

INSPECTION REPORT

GILLAS LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Houghton-le-Spring

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108829

Head teacher: Miss Elaine Kay

Reporting inspector: Mrs Pat Kime
25350

Dates of inspection: 19th – 23rd June 2000

Inspection number: 198668

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Seaton Avenue Houghton-le-Spring Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	DH5 8EH
Telephone number:	0191 5536517
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Watchman
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Pat Kime	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		History	What should the school do to improve further?
		Geography	The school's results and achievements
			Teaching
			Leadership and management
Tony Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety and child protection
			Links with the community
Pauline Smith	Team inspector	English	Efficiency
		Areas of learning for children under five	Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and development
		Equal opportunities	
		English as an additional language	
Shirley Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics	Support and guidance
		Art	Staffing, accommodation and resources
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
Richard Eaton	Team inspector	Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Religious education	
		Design and technology	
		Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gillas Lane is an average sized primary school serving a mixed but predominantly disadvantaged community. Close to 40 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above the national average. Most pupils start in the Nursery and move on to the Reception class. When they start Nursery their attainment is well below what is typical for their age. At the time of inspection there were 184 pupils taught in seven classes in the main school. A further 52 children were attending the Nursery either mornings or afternoons. There were 56 children under five in the Nursery and the Reception class. There is a high turnover of pupils. Around a quarter enter or leave during the school year. The very few pupils who are from ethnic minority backgrounds have a reasonable understanding of English. The school has identified 53 pupils as having special educational needs. Nearly half of them have significant learning problems and a few have behavioural difficulties but none carry statements of special educational needs. The number of these pupils varies considerably between classes. A new deputy head teacher started in May. The head teacher is leaving at the end of the school year and a new head teacher has been appointed to start in September 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with many good features. The head teacher, key staff and governors have shown a commitment to improvement. They have enabled the school to turn around. Teaching is now good, pupils are learning well and standards are beginning to rise. In spite of high costs, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The good teaching is raising standards and pupils gain ground from a low base.
- Children under five are now benefiting from very good teaching in the Nursery. A lot is expected of them and they progress rapidly in their learning and their personal development.
- Pupils respond well to the very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development. They have good attitudes to school. They take their schoolwork seriously and want to do well. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved.
- The governors and key staff know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to continuing to raise standards.
- The school has good partnerships with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- The standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school to bring them up to the national average;
- The provision for those pupils in Key Stage 2 who have behavioural difficulties;
- The way the school keeps a check on pupils' progress;
- The job of the subject leaders is not clear enough and some of them have little effect on how well pupils achieve.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in November 1997. All six key issues for action in the last report have been addressed successfully.

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly. It was a serious weakness in 1997, particularly in Year 6 and in reading in Years 4 and 5. As a result of staff changes, teaching in Year 6 has improved from poor to good and reading is now taught well in Years 4 and 5.
- The key issue for action regarding the role of the deputy head teacher has been successfully resolved after robust action by the head teacher and governors. The recently appointed deputy head teacher is already making a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning at Gillas Lane and

to the leadership and management of the school.

- The governing body now monitors the school's work well and statutory requirements are met in all subjects.
- Progress has also been made in areas that were not key issues for action. Standards in mathematics have improved in both key stages, since the 1997 national tests. In English standards have improved in Key Stage 1. Standards in information technology have improved to a satisfactory standard in both key stages. Standards in physical education have improved. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and their attendance are better than reported in 1997. The provision for children under five has improved. It is now very good.
- The commitment of staff and governors places the school in a good position to build on these improvements and raise standards further.

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	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	C	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	D	E	C	
science	D	E	E*	E	

E means that the school's performance was in the lowest five per cent nationally.*

- This table shows that in 1999 the eleven-year-olds did as well as pupils in similar schools across the country in English and mathematics but did not do well enough in science. The apparent decline in standards since 1997 is deceptive because the 1999 Year 6 contained an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, about a third. In spite of this, over four years the Key Stage 2 results have improved overall at a rate broadly in line with the national improvement from a low base in 1996.
- The present Year 6 pupils, only half as many as last year, are achieving higher standards in these three subjects, though they are still below national expectations for their age. Standards in science are now much better than the 1999 tests suggest. The school's realistic targets for the 2000 test results are likely to be met. The standards seen in Year 5 suggest that the higher targets for 2001 should be met. In Key Stage 2, pupils are now getting on well and making good progress.
- Pupils' results in the 1999 tests for seven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 1, were below the national average but above average for pupils in similar schools in both English and mathematics. In science these pupils' results were well below the national average.
- The present Year 2 pupils are working at a similar level in English. In mathematics they are doing better and are working at the level expected for their age. Their work in science is below the national expectation but at a higher standard than was achieved last year. In view of children's low standards when they start school, pupils are doing well for them by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Children under five now gain ground rapidly and in several areas of learning they are not far below national expectations by the age of five.
- In information technology and religious education standards meet expectations at the end of both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils want to do well, they nearly all work hard in lessons and many attend extra-curricular clubs. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6 pupils have become very well motivated learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the vast majority of pupils are well behaved and the school is an orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Good; relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils are positive. Pupils respect others and are sensitive to their feelings and views. Pupils co-operate well when working in groups and pairs.
Attendance	Satisfactory

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of the 58 lessons seen during the inspection; only 2 per cent were unsatisfactory. Teaching was better than satisfactory in 73 per cent of the lessons, being good in 47 per cent, very good in 21 per cent and excellent in 5 per cent. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good; staff training and intensive support are bearing fruit. In some subjects, such as science and music, several of the teachers lack specialist knowledge and teaching, though satisfactory, is less often of high quality. The proportion of high quality teaching was greatest in the Nursery and Year 5 and in lessons taught by the deputy head teacher. In these classes teachers expect a lot of pupils. Children under five are getting on very well in the Nursery. Learning is also particularly good in the top two years of Key Stage 2, Years 5 and 6. These pupils are determined to achieve and they work very hard. Almost all pupils' needs are well met and, overall, pupils are now making good progress in their learning as a result of the good teaching. However, there are a few pupils in Key Stage 2 who have behavioural difficulties. Their needs are sometimes not met because of a shortage of special needs support staff and occasionally their behaviour hinders the learning of others in the class because they take up too much teaching time.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; the curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils have equal access to the opportunities the school provides. There are strengths in the provision for children under five, extra-curricular activities and English, mathematics, art and physical education. There are shortcomings in the planning of work in science, and some of the National Curriculum foundation subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The needs of most pupils with individual education plans are met satisfactorily. The quality of support for these pupils is good, but there is too little. There is not enough support in class lessons for the few pupils in Key Stage 2 who have behavioural difficulties. This means that the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; effective specialist teaching is backed up by class teachers so these pupils are able to get on as well as their classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. This enables pupils who enter school with poor personal and social skills to develop the good attitudes, good behaviour and sense of responsibility that underpin their good learning. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to their well-being. The school's ethos and the positive relationships between teachers and pupils ensure effective personal and academic support. Nevertheless there is scope to make the assessment of what pupils have learned more systematic and to use assessment information more effectively to guide the planning of future work.

The school has established a good partnership with pupils' parents. The information provided and the arrangements for communication between home and school are good. The school enables parents to contribute to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good overall; the head teacher has led the school through a period of significant improvement and has set the quality of teaching and learning as the school's top priorities. The recently appointed deputy head teacher is making a very positive contribution. The key stage team leaders play a major part in setting and pursuing the agenda for improvement. The influence of subject leaders is variable; it is satisfactory overall. In some subjects the lead teachers have made a significant contribution to raising standards but in others they make little difference.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; the governing body is well organised. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and they maintain good oversight of the work of the school. They are committed to moving the school forward and raising standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; there is now a good system for monitoring and continuing to improve the quality of teaching. Test results are analysed and used to keep track of pupils' progress, though this process is not equally thorough in all subjects. Plans for the school's future development address most of the areas where improvement is needed.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; funds are directed to appropriate priorities. Resources for learning are used effectively in lessons and the small number of support staff are used well. The principles of best value are applied soundly.

Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They find the school approachable. • They consider the teaching to be good • Their children are expected to work hard and do their best and they are making good progress. • The school helps their children become mature and responsible. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several would like more regular homework. • The information they receive about how their children are getting on; • The range of activities outside lessons; • A few expressed concern about the effect of the minority of pupils with behavioural problems on their children's progress. • A very small number of parents think the school could work more closely with parents and the leadership and management could be improved.

About a quarter of the parent's questionnaires were completed and returned. The majority of parents who returned the questionnaire and the ten who attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector have a positive view of the school. The inspectors' judgements agree with the parents' positive views. Inspection evidence does not support most of the parental criticisms of the school. However, on several of these points, such as extra-curricular activities and the provision of information, improvements have been made only recently. Inspectors agree with parents that occasionally pupils with behavioural difficulties disturb other pupils' learning. Extra-curricular provision is good overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1999 national test (SATs) results

1 The standards achieved in the 1999 tests by the eleven-year-olds at the end of the school were well below the national average in English and mathematics and very low, in the lowest five percent nationally, in science.

2 The results can also be compared with those achieved by pupils in similar schools nationally, where between 35 and 50 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In this comparison, the English and mathematics results were broadly average and the science results were well below average.

3 The pupils who took the tests in 1999 were an unusual group for the school. A third of them were on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and about a quarter of them had significant learning difficulties.

4 The seven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 1, took national tests in reading, writing and mathematics and were assessed by their teachers in science. Their results were, for the most part, much better for their age than those achieved by the eleven-year-olds. They did well compared with pupils in similar schools. In reading and mathematics, their results were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. In writing, they were in line with the national average and well above average for similar schools. However, the standards achieved in the science assessments were well below the national average. Data is not available to make a comparison with similar schools in science.

Trends in SATs results

5 In the end of Key Stage 1 tests, the seven-year-olds' results have improved since 1997. In reading and writing there has been a great improvement and standards have risen at a faster rate than nationally. As a result, in reading, the gap between the standards achieved by pupils at Gillas Lane and the national average has narrowed. In science, standards have fallen slightly whilst nationally they have risen.

6 The school's results in the end of Key Stage 2 tests for the eleven-year-olds have fluctuated over the years. However, since 1996, taking all subjects together, standards have risen at a rate broadly in line with the national rate of improvement. This overall picture masks significant differences between subjects. The results in mathematics have improved dramatically from a very low base in 1996. In science, the results were much the same in 1999 as in 1996, as a result of a decline over the last two years, a period during which standards have improved nationally.

7 It is not possible to draw valid conclusions about pupils' progress by comparing the test results year on year. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the year groups vary considerably in the proportion of pupils who find learning difficult and the number with special educational needs. For instance, the 1999 test results were skewed by the unusually high proportion of pupils with special needs, around a third of the year group. Secondly, the rate of pupil mobility is such that, in some years, several of the Year 6 pupils who take the tests have not received all or even most of their education at Gillas Lane.

The Standards seen on inspection and pupils' achievements

8 Standards in English, mathematics and science, at the top of the school, are higher than suggested by last year's test results. The Year 6 pupils have benefited this year from good teaching and a lot of individual help in a small class. In these subjects, their overall standards are below what is expected for pupils at this age. This is largely because there is a higher proportion of pupils who find learning difficult than those who are able to achieve above average standards. A significant number of pupils are not far

short of achieving the expected standard but are not confident in their knowledge and understanding and what they can do, across all aspects of the subjects. In English, pupils' speaking skills are weak and this hinders their learning in all aspects of the subject. In mathematics, standards overall fall a little below national expectations. Standards in science have improved substantially since last year. In most aspects of the subject, pupils are not far below the expected standard. However, their experimental and investigative skills are below what is expected.

