

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **LORD BLYTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108700

Headteacher: Mr D Boyle

Reporting inspector: Mr J Hagan  
1065

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 215572

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blyton Avenue South Shields Tyne & Wear
Postcode:	NE34 9BN
Telephone number:	0191 424 0550
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	A Malcolm
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Hagan	Registered inspector	Science Physical education English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school Leadership and management.
Mrs J Hughes	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs C McBride	Team inspector	Information technology Design & technology Religious education Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements. The quality and range of opportunities for learning
Mrs M Loudon	Team inspector	Early years English Art	Teaching and learning
Mr B Ashcroft	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Geography History Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Lord Blyton Primary School is about the same size as most primary schools. There are currently 239 boys and girls on roll from 4 to 11 years of age. Overall the area served by school is one of social disadvantage. Thirty eight per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Sixteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, including statements, which is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is low. Two pupils require support on the grounds that English is their second language. Pupils enter the reception class at four years of age and their achievements on entry to the school are well below average. The school is also part of an Education Action Zone.

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

This is an effective school. It is a caring community where relationships are very good. Overall pupils achieve well given that they enter school well below average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although in the reception class and juniors, some of it is excellent. The headteacher, governors and staff work well as a team; they are clearly focusing the work of the school on trying to raise standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- High quality teaching for children in the reception class means that they get off to a good start
- It is very successful in supporting pupils' moral and social development
- The school makes excellent use of community resources and out of school activities to enrich children's learning
- There are very good relationships between all members of the school community; this results in good teamwork and a positive atmosphere
- Strong subject leadership in science, mathematics and information technology is raising achievement at a good pace
- It is very good at ensuring that children are safe; child protection procedures and health and safety measures are rigorous

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

- Standards of writing. In the juniors these are not high enough and the rate of learning in the infants for higher achievers is too slow.
- Standards in religious education in the juniors are below those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus

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

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

The school was last inspected in June 1996 and was noted as a good school. Since then, it has improved at a satisfactory rate. It has maintained most of the strengths identified at the time and has also worked at developing areas of the school which its own self-evaluation identified as needing improvement. Overall, teaching quality has improved in most subjects and approximately 10 per cent more lessons are now of good quality. However, standards in writing for junior pupils have slipped back and are not as good as they were. Despite implementing national initiatives in literacy, the school's approach to the teaching of writing has not proved to be successful in maintaining previous levels of achievement. Standards in music have improved because teachers have better guidance about the skills they are expected to teach and children have a much broader experience in lessons. The governors have made good progress in establishing and carrying out regular risk assessments. As a result, the school now has much more effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved to a satisfactory extent. Work is better matched to the needs of most of these pupils but individual education plans are still not specific enough about the steps which pupils need to

take next. The school has more effective ways of checking its own work. Together with the headteacher, the governors make better use of this information in deciding the school's next areas for development and in allocating the necessary funding to priorities. The school has sought to make use of extra resources and community help to improve its provision. Its involvement with the Education Action Zone has made a significant contribution to raising standards in information technology. The school sets itself challenging targets year on year and has stayed mainly on course to meet these with the exception of those in pupils' writing.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	D	E	C	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	B	C	D	B	average C below average D
Science	A	C	E	D	well below average E

The school's results have fluctuated over the past four years but have remained better than they were in 1996 when they were particularly low. The group who achieved such outstanding results in 1997 were noted by the school as an exceptional year group with a larger than usual proportion of high ability pupils. Subsequent year groups have had larger numbers of pupils with average and lower than average achievement but the school's results have more or less kept pace with national trends. Overall, they are achieving at least as well as schools with a similar pupil intake.

Results of the tests recently undertaken in June 2000 show pupils overall achieving higher scores than in 1999. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' best achievements are once again in mathematics with most pupils reaching average levels and a significant minority of pupils working at above average levels for their age. Their understanding of number in mathematics is particularly strong.

