

INSPECTION REPORT

CAMBOIS FIRST SCHOOL

Cambois, Blyth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122179

Headteacher: Mrs Denise Brewis

Reporting inspector: Mr Graeme Clarke
1547

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 September 2001

Inspection number: 206199

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cambois First School Cowgate Cambois Blyth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE24 1RD
Telephone number:	01670 825218
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Graeme Stewart
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1547	Graeme Clarke	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Special educational needs; Equal opportunities; Science; Design and technology; Information and communication technology; Geography; History.	Characteristics of the school; The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are the pupils are taught? How well is the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11468	Judith Menes	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25623	Ted Cox	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation stage; English; Mathematics; Art; Music; Physical education; Religious education.	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cambois First School is a small village school, currently with 37 girls and 23 boys aged from three to nine including seven children who attend the nursery each morning. None are from minority ethnic or other groups. There is a pre-school play-group held on the premises. A new headteacher was appointed in January 1999. Cambois is a former mining village on the north east coast to the north side of the River Blyth estuary, and is a designated industrial zone of severe deprivation. The village has very few amenities, and there is high unemployment and limited personal and public transport, which leads to isolation. A small minority of houses are owner-occupied, but most are rented, some of these by the local social services department. This leads to a short-term stay for some families, and a fluctuating school roll during the year. Almost one third of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, a proportion which is well above the national average. Four of these pupils have statements of special needs, which is a large number for a school of this size. Nearly half are entitled to free school meals, a proportion which is also well above average. Baseline assessments, made when children enter the school, indicate that their social and communication skills are well below average. These factors impact on the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cambois is an effective and improving school. Overall, its pupils are well taught and make good progress in lessons. In turn, pupils' attainment in the national tests for Year 2, in reading, writing, mathematics, and teachers' assessments in science have improved. The school has maintained the trend of improvement that began three years ago. The rate of improvement has been about the same for both reading and writing but more rapid for mathematics. Pupils like coming to school and the majority are attentive and work well. Sometimes behaviour is unsatisfactory but teachers and support assistants deal with consistent and effectively to minimise the impact on pupils' learning. The headteacher provides clear and very effective leadership for all staff in the school. The governing body and headteacher work well in partnership and share a commitment to the school's well being. Given the continuing improvement in pupil's attainment and the good progress made in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school makes very good quality and effective provision for children in the nursery and reception class, and a good curriculum for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- It offers excellent equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all pupils, and very good quality support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers and support staff have very high expectations of pupils, and manage them very well.
- It fosters children's personal and social education well, characterised by care and attention to moral development and very good relationships.
- The school forges excellent, strong and productive links with parents.
- It has very good leadership and governance that leads to very effective management.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in English, particularly boys' reading and writing, and standards in mathematics and science.
- The arrangements for developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT). In particular the number of computers with up-to-date software, and the way in which they are used.
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress since its last inspection in September 1998. Since then the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy fully through teachers' in-service training and through additional support. As a result, pupils are achieving well year-on-year. There are many good opportunities given to develop vocabulary, for under fives particularly, but pupils' skills in speaking remain below average throughout the school. Pupils' writing shows a significant improvement and test results are now above average in comparison with those of similar schools. Regular homework and target setting has helped pupils make good progress in reading although their attainment remains below what is normally expected for pupils in Years 2 and 4. The National Literacy Strategy is fully in place and the school has made good progress in developing pupils' literacy skills. The new headteacher has ensured that many improvements in aspects of school management have been made. There are detailed records of pupils' progress kept, and these are well used to set and revise individual targets for improvement. Teachers and learning support staff work very well together using the recommendations from the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to help plan and teach lessons. Governors have ensured that parents know about new arrangements for appraising teachers' work, and have improved the quality of assessment and reporting.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Where grade E is given it indicates attainment in the lowest 5 per cent of schools.*

In the most recent national tests for Year 2 in 2001, more pupils achieved the national target of level 2, and the higher level 3, than in the previous year, continuing the trend of improvement that began three years ago. However, there is no national information available at present to make comparisons, but standards are still not high enough. Many children make good progress and achieve relatively well during the Foundation Stage. By Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking, and good progress by Year 4, but not all listen carefully enough. Reading standards are mostly lower than normally expected nationally for Years 2 and 4, and few pupils reach higher levels. Progress in writing and spelling is good leading to improving standards - but they are not yet high enough. Standards in mathematics are improving to close to national expectations. Although most

pupils in Year 2 at present cannot add between 10 and 20 with reasonable accuracy, higher attaining pupils in Year 4 have a good grasp of number structure and use it accurately. Pupils learn satisfactorily all aspects of science although knowledge in Years 1 and 2 is well below expectation. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations throughout, but improve as pupils become older. Computers are not used sufficiently to help learning in subjects of the curriculum. Standards are in line with expectations elsewhere except that there is not enough evidence to make judgements in art and history at Key Stage 1, music and physical education (PE) in Key Stage 2, and design and technology and geography in both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like school and the majority respond well to the school's high expectations of good behaviour.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Good in Foundation stage and Key Stage 2 lessons, in the hall and dining area. Occasional instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are well managed by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children satisfactorily develop respect for the feelings of others. Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils are eager to take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching seen in 23 lessons or parts of lessons has improved since the last inspection. Teaching throughout the nursery, reception and class 2 (Years 3 and 4) is invariably good or very good. It is systematic and thorough leading to children making good progress. In Class 1 (Years 1 and 2) teaching is mostly satisfactory; however, the quality ranges from excellent to, in one instance, unsatisfactory. In the nursery and reception class, the teacher and the nursery nurse have very good understanding of the needs of young children and use appropriate methods coupled with excellent management skills. Activities move at a good pace, so children do not become bored, and this adds to their progress and enjoyment of school. Uncertainty and instability in Class 1 last year affected the older children. A new teacher, who is well supported by an experienced colleague, is working to reduce misbehaviour so that children can learn without disruption. However, at this early stage in the term, their classroom routines are not yet fully established. Lessons for children in Years 3 and 4 are delivered with enthusiasm, which results in pupils' becoming engaged and involved. Activities are very well designed and matched to different ability groups. Generally, pupils are making good progress, although some are being held back by poor handwriting presentation and incomplete knowledge of number bonds. Literacy and numeracy are taught well with both national strategies securely in place. Overall, teachers and support assistants have a good knowledge of what they teach, but there should be more strategies devised for using computers to support pupils' learning in different subjects. Teachers know the pupils very well and remind them of their progress at appropriate times so they know what they are good at, and what they need to do to improve. Teachers give a very high level of praise to reward pupils, who in turn respond well in the efforts that they make. When misbehaviour occurs, experienced

teachers and support staff nearly always dealt with it skilfully, quickly and effectively to maintain good order for others to learn. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 2 are learning and achieving well, while those in Key Stage 1 progress satisfactorily. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good for children in nursery and reception, satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good.

The care and guidance provided for pupils are a strength of the school. The staff has very good understanding of individual pupils and works hard to address their needs. All staff are very good at monitoring and improving pupils' behaviour and at helping pupils to develop social skills. Partnership with parents is a very strong aspect of the life of the school and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents feel welcome in school, and are pleased with the education the school provides. The headteacher values the contribution of parents and works hard to enable them support their children's learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher fosters a good team spirit and provides clear and very effective leadership for all staff in the school. These qualities have been very important factors in improving key aspects of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body and headteacher have forged an effective partnership. They deal efficiently with their business.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Governors are well informed about the work of the school. They have a good grasp of strengths and weakness through their involvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The headteacher and governors have been prudent in using money and carefully seek to obtain <i>best value</i> when making spending decisions. A very significant amount is spent on staffing to help the high proportion of children with special educational needs to make good progress.

There have been changes in leadership with the appointment of a new headteacher since the last inspection. She is determined in providing a very high quality leadership and education for the pupils. Teaching and support staff work well and effectively together. Governors' participation makes a very important and effective contribution to their knowledge of the quality of the school. They take part in a wide range of school activities and individual governors are usefully linked with aspects of the school's work. The management of the arrangements for all aspects of special educational needs is meticulous and effective in helping pupils make progress. Money to support children with special educational needs is well spent. There have been recent good improvements to the quality of the building. The school has ample accommodation and is sufficiently well resourced so that all aspects of the curriculum can be taught, except that the small number of computers of different age and type causes difficulty with teaching ICT. The amount of money which is spent on the education of each pupil is very high in comparison with other schools because of the small number on roll. Given that most children make good progress from a very low baseline during the Foundation Stage and reach close to expected standards, that the results in the statutory tests for Year 2 pupils in 2001 have maintained the trend for improvement, and the good progress made on addressing the issues raised in the last inspection, the school gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • They are kept well informed of progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching school. • The school expects their children to work hard and to do their best. • The school works closely with them. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of outside activities.