9 The standards achieved by the seven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 1, are also higher this year. In English, standards of reading and writing are close to what is expected at this age. As in Key Stage 2, speaking skills are below average. Standards in mathematics meet expectations. In science, most of the Year 2 pupils' work is at the level expected. However, standards in science are brought down because pupils' skills in the important aspect of experimental and investigative science work are below expectations. These standards represent a significant improvement in reading, mathematics and science. In English and mathematics the school's use of the national strategies to raise standards of literacy and numeracy has had a positive effect on standards. In science, the new subject leader and the adoption of a nationally recommended whole-school plan of work have had a positive effect.

10 Standards of literacy are below expectations in both key stages. Standards of numeracy are in line with expectations in Key Stage 1 and below expectations in Key Stage 2.

11 The school sets realistically high targets for pupils' attainment in the national tests each year, based on what would be expected in the light of their achievement at seven and tracking of their progress through school. The standards seen in Year 6 indicate that the school's targets for the 2000 tests are likely to have been met. Standards in Year 5 suggest that these pupils should, with steady progress next year, meet the targets for the 2001 test results.

12 Standards in information technology meet national expectations by the end of both key stages. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards in this subject were below expectations.

13 In religious education, the standards achieved, by the end of each key stage, meet the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus.

14 In the other National Curriculum subjects, the standards of work seen in both key stages indicate that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make satisfactory, though sometimes uneven, progress in their learning overall. In art, pupils' achievement is good for them because most of them enter school with little aesthetic appreciation and little creativity. Pupils do well in physical education in Key Stage 2.

15 For the majority of children, attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. They now achieve very well in the Nursery as a result of improved provision and teaching. The Nursery children have had a very good start to their education and they are well set to achieve the national targets for their age, by the time they are five. These children are well prepared to benefit from the good teaching in Key Stage 1. However, the Reception children are not so far on for their age. At present standards by five are below the national targets in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Standards by five years of age meet expectations in personal and social development.

16 The standards currently being achieved in different school years do not reflect the present good teaching. Pupils carry the legacy of unsatisfactory teaching in the past and, for some, disruption as a result of staff absences. This is particularly the case higher up the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are now achieving well in relation to what they have learned previously. Achievement is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 where much of the work is pitched at a demanding level. The children at the top of the school have made sufficient progress in their time at the school and gained ground from a low base.

17 Children under five, who have special educational needs, achieve very well, especially in overcoming language and communication difficulties and improving their personal and social skills. The

vast majority of these children meet the targets set for them by the age of five. In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils with special educational needs progress well in literacy and numeracy and, with support, meet their individual learning targets. A few pupils in Key stage 2 have behavioural difficulties. They do not receive sufficient support and therefore, although their behaviour is normally contained, they do not make enough progress in overcoming their difficulties. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and these strengths have a positive effect on their learning. This strength reflects pupils' good response to the school's very good provision for their social and moral development and to their teachers' interest in them.

19 These standards are an improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.

20 The vast majority of pupils work hard in lessons. They want to succeed at their work. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson the class composed a poem together. All the pupils were committed to achieving this task. They made good suggestions and kept their attention firmly on the work throughout. Year 2 pupils tried very hard in a demanding mathematics lesson on multiplication. They were determined to achieve well themselves and recognised their classmates' achievements, spontaneously applauding their success. The Nursery children have very good attitudes to school and participate fully in the activities provided for them. In an excellent dance lesson they responded extremely well to the staff's very high expectations and worked at a high level for their age. They all joined in enthusiastically and enjoyed themselves greatly whilst making very good gains in many areas of their learning. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 work very productively and they apply themselves very well even when working independently. By the top of the school, pupils show very high levels of commitment to their work and to achievement. A small number of pupils, mostly in lower Key Stage 2, have behavioural difficulties and they do not have such good attitudes to school. Occasionally they attempt to disturb lessons and even when teaching is good they can hinder the learning of others in the class.

21 Pupils take a positive interest in school life. For instance, attendance at extra-curricular clubs is good; there is a waiting list for the lunch-time computer club.

22 The vast majority of pupils are well behaved in class and around the school. They know the school's rules and they accept the standards the school sets for their behaviour. Consequently, the school is an orderly community in which pupils learn well. Pupils are well behaved in assemblies and polite to visitors who join them such as the representative of the Quality Award scheme who made a presentation during an assembly in the inspection week. The few pupils with behavioural difficulties are usually managed well and their behaviour is contained so that they seldom disrupt lessons unduly. Even so, the school has had to exclude pupils, two in the last year, because of their behaviour. A few pupils are badly behaved in the playground.

23 Pupils' personal development is good and they have good relationships with each other and the staff. Pupils share equipment such as musical instruments willingly. They co-operate with each other in group activities in lessons and they collaborate on joint work. For instance, in Year 5, a group of pupils worked very well together finding new words and looking up their meanings, with little direct supervision. They learn what it means to be a member of a team and apply this understanding well in physical education lessons. Pupils are respectful and sensitive to the feelings of others. Year 6 pupils were particularly courteous and admiring of an ex-airman who spoke to them about his wartime experiences. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to take responsibility. The older pupils undertake duties conscientiously. They take attendance registers to the school office and prepare equipment for assemblies and lessons.

24 Attendance rates are satisfactory. They are in line with the national average. A few pupils sometimes arrive late but the vast majority attend punctually and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25 Pupils are taught well. Almost all the teaching in the 58 lessons seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with 73 percent being good or better. Teaching was good in 47 per cent of the lessons and very good in a further 21 percent. In 5 per cent of the lessons, teaching was excellent. Just under 2 per cent was unsatisfactory. A significant amount of at least good teaching was seen in every year. This is a very good improvement on the position at the last inspection when the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was a serious weakness and only six per cent of the teaching was very good or better. The high proportion of good and very good teaching is a strength of the school. It enables pupils to make good progress in their learning and, as a consequence, standards are now showing signs of improvement.

26 For children under five, teaching is very good overall. Teaching in the Nursery is usually very good and occasionally excellent. The teacher, who took over in September 1999, and the nursery nurse make a strong team. They give suitably high priority to improving pupils' language skills and their ability to communicate. These skills are well below average for most of the children when they start school. The under fives in the Reception class are taught well. The staff who work with the under fives have a very good understanding of their needs. They have very high expectations of what the children can achieve and the activities they provide are very well thought out. They help the children to make very good progress in their learning. As a result, the present Nursery children are well set to come close to meeting national targets by the time they are five. The Reception children are not so far on for their age. Even so, they have gained ground during the year in response to good teaching.

27 The teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, taken overall, is good. In Key Stage 2 there is a high proportion of good or better teaching in the later years and, in Year 5, teaching is usually very good. The deputy head teacher does not yet have responsibility for a class but nevertheless makes a strong positive contribution to the quality of teaching. He works very effectively with teachers to improve their teaching further. During the inspection he taught most classes in Key Stage 2 and provided a very good model for staff.

28 When the teaching is good or very good, teachers have very effective strategies for maintaining order and keeping pupils' attention on the work in hand; they have very high expectations for pupils' learning and they make it clear to pupils what they are to learn in each lesson. Consequently they pitch work at a demanding level, secure a high degree of commitment to achievement from their pupils and maintain a purposeful and productive atmosphere in their classrooms. For example, a literacy hour in Year 5 was one element in the class's challenging work about fox hunting. The pupils had previously read letters from supporters and opponents of hunting. They read a passage about "Reynard the Fox" and the teacher expected them to think about the ideas behind the passage, to consider the effect of emotive language on their opinions, to "read between the lines" and to identify and suggest synonyms. The teacher's very good control of the class and very good rapport with the pupils meant they were extremely well behaved and she was able to pursue their answers to her challenging questions. This questioning was very effective in deepening pupils' understanding of how language is used to influence readers and in promoting thinking at a high level.

29 In effective lessons teachers use resources and a variety of tasks well to sustain pupils' interest. This was seen, for example, in a history lesson in Year 2 when the teacher built up pupils' curiosity about an unnamed historical character, Florence Nightingale, very effectively by using copies of a photograph and a video. She captured their interest and focused their attention well with careful questioning and by telling them they would find out the answers to two important questions as they watched the video. A gasp of excitement went up when the character's name was finally revealed. The pupils learned to use historical evidence to find out about the past and to ask relevant questions. This lesson, like many other successful ones observed, created a real enthusiasm for learning.

30 The teachers usually match work well to pupils' learning needs, providing simpler tasks for those who find learning difficult and harder work for the higher attainers. This means that pupils at all levels make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting point. Pupils are well motivated when they know how well they are getting on. This is seen in English, where they keep track of their own progress

through the levels of the National Curriculum, and in the most effective mathematics lessons, where, at the end of the lesson, pupils identify what they have learned.

31 Teachers' day-to-day assessment of how well pupils are learning and the marking of work varies. In mathematics, there are regular assessments and teachers use the findings well to guide the planning of future work. Marking of work is sometimes very effective but in some classes and more generally in some subjects, notably religious education, marking, though diligently completed, does little to help pupils to learn from their mistakes.

32 The most effective teaching occurs when teachers vary the pace and organisation of lessons to suit the task in hand. For instance one teacher conducted a mental mathematics session on digital time at an electrifying pace that kept all pupils very alert and enabled them to make very good gains in their learning. The same teacher allowed plenty of time, in an excellent art lesson, for pupils to reflect on their work, to practice new skills and to improve on their first efforts. The task, to paint in a way that showed the effect of light on a still life, was demanding for the Year 6 pupils. The teacher established a thoughtful and industrious atmosphere and the pupils responded with a mature approach to the work, intense concentration and growing confidence in their own abilities as artists. As a result they gained in understanding of the effects that can be created with thick paint applied with a palette knife and they developed a good degree of mastery of this technique.

33 When teaching is satisfactory, and on the few occasions when it falls below a satisfactory standard, its quality is diminished by one or more of the following factors. Firstly, in some subjects teachers' own knowledge, though satisfactory, lacks depth and either there is no specialist on the staff to advise them or the subject is not effectively led so teachers are not able to benefit from each other's expertise. This occasionally leads to lessons where the work is not hard enough for some pupils and a few therefore misbehave. Secondly, because there are not enough support staff for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2, the few pupils with behavioural difficulties occasionally slow the learning of others in the class. Their behaviour can be hard even for the school's most effective teachers to manage. Other teachers' strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are not always robust enough to work effectively with these pupils and consequently lessons occasionally slow down as too much time is taken up trying to reason with these pupils. Thirdly, the organisation of lessons is sometimes cautious and not well matched to the task in hand. For instance, in one lesson pupils were kept sitting together on the carpet for a written task that would have been better done at tables. Time was therefore lost to issuing resources and pupils had to write awkwardly on boards on their knees or held in the air.

34 The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good throughout the school. Teachers have benefited from training both within the school and at outside courses as well as from intensive support provided by local authority consultants. They have a good understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and teaching in the literacy and numeracy hours is usually good or better. This enables pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics. The result is clearly seen by the end of Key Stage 1 where pupils come close to achieving the national expectation for their age in English and do meet it in mathematics.

