and increasing staff expertise. The computer suite is used to its full capacity and the co-ordinator has clear development plans for broadband connection to a suite and wireless connection to classrooms for a set of laptops. The school does not have broadband access and so the use of the Internet is often restricted due to slowness of connection.

MUSIC

123. Good teaching from music specialists and the school's strong programme for extra-curricular activities ensures that pupils make good progress and that standards are above those usually found by the end of Key Stage 2. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
124. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and a visiting specialist taught this. However, the school's planning and evidence of previous work indicates that pupils are involved in a good range of musical activities that promote their learning well. In the one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils were preparing for a 'Kite Festival' and the lesson captured pupils' enthusiasm well. A lively introduction to the lesson, by way of a good range of warming-up activities ensured the children were well prepared for singing. Pupils demonstrated good control by singing imaginatively in a variety of ways. For example, when they were asked to sing angrily, they sang quickly and pointed their fingers, and when they sang sadly, they did so slowly and with drawn faces. The school's good selection of instruments enables all pupils to perform and express their feelings in music, as when cymbals are clashed for lightening and maracas shaken to portray rain.
125. At Key Stage 2, the school's own music specialist's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm contribute to the progress made. Lessons have a good pace and a variety of activities ensures that pupils cover a range of musical skills. The lessons seen were linked to the theme for the week of 'Rivers and Seas' and children correctly recalled the music heard in that morning's assembly as 'La Mer'. Pupils improved their listening skills as they discussed extracts, and analysed and responded to contrasting moods in music. For example, some said that the soft music of 'Sleepy Lagoon' by Eric Coates suggested 'waves gently lapping on the shore'. Pupils listen to and identify instruments, recording their comments as the music is played in a 'Listening Diary'. They discuss their feelings and share their opinions sensibly. Pupils are able to identify and recall rhythmic patterns, know the meaning of a crotchet and a minim and are making good progress in playing the recorder.
126. There is a good programme for the teaching of instruments such as the guitar, and pupils skills were recognised well during an assembly performance during the inspection. Many pupils also take part in drums and choir activities, and contribute to school productions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Too few lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 to make any overall judgements about standards of attainment or the quality of teaching. By the age of eleven, standards of attainment are above those usually found. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection. Judgements are based on the games, gymnastics and dance elements of the subject observed during the inspection.
128. By the age of 11 pupils understand that exercise is essential to health and fitness. Teachers and pupils work together in "warm up" sessions and discuss the effects. In gymnastics the variety of movements incorporated into sequences is evidence of sound progress. Pupils are more aware of the need to demonstrate clear starting and finishing positions, they create more interesting pathways and use a variety of body parts to bear their weight. Pupils co-operate well when working in groups and when given the opportunity are able to comment sensibly about work done by other pupils. The work of "Fabtots", a group based at a local sports

college, both in developing pupils skills and providing training for staff is having a significant effect on raising “expertise”. In games, a number of pupils demonstrate throwing and catching skills that are above average, demonstrating good hand and eye co-ordination. In the one dance lesson, pupils were able to create a sequence of movements telling a story with clear beginnings and endings, with many able to match their linking movements to the pace and pitch of the music.

129. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject, and pupils achieve well because they are systematically taught skills and techniques. They receive appropriate amounts of time for practice and respond well to this, concentrating and working hard.
130. Key Stage 2 pupils use the neighbouring Secondary School swimming pool, and by the time they leave at 11, almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres. Many go on to exceed this, gain experience of water safety techniques and have the opportunity to develop a wider range of strokes.
131. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities linked to physical education. These include netball, swimming and gymnastics and extend to competitions against local schools. Sunderland Football Club conducts after school “soccer skills” coaching sessions and the youngest pupils have a “Fit for Fun” club. The school plans an Outdoor Pursuits week at Derwent Hill Outdoor Activity Centre in the Lake District and this contributes well to the pupils’ personal and social development.
132. The subject co-ordinator, only recently appointed, is enthusiastic, has a good sporting background and is keen both to revise and update existing programmes, and to provide further opportunities for staff to develop their subject knowledge. There is a good sized hall and outdoor hard play area and a large, shared playing field. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The school has received a grant to provide new large pieces of gymnastic equipment, and as some of this was arriving during the inspection it was viewed with enthusiasm by the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Standards of attainment at ages seven and 11 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in developing and promoting the subject.
134. By the age of seven most pupils have a broad understanding of religious topics including Bible stories, religious events and the significance of religious ceremonies, and they have some understanding of other faiths. Through a visit to a local church, pupils have learnt about the use of the pulpit, font and altar relating these to well known ceremonies. They have studied the life of a Buddhist monk and they have been introduced to the concept of meditation. Most pupils can write a prayer in the form of a scroll and set down kind thoughts on the leaves of the traditional Bodhi tree.
135. By the age of 11 most pupils have considered religious themes such as the Creation. They have studied a description of how the earth was created and have formed ideas about God that they can relate to each other. As they develop these ideas, they are beginning to pose questions and challenge the validity of some religious ideas and concepts. Most pupils can compare and contrast two different accounts of the birth of Jesus by interpreting cards

depicting the Nativity. They can give reasons for their preferences drawing out detail such as descriptions facial expressions. Pupils have studied Islamic artefacts and in doing so have learned about the significance of beads, a prayer hat and prayer mat. Pupils have made a sketch plan of a mosque annotating these to show the positions taken up by the elders. Using word processing skills acquired in ICT the pupils have produced a religious diary including information of key events in the Bible, such as the Last Supper. Through this work, the pupils have been introduced to the religious significance of bread and wine.

136. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Since the last inspection teachers have access to much better resources, particularly artefacts. They use these well when explaining the significance of religious practices and this helps to maintain pupil interest. Pupils in Year 4 benefited from their teacher's use of a pupil's own expertise and the provision of helpful resource materials covering information on Sikhism as they traced the events of the Amrit ceremony.
137. Most pupils enjoy the lessons, and approach the subject conscientiously. In a lesson for Year 6 pupils, the session started well because the teacher used an overhead projector to demonstrate optical illusions of well-known animals. This fascinated the pupils who enjoyed identifying different results from the same image. This gave the teacher the chance to make an important point about respecting each other's opinions. As the lesson continued several pupils started to raise fundamental questions about the validity of Biblical information and enthusiastic discussion developed. Personal development was promoted effectively in a lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils when the teacher asked if it was a good idea to share information with each other when working in small group. One pupil's response was "If someone is struggling you can help them".
138. The subject is very well led by the headteacher, who has drawn up detailed plans based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus to be taught. This helps the teachers to deliver lessons well. She has spent time monitoring lessons and pupils' work and has a very good view of the progress made since the last inspection. She has promoted links with neighbourhood churches and has invited parents who have experience of different religions into lessons and assemblies. Resources for learning are now good, well used and include a selection of books covering religious festivals and practices.