The inspectors completely agree with parents on those areas that please them most. Inspectors feel that the school provides a reasonable range of outside activities given its size, and the number of pupils who cannot stay long after school ends because they travel by a contract bus.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children join the reception class, from the nursery in the school or from elsewhere, the school makes a 'baseline assessment' of their social and communication skills using the Northumberland scheme. Ten of the fourteen children who took the national statutory tests (SATs) for seven year olds in spring 2001 were in the reception class in 1998. A majority had a baseline assessment that was well below the average for the County. The school made a determined effort to improve the effectiveness of teaching by addressing children's social, literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, an analysis of the national test results, comparing them with the 'baseline assessments' three years earlier, shows they made progress as well as or better than expected.

2. There is no national information available at the time of the inspection to make comparisons with the school's results in the 2001 statutory tests. A much greater proportion attained Level 2 and Level 3 in mathematics than last year, but there was little change in reading and writing. However, it is difficult to be firm about the significance of these changes because the number of pupils taking the tests was so small. Importantly though, it is clear that the school's trend of improvement in all subjects that began three years ago has been maintained. The rate of improvement has been about the same for both reading and writing but more rapid for mathematics. Analysis of the results indicates that although the attainment of Year 2 pupils has improved, it is still well below national averages, more so in reading and writing than mathematics.

3. Boys' and girls' results show an improvement trend over the past three years. In reading and in writing the girls' trend has improved faster than the boys but the trend of improvement for mathematics is very similar for both boys and girls. The girls' average results were noticeably higher than boys in reading, writing and mathematics in 2001.

4. Many children who have just started in the nursery find it difficult to express themselves clearly because they only have a small vocabulary. During the foundation stage they make good progress and achieve relatively well. They learn to handle books sensibly and reception children now understand that stories develop through the book. More than half the reception children can count to ten. Most count up to five with confidence and recognise numbers accurately. Lower ability children can count by using counters. They are developing investigative skills so some nursery children know the difference between floating and sinking and older ones also know about heavy and light. For example they have learned that large objects can be lighter than smaller ones and use a balance to check. Reception children are developing their knowledge of the world. They can describe clearly how seeds from Willow-herb plants next to the grounds grow into new plants and some understand they need water and soil to grow. Some show knowledge of the world beyond Cambois, for example drawing pictures about the tragic events in New York. Reception children show good imagination such as when acting out the parts in poems read to them. They can choose suitable pastels for the colours to represent Van Gogh's painting of sunflowers. They run, walk, skip and jump safely in the playground, and have good control of large ride-on toys. Many children are also learning good control over tools such as paintbrushes and rollers, scissors and pencils. They are making sound progress, such as when painting a wall, cutting around shapes and following over letters with a pencil. Some are successfully trying to write them independently.

5. Overall in English, pupils make good progress in lessons and show satisfactory achievement. However, the standards they attain in speaking, reading and writing are below national expectations. Although many pupils do not express themselves as clearly as they should, they make good progress in speaking. For example, a Year 4 pupil with special

educational needs gave precise directions to a horse chestnut tree in a nearby village. However, not all pupils listen carefully enough. Good progress comes about because teachers work hard to increase children's vocabulary. Pupils do use technical words properly, such as *cranium* when talking about the body and *viscosity* in relation to syrup.

6. Most pupils achieve lower standards in reading than normally expected for Years 2 and 4, and few reach higher levels. This year, the higher attaining Year 3 and 4 pupils are developing into fluent readers by successfully using a range of tactics to read unfamiliar words but others lose the sense when they ignore punctuation. Many pupils in Year 1 do not know all the letter sounds and this stops them building words. Those with special educational needs make good progress because of good teaching of literacy skills. They learn how to find out information from non-fiction books using structures such as lists and illustrations to help them. In turn they contribute to discussions at the end of the lesson to show what they have learnt.

7. Pupils' progress in writing is good, leading to improving standards - but they are not yet high enough. Pupils write for a range of people and purposes, and use correct words to describe things. A more-able Year 1 pupil described the sea as *fierce* and a Year 2 pupil used the word *maze* to describe a path through bushes in interesting sentences. Other pupils' writing tends to be short and lacking in description. By Year 4, higher and average attaining pupils begin to use a wider range of punctuation but lower attaining pupils sometimes write without enough punctuation. They spell common words correctly. Handwriting does not reach sufficiently high standards. Year 2 pupils are generally forming letters correctly, but not enough join letters which may limit them reaching higher standards in national tests.

8. Pupils are developing number skills in Years 1 and 2. Most know bonds of numbers up to 10 and about half the class can accurately round numbers to the nearest 10. However, most pupils in Year 2 cannot add between 10 and 20 with reasonable accuracy. Pupils have made clear progress since in Year 2 last year, and some are achieving well. The higher attaining pupils in Year 4 have a good grasp of place value and of how to use co-ordinates in simple maps. Those with special educational needs manipulate number sequences in steps of 1 or 2, taking care over accuracy, but many are unsure about number bonds to 12.

9. Pupils learn satisfactorily all aspects of science, including carrying out first-hand investigations to help their understanding, but the present level of knowledge in Key Stage 1 is well below expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing their knowledge further, for example those in Year 4 have a good understanding of some of the properties of materials. The use of good scientific vocabulary is a strength in the subject. The higher attaining pupils are perceptive and use scientific terms appropriately when observing and describing phenomena. Last year, pupils in Year 4 reached standards close to expectations in their science work.

10. Standards in information and communication technology are below expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4, but do improve as pupils become older. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 competently set out work written earlier using word processing, but do not have much experience of producing text directly on the computer. They skilfully select appropriate font styles, colour and size and can evaluate their work. They are also experienced in making and printing effective patterns using art packages creatively and learn successfully to programme and control a floor robot. Younger pupils in Year 1 can use the mouse to navigate, and Year 2 pupils are familiar with using the menu commands. However, they mostly are unable to relate the software to their task and as a result cannot use the computer to help learning in subjects of the curriculum. Other weaknesses, particularly the age and mixed types of computers available, inhibit raising standards further.

11. Standards in music and PE at Key Stage 1, and history in Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education (RE) are in line with

expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. However, in art and history at Key Stage 1 and design and technology and geography in both key stages, there is not enough evidence to make judgements on standards. Displays of artwork show how pupils in Key Stage 1 know about colour mixing, and how their good observational skills are used in studying the work of artists such as Picasso and Klimt. Pupils have clearly been stimulated by joining in with the recent sculpture work of an artist in residence. They also benefit from the stimulus their art brings to other subjects such as history studies of ancient Greece. In design and technology, younger pupils show good aptitude in handling construction kits in their work to represent aspects of the local power station. Older pupils are accruing a sound knowledge of handling materials, and of ways of fixing them together, but there is no evidence of their achievement in other areas of design and technology. Pupils have a good knowledge of local geography drawn from investigations into possible uses of the power station site after demolition. Their illustrations and written work particularly show some perceptive understanding of the issues. In history in Years 3 and 4, pupils are successfully learning about invasion and settlement in relation to Roman Britain. In music children in Key Stage 1 clearly follow the rhythm and beat of a song with percussion instruments. In physical education they make satisfactory progress when investigating movement and shape, and are able to use their hands and feet imaginatively.

12. Standards in religious education at the end of Years 2 and 4 are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Year 2 know about the Creation, and are making good progress in learning about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. They are successfully learning about other religions, particularly that they too celebrate festivals. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4, including those with special educational needs, are beginning to understand symbols such as a lighted candle. They make clear progress and reflect their feelings well in written and spoken words.

13. Pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and Class 2 (Key Stage 2) are achieving well in relation to their ability, and those in Class 1 (Key Stage 1) are achieving satisfactorily. They are making good progress in relation to their clearly defined individual education plans. Pupils know their targets set, and are keen to achieve them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils like coming to school and are cheerful, friendly and courteous. The majority takes an interest in their lessons, where they are attentive and work well at the tasks they are set. In the Foundation Stage they are eager to answer questions and are fully engaged in activities, moving from one to another as tasks are explored or completed. Elsewhere in the school, pupils are responsive to help offered by teachers and support staff, and behave well in class. They learn to work together and co-operate well on shared tasks. There are times, however, when a few pupils lose concentration and become restless. Behaviour can occasionally be unsatisfactory when a small group of disruptive children sparks off poor behaviour in other pupils. When this occurs, effective classroom management through firm, consistent dealing with pupils' behaviour by teachers and support assistants minimises the impact on pupils' learning.

15. Pupils understand that the school expects them to behave well; they are aware of the rewards and sanctions that will follow the choices they make in this respect and believe them to be fair. There were no pupils excluded from school during the last year. Pupils are aware of bullying as an issue and that they can refer any bullying to teachers if they feel threatened. Pupils' behaviour around the school, at lunchtime and break is usually good. They are proud of the new features outside in the playground and are eager to explain their purpose, and for example, their part in collecting the driftwood for the sculpture in the garden enclosure. Their play shows some imagination and they usually get on very well with each other.