35 There are a few variations in the quality of teaching. In information technology and religious education, teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but good in Key Stage 2, where expectations are higher and the teaching methods used are more effective. The teaching of science and geography is satisfactory throughout the school. In both these subjects, some teachers' own knowledge, though sufficient to teach what is required, lacks depth.

36 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In the Nursery, it is very good. The teacher has good specialist knowledge of how to help such children and she is supported by a very skilled and experienced nursery nurse. Children's difficulties are identified quickly and outside agencies, such as speech therapy are involved in helping children overcome their difficulties. The under fives with special educational needs make very good progress towards meeting their learning targets as a result of this very good provision in Nursery and the additional support they receive in the Reception class. There is one nursery nurse to provide support for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and

2. She is deployed well and she works very closely with class teachers, sometimes working in the class and sometimes teaching small groups of pupils out of the classroom. She has good knowledge of the pupils' individual needs and targets. The quality of this teaching is good and the work undertaken is closely linked to that of the rest of the class. The shortage of support staff for the few pupils in Key Stage 2 who have behavioural difficulties has an effect on their learning. Most of the time, the strategies employed by teachers are reasonably effective in containing these pupils' behaviour so that lessons proceed at a reasonable pace, though at times lessons slow down while teachers devote time to dealing with them. However not enough is done to teach these pupils to control their own behaviour and they make insufficient progress in this aspect of their learning.

37 There are few pupils for whom English is an additional language. They make good gains in acquiring competence in English. They receive some good teaching from specially trained staff who visit the school. These staff liaise effectively with class teachers so they are able to use similar methods to support the pupils' learning and the pupils achieve as well as their classmates.

38 A significant minority of parents are not happy about the amount of homework their children are set. However, inspectors found that teachers use homework effectively and the amount set is appropriate and it builds up as the pupils move up the school.

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

The curriculum; the learning opportunities the school provides

39 The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are very good for the under fives and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. All pupils have an equal opportunity to learn. The school meets the requirement to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being implemented well. There is a suitable emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this is having a positive effect on standards in English and mathematics. The curriculum is enriched by good links with the community and good extra-curricular provision.

40 Curricular provision has improved since the last inspection when a key issue for action was to meet National Curriculum requirements in information technology, design and technology and, in Key Stage 2, physical education. All these matters have been addressed successfully. The physical education curriculum is good and, as a result, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are working at a higher than average level in this subject. Information technology and design and technology are developing rapidly.

41 The curriculum for the under fives is very good. The children undertake a wide range of carefully planned, purposeful and stimulating activities that cover all the areas of learning in the nationally recommended programme for children of this age. Emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' personal and social development and their spoken language. As a result of the very good provision, these young children progress very well in their learning.

42 In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school has recently adopted nationally recommended whole-school plans in most subjects. This successfully ensures that pupils cover all the work they should. However, the plans have yet to be fine-tuned to match the school's needs and to ensure that pupils progressively build up the skills they need to use what they know. This is seen, for instance, in the experimental and investigative aspect of science and in map work in geography. The curriculum for art is good. As a result, pupils who enter school with little aesthetic awareness achieve typical standards for their age in both key stages.

43 Effective links are made between different subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils learned about prayer mats in religious education and, in art, they designed their own. Pupils have suitable opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects.

44 The arrangements for personal, social and health education are satisfactory overall. “Circle Time”, when pupils have opportunities to discuss issues of concern, makes a positive contribution to their social awareness and understanding. Education about the dangers of drug abuse is enhanced, in Year 6, by a presentation by police officers.

45 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including music and sporting and craft activities. The computer club is helping to improve the standard of work in lessons. Useful study support has been provided by the pre-test booster classes run for 12 weeks by the Year 6 teacher.

46 The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits and visitors. Year 6 pupils had returned from a two-day trip to London immediately prior to the inspection. Discussion with some of them showed that they had enjoyed the stay and benefited educationally from it. There is a link through a local industrial concern with the Wolfrap Foundation in Michigan USA. Black American dancers and musicians have worked with the pupils.

Provision for pupil’s personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

47 This provision, taken overall, is very good and, as a result, the vast majority of pupils, many of whom start school with poor personal and social skills, make good progress in their personal development; they develop good attitudes and form positive relationships and they are well behaved. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. For cultural development, the provision is good.

48 Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual development as they are taught about beliefs and values. Pupils are helped to develop self-knowledge and to understand and accept their feelings. “Circle Time”, when the class sits together for an open discussion, starts in the Nursery and is continued throughout the school. It provides good opportunities for pupils to talk about things that puzzle or worry them and to develop their awareness of spiritual, social and moral issues and for teachers to guide pupils into good behaviour and positive social attitudes. Teachers make the most of opportunities to encourage reflection and nurture pupils’ sense of wonder. Reception pupils listened to Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons” as they changed for physical education. Pupils’ “Millennium Promises” and in Year 6, their hopes for the next thousand years show depth of thought and awareness of the needs of the planet and mankind. In an art lesson, Year 2 pupils showed a sense of wonder at the magnificence of the wave in Hokusai’s painting, “The Great Wave of Kunegawa”. Assemblies are sometimes too long. Nevertheless, they are well-planned acts of worship that contribute positively to pupils’ sense of belonging to the school community and provide good opportunities for reflection and prayer. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the beauty of the natural world seen in flowers in full bloom. One assembly came to a moving close as pupils looked at slides of Van Gogh’s pictures whilst listening to the song, “Starry, Starry Night”.

49 The school has a strong moral ethos. It provides a very good framework of order and clear guidelines, in the code of conduct, for pupils’ behaviour and to promote their moral development. The staff set a good example for pupils. They promote sound values and pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and the importance of doing the right thing. They “know where they stand” and the vast majority accept the standards the school sets for their behaviour. Teachers provide some very good opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues and to make moral choices. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson, the grandfather of one of the pupils talked about his experiences in the Royal Air Force and as a prisoner of war. Pupils asked many pertinent questions that showed how carefully they were thinking about the issues involved. In Year 5, pupils learned about differing views of foxhunting and were asked to consider where they stood on this issue and why.

50 Pupils are helped to develop a sense of social responsibility and they have good opportunities to make a valued contribution to school life. Social development is promoted very well for children under five. Throughout the school, staff provide pupils with a good example of relationships and they encourage good manners and consideration for others. Pupils have good opportunities for co-operative and collaborative work in lessons. In Key Stage 1 and 2, and especially in the classes of older pupils, opportunities are provided for pupils to take and to share responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils

designed the roadway for nursery children and they regularly set out the large outdoor equipment for these children. The older pupils are currently involved in a major project on the care of the environment. The school has substantial plans to develop its grounds and Year 6 pupils have prepared designs for the playground and are to take responsibility for care of the trees and plants. Pupils' social development is also promoted through educational visits, including those to London and Paris.

51 Pupils' cultural development is promoted effectively. They learn about the rich culture of their local area through visits to Beamish museum, and historical sites such as Hadrian's Wall and Tynemouth Priory. They learn about the cultures of different times and places in history and geography. Their study of world faiths, in religious education, enhances their awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society. Pupils study a very good range of artist's work and Year 1 pupils learned much about sculpture from a visit to "The Angel of the North".

Links with the community

52 The school's links with the community and partner institutions are good. This strength has been maintained since the last inspection.

53 There are many places of interest in the area and the school uses several of these well for educational visits. These enrich the curriculum and bring learning to life for pupils. For example, pupils in Year 1 visited the "Angel of the North". This deepened their understanding of the properties of materials and how this statue had to be made of material that would withstand the weather as well as enhancing their appreciation of sculpture.

54 Over several years the school has developed a strong link with Banardos and is involved in several current projects. The school also has several useful links with local industries. For example, a local building company has been involved in the school environmental project, which is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

55 The school maintains a close working relationship with Houghton Keping Secondary School. The transfer arrangements are good. They involve ex-pupils and are effective in relieving any anxiety pupils might feel.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Pupils' welfare and safety

56 The procedures for child protection are good and staff have had appropriate training. The procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health, safety and well-being are good and the school provides a safe environment for the pupils.

57 Day-to-day care of pupils is good. Staff know their pupils well and have a good level of concern for their well-being. The school is aware of its responsibilities for pupils' health and safety and proper procedures, including safety audits, are implemented but they are not always backed up by appropriate records. For example, successful fire drills take place each term but the outcomes, such as evacuation times, have not been recorded. The school is now aware of this shortcoming and has taken action to remedy it.

The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic performance, personal development and attendance and the support and guidance given to pupils.

58 Taking all factors into account, the school's arrangements for assessing pupils' learning are satisfactory. There are strengths in the under-fives and for pupils with special educational needs and in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, there are weaknesses in several other subjects.

59 For the under-fives, assessment is good. Staff check what children know and what they can do when they start Nursery. They use this information well to plan the next steps in learning for each child, to identify children who need extra help and as a baseline against which to measure how well children are getting on. Continuity is assured as information is passed on from Nursery to Reception. However, the teachers of children under five have not yet checked that they have the same understanding of the criteria they use to judge the children's performance. Plans are in hand to address this matter.

60 In Key Stages 1 and 2, the assessment of pupil's learning and the use made of the information gained, though satisfactory overall, is inconsistent.

61 There are good procedures to keep a check on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Pupils are tested regularly and test results are checked to ensure pupils are making sufficient progress. The progress of a representative sample of pupils is closely tracked and analysed to determine how well all pupils' needs are met in each year. Pupils' results in the national tests are analysed. In mathematics the findings from this analysis are used effectively to set class targets and ensure that work is matched to pupils' learning needs. In English the analysis, though helpful, is less rigorous. It is not sufficient to pinpoint weak elements in individual pupils' learning or in the coverage of the curriculum. In science, the 1999 test results have been analysed very thoroughly and areas of weakness have been clearly identified as an effective first step in halting the decline in standards.

62 In the other subjects, assessment of pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory in physical education and religious education but unsatisfactory in the remainder. In most of these subjects the school lacks systematic procedures to measure and record how pupils are getting on. Teachers know their pupils well but rely too heavily on this. Consequently pupils' continued satisfactory progress is not assured. The school has rightly identified assessment as needing improvement and the development of this area is now being led well. Good whole-school systems for assessment are planned in information technology, design and technology, and art but they are not yet being fully implemented.

63 Pupils undertake simple self-assessment and they are beginning to keep track of their own progress and therefore to recognise their achievements. This makes a positive contribution to their personal development.

64 The use made of assessment information to determine what is taught varies but is satisfactory overall. The analysis of test results and the close tracking of a selection of pupils are strengths. However, the quality and effectiveness of teachers' record keeping varies. There are pockets of good practice which have a good impact on pupils' progress as work is then matched well to what pupils have learned. Some teachers note whether or not pupils have learned what they should in each lesson and adapt their plans for future lessons accordingly. However, this is not done effectively in all classes. The school has not yet devised efficient, effective and consistent whole-school systems.

65 The academic and personal progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored well. There are good day-to-day procedures and regular reviews, thorough records are kept and the information from assessment is used well to plan the next steps in these pupils' learning.