In speaking and listening, children achieve at a good rate and have reached average levels by the time they leave the school. Achievement in reading shows a similar picture and standards are average in both the infants and juniors. Pupils particularly enjoy reading poetry and are good at interpreting difficult ideas. In writing, standards are average in the infants although higher achievers do not learn at a fast enough rate. In the juniors, standards are below average in handwriting and spelling. Pupils do not practise their writing skills well enough in other subjects to improve the quality of their work.

Standards being achieved in science by the current Year 6 group are average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas are strong in both the infants and juniors. However, their achievements in the investigative part of science are weaker because there are too few opportunities for them to design their own experiments and interpret their own findings. In religious education, standards for junior aged pupils are below those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Their knowledge and understanding of facts and religious ideas are weak. In other subjects, pupils' work is of a similar standard to that found in most schools. Some of the work done in design technology in the lower juniors is of an exceptionally high standard.

Children under five in the reception class achieve exceptionally well. From a very low starting base they make good ground and by the time they are five, the majority are meeting and some are exceeding the expectations for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve at a satisfactory rate in relation to their difficulties.

The school has analysed its own results over the last few years and has set challenging targets in the areas where it is apparent that most rapid improvement is needed.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils show good attitudes to their work. They enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. A very small minority are not interested and not keen to apply themselves to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and courteous and are proud of their school. A very small minority show signs of unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Children have very good relationships with their teachers and each other. They are quick to take responsibility and help to make the school an orderly and friendly place.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are satisfactory and are just above the national average. Most pupils come to school on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

Overall, teaching meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. Of the teaching seen during the inspection, 7 per cent of lessons were judged to be of excellent quality. 13 per cent were very good, 31 per cent were good and 42 per cent were satisfactory. 7 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The percentage of excellent and very good teaching has risen by 9 per cent and the unsatisfactory proportion has fallen by 3 per cent.

The teaching in the reception class, including that for pupils under five, is very good. It enables them to make good ground in all areas of learning. The teacher understands the needs of this age group well and sets high expectations. Activities in lessons are challenging and ensure that they learn at a fast rate.

The rate of children's learning throughout the rest of the school is closely related to the quality of teaching and most pupils learn at a satisfactory pace at both key stages in most subjects. In some important aspects however, such as in writing, teaching quality is not good enough to accelerate learning and raise standards. This is because spelling and handwriting are not taught effectively at Key Stage 2. Overall, too little time or attention is given to guiding pupils in how to develop the quality of their writing in the juniors and in the infants with higher ability pupils. Some teachers need

more guidance themselves in the teaching of writing because there are weaknesses in their subject knowledge.

The teaching of reading is stronger and pupils develop comprehension skills at a steady pace. Poetry is taught particularly well. Most teachers are good at developing children's speaking and listening skills. From a low level on entry, most children, including those with English as an additional language, are gaining confidence and achieving fluency in their speech.

The teaching of numeracy is good. This is because teachers set challenging work for pupils and keep a close check on how well they are progressing in each lesson. They adjust work accordingly for the next lesson and this means that children move on quickly from one lesson to another because they do not repeat work unnecessarily.

Some teachers in Key Stage 2 have very good subject knowledge in science, information technology, design technology and mathematics. Where this is the case, they are providing really interesting activities in lessons. Children are highly motivated, become very involved in their work and achieve really well. There is some excellent teaching of design technology and science in Years 4 and 6.

In some of the more ordinary teaching, children are faced with boring tasks and too many worksheets to complete. Their rate of learning is slower than necessary and some become bored and restless. The reasons for the unsatisfactory teaching seen stemmed from the teacher not having a clear enough idea of what the class were expected to learn from the lessons. Because the teacher was unsure, the children themselves were also unsure and were not motivated well enough to work at a good pace.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	It is particularly good for the under fives and good throughout the rest of the school. The use of the community and the good range of out of school activities to enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning are excellent. Work in different subjects helps to reinforce learning in other subjects very well. However, insufficient time and attention is given to developing writing.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Most pupils are supported well either individually or in small groups. Education plans for each child are not detailed enough in setting out what they need to work on next.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. These pupils receive weekly support from a specialist teacher. On a day- to- day basis, teachers pay particular attention to developing their spoken and written language skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good. The school is good at teaching children about the behaviour expected of them and about their responsibilities as members of a community and future citizens. They have good opportunities to learn about their own cultural heritage and that of other people. They are also encouraged to take pleasure in and to appreciate the natural world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils to a high level. Procedures for ensuring health and safety and child protection are very good. The work covered in personal, social and health education makes a strong contribution to their well-being. The school's systems for checking on how well children are achieving in their work are not effective enough in some areas.