16. Relationships are very good and are characterised by mutual respect between all members of the school community including parents. Pupils evidently like their teachers and have great confidence in them. Children settle into school well when they join the nursery and reception class. Both reception and nursery children have good relationships with adults and each other. They gain confidence as they grow older and are eager and willing to take on responsibilities such as helping in the library. Older children care for younger ones through the *Friendship Patrol* whereby each small child has an older friend who makes sure they are happy and have someone to play with. Older pupils also help in the dining room, each taking responsibility for serving meals at one table, and contributing to an orderly and sociable atmosphere.

17. Attendance last year was well below the national average, although there is evidence that it is improving; in such a small school any child who is frequently absent has a disproportionate effect upon the figures. In addition, last year approximately a quarter of pupils were taken out of school to go on holiday in term time. There is a small amount of unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Overall the quality of teaching seen in 23 lessons or parts of lessons has improved since the last inspection. Teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is invariably good or very good. Similarly, the teaching in Class 2 (Years 3 and 4) is nearly always good and sometimes very good. The teaching in both classes is systematic and thorough, and as a result the pupils make good progress. The teaching in Class 1 (Years 1 and 2) is mostly satisfactory, but with more variable quality. It ranges from excellent to, in one instance, unsatisfactory where in consequence learning was poor.

19. Children in the nursery and reception benefit from teaching that has many very good features. The teacher and the nursery nurse have very good understanding of young children under five and use appropriate methods coupled with excellent management of pupils. They have good subject knowledge and high, but realistic, expectations used together in planning tasks that provide challenge and stimulation for the children. Children are successfully encouraged to speak and describe events, to experiment and investigate, to develop physical skills such as using a pencil, and to improve numeracy skills in counting and measuring. Activities move at a good pace, so children do not become bored, and this adds to their progress and enjoyment of school.

20. Last year there was a period of uncertainty and instability because of the teacher's intermittent long-term absence that affected the Year 2 pupils presently in Class 1. Several pupils with behavioural special educational needs are new to the class. A new teacher, who is well supported by an experienced colleague, is working to reduce misbehaviour so that pupils can learn without disruption.

21. With very few exceptions, lessons for Years 1 and 2 are well planned by teachers and support assistants. They arrange activities that are carefully matched to pupils' abilities. They expect pupils to make progress, for example in improving their vocabulary by using correct technical terms in science. They use a broad range of strategies, such as speaking loudly or quietly during introductions, and so gain pupils' attention. They use questions pitched at the right level for individuals to foster their interest and find out how well they are learning. When misbehaviour occurs, experienced teachers and support staff nearly always dealt with it skilfully, quickly and effectively to maintain good order for other pupils to learn. When misbehaving pupils become too disruptive it is generally because, at this early stage in the term, their classroom routines are not yet fully established. However, the situation is made worse when insufficient thought is given to providing suitable activities for pupils, coupled with overlooking the need to remove furniture and resources that easily distract pupils.

22. The teaching for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is generally good with some very good features. Lessons are given with enthusiasm, and this results in pupils becoming interested and involved. Introductions make the purpose of the lesson clear. Activities are very well designed and matched to pupils in different groups based on prior attainment. Expectations are high, for example in science and history pupils are challenged to use technical terms correctly. The teacher and classroom assistants work well together to support pupils' learning, noticeably those with special educational needs. There is a good range of activities, whole class and group, during which the teacher uses good questioning techniques to probe and challenge pupils' understanding and consolidate their learning. Generally, pupils are making good progress in lessons, but some are being held back by poor handwriting presentation and incomplete knowledge of number bonds. Very occasionally, time at the end of lessons is rushed, so the part of the lesson used to consolidate learning is not as effective as it could be.

23. Literacy and numeracy are taught well with both national strategies securely in place. The school uses outline guidance from the QCA for its curriculum. Teachers and support assistants work well together to plan the lessons effectively. Overall, teachers and support assistants have a good knowledge of the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage, and of the National Curriculum. However, there should be more strategies devised for using computers to support pupils' learning in different subjects.

24. Teachers know the abilities of their pupils very well through assessing their work carefully and then using the information to set targets for further work. Pupils are reminded of their progress at appropriate times, and they respond positively because they like to know their targets, and that they are achieving them. They know what they are good at, and what they need to do to improve. The information is diligently used to group pupils. Therefore, because they work at a suitable level, they are helped to make good progress. There are good working relationships between pupils and adults. Teachers give a very high level of praise to reward pupils, who in turn respond well in the efforts that they make. Where the classroom routines are securely established pupils work at a good pace with interest and concentration. They are learning and achieving well in lessons in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, and satisfactorily in Key Stage 1.

25. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are effectively helped by learning support assistants who are very much part of the staff team, working collaboratively with teachers. The arrangements for setting Individual Education Plans, for reviewing progress, and for involving parents and external agencies whenever necessary are meticulously carried out.

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

26. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. There is a broad and balanced curriculum in all subjects. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for children in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory for pupils in Key Stage 1 and good for pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils' intellectual development is promoted effectively and the planning of work is good. Provision is very good for pupils' moral and cultural development, where, for a small school, a very wide range of opportunities to broaden their awareness is made available. It is good for social development and satisfactory for spiritual development.

27. Policies are in place for sex and drugs education. The school places great importance on teaching pupils about the dangers of drugs. Good use is made of the Drug Action Nursery Initiative with children under five. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taking part in trials for a scheme suited to their age group, and pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 work with the Drug Action Team. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education, which is taught through science, religious education and other subjects. The

school places great importance on pupils' moral development and tries hard to teach them right from wrong. Pupils who break school rules or act in an unacceptable manner are given targets to improve their behaviour. These targets are reviewed regularly and praise is given when pupils amend their behaviour. Teachers are consistent in applying school rules. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been successfully introduced. The school has good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills and inspection evidence shows that standards are improving in both of these subjects. All infant and junior pupils take part in swimming lessons. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

28. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder and take part in a 'Fun Fit' club. A wide range of visits and visitors supports pupils' learning. They learn about the emergency services through visits from the fire brigade, the community policeman and the coastguard. They have listened to a local nurse, representatives from the RSPCA and the RNIB, and a beekeeper talking about their work. Pupils learn about the culture of their area through visits to the Angel of the North, Beamish Open Air Museum and visits to the theatre in Newcastle. A visiting artist worked with pupils to create a sea garden using materials gathered from the nearby beach.

29. Pupils contribute to the local community by decorating the church at Christmas, planting trees along coastal walkways and singing in carol concerts. They support local charities such as the 'Christmas Shoebox Appeal'. Players from Newcastle United Football Club teach football skills and pupils compete against local primary schools in sporting events.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The care and welfare of pupils is a major concern of the school, and the headteacher and governors have worked hard to establish very effective procedures to promote health and safety and child protection. Pupils use the Internet through the local education authority's system, which is heavily screened to prevent access to undesirable websites. There are well-developed contacts with other agencies, which support pupils' health and welfare. The headteacher makes a point of getting to know all pupils and their families from the moment they join the school so that she can share information with parents and form a clear understanding of each pupil's needs. All teachers know the pupils very well and receive invaluable assistance from competent and caring support staff. They are fully involved in helping pupils take full advantage of the education the school provides. The school participates in various national and local initiatives such as drugs action nursery school initiative (DANSI) to raise pupils' self esteem and help them to realise that they can make choices, which affect their own health and well-being.

31. The school makes good provision for pupils with special needs. Their requirements are identified early and detailed individual education plans are frequently and rigorously reviewed according to the needs and progress of the individual. They are well supported and monitored in class to ensure full access to the curriculum and inclusion in all aspects of school life.

32. The school encourages parents, through newsletters and personal contact, to make sure their children come to school. In turn, parents understand that they must inform the school when their children cannot attend. The headteacher rigorously monitors absence and late arrivals, and follows up any concerns through contact with parents and the educational welfare officer.

33. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' behaviour and eliminate inappropriate language, and has high expectations which it shares with parents and children. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions which pupils understand and

staff consistently apply. Achievement assemblies, to which parents are invited, are held every week. In these assemblies success is celebrated and pupils receive awards covering all aspects of their life in school. The staff keeps detailed records of any incidents of poor behaviour and the headteacher contacts parents to gain their support in overcoming the problem. Parents are very pleased with the improvement they have observed in pupils' behaviour. The school does not tolerate bullying, which is firmly dealt with according to the guidelines.

34. Teachers set targets for pupils which cover literacy and numeracy and may include behaviour and personal development when appropriate. These targets relate well to pupils' needs and are changed when they have been achieved. They are shared with parents who can see how their children are progressing. The high number of classroom assistants helps pupils to learn at their own pace with individual attention when it is needed.

35. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school tracks children's progress from entry into the nursery through to results of national tests at the end of Year 2 and optional tests taken in Year 4. Teachers check the results of national tests taken by Year 2 pupils to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning. In the nursery and reception classes, the school uses 'baseline' tests to assess the academic, personal and social development of children. Teachers make good use of the information gained to plan work that suits the needs of pupils, and set targets to improve the progress made by pupils. Teachers constantly refer to pupils' targets during lessons and make good use of targets to encourage them to improve. Their efforts are paying dividends and standards achieved in Year 2 in reading, writing and in mathematics, although still below expectations, are improving at a faster rate than national standards.

36. The small numbers of pupils in each year group means that the staff knows pupils well. They make good use of their assessment of pupils' performance to amend work and working arrangements so that pupils make good progress. This is seen in Class 2 where the teacher has arranged different groupings in English and mathematics lessons to take account of pupils' differing abilities in those subjects. The marking in pupils' books congratulates them on work done well as well as showing them how to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Partnership with parents is an exceptional strength of this school. The success it has achieved in this respect is evident in the support parents give to the school and the praise and appreciation they express for the work of the headteacher and staff.

38. Parents feel welcome in school and are pleased that the school works closely with them, responds to their concerns and values the contribution they can make to their children's education. The provision of a playgroup on school premises familiarises them and their children with the building and staff. Induction to the Foundation Stage is flexible to accommodate the differing needs of children and families. Parents find it easy to come into school and talk to teachers about their children's learning and progress and value the information provided through target setting and homework diaries. On a formal level, the school provides good information on progress through annual written reports and termly meetings between teachers and parents.

39. There is very good information on the curriculum for parents in the school brochure, the Early Years booklet, half-termly newsletters and on notices around the school. In addition the school has made excellent provision to help parents learn how they can help their children at home. Meetings are held weekly throughout the year for parents of Foundation Stage children to support literacy and numeracy. In addition the school ran an accredited course for parents and their children together, supervised by an open college tutor. Five parents achieved accreditation and attended an award ceremony in school. This is an excellent example of the inclusive ethos that the school has fostered. The

headteacher explained that the parents had worked hard from choice, and the children were thanked for helping their parents succeed and involved in giving the awards. Parents have asked for further courses, and ones in literacy and ICT are planned.

40. Parents are invited to assemblies and to join in school events. Several help regularly in school and others are willing to help when needed. The school has provided a small adult library for parents, which encourages them to come into school. It also fosters relationships with members of the community because it is also open to them in the absence of a public library in the village.

41. The school evaluates its success in maintaining a partnership with parents through discussion and questionnaire. The headteacher listens carefully to parents' concerns, and is open to their suggestions, in the belief that they have a shared objective in the education of their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The school has been in transition over the past three years, from the time of the last inspection. There have been changes in leadership with the appointment of a new headteacher. The headteacher provides clear and very effective leadership for all staff in the school. She is conscientious and determined in providing a very high quality education for the children and shows commitment and dedication in serving the school.

43. The headteacher fosters a good team spirit. Accordingly, teaching and support staff work well together so that much of the planning and review is effectively undertaken jointly. These qualities have been very important factors in improving key aspects of the school.

44. The governing body and headteacher have forged an effective partnership in sharing a commitment to the school's well being. They deal efficiently with their business, for example finance, staffing, and health and safety through a well-defined committee structure, as well as in meetings of the full body. Governors are well informed about the work of the school. They have a good grasp of strengths and weakness through their involvement. Individual governors identify with aspects of the school's work such as literacy, numeracy, special educational needs, personal, social and health education, and target setting. They visit classes and report on the focus of their visit to the governing body. Governors are greatly involved in reviewing pupils' attainments, especially in formal tests, leading to agreement on targets being set. Governors also take part in a wide range of school activities such as staff meetings and social events which all adds to their perceptions of the school's work.

45. The school development plan is a thoroughly detailed joint product that draws on the information governors gather and the headteacher's reports. It is effectively put together from reviewing past work to set priorities for the future, taking the amount of money in the budget carefully into account. The plan, which contains clear targets, time scales, costings, and criteria to judge success, is well used as a framework of reference for the school's work. Governors' participation in the whole process provides valuable opportunities for questions and discussion and makes an important contribution to their knowledge of the quality of the school.

46. All the areas for improvement indicated when the school was last inspected in September 1998 have been successfully addressed. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy fully. Teachers have taken part in in-service training and benefited from additional support. As a result, pupils are achieving well and this is reflected in test results that have steadily improved year-on-year. The new headteacher has ensured that improvements in aspects of school management have been made. There are detailed records of children's progress kept that are used to set and revise individual targets for improvement. Teachers and learning support staff work well together using

guidance from the Qualification and Assessment Authority (QCA) to help plan and teach lessons effectively. Governors have ensured that parents know about new arrangements for appraising teachers' work, and that, after consultation with parents, the quality of assessment and reporting has been improved to everyone's satisfaction.

47. The management of the arrangements for all aspects of special educational needs is meticulous and effective in helping pupils make progress. Procedures for annually reviewing statements of special need are followed rigorously. For example, where a child is looked after by the local authority, the review statements show clear progress against targets and attention for the next steps to foster progress, all of which is shared between teachers and care staff. There are reviews of all the individual education plans, at least twice yearly, and more often if the need arises. Individual plans are used to identify specific targets, with present achievements, support needed, strategies and resources all described. The review section very usefully incorporates evidence of relevant pieces of pupils' work and summary statements for teachers and support staff.

48. The school is very aware of how the number of pupils affects the level of basic budget. The numbers have fluctuated in the recent past because, for example, families have moved into and out of the area. This has led to a reduction in the number of teachers to the present level of three. The headteacher has a full-time teaching commitment, which leads to pressures in meeting management responsibilities. The headteacher and governors have been prudent in using money for more learning support assistants, and are now able to consider enhancing the teaching staff again which should help give time for senior management. The school uses specific grants well. There have been good improvements to the quality of the building, such as replacing window frames, carpeting some classrooms, and enhancing the hard-play areas. Money to support pupils with special educational needs is well spent. The additional support helps them make good progress.

49. The new performance management arrangements are securely in place for the teachers to which they relate. The governors' policy is being implemented, with objectives for the teachers set and work taking place to achieve them. Grants to support the professional development of teachers are aligned to the school's new performance management arrangements, and to help implement the school development plan. For example, there are further opportunities available for improving teachers' ICT skills, which should help this area of the curriculum.

50. The school has ample accommodation. Children who are under five are taught in a well-resourced area with ample space for indoor and outdoor work and play. Classes in Key Stage 1 and 2 are in good-sized rooms with carpeted floors that make them a pleasant place to work. Other rooms close by are used for ICT, design and technology and art. Whilst they offer good space, some of the furniture is inappropriate. However, the school is already making arrangements to make better use of these facilities. Other classroom space is used to support the wider involvement of the community, such as a room for a pre-school playgroup and a library that includes facilities for parents to borrow adults' books.

51. The school is sufficiently well resourced so that all aspects of the curriculum can be taught. There is a well-stocked spacious library. The book stock is enlarged with the help of the County's library service that provides collections to help with specific topics. Examples include nicely displayed and accessible titles about the Romans in Britain to help with history, and about aspects of other faiths and their celebrations to contribute to religious education. The combination of library and enhanced range of books for classroom use makes a clear contribution to improving standards of reading and literacy. There is a good range of large play equipment for indoor and outdoor use in the nursery and reception class. Equipment for practical science and mathematics is readily available and well maintained. The small number of computers, however, causes difficulty with teaching ICT. They also range widely in age and type so that differences in their capacity,

coupled with out-of-date software they can run, limit significantly the kind of work children can undertake. At the time of the inspection, a new machine was not fully installed.

52. The headteacher and chair of governors are well informed about the principles of best value and carefully seek to obtain *best value* when making spending decisions, as well as applying other principles very well. For example, the school uses information about its own work and that of other local schools. It has drawn on the expertise of a local beacon school and established target setting initiatives to raise standards. The school consults with parents in both informal and formal ways. A great deal of helpful information is gleaned in

day to day contacts between parents and teachers and governors. More formally, the school used a questionnaire to obtain parents' views about how the school reports on children's progress. As a result, the procedures have been modified and initial views from parents indicate high levels of satisfaction.