66 Class teachers know their pupils well. This enables them to keep an overview of each pupil's all round development and provide effective support and guidance for pupils. This, combined with the very good provision for pupils' social and moral development promotes a positive approach to learning and the vast majority of pupils therefore achieve well. Nevertheless, in Key Stages 1 and 2, no systematic track is kept of pupils' personal development. In the Nursery and Reception classes this is done well. The monitoring of children's personal development is part of day-to-day activities and the children's progress is recorded systematically. Teachers then plan activities to meet the needs of individual children and help them gain confidence, self-esteem and the ability to persevere. For pupils with special educational needs, targets for personal development are included in their individual education plans. Nevertheless, there is a small number of pupils in Key Stage 2 who do not receive sufficient support to enable them to develop a suitable degree of self-control.

67 There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance. Parents are consulted at an early stage if there are concerns about attendance, and, as a result, attendance rates have improved since the last inspection. Punctuality is also monitored effectively. Attendance and punctuality are encouraged by the use of "Early Bird" stickers and certificates to reward good attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68 The school's links with the pupils' parents and carers are good and parents' and carers' views of the school are mainly positive. The school maintains good links with parents and carers and their involvement in the life and work of the school has a positive effect on pupils' achievements.

69 The majority of parents have signed up to the Home School Agreement and they understand the importance of supporting their children at home.

70 The school provides parents with good quality information in the prospectus, the informative annual reports on pupils' progress and the two parents' evening held each year. There is a very good arrangement by which teachers are available for interviews with parents for an hour each week after school. In the Nursery, daily contact between parents and staff is effective in promoting parental involvement in school life. The 52 children were accompanied on a recent farm visit by 40 parents. No newsletters have been provided for parents this school year but plans are in hand to remedy this shortcoming; pupils who attend the computer club are compiling a newsletter.

71 The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are involved in drawing up their individual education plans and in the regular reviews of their children's progress. They have good opportunities to discuss any concerns about their children with senior members of staff.

72 Several parents are directly involved in supporting pupils' learning in school. They provide valuable help in class and read books with individual pupils. There is a good home-school reading partnership that, combined with homework and project work, enables all parents to contribute to their children's learning. Many parents are involved in fund-raising activities on behalf of the school. The funds they raise are used to provide additional learning resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The contributions of the head teacher, key staff and the governing body

73 The leadership and management of the school are good overall. There are strengths in the contributions and the commitment to improvement of the senior staff and the governing body. However, some subject leaders make little difference to standards in their subjects.

74 The school has turned round in the last two and a half years. The last inspection found that there were serious weaknesses in teaching, the then deputy head teacher did not make an appropriate contribution and the governing body did not keep sufficient check on the school's work. The steps taken since then by the head teacher, governors and staff have resulted in very good improvement. Gillas Lane is now an effective school where pupils learn well.

75 The head teacher has led the school through this period of change and has set the quality of teaching and learning as the school's top priority. She has given leadership responsibility to a senior teacher in each key stage. These teachers are strongly committed to improving the school and they ensure that teachers know what is expected of them and are helped to make a positive contribution to moving the school forward. This has successfully ensured an effective management structure. The head teacher and senior staff keep track effectively of whether pupils are doing as well as they should in English and mathematics. They know where improvements are needed. There is a plan for whole-school development and this includes appropriate plans to address most of the areas in need of improvement.

76 The head teacher and governors have taken robust action to resolve the key issue for action regarding the role of the deputy head teacher. This has taken considerable time but has been effective and a successful new appointment has recently been made. The decision to allow the new deputy head teacher to spend a term without responsibility for a class has proved wise. He has been able to get a good overview of the school and form a clear view of where improvements are needed. This should help to provide a smooth transition when the new head teacher takes up duty in September. The deputy head teacher has also made a very good contribution to the quality of teaching. He teaches alongside the class teachers and provides a very good role model. He has observed teachers at work and given them good guidance as to how they can improve their performance. This is valued highly by the teachers.

77 Nearly all the teachers carry responsibility for leading and co-ordinating work in at least one subject. Several of these responsibilities have recently been reallocated in the light of staff changes. Some subject leaders who have only recently taken on their responsibilities, for example in science and design and technology, have laid good plans but, as yet, made only a limited impact. Some of the subject leaders make a significant difference to the standards pupils achieve. For instance, the two teachers who lead mathematics have supported the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy well. They have undertaken further training at outside courses and provided “in-house” training for all the teachers. They keep a good check on the work teachers plan, how well the subject is taught and how pupils are getting on and they have established a good plan to steer further development and improvement. Their work is bearing fruit and standards are now rising. However, when subjects are given less priority and the subject leaders do not establish such a high profile in school, they make little difference to what is achieved. In some subjects they are poorly placed to know about the standards achieved and how well pupils progress as they move up the school or about how effective teaching is and whether the right things are being taught. The development of the role of subject leader is hampered by their out of date job descriptions.

78 The contribution of the governing body to the leadership and management of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and they are strongly committed to continuing to improve the school and to raising standards. They now provide good oversight of the school’s work. They monitor its performance effectively and they make a good contribution to planning for its future development. They have a clear and largely accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses, based on their own observations of the school at work and information from the head teacher. The governing body is well organised. It carries out its work efficiently and fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors monitor the school’s budget effectively and they have a clear view of the school’s financial position. They ensure that the principles of best value are applied to spending decisions.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources and the school’s use of its resources

Staffing

79 There are sufficient, suitably trained and qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teachers have undertaken considerable further training and the benefits to pupils can be seen, for instance in the good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. In some subjects, teachers’ subject knowledge lacks depth; this results in pupils’ rate of progress varying between classes.

80 There are not enough support staff. In the Nursery there is sufficient support and the children’s needs are met. There is only part-time classroom support in the Reception class. The level of support staff for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and 2, one nursery nurse, is unsatisfactory, although the quality of the support is good. There are a few pupils with significant behavioural difficulties. There is not enough support for them in class. Occasionally, managing their behaviour takes an undue amount of the teacher’s time and consequently the progress of all pupils in the class is slowed in these lessons. Action has been taken to resolve this problem. Now the governing body has eliminated the budget deficit, it has appointed additional staff to work with pupils who have special educational needs from September 2000.

81 All staff in the school feel valued and are given the opportunity to develop their expertise and contribute to the life of the school. For example the mid-day assistants have introduced a star system to reward good behaviour during lunch-time. Teachers who are new to the profession or to the school are supported well and quickly enabled to settle into the school and make a full contribution to its life and work.

Accommodation

82 The school's accommodation is sufficient to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively, though there is a shortage of storage space for learning resources. Outside play areas are generally good. There is sufficient outdoor play space for children under five but there is no soft play area for them. The outdoor accommodation is greatly enhanced by the "environmental area". This is used well to promote pupils' learning. Attractive and stimulating displays, which include pupils' work, enhance the classrooms and communal areas and build up pupils' self-esteem and sense of pride in their achievements and their school. The Nursery is accommodated in a separate building. There is no adult toilet in the building. This is an unsatisfactory state of affairs that occasionally causes lessons to be disturbed.

Learning resources

83 There are sufficient resources to teach the National Curriculum and implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is an improvement since the last inspection; deficiencies identified then have been remedied. Nevertheless, there are a few gaps. There are few historical or religious artefacts to bring study to life for pupils. In geography, there are barely enough globes and few suitable library books. Some of the equipment for design and technology is old. There is a restricted range of resources to promote pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society. The resources for information technology are now much better. The Nursery is well resourced with suitable equipment but outdoor play is restricted by the lack of safety surfacing. The library is spacious and, for most subjects, well stocked with good quality books.

Strategic use of resources

84 The resources available to the school are satisfactorily managed. Financial management is sound; funds are directed to appropriate educational priorities and plans are costed. This is seen, for example, in the action taken to increase the level of staff to support pupils with special educational needs. The governing body is properly involved in allocating the available funds and in monitoring spending. Governors seek competitive tenders, they plan ahead for refurbishment and refurbishment's and they are active in seeking additional sources of funds, such as sponsorship from local business. They ensure the budget is spent prudently and they have succeeded in turning a deficit into a small surplus. The school's day-to-day financial affairs are managed efficiently by the head teacher and school administrator, who make effective use of information technology for this purpose. Funds allocated for specific purposes, such as provision for special educational needs, are used appropriately. All the minor recommendations in the latest auditor's report have been followed. Staff are deployed suitably and the short-term non-teaching role of the new deputy head teacher has proved very effective. Resources for learning are generally used effectively but staff are not always aware of all the resources available in school. Time is used well in most lessons; they move along at a brisk pace and pupils make good progress in their learning. Time is occasionally lost when pupils are slow to change for physical education lessons and when assemblies are overlong.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85 In order to raise standards of achievement and continue to improve the quality of education, the head teacher, staff and governors should build on the school's many strengths and consolidate recent improvements by:

- (1) Raising standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science to meet national averages, by the end of Key Stage 2 by;

*** In English**

- continuing to implement and develop the use of the National Literacy Strategy,
- improving pupils' ability to communicate in speech and writing by establishing a whole-school programme to enrich pupils' vocabulary and improve their speaking skills,
- improving pupils' understanding of what they read,
- analysing performance data more rigorously to pinpoint exactly what improvements are needed and taking the necessary action.

(See paragraphs 8, 97, 100-105, 109)

*** In mathematics**

- continuing to implement and develop the use of the National Numeracy Strategy,
- developing the use of the recently introduced system for tracking pupils' progress and ensuring that groups of pupils needing additional support to catch up with their classmates are quickly identified and appropriately provided for.

(See paragraphs 8, 112, 120)

*** In science**

- teaching the experimental and investigative aspect of the subject at a more demanding level,
- assessing what pupils have learned more effectively and systematically and planning future work in the light of these assessments.

(See paragraphs 1, 2, 8, 9, 123, 124, 126, 128, 132)

- (2) * Improving the level of support for the few pupils in Key Stage 2 who have special educational needs because of behaviour difficulties, so they do not hinder other pupils' learning. (See paragraphs 20, 22, 36, 66, 80)

- (3) * Improving the assessment of pupils' learning by;

- establishing procedures for assessing what pupils have learned in science and information technology and those foundation subjects in which learning is not yet systematically assessed,
- ensuring that whole-school systems are efficient, consistent and manageable and are used as the basis for planning future work,
- improving the quality of marking of pupils' work where necessary.

(See paragraphs 31, 61, 62, 64, 132, 139, 148, 158, 160, 175, 182)

- (4) Clarifying the role and responsibilities of subject leaders so they are enabled to have a positive effect on standards in their subjects. (See paragraphs 73, 77)

* The school has identified these issues and in all cases begun to take appropriate action.