Overall the school works well with parents and it has established good working relationships and links with them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall leadership is good. The headteacher, provides a clear direction for the work of the school and draws the team's efforts together well, There is strong subject leadership in science, information technology and mathematics which is making a strong contribution to raising standards in these areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are supportive and committed to their school. The work of the special needs / literacy governor is excellent. The governors are not active enough in fulfilling their role as a critical friend to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is good at reviewing its own work and has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used efficiently and to the benefit of the pupils. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. The school checks to see if it is getting best value by putting its own performance against that of similar schools. They consult with parents on important issues such as the code of practice for pupils' behaviour. There are enough staff and the accommodation and learning resources are adequate

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children like school</li> <li>• The school helps their children become mature</li> <li>• That the school works in partnership with them</li> <li>• That children are expected to work hard</li> <li>• The ease with which they can approach the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with them on the topics being taught and the school's policy on homework</li> </ul>

Very few parents attended the parents' meeting and only a small percentage returned the questionnaires. An analysis of returns and discussions with parents during the inspection week show that most of them have very positive views about the school and its work. The inspection findings support their positive views but also agree with their views on what could be improved. The school could improve its communication with parents by providing them with more information on the topics to be taught each term and on the school's approach to homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Taking into account their starting point, over the time they attend the school, most children's overall level of achievement is at least satisfactory and for some it is much better. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys or girls.
2. When pupils first arrive at the school their previous achievements are well below average in all areas of learning. By the time they are five, most have met expectations in all areas of learning. This is as a result of very good teaching which enables all ability groups to learn at a fast pace and achieve well in the reception year.
3. At the end of Key Stage 1 the most recent test results for pupils at seven (1999) show a decline from the two previous years. Their performance in reading was well below average and below average in mathematics and writing. However this was on a par with pupils from similar backgrounds in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The work of the present Year 2 children seen during the inspection indicates that they reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and are close to the average in science. Best progress is made in understanding numbers and in developing their speaking and listening skills.
4. Whilst progress is satisfactory overall there are a small number of children whose attitudes to their work are not as good as the rest and they hinder the rate of learning for example in some Year 2 lessons. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is more ordinary when compared with the reception where it is very good. As a result children's rate of learning whilst satisfactory is not as fast as it could be and particularly for the higher attainers in writing.
5. In the most recently reported (1999) results for pupils aged 11 in English, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) was close to the national average but the school did not get many pupils to the higher level (Level 5). As a result its overall performance when compared with all schools was well below average but average when compared with similar schools. It was a similar picture for mathematics in the national tests but when compared with similar schools Lord Blyton School was doing better. In science there was a blip with results being well below the national average and below those of similar schools. This was caused to some degree by some higher achieving pupils leaving and some lower achievers from other schools joining towards the end of the key stage.
6. Based on work seen during the inspection, standards achieved by the current Year 6 pupils are better than those achieved in 1999 in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence indicates that a greater number of children will achieve the higher levels in both mathematics and science this year. Within English, pupils' reading reaches an average level. However standards in writing are not high enough. Spelling and handwriting are weak. In speaking and listening children are meeting the average expected for their age. In science children are demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of scientific vocabulary by the time they are 11 years old. They are doing well in developing their knowledge of physical processes, materials and forces. Whilst they have a good understanding of what makes a fair test, pupils make least progress in developing the higher order investigative skills for this subject. This is because they do not have enough opportunities to set up their own experiments and interpret their findings.