53. The amount of money spent on the education of each pupil in the school is very high in comparison with other schools because of the small number on roll. The school spends a very high amount of its budget on staffing, particularly learning support staff, having taken the decision to help the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Most pupils reach close to expected standards when they complete the foundation stage, often having social and communication skills, which were much below expectations when they joined the school. The results in the statutory tests for Year 2 in 2001 have maintained the trend for improvement in reading, writing, science and particularly mathematics. Given these factors, and the good progress made on addressing the issues raised in the last inspection, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve the standard of education further, the school should consider and act to;

- Improve standards in English, particularly boys' reading and writing, and standards in mathematics and science, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2 through attention to establishing classroom routines and the content of activities.
(Paragraphs: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22, 35, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76, 84)
- Improve the arrangements for developing pupils' ICT skills, particularly to increase the number of computers with up-to-date software, and to exploit their use to foster pupils learning in different subjects throughout the curriculum.
(Paragraphs: 10, 23, 51, 69, 77, 87, 99, 100, and 101, 102)
- Work with parents to encourage attendance, particularly in relation to reducing time lost for holidays during the term.
(Paragraph: 17)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	11	7	1	0	0
Percentage	4	13	48	30	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR–Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	4	53
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR–Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.9	School data	0.4
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	-	-	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	-	10	-
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	67 (23)	83 (38)	75 (54)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	10	-	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (23)	75 (54)	100 (77)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The separate numbers of boys and girls are not reported where the group tested is less than ten because individuals might be identified.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y N–Y 4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Average class size	19

Education support staff: Y N–Y 4

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Total number of education support staff	0.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	3.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	197847.00
Total expenditure	199840.00
Expenditure per pupil	3701.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	8208.00
Balance carried forward to next year	6215.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	57
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	81	19	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	56	6	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	38	0	0	19
The teaching is good.	88	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	88	13	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	94	6	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	13	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	94	6	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	94	6	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	19	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	19	12	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Staff listen to suggestions, and deal with problems immediately and discretely. The school's reputation has much improved. There is a good atmosphere and teamwork in school.

The public library brings parents into school. Children were well behaved and polite when making visits to old people, which helped foster relationships.

Resolving the teaching staffing problem is a great concern. *[Since the parents' meeting, technical difficulties over the staffing situation have been resolved, clearing the way for a permanent appointment].*

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

55. The children enter the reception class at the beginning of the academic year. At the time of the inspection, there were nine children in the class. All attend full time. Most children attend the nursery, which runs alongside the reception class each morning. Seven children currently attend the nursery. This arrangement works well. The nursery children have the advantage of starting school with brothers and sisters, and other children who live nearby, while reception children learn to care for younger children and have a larger number to involve in games and activities.

56. The school has good information from the results of baseline assessments of children's early experiences of language, reading and mathematics in both their first terms in the nursery and in the Reception class. Understandably, there is some variation between one cohort and another, but the baseline attainment of Reception children does not ever reach average levels. Sometimes it is below average and sometimes, well below. For example, the attainment of the children who started school in September 2000 the last year for which data is currently available was well below average. Early signs are that the attainment of those starting this year will be slightly better. Socially, children are friendly and co-operative and they behave well.

57. Teaching for the reception and nursery children is very good. It is characterised by very good subject knowledge and teaching methods, and excellent management of pupils. The teacher has very high, but realistic, expectations of children. Both the teacher and the nursery nurse have very good understanding of the needs of children under five. They plan tasks that provide challenge and stimulation for the children and both are skilled in moving children on to another task or activity so that they do not become bored. Consequently, activities move at a good pace and this adds to children's enjoyment of school. The nursery nurse provides excellent support for the teacher, who makes very good use of support staff and volunteers. For example, a supporting adult noted down how well reception children understood the concept of *heavy* and *light*, while the teacher worked with children using balancing scales. The results of these, and other regular assessments, are used to plan future work. The teacher, nursery nurse and other helpers take every opportunity to encourage children to develop their speaking and listening skills and learn new words. Parents of children starting in the nursery are encouraged to stay with their children for the first few weeks, and this promotes very good links between the school and home. The room is arranged so that children are presented with a variety of challenges. There are areas for role-play, sand and water trays, a computer, and reading, listening and writing areas. Another room is set up with climbing equipment, so that children can exercise in poor weather, and a cooker.

58. At the time of the inspection, the children had only completed one week in school. Nevertheless, they were already settled and starting to learn. The progress they were beginning to make was equally good across all six areas of learning but the short time-span involved makes an overall judgement difficult. However, the progress made by pupils who have just *completed* the Foundation Stage and are setting out on Key Stage 1 has been good. Given the high quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, it is likely that progress for the current group of children will be equally rapid. Progress of this quality will result in most pupils achieving what is expected nationally in all areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class and enter Key Stage 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. The sensitive approach adopted by the school, where parents are invited to stay with their children, ensures that children settle into school well. This was seen with a boy in the nursery group who, in the first week of term, had been reluctant to join in activities in the playground, By the second week, he was taking turns to ride a tricycle. Children tackle activities with interest and enthusiasm and learn to co-operate on tasks. For example, when the pedals on a wheeled toy began slipping, one child pushed the other along so that it could steer round the playground markings. Nursery children learn to make choices and develop skills of concentration because they are provided with interesting activities. An example of this was seen when a boy selected a series of simple puzzles and worked on his own for over ten minutes, fitting the pieces into the spaces. Reception children gain the confidence to organise games for others to join in without dominating the group. This happened when a girl encouraged a group of others to join her and let everyone take an equal part. Reception and nursery children have good relationships with adults and each other. The adults, who treat everyone politely and make sure that children feel safe and secure, set them a very good example. This builds children's confidence so that a reception boy felt able to ask an inspector to help him zip up his coat before he went out to play.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Many children enter school with a limited range of vocabulary and some find it difficult to express themselves clearly. A nursery child asked an inspector "Why you called?" and reception children initially found it difficult to distinguish between *light* and *dark* when comparing heavy and light objects. The teacher, nursery nurse and other adults take every opportunity to develop children's vocabulary, for instance when encouraging children to describe what flour and margarine feel like when making gingerbread men and using the correct words to describe parts of plants. Consequently, children make good progress in speaking and listening and reception children answer questions about autumn fruits they have collected in complete sentences. As well as using activities to develop speaking and listening skills, the teacher and nursery nurse encourage children to experiment with making marks on paper as an introduction to writing. Children using one of the role-play areas as a clinic were encouraged to make notes as they examined the babies and held make-believe conversations with the babies' mothers. The teacher develops the reception children's writing skills in a lesson about *The Three Little Pigs* when she encourages them to put their fingers on their lips to feel the sound of the letter *p*, draw it in the air and then attempt to write it. Almost all have sufficient pencil control to draw over the top of the letter shape and all try to write the independently. About half of the children succeeded in making accurate letter shapes and this represents sound progress. Nursery and reception children handle books sensibly. They listen to stories and follow the pictures in the book. Reception children choose their own books from the library to put on display in the classroom. They understand that stories develop as the book progresses. This was seen when a reception girl turned the pages of the book she had chosen and told herself a story based on the pictures in the book.

Mathematical development

61. Most higher and average ability reception children count up to five with confidence and lower ability children manage this by using counters placed on the spots of a large die. Over half the children count to ten, and several start counting by saying *zero* before 1. The teacher provides regular opportunities to develop mathematical skills and understanding. When nursery and reception children baked gingerbread men, some put flour onto the scales while others said when the pointer was showing the correct weight. They counted the number of raisins they used for buttons and one boy picked out his biscuit because it had three buttons. The teacher uses a good range of activities to reinforce mathematical

understanding. When learning to distinguish between heavy and light objects, children picked up a variety of objects to show that large objects can be lighter than smaller ones, and then used balances to consolidate their learning. The story of *The Three Little Pigs* was used by the teacher to teach the idea of the order of events when she asked children which were the first, second and third houses the wolf tried to blow down.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Reception and nursery children are interested in making models of objects. For example, when learning about houses they use plastic bricks to make buildings. They show an understanding in their role-play of the way that doctor's clinics and hospitals work and demonstrate very clearly that they know how to use a telephone. Children are curious about the world around them. They collected autumn berries from the school grounds and looked at apples the teacher had brought in from her own garden. Some children found it difficult to understand what the word *fruit* means until they were shown a banana. Reception children develop their investigation skills when they use magnifying glasses to look at the seeds in the apples. They know that seeds grow into new plants and are excited when the teacher says they will save the seeds to grow later. Children show good understanding that seeds require water and soil before they will grow into healthy plants. They learn what flour and margarine feel like and how they can be combined with other ingredients to make gingerbread men. The teacher introduces good habits when she makes children wash their hands before cooking. Good resources are provided around the room to stimulate children's interest. They look at mirrors with flat and curved surfaces and see how the surface alters their reflection. Children create bubbles using soapy water. Some nursery children know the difference between floating and sinking. Reception children confidently use computers to dress a teddy bear and join in discussions with nursery children and adults about the clothes they choose. They are aware of the importance of road markings and told their teacher to "Mind that car!" when she stepped on the zebra crossing in the playground without looking. Some reception children show knowledge of the world beyond Cambois when they draw pictures about the tragic events in New York.