In addition to these key issues for action, the following less significant weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- the shortcomings in some teachers' subject knowledge in science, information technology, geography and music; (See paragraphs 33, 35, 131, 151, 173, 181)
- the curricular guidance for teachers in history and geography and for the experimental and investigative aspect of science; (See paragraphs 42, 132, 158, 161)
- the learning resources for history, geography and religious education and the provision for outdoor play for children under five. (See paragraphs 83, 159, 167, 192)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	61

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5.1	20.6	46.5	25.8	1.7	0	0

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

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)	26	184
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	42

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	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.36
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	20	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74% (75%)	85% (94%)	85% (97%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	87% (84%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	12	8
	Girls	11	13	11
	Total	15	25	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56% (69%)	93% (62%)	70% (94%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	7
	Girls	10	11	8
	Total	18	19	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60% (54%)	63% (50%)	50% (65%)
	National	70% (64%)	69% (58%)	68% (69%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	6	11	8
	Total	14	19	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47% (45%)	63% (50%)	53% (51%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (71%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	156
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	2	1
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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	26.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	405,838
Total expenditure	391,486
Expenditure per pupil	1,874
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,324
Balance carried forward to next year	16,676

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	33	2	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	54	8	2	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	45	20	4	4
The teaching is good.	57	41	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	35	14	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	37	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	35	52	5	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	37	8	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	36	9	5	16

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

86 Children under five years of age are taught in the Nursery and the Reception class. At the time of the inspection there were 56 children under five in these classes, four of them in the Reception class. Children normally start Nursery in the September before their fourth birthday and attend part-time. A year later the vast majority move on to full-time attendance in the Reception class, which is housed in the main school building. The Nursery is accommodated in a separate building set in its own grounds.

87 Children's levels of attainment, when they start the Nursery vary but, taken overall, their attainment is well below what is typical for their age. For many children, personal and social development and language and literacy skills are particularly limited. They have to learn how to take turns and share, to make friends and to develop an appropriate degree of independence. A small minority cannot attend to their personal needs. A significant number of the children have been assessed as having special educational needs because of their speech and language difficulties.

88 The provision for children under five has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the Nursery. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are now very good and the children are now making very good progress in their learning. The present Nursery children are well set to achieve the national targets for their age, by the time they are five. The Reception children are not so far on for their age. Their attainment, by five, falls below expectations for their age in most areas of learning. Nevertheless, in mathematics, physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the scientific aspects of the world around them, their attainment is not far behind expectations. In personal and social development they meet national expectations by five. The children are prepared well to benefit from the next stage of their education.

89 Provision for children's personal and social development is very good. Children make very good progress in this important area of learning. By the time they are five, despite their initial disadvantage, they have reached the national expectation for their age. The staff create a warm, encouraging and supportive yet stimulating atmosphere in which children flourish, grow in independence and gain confidence and self-esteem. The classrooms and the everyday routines are well organised to provide many opportunities for children to take simple decisions, to make choices and to take some responsibility. When children arrive at Nursery each day they decide which of the activities on offer they want to do and stick their names on a chart next to the picture of the relevant activities. Resources are stored at a suitable height for children so they can get what they need independently. In Nursery, the number of children allowed to work on one activity, for example the sand, is limited. The appropriate number of "medallions" are provided for children to wear so they know at a glance if they can go to that activity or will need to wait for a turn. The children understand and readily accept this system. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to co-operate and develop self-discipline. The daily prayer said in the Nursery sums up their approach, "Dear God, help me to care, help me to share with my friends as I play in the Nursery today". By the time they are five, children have established friendships and they have positive relationships with staff. They have a good degree of self-discipline and rarely need reminding about how to behave in school. They concentrate well and persevere at their activities, often concentrating for a long time.

90 Children make good progress in developing their language and literacy skills from a low base. Nevertheless, by five, their attainment falls below the national expectation for children their age. Nursery children are now making very good progress in this area of learning. The staff recognise that children's limited language hinders progress in much of their work and they now give high priority to promoting purposeful talk and extending children's vocabulary. They plan good activities to develop listening skills and build up the children's concentration. For example, a large picture of Little Boy Blue on the farm was used very effectively to teach positional language like "behind", "underneath" and "on top of". Staff also seize incidental opportunities to promote language development and they enrich the children's vocabulary when they join in their activities. The children have good opportunities to talk to their classmates and the

staff and most gain the confidence to do so. Nevertheless, in spite of the staff's efforts, many use a limited vocabulary and several tend to point and seldom utter more than short phrases. Staff teach the children about sounds, letters and words and how to write their letters. This improved provision has not yet had time to impact on standards in Reception. The Nursery children handle books carefully and they enjoy listening to well told stories. A few of them realise that the written word carries meaning and they imitate the teacher, "reading" stories expressively from familiar books. By the time they are five, in Reception, most children's speaking skills are below average. Many of the children recognise a few familiar words from the "reading scheme" on sight. They are beginning to use the sounds of the letters to work out very simple unfamiliar three-letter words. They form letters correctly and copy accurately underneath the teacher's writing. A very small number of higher achievers are beginning to write independently. Staff incorporate writing in play activities well. For instance, a notepad and writing implements are provided alongside the telephone. As a result of such provision, children experiment making marks to represent writing and they realise that writing is used for many purposes. Children for whom English is an additional language benefit from some specialist teaching from a visiting teacher. This is backed up well by the class teachers and these children make as good progress in their learning as the others.

91 The teaching of mathematics is thorough and systematic and based on interesting practical activities. Children make very good progress in this area of learning and, by the time they are five, they are not far behind the standard expected at their age. In Nursery, children learn about shapes, pattern and size through well planned practical activities. They thread beads and copy repeating colour patterns. They make long and short snakes from playdough and they match five cherries to the top of five cakes. They learn to compare the size of objects and their own heights and they understand the language of comparison, such as "bigger" and "smaller". They recognise common shapes, such as circles and triangles. Most count accurately to 10 and the higher achievers recognise if the numerals from 1 to 10 are placed in the wrong order. In Reception, children build effectively on what they have learned in Nursery. By the time they are five, several children count to twenty and the higher achievers are beginning to understand the process of addition. In both classes pupils learn to use their mathematical knowledge in practical ways. They know when containers are full and empty and they set the table in the domestic play area correctly for a given number of visitors.

92 Children generally enter the Nursery with a limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They have good opportunities in the Nursery and the Reception class to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and their environment. Staff broaden the children's horizons and lay the foundations for later study of science, design and technology, geography, history and information technology. Even so, by the time they are five, their level of achievement is below that expected at their age. In the scientific aspect of this area of learning their achievement, by five, is not far behind expectations. Children learn to make comparisons and to identify similarities and differences. They have good opportunities to develop their observational skills. For instance, in the Reception class they grow fruit from seeds. In a lesson about fruit, they tasted a wide variety of fruit and looked closely at different cut fruit, comparing the number and size of stones and pips and the difference in the skin of, for example, a plum and a lychee. They recognise and name farm animals after a visit to a farm and they know wool is obtained from sheep. The Reception children know that a caterpillar changes into a butterfly. They observe the African snail in the terrarium with interest. Children observe the weather and know that it changes day by day. They talk about photographs of past events. They are developing an early understanding of geographical concepts in their play with toy cars and play mats marked with roads and other features. They know about the jobs done by "people who help us", such as a vet. Children in both classes use the computer to support their learning. Reception pupils name the parts of a computer accurately and control the "mouse" effectively.

93 The majority of children make good progress in their physical development. The provision for this area of learning is very good. Children are supported sensitively as they build physical skills and confidence. By the time they are five, most children come close to meeting the standard expected for their age. They have achieved sound physical co-ordination. They jump and balance and climb up ladders and through tunnels. Nevertheless, overall attainment in this area of learning is below expectations because a significant minority of children do not achieve the level of manual dexterity that they is expected. Their pencil control and cutting skills are below average.

94 The standards children achieve in their creative development are below average overall. However, standards in dance and music are good. This aspect of the work is taught very well and enthusiastically and children respond well to the pitch, speed and dynamics of music. They move rhythmically to music with good control of their bodies. They explore and investigate sounds using a good range of musical instruments. Staff provide a good range of suitable art activities but the children's work is immature for their age. Children's play tends to lack imagination and staff do not intervene as much as they could to develop this aspect of children's creative work.

95 The quality of teaching for children under five is very good overall. Most of the teaching observed in the Nursery was very good and in Reception the teaching seen was nearly all at least good. The staff have a very good understanding of these young children's needs and how they learn and of the curriculum for children under five. They get the children to behave well whilst maintaining good relationships with them and being quick to praise and encourage children. Teachers have high expectations of what the children can achieve, especially in the Nursery and they use the support staff very effectively. In both classes they provide worthwhile practical activities to help children learn and they hold the children's interest well. Staff monitor and assess children's progress very well and plan the next steps in their learning carefully to meet their individual needs. Staff give children a very good model of relationships and they treat the children with respect, care and courtesy.

96 The provision for children under five who have special educational needs is good. Their needs are identified quickly and they are supported well. As a result they make very good progress in the light of their learning difficulties.

ENGLISH

97 Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in all aspects of English and building well on what they have already learned. They are benefiting from the introduction of the literacy hour. Teaching is now good and standards are improving in all aspects of the subject. Nevertheless the standards of pupils' work, by the end of each key stage, at ages seven and eleven, are not yet up to the national expectation. Pupils are closer to reaching the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, overall standards are depressed because there are many more pupils who find learning difficult than are able to achieve high standards.

98 In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' results were well below the national average. However, in spite of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, around a third, the results were in line with the average achieved by pupils in similar schools across the country. The test results have varied but, taken over the last four years, they have kept pace with the national rate of improvement.

99 Pupils' results in the 1999 tests for seven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 1 were better for their age. In reading, they were below the national average but above the average achieved by pupils in similar schools. In writing, the results were in line with the national average and well above the similar schools average. The results have improved significantly since 1997. Pupils are enabled to do as well as they can. This is seen in the proportion of pupils achieving better than the expected standard for their age. This was close to the national average in reading and well above it in writing.

100 The standards of work in Year 6 are better than the 1999 test results suggest. There is a smaller proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the pupils have benefited from consistently good teaching and much individual support in a small class. They have all made good progress this year. Even so, their standards are a little below the national expectation in all aspects of the subject, except listening, which meets expectations. The Year 2 pupils' speaking skills are below average but in reading and writing their work is close to the standard expected. However, standards in both key stages are held back by pupils' weak speaking skills and limited vocabulary.

101 By the age of seven, pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking skills. Even so, several do not listen purposefully and they do not gain as much as they could from the rich vocabulary they encounter at school. A significant minority of pupils have limited command of English. They speak in only simple sentences and use a narrow vocabulary. The majority of Year 2 pupils are beginning to take an interest in words and the imagery of poetry and they speak confidently in class, sharing their views with others.

102 By the age of eleven, pupils' listening skills have developed well and are at the standard expected at their age. The Year 6 pupils listen intently to the teacher and to each other. For example they listened to two contrasting passages and compared them sensitively. Speaking skills are poorer. Pupils use a narrow vocabulary and still occasionally confuse tenses. They only use complex sentence structures in response to prompting from the teacher.

103 Standards of speaking and listening are low when children enter nursery. Pupils progress in these skills, but not enough to catch up to average. There are many good points in the teaching of this aspect of the subject. In English lessons, teachers introduce a wide vocabulary and encourage pupils to look words up in a dictionary or thesaurus. For example, in Year 5, pupils were challenged to give alternative words for "like". However two features reduce the effectiveness of the teaching. Firstly, teachers do not do enough to get the pupils to use a wider vocabulary. Secondly, the good work is not yet backed up by systematic reinforcement in other subjects. Pupils' limited speaking and listening skills hinder their progress in reading because they do not always understand what they read.

104 In reading, standards are below expectations by the age of seven. Around half the Year 2 pupils are lower attainers or have special educational needs. These pupils are gaining confidence as readers. They use picture clues and the sounds of letters to help them work out unfamiliar words but they have limited understanding of what they read. The higher attainers read suitable books for their age accurately and fluently. A few read expressively and discuss their books showing a good understanding.

105 Pupils' reading, by the end of Key Stage 2, is also below the standards expected at their age because of the high proportion of lower attainers. These pupils master the technical skills of reading but their understanding of what they read is superficial. Around two-thirds of the Year 6 pupils remember what has happened in their "reading books" and they make sensible predictions about how a story might develop. They discuss the quality of language used, for example, how adjectives and similes enrich description. The few higher attainers read a wide range of books. They are developing preferences for certain authors and types of book and discuss them knowledgeably. They understand and discuss plot, character and setting. All the Year 6 pupils know how to obtain information from books.

106 Throughout the school, pupils' reading progress is aided by a good home-school reading partnership. Most parents read with their children at home. For a very small minority of pupils this is not as effective as it might be because their books are not sufficiently closely matched to their reading level. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress. However, in some Key Stage 2 classes, there is insufficient additional support and these pupils then make only satisfactory progress in their learning.

107 In writing, pupils in Key Stage 1 are making good progress although most have not reached national expectations by the end of the key stage. They undertake a wide range of writing. By the age of seven, the majority express their ideas in writing in a logical sequence of sentences. They are beginning to use basic punctuation correctly. The higher attainers write in more complex, well connected sentences, though with a rather narrow range of vocabulary. They consistently use capital letters and full stops accurately and they are beginning to use "speech marks" and question marks. Handwriting is of a satisfactory standard. Pupils make good progress in learning to spell, as a result of systematic, direct teaching in the literacy hours. Pupils are confident to try to use their good knowledge of spelling patterns to try to spell unknown words. Most spell common words accurately and their errors are usually reasonable attempts.

108 By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils organise their writing into paragraphs. Their use of punctuation has become more consistent and most use "speech marks" accurately. They are beginning to choose words for effect but their vocabulary is still limited. They have a good range of opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes. As a result they adapt their written style as necessary. For

example, they have written a letter to the Prime Minister expressing their appreciation of the work of the prison service and were delighted to receive a reply. Their Millennium poems are sensitive and they have produced interesting extended pieces about the lives of wartime evacuees. Standards of spelling are satisfactory in English but weaker in other subjects. Handwriting is good and pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work.

109 The school has a good strategy for promoting literacy. The staff share a strong commitment to improvement and they are working hard to raise standards. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted. This has brought a consistent approach and it is having a marked positive effect on standards. The two subject leaders have been instrumental in this, supporting teachers, encouraging teamwork and, with a governor, monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and how well pupils are learning. They have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject throughout the school. However, best use is not made of the available assessment data. National test results are analysed and the progress of a sample of pupils is tracked. However, the analysis of data is not thorough enough to identify patterns in results and highlight where action is needed. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively in other subjects. For instance, in history, they write letters in the character of a Roman soldier serving on Hadrian's wall. They use information technology for research in several subjects and the use of e-mail stimulates good discussion about styles of letter writing.

110 The quality of teaching is good. It has improved significantly since the last inspection. All the English teaching seen was at least satisfactory, most was good and almost a sixth was very good. This good teaching underpins pupils' good rate of learning. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how to teach it. They are implementing the National Literacy Strategy well and lessons are well structured. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they plan work that is demanding but matched to their pupils' individual learning needs. Teachers know what they want the pupils to learn and they share these learning targets with them. This is effective in motivating pupils the vast majority of whom respond well. Pupils keep track of their own progress through the levels of the National Curriculum and even the youngest are aware of how they are getting on and what they have achieved. However, although teachers know their pupils well, they do not keep consistent records of progress. Occasionally, as with the home reading books, this leads to a less good match of work to pupils' levels of attainment. In the most effective lessons, teachers have very high expectations, teaching is stimulating and very focused and very good order is maintained. This results in pupils being interested and enthusiastic, trying hard and concentrating very well and therefore making very good progress in the lesson. Teaching of this quality was seen in a Year 5 lesson about the impact of emotive language. The teacher used a passage about fox-hunting to capture pupils' interest. Her calm manner, good organisation and very good discipline meant she could take the time to get pupils to think deeply about their work and extend their initial responses to her questions without losing anyone's attention. Her very good subject knowledge enabled her to explain difficult points, such as defining a synonym, clearly. In this lesson, pupils worked very industriously. They made very good gains in learning about language and how it is used to sway people's opinions and in their vocabulary as they learned the meaning of new words like "ferocious" and "immense".

MATHEMATICS

111 Pupils are making good progress in their learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 and progress is rapid in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special needs make good progress. Work is carefully prepared to help them develop basic skills and they receive good quality support. The recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils are achieving. Teaching is now good and standards have improved in both key stages. They now meet the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 but fall a little below it by the end of Key Stage 2.

112 In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' results were well below the national average. However, their results were in line with the average for pupils in similar schools, in spite of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The test results have improved significantly over the last four years from a very low base in 1996. The present Year 6 pupils are working at a higher level than last year's test results indicate but, overall do not yet meet the national

expectation for their age; several pupils are not confident in what they know and what they can do, at the expected level, across all aspects of the subject.

113 In 1999, the seven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 1, achieved below the national average in the tests. However, when compared with similar schools, their results were above average. Standards at the end of this key stage have improved and the present Year 2 pupils' work is at the level expected for their age. Every pupil covers work to the level expected for their age and those who are able to achieve a higher standard do so, because they are sufficiently challenged.

114 The Year 6 pupils understand multiplication and division. They multiply and divide large numbers in a variety of ways. They understand and use negative numbers, for instance, to plot shapes using co-ordinates. In work about shapes, they understand symmetry and they know about angles. They draw angles accurately using protractors. They explain the difference between acute and obtuse angles and use this knowledge to check the accuracy of the angles they draw. They understand the vocabulary of data handling. For example, they know the difference between mode, median and mean. Standards in problem solving and investigative mathematics are not as high as in the other aspects of the subject. Pupils use their mathematical skills effectively in other subjects. For instance, they measure accurately when constructing working models in design and technology. There are more pupils in Year 6 who find learning difficult than are able to achieve above average standards. The average attainers are working at the expected level for their age and the few higher attainers' work is above expectations in most aspects of mathematics. Nevertheless, when all the Year 6 pupils' achievements are taken into account, standards overall are a little below the national expectation for their age. However, these pupils have benefited from much individual teaching in a small class and they have all made good progress this year. They have met their personal targets.

115 Year 5 pupils are further on for their age than Year 6. They are beginning to learn about angles and to use protractors. About a quarter of these pupils investigate mathematical problems, such as 'do the three angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees?'. They decided how to investigate this problem and explained the process to their classmates at the end of the lesson. Pupils in Year 4 know a range of units for measuring quantity and distance but they do not fully understand them when they are written as decimal fractions. Year 3 pupils use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in calculations with money.

116 Pupils in Key Stage 1 receive a comprehensive and stimulating curriculum in mathematics. By the end of this key stage, standards meet national expectations in all aspects of the subject. The Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of number and the processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They apply this knowledge effectively when they investigate and solve problems. They have a sound knowledge of the vocabulary to describe such processes, for instance 'share between' and 'altogether'. They tackle problems confidently and explain the strategies they have used to solve them. Most of these pupils are competent at mental mathematics. They give pairs of numbers to make a given number, such as ten, twenty or a hundred. The higher attainers, about a third of the class, divide and multiply a mix of one and two digit numbers using different processes such as doubling, halving and accumulation. The majority of Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge about shapes. They know the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes and correctly name shapes from a description of their properties. In data handling, they use diagrams to show how they have sorted information and they present information in simple block graphs.

117 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. The teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and some very good and excellent teaching was observed. This is a major improvement since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in both key stages. Teachers have worked hard to understand the National Numeracy Strategy and use it effectively. Teaching in the numeracy hours is mostly good. Basic skills are taught well and teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They set demanding targets and expect them to be met. Where teaching was excellent, the work was fun and pupils found learning exciting. As one pupil remarked after a lesson, 'we were really investigating weren't we?'. Teachers use a consistent planning format; they know what they want pupils to learn in each lesson and they motivate pupils by discussing these learning objectives with

them at the start of the lesson. In very good lessons pupils identify what they have learnt at the end of each lesson and find ways to improve their work during the tasks they do. For example, a pupil in Year 5 realised that by drawing angles in pencil on paper instead of in felt-tip on a white board, measurements would be more accurate and the problem easier to solve. Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly to identify what pupils know and understand. They use this information well to guide their plans for the next steps in pupils' learning.

118 In a few lessons teaching fell below a good standard. Sometimes introductions are too long so pupils do not get down to work quickly enough. Occasionally the work set for the lower attainers is too hard for them and, at times, teachers give undue time to dealing with interruptions by the very few pupils who occasionally disturb lessons.

119 The school has a good strategy to promote numeracy and pupils enjoy mathematics. They have a good attitude to their work. They participate fully in lessons and carry out mathematical investigations purposefully. They concentrate hard and record their work clearly, neatly and accurately. Pupils know how they are getting on and they see the progress they have made. Consequently, they are well-motivated, they work hard and they grow in confidence.

120 The two subject leaders have been instrumental in the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and they check on the work done throughout the school. They use assessment well. They analyse pupils' results in the national tests in detail to identify areas of weakness and to help teachers set targets for their classes. A recent initiative is designed to track the progress of a sample of pupils as they move up the school to determine how well the needs of different groups of pupils are met in each year. There is scope to develop the use of this system to identify groups of pupils who need extra support or challenge in some aspects of the work. A significant minority of pupils enter part way through the school, sometimes during the school year. However, there are no arrangements to enable them to catch up on work they have missed that would lay solid foundations for the next steps.

121 Resources for learning are good and they are used well. This was seen in several lessons when "magic boards" were used effectively in mental and oral mathematics sessions.

122 This subject has improved significantly since the last inspection, both in the quality of the curriculum and in teaching. Pupils are benefiting from these improvements and standards are rising. The staff have the capacity to help all pupils achieve their potential in mathematics.

SCIENCE

123 All pupils are now making sound overall progress in their learning in Key Stages 1 and 2. The decline in standards seen since 1997 has been halted and standards are beginning to rise. Nevertheless, pupils' rate of progress varies between classes and between different aspects of the subject. The standards of work seen on inspection were below national expectations overall but substantially better than the 1999 national test results suggest. The overall standards achieved are lowered because there are few high attainers and most of the pupils do not reach the expected standard in experimental and investigative science.

124 In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, at the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' results were in the lowest five per cent nationally and well below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The test results have declined significantly since 1997. However, the 1999 results are deceptive. They were skewed by the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

125 The seven-year-olds' standards were assessed by their teachers at the end of Key Stage 1 and found to be well below the national average. No data is available to compare the teachers' assessments with the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools.

126 The present Year 6 pupils are achieving significantly higher standards than those seen in the 1999 tests. The overall standard of work in Year 6 is slightly below the national expectation for the end of Key Stage 2 and the school is expecting better test results this year. These pupils have a sound body of scientific knowledge and a satisfactory understanding of what they have learned. Their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things comfortably meet the expectation for their age. They have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and of physical processes. However, their experimental and investigative science work is below the standard expected at their age.