Creative development

63. Children enjoy painting, making models and taking part in role-play. Reception children show good imagination when taking part in role-play. They carry on long and detailed discussions when pretending to work in a clinic; a reception girl who had been sent shopping by the nursery nurse came back to say that she had been given too much change. Children act out the parts in poems such as *When the wind blows*. The teacher provides a good selection of art materials for pupils to choose from when painting pictures and making models. A selection of large brushes and ready mixed paint encourages children to paint. They create mini-beasts decorated with crayons and sequins, and use wool, straw and fabric to make 'feely' bugs. Reception children look carefully at Van Gogh's painting of sunflowers in a vase and choose suitable pastels to represent the colours and shapes of the flowers. Nursery and reception children make choices from twigs, berries, autumn fruits, driftwood and marbles to make model gardens in work about *Our House*. They cut out pictures of food from magazines to make pies and build walls with plastic bricks.

Physical development

64. Nursery and reception children move confidently around the school and playground in a way expected of children of this age. They run, walk, skip and jump safely, stopping and dodging so that they do not bump into each other. Children make good use of opportunities to use large ride-on toys in the playground and enjoy following the road

marking in their games. They have good control of the toys, slowing down for corners and stopping at the zebra crossings. Nursery children gain confidence with assistance of adults in climbing over frames and through tunnels. Nursery and reception children develop their physical skills effectively using the activities that are set out for them. For example, they apply emulsion paint to a wall with rollers without making too much mess and stick bricks accurately onto pictures of their houses. Many children show good ability to control tools and pencils in small movements. They cut out pictures from magazines and stick them in books, and peg out clothes. During one lesson, a nursery girl made good progress in following a zigzag line with a pencil. Reception children show good control of a pointer on the computer screen, moving clothes to dress a teddy bear. Children put on their own clothes to go out to play, although one or two struggle with zips.

ENGLISH

65. Standards achieved in reading by pupils in Year 2 in the national tests in 2000 were well below those achieved nationally but were close to the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when results were very low compared to similar schools. Recent trends show that while performance in reading has fluctuated since 1996 and has remained below the national average, it is improving at a faster rate than the national average. Results in writing showed a big improvement in 2000, but were still below the national average when compared to all schools. However, the school's performance in writing tests was above average in comparison with similar schools. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection when results were very low compared to similar schools. Fewer pupils reached higher standards in reading and writing than in schools across the country. Over the five years since 1996, girls have done better than boys in reading and writing.

66. Analysis of the school's results from the national tests taken by seven-year-olds in 2001, for which national comparisons have not yet been made, indicates that the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of level were lower for both reading and writing. Girls did better than boys in both reading and writing. Inspection evidence indicates that at the beginning of Year 2 and Year 4, attainment is below the level expected for children of these ages.

67. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. However, they often do not express themselves as clearly as most other pupils. After some initial shyness, they talk to visitors but some have difficulty forming the questions they want to ask. For example, a Year 2 pupil did not speak clearly or use Standard English when asking, "What is you called?" Most children listen carefully to questions and give suitable answers. A high ability pupil in Year 4 was able to say that a glossary is "A list of meanings of words that are particular to a book". A lower ability pupil in the same year group gave precise directions to a horse chestnut tree in a nearby village. However, not all pupils listen carefully enough. In a literacy lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were asked to pick out words which rhymed but several chose incorrect words. Pupils' good progress comes about because teachers set very good examples. They work hard to increase pupils' vocabulary, using words such as cranium when talking about parts of the body. Teachers set very good examples when speaking and reading, for instance when a teacher varied the volume and pitch of her voice to gain pupils' attention during the introduction to a music lesson.

68. Most pupils achieve standards in reading that are below those normally expected for children in Years 2 and 4. Nevertheless, due to regular homework and target setting, pupils make good progress in reading. Fewer than the expected numbers of pupils reach higher levels. The more able Year 3 pupils, who have only just moved up from the Year 2 class, are developing into fluent readers. They are beginning to introduce expression and pay attention to punctuation to make better sense of their reading. Average and lower ability pupils read without expression. They lose the sense of what they read when they ignore punctuation and sometimes stop in the middle of sentences. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils use

letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words and higher ability pupils are beginning to split longer words, such as *medieval*, into syllables. Most Year 2 pupils know the letter sounds and some use them to work out new words. Others, however, guess at words after recognising the first sound so that, for example, one boy read *picture* instead of *postcard*. Many pupils in Year 1 do not know all the letter sounds and this stops them building words. However, they can often work out the sense of the story from looking at the illustrations. Although most pupils say they have books at home and several belong to a local library, few appear to get any particular enjoyment from reading. They find it difficult to name any of the books they have at home or to describe in any detail the contents of those books. Although most pupils know that authors write books and that illustrators do the drawings, none of those in the group heard read could name any authors. Recent lessons about gathering information from non-fiction books means that, currently, most average and higher ability pupils in Year 3 and year 4 know how to use the contents and index pages to find information and some can explain the function of the glossary. All pupils are expected to take books home to read to adults and the reading diary provides a good method of communication between teachers and parents.

69. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of good teaching. They learn how to find out information from non-fiction books using the structure of the book, such as bullet points and numbered lists to help them. Pupils learn that much information can be obtained from illustrations. Consequently pupils are able to contribute to discussions at the end of the lesson to show what they have learned.

70. Standards in writing are improving but are not yet high enough. Progress in writing is good. Pupils write for a range of people and purposes. They write diaries, say how they wash their hair, write weather forecasts and letters to newspapers. By Year 2, average and higher ability pupils write letters of thanks about a visit to see the inshore lifeboat and start to use capital letters and full stops to separate sentences. They use the correct words to describe the things seen on the visit. Teachers take every opportunity to introduce pupils to new words and this helps pupils improve their vocabulary. A more able pupil in Year 1 described the sea as fierce and a Year 2 pupil used the word maze to describe a path through bushes. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils are beginning to write longer, more interesting sentences, but those of other pupils tend to be short and lacking in description. Most common words are spelt correctly. By Year 4, pupils start to use language that is more interesting. A higher-attaining pupil created atmosphere when writing Down in the dungeon, skeletons chained against the dark, slimy wall: a lower-attaining pupil described black eyes staring and repeated down several times for effect. Higher attaining and average ability pupils begin to use a wider range of punctuation, including commas. Lower attaining pupils sometimes write long sentences without enough punctuation. Pupils begin to separate their work into paragraphs and include speech in their writing. Pupils' handwriting does not reach sufficiently high standards. By the end of Year 2, higher and average attaining pupils generally form their letters correctly but do not take sufficient care with placing the letters on lines and keeping a regular size. Not enough pupils join letters and this may limit them reaching higher standards in national tests. Pupils use ICT to resent their written work in a range of ways. They type in work they have previously produced using different colours, sizes and styles of print to have impact when displayed. Although they can use word processing facilities on the computer, they do not write directly on the machines, so the technology is not exploited to contribute to developing creativity in their writing.

71. Pupils with special education needs make good progress towards their targets in handwriting. This was the result of good teaching in a religious education lesson when the teacher used the stimulus of a lighted candle to get children to express their feelings. Pupils understand their targets were able to write short sentences in which they showed good progress in spacing words correctly, using capital letters and full stops, forming letters accurately and placing them on the line. They were keen to achieve their targets.

72. The evidence from lessons seen, in pupils' written work, hearing reading and in conversations with them, shows that the quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Work is matched well to pupils' ability and many opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills through answering questions. Teachers make good use of the introduction to lessons to ensure that pupils know what they have to do. They give clear explanations and instructions. Teachers' expectations are very high. The teaching of basic skills and teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is very good. Teachers make very good use of support assistants to ensure that pupils work to the best of their ability. Teachers use questions well to find out how well pupils are learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly with some useful comments on what pupils need to do to improve. They assess pupils' work well and use the assessments to plan future work. A good feature of the use of assessment is the targets that are set for all pupils. Teachers frequently remind pupils of their targets, which are reviewed regularly. In the junior class, assessments are used to put pupils into different groups for individual subjects so that pupils are always working at a suitable level.

73. The school's literacy strategy is used well by teachers and contributes to the rising standards. The staff takes a corporate responsibility for planning and the headteacher ensures that all areas of the curriculum are covered. The results of national tests are analysed to identify weaknesses and to aid in the setting of targets for individuals and groups of pupils. These assessments, combined with those made in lessons are raising standards in English. The school is involved in national initiatives and received the Basic Skills Award in July 2000. It meets with other local schools to share developments to raise standards in writing and drama. Given the commitment of the staff to raise standards and the good use made of assessment and target setting, the school is in a good position to raise standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

74. There has been a clear improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieved the national target of Level 2 or higher in the national tests for Year 2, from 75 per cent in 2000 to 92 per cent in 2001. However, at the time of the inspection there was no information on which to make national comparisons of the 2001 results. In 2000, the results in the statutory tests were well below the national average in each of the aspects of mathematics – using mathematics, number and algebra, and shape, space and measures – and in an overall average points score. No one gained the higher Level 3. However, the results were in line with the average of similar schools. In 2001, three pupils gained Level 3 and nearly three-quarters reached Level 2B or above.

75. The mathematics results have clearly improved since the last inspection and this improvement has been more rapid than for reading and writing. An analysis of national test results indicates that on average, the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 have improved and they are now about one term behind most children nationally. Boys' and girls' results show a similar improvement trend over the past three years. However, the girls' average results were noticeably higher than boys in 2001.

76. In a mixed group of Year 1 and 2, pupils develop sound skills in handling number. Most know bonds of numbers up to 10 but in Year 2, only two know about additions between 10 and 20 with reasonable accuracy. Pupils with special education needs respond willingly, but often only by guessing incorrectly, when questioned. Only about half the group have accurate knowledge of rounding numbers to the nearest 10. Class-work from last year reflects an appropriate range of mathematics that the children now in Year 2 have undertaken, including learning to measure the length of line, handle money facts and draw simple graphs. At this early point in the term, attainment is below national expectations. Most pupils in Year 1, some of whom are only five years old, including many with special educational needs, are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum and

in Year 2 most pupils, who are only six years old, are working within Level 1. At this time in the academic year work at this standard is appropriate.

77. In a mixed class of Year 3 and 4 pupils, children have made clear progress since Year 2, and some are achieving well. The higher attaining pupils in Year 4 have a good grasp of place value in their understanding of numbers up to a thousand. They recognise the importance of placing digits carefully and know how to manipulate the digits to accurately add and subtract. Less able pupils with special educational needs manipulate number sequences in steps of one or two taking care over accuracy but many are unsure about number bonds to 12. For example in a dice game, they roll two dice and often resort to using fingers to count on when adding the scores together. Pupils now in Year 4 have a good grasp of co-ordinates and can use them well to play games such as *Battleships*. Class-work examined shows they have developed their knowledge of number facts, use of money and graphing skills but, the attainment of pupils in Year 4 remains below national expectations.

78. The evidence from lessons seen and in pupils' written work shows that the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. There was no evidence seen that ICT is used to help develop pupils' mathematical skills. Most lessons in Years 1 to 4 are based on the National Numeracy Strategy and are always well planned to take the different needs of pupils in the classes into account.

79. The new teachers for Years 1 and 2 are establishing clear routines for the significant number of young pupils with a challenging range of special educational needs. Some pupils quickly become inattentive and are sometimes disruptive. Alert learning support assistants and teachers manage their behaviour very skilfully and sensitively. There are carefully structured, short activities which are matched to different groups. Questions are pitched in different ways to pupils by name. As a result their interest is fostered and they make progress in mathematics. The need now is to continue to establish firm classroom routines so that more pupils make greater and sustained progress.

80. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn mathematics and numeracy skills in lessons that are taught with enthusiasm. They contain a variety of activities for the whole class and ability groups that proceed at a lively pace. Sometimes, however, there is not enough time left for the final session to consolidate learning, and it is not so effective in consequence. The teacher and support assistants can quickly check accuracy and assess progress through questions, which are well directed to individuals, in both whole class and working groups. The teaching has established good work habits and it fosters children's attention and engagement. Pupils share resources when appropriate. They willingly contribute to discussions and respond to questions with confidence, even if their answer is incorrect. Learning support assistants and the teacher work well together. In turn, all children, including higher attainers in Year 4 and those with special educational needs, are learning well.

81. National guidelines for the National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy are thoroughly used to plan lessons in mathematics. Teachers and learning support assistants work closely together. Pupils' work is thoroughly assessed and the information used to set individual targets that are regularly kept up-to-date. The progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs is frequently reviewed. Their Individual Education Plans are backed by relevant evidence and suitably modified when necessary, which helps them make good progress in their mathematical development.

SCIENCE

82. All Year 2 pupils reached Level 2 in the 2000 statutory assessments; this proportion was very high compared with the national average. The results are also very high compared with those of similar schools. However, none of the pupils achieved the higher

Level 3, and this performance was well below the average. In 2001, some pupils achieved Level 3, which is an improvement, but not all reached Level 2. The small number of children in the group makes it difficult to be clear about the significance of these changes and there is no information available to help make national comparisons. There has been an overall rise in the standards in science over the past three years and this is a clear improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.

83. Teachers' formal assessments of pupils at the end of Year 4 in 2001 show that they reached standards close to expectations in all aspects of science. Most made satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2 since their statutory assessments as Year 1 pupils in 1999, and some made better than expected progress.

84. It was only possible to see pupils involved in science activities in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. From observations of lessons and scrutiny of work, it is clear that pupils have opportunities to learn about all aspects of science, including carrying out first-hand investigations to help their understanding about living things, physical changes and materials. Younger pupils, for example, have a good grasp of the structure of plants, and of our five senses. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their knowledge of living things further in their work on *Ourselves*. They have a good understanding of some of the properties of materials. In a lesson about classifying a range of substances as solids or liquids, examples of powders such as salt, and liquids such as syrup successfully taxed pupils' thinking. Those at the start of Year 3 could, with help, discuss the differences and then apply the criteria to categorise their samples. Those in Year 4 were perceptive. They showed good observational and classification skills, and used scientific terms appropriately when observing and describing phenomena.

85. Teachers expect Key Stage 2 pupils to use correct words and sentences and they do. In turn they are making clear progress in lessons and achieving well but overall the standards attained by the class are below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 use expressions such as "behaving like a liquid" when describing a powder and understand the term *viscosity* when describing syrup. Skills in literacy and numeracy are enhanced through work in science, for example in the attention that is given to accurate description, presentation of results and estimation when measuring.

86. Science is taught very well in Key Stage 2. Lessons are planned jointly with learning support assistants. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson very good use was made of whole-class and group activities. The teacher used questions that were carefully directed at individual pupils to assess their knowledge at the beginning and their progress by the end of the lesson. The work is well matched to different groups of pupils, which are organised on the basis of their ability. Teachers and support assistants give effective help to pupils in different groups. They challenged their thinking, and reinforced their learning through discussion as well as insisting on accurate presentation of written results. In Year 3, pupils with special educational needs were encouraged to check criteria when sorting substances, and to note their findings. The lesson was presented in a lively enthusiastic way, and the class management was good, without dwelling too long on one activity. This fostered and sustained pupils' interest and attention to their work. As a result, they made good progress in learning about the characteristics of materials as well as developing classification skills.

87. The science curriculum is well structured throughout the school and results from teachers throughout the school working together using the official guidance available. However, there is no evidence of how ICT is used to foster pupils learning in science. Resources are carefully maintained and stored for ease of access. Teachers in Key Stage 1 new to the school will need support so that continuity is built in to the science programme, and pupils make progress towards improved standards in their work.

ART AND DESIGN

88. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection and insufficient evidence was available to make judgements about the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. However, from the evidence available in displays of work produced by Year 4 pupils who left the school at the end of the summer term and Year 3 pupils who have just started in Year 4, attainment is at least in line with expectations, with some good aspects. This is similar to judgements in the previous inspection.

89. In Key Stage 1, pupils make life-sized models of people by stuffing fabric rolls with paper. Pupils, who were sometimes boisterous, needed the help of the teacher and support staff to complete the task but assembled two recognisable life-size figures. Pupils who have only just started in Year 2 know that colours can be mixed together to produce other colours but could not say, for instance, what colour they would get if they mixed red and blue. Pupils in Key Stage 1 produced good quality patterns by using mathematical shapes and printing blocks of colour. ICT has been used to produce some striking similar designs. Displays of work by Year 3 pupils and pupils at the end of Year 4 show that teachers introduce them to a variety of media. They use paint, chalk, pastels and crayons when studying the work of Gustav Klimt and Picasso. They show good observational skills in working in the style of Picasso to produce their representations of his painting, *Maya with Doll*. Pupils demonstrate good ability to produce accurate proportions of the human body in copies of Klimt's *Mother and child sleeping*.

90. Pupils worked with a living artist when they collected driftwood and other materials from the beach to produce a large-scale sculpture in a corner of the school field, in which pupils can sit and rest. They used sand and pebbles to make pictures. Art is used effectively to support other subjects. For example, in history, pupils made large-scale representations of Icarus and masks made of dough in their study of Ancient Greece.

91. In the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. Clear instructions were given to pupils. The teacher and support staff worked well together to curb boisterous behaviour so that recognisable models of human figures were made. With the teachers' encouragement, a pupil with special educational needs worked conscientiously on the figure.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Only one design and technology lesson was seen, in Key Stage 1 and there was very little work available in either Key Stage 1 or 2 to make a judgement about pupils' achievements and progress.

93. In the lesson observed, many pupils were using construction kits to model aspects of the old power station they visited the day before. Some, both boys and girls, including one with special educational needs demonstrated good motor skills in handling tools and fixings well to create recognisable models of the demolition equipment. One group using large construction bricks made a representative model of the station and described it accurately to the class.