127 The Year 6 pupils have a good scientific vocabulary. For instance, they use terms such as “photosynthesis”, “solution”, “germination”, “carbon dioxide” and “upthrust” confidently and correctly. They are confident in their knowledge about plants and humans. They know that plants obtain “food” in two ways, by the action of sunlight on the chlorophyll in their leaves and by drawing water and minerals from the soil through their roots. They give examples of food chains and know that they always begin with a green plant producer. They explain the human circulatory and respiratory system well. They know that the heart is a muscle and that we breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. They know about the differences between solids, liquids and gases and they understand how insoluble solids such as tea leaves can be separated from liquids by evaporation. They understand that light travels in straight lines and the higher attainers understand how shadows prove this. They have a satisfactory understanding of the forces of gravity and upthrust and explain that when a boat floats these forces are balanced. They have a sound understanding of electricity. They participated in a well organised and enjoyable lesson that made good use of the specialist knowledge of a voluntary helper, the school caretaker. They used batteries and bulbs to explore the effects of changes in circuits and consolidated this knowledge well. They realised that putting several bulbs in the circuit would result in each one being dimmer.

128 Nevertheless, pupils’ overall standards, by the end of Key Stage 2, are held back because they do not undertake enough experimental and investigative work at a suitably demanding level. The lesson on circuits showed the effect of this; at least a third of the pupils failed to use a systematic approach to their experiments. Pupils know that scientists find things out by experimenting to test out their ideas. They make predictions and accurately record the results of their experiments. The higher attainers are beginning to draw sound general conclusions from their observations. For example, “the further the source of light is from an object, the smaller the shadow”. However, in Year 6, pupils’ experimental work is closely directed by the teacher. As a consequence, they do not devise and carry out experiments to test their own hypotheses and their ability to explain what the results they have recorded show is below the level expected.

129 The Year 2 pupils, nearing the end of Key Stage 1, also achieve broadly satisfactory standards for their age in all aspects except experimental and investigative work which, as in Key Stage 2, is not pitched at a high enough level. For instance, these pupils have little experience of undertaking “fair tests” so their understanding of what makes an experiment fair is limited.

130 Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in science. For instance, when Year 2 pupils measure how far a toy car travels down different slopes, they measure in centimetres. Pupils in Year 5 measure accurately when undertaking experiments and they present their findings in graphs. Literacy skills are used satisfactorily when pupils research scientific topics and when they write about what they have discovered. Information and communications technology skills are not used as much as they should be in most classes.

131 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils are getting on as they should; they make satisfactory progress in their learning. The teaching in the lessons seen on inspection varied from unsatisfactory to good and was satisfactory overall. Other evidence, including teachers’ plans for previous work and pupils’ exercise books, indicates that unsatisfactory teaching is rare and that there is much good teaching in the later years of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 teachers provide a lot of practical activities to help pupils understand the work and they give good attention to developing observational skills. For example, in the Reception class, the teacher provided a range of cut fruits and skilfully guided the pupils to look closely at them and describe the differences they could see. In Year 5 experimental and investigative science is taught well and, consequently, these pupils are well set to achieve the standards they should in

this aspect of the subject, by the time they reach the end of the key stage. Most aspects of the work are pitched at a suitable level in Year 6 to enable all pupils who can to achieve the expected level for their age. The Year 6 pupils have benefited from consistently good teaching of scientific knowledge in a small class and they have caught up a lot of ground. Several of the teachers' scientific knowledge lacks depth. It is sufficient to teach what is required but not to take work to a high level. The impact of the substantial amount of good teaching is not as great as it could be because of shortcomings in the whole-school planning of work and in assessment.

132 The curriculum and the leadership and management of the subject have improved this school year. The school has adopted nationally recommended whole-school plans for the curriculum that ensure pupils cover all the necessary ground. However, there is little guidance for teachers to ensure that experimental and investigative work becomes progressively harder as pupils move up the school and there is insufficient systematic assessment of what pupils have learned. Consequently there are inconsistencies that undermine pupils' progress. For instance pupils do not learn step by step how to write up their experiments in an appropriate form. A new subject leader has taken over. She has conducted a very thorough analysis of the 1999 test results and has monitored pupils' work and, as a result, pinpointed weaknesses. A sound action plan has been drawn up to address these, but as yet, science has not been given a high priority in the whole-school development planning.

ART

133 The standards of work seen were appropriate for the pupils' ages by the end of both key stages. In some lessons pupils produce good quality work. Pupils are taught well, they undertake a good range of work and they make good progress in their learning. Therefore, although they enter school with limited aesthetic awareness, they develop suitable levels of knowledge and skill.

134 By the end of Key Stage 1, the seven-year-olds use a good range of media including paints and pastels, with confidence and skill. This was seen in their work based on 'The Great Wave of Kunegawa' by Hokusai. They painted imaginary sea monsters, used pastels to create their own interpretations of the sea and built three-dimensional sea collages using paper sculpture. Their work was imaginative and creative and they captured a sense of action effectively. These pupils are developing an awareness of the potential of the media they use. For example, pupils responded thoughtfully when asked which of the above media they preferred. A typical response was, "I can get more action into painting".

135 By the end of Key Stage 2, the eleven-year-olds are skilled at painting in the style of famous artists. They have a wide knowledge of artists and they appreciate that artists use different techniques and media to achieve various effects. They use oil painting techniques to produce work in the style of Van Gogh. Teachers use such works of art effectively to teach pupils a range of techniques which they use to enrich their own work. These pupils understand the process of building up layers of paint and mixing on a palette and on the page and they apply paint with palette knives as well as brushes. Pupils' observational drawing skills are appropriate for their age and they use light and shade to suggest depth.

136 Art makes a significant contribution to pupils cultural development through the study of artists' work from different cultures and the use made of design and art in other cultures as a starting point for pupils' work. Pupils in Year 6 researched the designs of prayer mats and painted their own mats in a similar style.

137 Appropriate attention is paid to three-dimensional work and in some classes this is of good quality. For instance, Year 1 pupils deepened their awareness of the shape and texture of natural objects found in the playground, which they formed into sculptures using a range of other materials. These pupils have also benefited from a visit to "The Angel of the North".

138 Teaching was always good in the small sample of lessons observed. Some teaching of the highest quality was seen in Key Stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons imaginatively. One teacher had used the paintings of Noel Coward as a starting point for creating a group

composition, showing how contrast can be used to give a picture life and interest. Teachers make very good use of resources and organise their classrooms well for art work. A class sketched and painted while standing in order to draw large still life arrangements from different angles. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own work as part of the creative process and help them to value their work while learning to improve it. Pupils' work is displayed attractively and well. This promotes positive attitudes as pupils learn to value their work. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection especially in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is not underpinned by whole-school curricular plans to ensure continuity in their learning.

139 The subject is led well and the recently appointed subject leader has sound plans to address the weakness in the assessment of pupils' progress. At present, in spite of the good practice in pupils' self-evaluation in lessons, there is no systematic approach to keeping track of how pupils are getting on.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

140 Only one lesson was seen. Judgements are based on an examination of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff. There was plenty of work on display and pupils in most classes remember undertaking projects to design and make products. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection when inspectors found little evidence of work in design and technology.

141 The standards of pupils' work seen in both key stages were typical of what is usually seen at their age, though pupils are more confident at designing and making than at evaluating their finished products. The teaching is satisfactory. The subject is now being led well; there is a clear sense of direction for the subject and curricular planning has improved. Consequently pupils now undertake a sufficient range of work and they are now making good progress in their learning.

142 The Year 6 pupils at the top of the school have drawn good quality, detailed plans for improving the playground as part of their contribution to the environment project. They understand the use of scale drawings in the design process.

143 Pupils in Year 4 have learned to design a product with a particular user in mind by making moving pictures for pupils in Key Stage 1. These pupils are beginning to realise that their designs sometimes have to be modified to overcome difficulties at the making stage.

144 In Key Stage 1, pupils have made baskets to hold Easter eggs and finger puppets.

145 Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to their work; they light up when they talk about the things they have made. Year 5 pupils were keen to show their Harry Potter display and the musical instruments they had designed and made.

146 The work seen shows that pupils are learning well about the process of designing and making. However, there is little evidence of them evaluating the products they make to see if they fulfil the "design brief" effectively or considering how products could be improved to make them serve their purpose better.

147 The quality of teaching varies but is always at least satisfactory. Teachers plan design and technology lessons well and some marking of pupils' work is detailed and helpful.

148 The newly appointed subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and sound plans to develop it and has begun to make improvements. The school has recently improved its curricular planning by adopting nationally recommended whole-school plans of work for design and technology. A good system for assessing pupils' learning has been devised but is not yet in use. At present assessment is not satisfactory; it relies heavily on informal methods and on teachers' knowledge of how the pupils are doing.

149 There are just sufficient materials for work in the subject but some of the equipment is old.

GEOGRAPHY

150 Few lessons were observed. Judgements are based on these lessons, examination of pupils' work and teachers' plans and discussions with staff and pupils.

151 The standards of the work seen were appropriate for the pupils' ages by the end of both key stages. Pupils cover suitable work and all make adequate progress in each key stage. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was seen. However, the quality and depth of the work varies between classes, because the subject is not effectively led or managed and there is little guidance for teachers, several of whom lack specialist knowledge in the subject.

152 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed a satisfactory sense of place. Pupils in Year 1 draw simple plans of their routes to school showing landmarks. They learn about life in a different part of Britain, the Hebrides. They know that there are differences between life in the farming community on the Hebridean island of Barra and their lives in Houghton-le-Spring. Most of them identify things they like and dislike in their immediate environment but the lower attainers describe features of their surrounding rather than expressing an opinion about them. They have satisfactory mapping skills. They are familiar with maps of the United Kingdom and they name the countries shown on them. They easily locate Barra on a map of the United Kingdom and they know it is an island. They use two figure co-ordinates to indicate the location of features on plans.

153 The Year 6 pupils have completed a unit of work based on water. They know the main physical features of a river system and use vocabulary such as "meander", "flood plain" and "tributary" with understanding. They name and locate major cities and rivers in the United Kingdom accurately. They know that the Tees is in the north of England, that the Thames flows through London and that the Clyde is in Scotland.

154 As pupils move up through Key Stage 2 they study appropriate geographical topics and gain in their understanding of place and their mapping skills. For instance, Year 4 pupils study life in an Indian village. They are beginning to recognise that differences in climate have a major impact on people's everyday lives. Most of these pupils name the countries flown over on a plane journey from England to India and some locate these accurately on a world map. A few cannot yet locate Great Britain reliably. These pupils have drawn plans of the classroom and incorporated simple keys. By Year 6 they use keys and symbols to represent physical features and they use four figure co-ordinates.

155 There are pockets of good work. For example, pupils in Year 5 have considered traffic problems in the vicinity of the school and in Sunderland city centre. They have conducted research using a questionnaire with members of their families. The results have been displayed in graphs produced on computer. They have written to the city environment department. This approach has successfully captured pupils' interest and, as a result they express their views well.

156 The school has recently adopted nationally recommended whole-school plans for the subject. This means that pupils now cover sufficient appropriate work. However, there are gaps. Pupils make little use of Ordnance Survey maps and have few opportunities to compare maps at different scales.

157 Pupils make effective use of literacy and numeracy skills in geography. For example, they use co-ordinates in map work and they measure temperature when they study the weather.