94. The teacher and support staff gave good encouragement to small groups, talking with them about the models, how they were made and what they did. Pupils had clearly been stimulated by the visit and talked well about how the machinery was used. The support and encouragement helped those with special educational needs to make clear progress. One in particular with recognised behavioural difficulties concentrated so well to model part of the building accurately without causing disruption. A minority used construction kits, but without a focus to their work, in finding out how the fastenings join pieces together. Some willingly talked about the equipment they were using, but for others the activity was more in the realm of play. Pupils are encouraged to use and develop literacy skills when asked to describe and explain their work.

95. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 handle a range of resistant materials including textiles. From the evidence of work on display, they are competently developing their knowledge of methods of fixing materials together but there is no evidence of how they draw upon numeracy skills, for example to help measuring. The co-ordination of design and technology follows a school specific programme of activities, supported by QCA materials, which develops the full range of design and technology capability.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

96. Not enough evidence was available to make judgements about standards in geography or history at the end of Key Stage 1 and in geography at the end of Key Stage 2.

97. There is good evidence available to show how pupils have been stimulated to produce a range of work derived from a study of their village and of the local redundant power station. Displays of artwork, written text and photographs illustrate a coordinated approach to the geographical basis of the topic that pupils undertook last year. For example, Years 3 and 4 investigated possible uses of the site after demolition. Their reports, informed by canvassing opinions, show good understanding and reflect a clear focus on the social impact of the possibilities. Standards are in line with expectations. Their work represents a good piece of relevant human geography as well as making a useful contribution to literacy skills. The locality is continuing to provide a stimulus for work in Years 1 and 2. Following visits made this term, pupils are embarking on work to map the village using information and communication technology and to model the power station in their design and technology work. However, judgements on their understanding of geography across the breadth of the curriculum could not be made.

98. Standards in history at the end of Key Stage 2 are now in line with national expectations. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Examples of written and art work undertaken last term show that pupils were enthused by studying ancient Greece. One history lesson was seen in Key Stage 2 in which pupils were successfully learning about invasions and settlement of England, concentrating on the Roman period. Following an effective whole class introduction, group work had been carefully planned between the teacher and learning support assistants and was closely aligned to working groups based on pupils' ability. Staff gave good support to pupils, who made clear progress, particularly those with special educational needs. Younger and less able pupils were helped to understand key words so they themselves could relate them to invasion or settlement. Pupils in Year 4 were able to look up the meanings of key words correctly and talk about the processes accurately. Higher attainers showed good understanding by drawing on their previous learning to help their explanations. Carefully directed questions, and the involvement in some way of all pupils, ensured they contributed to the beginnings of a 'time line' about invasions of England.

99. Activities in geography and history are planned well and related into the school curriculum. The teacher and learning support assistants effectively encourage pupils' learning. There is an attractive and readily accessible display of relevant books and artefacts. These approaches together foster pupils' interest and involvement and improve their understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

100. Evidence from lessons and work on display indicates that standards in information and communication technology are below expectations in Key Stage 1 and 2 but improve as pupils become older. Evidence from earlier work shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 are competent in using word processing to set out extended pieces written earlier but they only have limited experience of using the software to write directly on the screen. They use art packages creatively to make and print symmetrical and repeat patterns. They learn successfully to control the movements of a programmable floor robot. Pupils make images with a digital camera, but have yet to manipulate them or incorporate them with text by exploiting the new technology. In lessons, such as those about using software to map or model their village simply, most younger pupils in Key Stage 1 could use the mouse to navigate, and the older pupil used the menu commands and drag facility to move objects

about the screen. However, all but one were unable to relate the items to the represent aspects of the village and simply moved objects about with little purpose. In Years 3 and 4

pupils are much more adept at using the mouse and showed familiarity with word-processing commands. In a lesson on presenting text with impact for a pamphlet, for example, they all showed competence in highlighting and selecting appropriate font styles, colour and size. They accomplished their task and, in discussion with the teacher, made an evaluation of their work.

101. When the teaching is successful, it incorporates an effective introduction so that pupils clearly know and understand the context, the purpose and what is expected of them, and the working arrangements for using computers. During individual work, the teacher moves around each pupil to give support. Learning support assistants work alongside pupils in groups who are not immediately using computers. In turn pupils become actively involved in associated activities that contribute to the purpose of the lesson.

102. Teaching is unsuccessful when several factors combine to limit pupils' ability to learn. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, for example, the content was based on concepts that young pupils find very difficult – making maps or modelling after a short visit, without other preparatory work. Too few computers were available. Too many pupils did not have immediate access to a computer and there was no clear guidance or support available for any related activity. Pupils were easily distracted by wheeled seats and in consequence misused them. These factors together led to inattentive and disruptive behaviour that could not be quickly or easily managed. As a result, pupils made little or no progress.

103. Pupils have a lively interest in computers and enjoy using them but the resources available are limited. There are eight machines in a dedicated room but some are old and of different types that are no longer suitable for the present curriculum. Wide variations in their capacity, coupled with out-of-date software, significantly limit the work that pupils can undertake. At the time of the inspection a new machine was not fully installed. The school has access to the Internet, but the connection is slow, leading to frustration. The school has carefully used specific grants to fund computer training for all permanent teachers during 2000 – 2001. Although the curriculum is appropriately based upon the national guidance that was emerging at the time of the last inspection, the quality of the present provision has slipped since then. The factors contributing to this situation should be addressed as soon as possible in implementing the plan to develop information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND MUSIC

104. Insufficient evidence was seen to be able to make judgements about standards in physical education and music at Key Stage 2. In a music lesson at Key Stage 1, shared by two teachers, the way in which pupils learned to identify rising and falling notes and repeat the patterns of notes on chime bars suggest that standards are in line with expectations. In physical education, pupils' ability to move in different ways on apparatus is in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. This indicates an improvement in standards in physical education at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, while standards in music remain the same.

105. By the Year 2, pupils make very good progress in learning how the notes in a piece of music rise and fall. This is due to very good teaching when the teacher sings a song and uses her body to show how the notes become higher as she moves her hands from her feet to her head. In this lesson, pupils went on to accompany the tune using chime bars and demonstrate a sense of rhythm. In the second part of the lesson, pupils consolidated their ability to follow the rhythm and beat of a song using a variety of percussion instruments. They were taught to listen carefully through an activity in which individual pupils closed their eyes and identified which of their friends was singing the last line of the song.

106. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn to move safely about apparatus in physical education lessons. Their keenness to take part in the lesson meant that, at first, they did not always listen to the teachers' instructions but insistence by the teacher on moving safely around the hall meant that they soon established a sensible pattern of working. After initial work in which pupils were content to walk across benches and perform simple jumps, pupils were encouraged to try different ways of moving and they became more imaginative in their movements. They used their hands and feet to create different shapes, and made satisfactory progress in moving and creating different shapes as they moved. Most pupils worked confidently on the apparatus but one pupil needed the assurance of having an adult nearby, without needing to ask the adult for support.

107. The standard of teaching in the first part of the music lesson was excellent. A notable feature was the way the teacher calmed down a group of pupils who came into the classroom after playtime in a high state of excitement and were very disruptive. By varying her voice, ignoring many comments made by pupils to provoke reaction, allowing the most disruptive pupil to wear a watch and time the lesson and praising the class for the way she knew they could behave, the teacher brought the class under control and enabled learning to take place. Her imaginative introduction to the lesson and constant reinforcement of the positive aspects of pupils' behaviour ensured that pupils made very good progress in the lesson. Teaching in the second part of the lesson was sound overall, with some good aspects. There was good involvement of a pupil with special educational needs who was chosen to sing the last line of a song for others to identify. The standard of teaching in the only physical education lesson seen was sound. The teachers' insistence on good behaviour and safe movement around the hall meant that pupils were able to work in a secure manner and consolidate their learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection in the junior class. However, discussion with pupils and examination of their work indicate that standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 4. This broadly reflects the situation found at the previous inspection. Pupils are given more opportunities to develop an understanding of other faiths. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

109. By Year 2, pupils gain a sound understanding of The Creation. They talk about how God made the world in six days and then rested. Pupils who have just entered Year 2 have a limited knowledge of the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Year 2 pupils make good progress. They describe how Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem, the appearance of the angel to the shepherds and that Jesus was born in a stable because there was no other room. They describe the part played by the three wise men and King Herod. Pupils know that religions other than Christianity celebrate festivals and talk about Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukah and Divali.

110. Year 4 pupils learn about the practices associated with Divali. They begin to understand the symbolic significance of light in the celebration of the festival. Higher-attaining pupils write their thoughts about light and what it makes them feel. Good teaching encouraged pupils with special educational needs to reflect on the feelings the lighted candles brought to mind and were moved to express feelings such as happiness.

111. Too few lessons were seen to make judgements about the quality of teaching. In the one lesson seen, teaching was good. The teacher made good use of a lighted candle to stimulate discussion and to encourage pupils to say how it made them feel. Initially, pupils were slow to respond but, by skilful questioning, the teacher drew out responses that showed pupils' feelings. The teacher used support staff well to help pupils to learn. They helped to keep pupils working at their tasks so that the lesson moved at a good pace.