158 The leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient checks on the quality of teaching, the standards of pupils' work and the progress pupils make in their learning. Consequently variations in quality and standards and pupils' uneven progress have not been recognised. The subject leader has very few opportunities to check on work and is therefore poorly placed to know what needs to be done or to plan the future development of the subject. Geography has not been given priority whilst the school's efforts have been directed towards raising standards in English and mathematics and introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Action has not yet been taken to ensure that work will cover the new requirements being introduced in September 2000.

159 Although there are sufficient resources for learning overall, there are some gaps. There are barely enough globes and there are few library books for pupils to undertake research on the topics they study. Some teachers are not aware of all the resources available.

HISTORY

160 Few lessons were seen. Judgements are based on these lessons, examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers.

161 The standards achieved in the work seen were appropriate for the pupils' ages by the end of both key stages. Pupils cover suitable work and they make sufficient progress in both key stages. Teaching is usually of a good quality; all the lessons observed were taught well. However, the potentially positive, cumulative effect of good teaching is diminished by shortcomings in three important aspects. The planning of the curriculum is not thorough enough to ensure best progress, there is no effective system to assess and record pupils' learning and then plan the next steps to build on what they have already learned, and the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

162 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the range of sources of information about the past. They know that diaries, photographs, museums, books and older people are all sources of historical evidence. They ask relevant questions and draw reasonable conclusions from simple sources of evidence, such as photographs. They have a sound knowledge about events in the past and famous historical figures. For example, they know about the Great Fire of London. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils learned about the life and work of Florence Nightingale. They learned about how life in the 19th century was different from the present, for instance, in the prejudice against women in the medical world.

163 In Key Stage 2, pupils study suitable historical topics, such as Roman and Viking invaders, the Victorians and the Ancient Egyptian and Greek civilisations. They gain a satisfactory body of knowledge about these periods. The Year 6 pupils were studying World War 2 at the time of the inspection. They take a lively interest in this period and are knowledgeable about it. They have a sound understanding of the value of documentary evidence and the oral tradition. From looking at an airman's log they have developed a good appreciation of the risks servicemen had to take. These pupils recognise that different people may interpret and report the same events differently and apply this to how the Allies' victory might have been reported in the German press. They had the opportunity to talk to an ex-serviceman who had been on active service in the war. Many of their questions revealed a thoughtful approach, an appreciation of the sacrifices made and the freedom secured for future generations, and an awareness of different points of view. They realised that some British soldiers might have had German relatives and that people may have been conscientious objectors.

164 As in geography, the school has recently adopted nationally recommended whole-school plans for the curriculum and there are pockets of particularly good work, notably in Years 2 and 3. In Year 3 good attention is paid to important aspects of the subject that get inconsistent attention across the school. Pupils are helped to develop a sense of time by using dates correctly, for instance in their accounts of Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain. They are taught to compare life in different historical periods, for example, the differences between the way of life of the Celts and the Romans. In the Year 2 lesson about Florence Nightingale, pupils learned to find out about the past by looking at photographs, asking relevant questions and making deductions.

165 Pupils make sound use of their literacy and numeracy skills in history. In spite of some good work, such as Year 6 pupils' research on the Battle of Britain using the Internet, there is little use of information and communications technology skills in history.

166 The leadership and management of history are unsatisfactory for the same reasons as in geography.

167 There is a good number of library books to support pupils' study of historical topics but there are not enough historical artefacts. As in geography, teachers are not fully aware of what resources are available.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

168 Standards in information technology meet national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, pupils use computers confidently, at an appropriate level for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. At that time, standards were reported to be below expectations and the school did not teach the full National Curriculum requirements in the subject.

169 All the requirements are taught now and draft whole-school planning for the curriculum has been produced. The school is better equipped. A new computer room housing 10 machines and a suite of four computers in a classroom have greatly increased the possibilities for computer work. Discussions with pupils near the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that they now undertake more information technology work. A computer club now runs twice weekly. The subject leader has been very active and has made a very significant contribution to the recent improvements and to setting a clear direction for development in the subject.

170 By the end of Key Stage 2, the eleven-year-olds have satisfactory skills at communicating and handling information. They combine text and graphics successfully. They use information technology for research in several subjects, for instance history, and they use the Internet independently to find information, which they download. They achieve satisfactory standards in data handling and apply them soundly. For example, in geography they produce graphs on computer and they tabulate the results of scientific experiments.

171 The seven-year-olds in Year 2, at the end of Key Stage 1, use control technology at an appropriate level. They programme a remote controlled toy to execute given move and draw a square. They understand that the toy "remembers" their instructions and that its memory has to be cleared before it can accept new instructions. Control technology work is at a higher level for the pupils' age in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2, where the older pupils still have some ground to catch up.

172 Throughout the school, there are examples of pupils using word processing to support their learning and to present their work attractively. The older pupils select suitable print styles and sizes to match the work in hand.

173 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Discussions with pupils indicate that all classes are now tackling information technology work successfully. All teachers provide at least satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop and use a suitable range of information and communications technology skills. Consequently, pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning in Key Stage 1 and, in Key Stage 2, they are learning well and gaining knowledge and skills at a good rate. As at the time of the last inspection, some teachers lack confidence teaching this subject. However, the recently appointed subject leader brings considerable expertise and enthusiasm and fulfils the role of "in-house" consultant well. Some teachers capture pupils' interest in the application of technology particularly well. For instance, in some classes pupils have searched the Internet for animals to adopt.

174 The recently established computer clubs make a good contribution to developing the skills of those pupils who attend. They learn about the potential of the programs they use. Members are producing newsletters and a school magazine. Staff are aware of the information technology skills some pupils have learned at home and utilise them for the benefit of all. For example, when a Year 6 pupil with good skills at using the "Publisher" program practised and developed her own skills as well as helping the others in her group.

175 At present there is no systematic assessment of pupils' progress in their learning in this subject. However, a suitable system has been devised and is ready to be implemented in the near future.

176 The school is now well placed to develop information technology, make full use of all the newly-acquired equipment and raise standards further.

MUSIC

177 Standards of work in music at both key stages are appropriate for pupils' ages and pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.

178 Pupils listen to music purposefully. By the end of Key Stage 1, they identify high and low sounds confidently. In Reception and Key Stage 1 they learn to clap a steady beat. By Year 2, the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good sense of pulse. Older pupils, in Year 4, are less confident for their age. Only around three-quarters of them maintain the strong pulse when they clap to a Morris Dance tune. Pupils remember music they have listened to in previous lessons and they describe its characteristics.

179 Pupils undertake appropriate composition work. They have a confident approach and, by the middle of Key Stage 2, they have good ideas of how to record the different sounds they make symbolically when making up dance music. Pupils listen to a range of music and, by Year 6, they recognise different musical styles.

180 The quality of pupils' singing is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing well in assemblies and, in class music lessons they sing enthusiastically and generally in pitch. Year 6 pupils sing accurately and tunefully. Older pupils sing tunefully in assemblies but a significant minority do not join in.

181 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some teachers lack confidence in their own knowledge of the subject. However they follow a commercial scheme of work closely. This enables them to provide pupils with a worthwhile range of musical experiences and ensures that pupils make sufficient progress.

182 The subject has developed since the last inspection. Standards are higher in Year 6 and the guidance for teachers has been improved. Nevertheless, there is scope for further improvement. At present there is no systematic assessment of pupils' progress. Pupils could play more music in class lessons and the choir could be further developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

183 Pupils work at an appropriate level for their age, by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 their work is at a higher standard than usually seen at their age. Standards of swimming, the compulsory element of the physical education curriculum, exceed national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, pupils follow a good curriculum and make at least satisfactory progress in their learning and developing physical skills. In Key Stage 2, where teaching is good, pupils make good gains and achieve well.

184 Seven-year-olds have a good range of ball skills and they follow simple rules in team practices with a partner. They are well co-ordinated and use the working space effectively. They give simple, but appropriate answers to teachers' questions and they demonstrate their skills to their classmates willingly to illustrate teaching points. In Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils listen carefully and work hard to improve their basic skills. As a result, they make good progress. A few younger pupils are easily distracted, when the work is not demanding enough for them and do not achieve as well as they could.

185 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good gains in their skills. The eleven-year-olds show good levels of performance in a wide range of skills. Standards in swimming are particularly good. Some pupils have achieved all their survival awards and are successful at competitive swimming for local clubs. This is a major improvement since the last inspection when pupils did not have the opportunity to learn to swim. Athletics is pursued with vigour and pupils achieve good standards in a range of activities, based on

a national award scheme. Pupils have good games skills and apply their wide range of basic skills to all aspects of the physical education curriculum.

186 Pupils make significant strides in personal development through physical education. They learn to recognise the importance of knowing what they can do as individuals and how to improve their achievement over time. For instance, pupils practise skills in athletics against standards set for eleven-year-olds. They help each other to improve by sharing their knowledge and by encouraging their classmates. These pupils show good sportsmanship in team games and they are quick to praise when someone makes progress. Their positive attitude is evident in their rate of progress through the school and particularly in Years 5 and 6.

187 Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum and teach basic skills well. In the best lessons observed, teachers managed their classes very well and the vast majority of pupils were very well behaved. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and they use a wide range of teaching strategies to extend pupils both physically and intellectually. Both accommodation and resources were used well to promote learning in a lesson on football skills when a varied range of activities were taught successfully in the school hall. Occasionally, some activities are not challenging enough for pupils and, in these lessons, pupils do not achieve well enough.

188 The subject is led well and has therefore improved since the last inspection. Swimming has been brought into the curriculum and the subject has ensured that the outdoor accommodation is in good condition.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

189 Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus, by the end of both key stages. Standards are at least as good as at the time of the last inspection. There are good links with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious education is strengthened by the very good provision for these aspects of pupils' development and the subject makes a good contribution to this provision.

190 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of world religions. During the inspection they made good progress in their learning about Sikhism as a result of a visit by a member of the local Sikh community. Pupils were interested in the beliefs and practices of this religion and they showed respect for them. These pupils have a sound knowledge about Christianity. They know stories from the Bible and know about events in the Christian calendar, such as the Annunciation. Pupils' Millennium promises show a thoughtful approach to personal responsibility. Pupils in Year 5 have a sound understanding of the concept of commitment in life today as a result of their study of life in a monastery.

191 Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a satisfactory knowledge of celebrations and of non-Christian faiths, Hinduism and Buddhism. For example, they know the Hindu creation story and they relate this to how they care for the world around them.

192 Throughout the school pupils learn *from* religion as well as *about* religion. This was seen, for instance, in Year 1 where pupils thought about our use of the created world as part of their work on Hinduism, studying a Hindu God. Pupils have a good attitude to the subject and they take a pride in the presentation of their work. The Year 6 pupils listened attentively to their Sikh visitor and were fascinated by what he told them.

193 The quality of teaching is very sound. Teachers prepare and organise lessons well. They maintain good order in lessons and they guide pupils' thinking by their perceptive questioning. This was done particularly well in the Year 6 lesson. Much oral work is undertaken. However when pupils do work in their exercise books, although it is marked, teachers' written comments seldom contribute to helping pupils learn from their mistakes. Marking reveals that some teachers' subject knowledge lacks depth.

194 Religious education is led well. The subject leader and the teachers are committed to continuing to develop the subject. There are sufficient resources for learning overall but, as at the time of the last inspection, there are not enough artefacts to help bring pupils' studies to life and to deepen pupils' understanding of world faiths.