7. In religious education standards are below the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for children aged 11. The subject has a very low profile particularly in the upper juniors. Topics are visited at a superficial level and do not always build on children's previous experiences. As a result pupils are learning the same information over and over again. The standards of work in most other subjects of the curriculum are typical of those seen in other schools, although some very high standards are achieved by Year 4 pupils in design and technology. Pupils' skills in observational drawing are also higher than normally seen. There was insufficient evidence to enable an accurate judgement to be made on physical education but the vast majority of pupils will meet the expectation to be able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their difficulties. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language gain confidence and make good ground in speaking, reading and writing.

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

9. The school has maintained the good overall standards noted in the previous inspection. The majority of pupils show good attitudes to work and enjoy coming to school. They concentrate well and persevere with an activity until it is complete. This is particularly evident in Reception where children take every opportunity to listen and work hard for their teacher. This allows the class teacher to squeeze every last bit of learning out of each child and they make good progress in her lessons. Older pupils respond particularly well to any practical opportunities they are given to experience something new. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils visited a local college and practised building brick walls and arches. Even the most reluctant pupils were totally absorbed by this task and maintained an excellent work rate and ethos throughout the visit. They were rewarded with surprisingly solid structures and the uplifting experience of a difficult job well done.
10. A very small minority of pupils are generally not interested in their work and are not keen to apply themselves during lessons. They do not always respond to teachers' requests for them to concentrate and this disrupts the lesson and can interfere with other pupils' learning. This situation arises most often when teachers fail to adopt a consistent enough approach to discipline or when their expectations fall short of the norm.
11. Most pupils demonstrate good behaviour in all areas of the school. They are attentive in lessons, when moving around the building and in the large playground. Pupils are particularly well behaved during collective worship where they participate wholeheartedly in the hymns and prayers. They also listen extremely well to staff and pupils leading the worship and this helps them to consolidate their understanding of the theme which, for example, during the inspection week was 'sharing'. The majority of pupils are well aware of the high expectations staff have concerning behaviour; indeed, pupils contributed to the new behaviour policy now in place. Most pupils are polite and courteous and are keen to offer help and to talk to visitors. They are proud of their school and what they achieve personally. There have been no exclusions from school in the past year.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. They are quick to take responsibility whenever it is offered to them. Pupils carry out any duties they have very well and are trustworthy and eager to help. They are able to make sensible contributions to the way the school works as, for example, when asked to help draw up the new school behaviour policy. Pupils also work well independently on tasks when offered the opportunity by staff. For example, the majority work without interrupting the class teacher during group time in literacy sessions. Pupils do not regularly research topics for homework assignments and are often provided

with recording mechanisms by staff rather than making their own decisions about how to set work out or record their findings.

13. This is a school where relationships throughout the school community are very good. Teachers and pupils respond very warmly to one another and mutual respect is evident in the relationships they establish. Children are also caring and sensitive to the needs of others and they respond very well to the positive role models and encouragement they receive from all adults working in the school. This helps them to understand the importance of considering the values and beliefs of other people.
14. Levels of attendance are satisfactory throughout the school and are broadly in line with the national average. There are very few instances of unauthorised absence. Parents and pupils are clear about the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality and attendance figures do not vary much from year to year. Sessions begin and end punctually with little time wasted.

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

15. The teaching of children under five is very good in all areas of learning and excellent in language and literacy and mathematics. The teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and she sets up, interesting and stimulating activities that motivate them and enable them to learn well. The classroom assistant plays a significant part in the teaching that goes on and together with the teacher, they form a highly effective team. The teacher has good strategies for managing children's behaviour and sets high standards to which they respond. The children work hard, concentrate well and take pride in their finished work. The teacher keeps detailed records of the children's achievements in each area of learning and uses the information well to plan work which is matched carefully to their needs.
16. The teaching of mathematics is good overall and in most lessons the rate of children's learning is good. Teachers are particularly successful at helping children to develop their skills of mental calculation and their knowledge of number facts. The quality of teaching has been successful in promoting very respectable standards over the last few years in these aspects. It has improved further since the school adopted the recent national numeracy initiative. Lessons have a more challenging content and most mathematics lessons, demand that children calculate quickly and recognise patterns in number. Some teaching is excellent and teachers' expectations of what children will achieve are very high. Children are taken quickly through gradual steps. As a result the rate of learning is very rapid in some lessons. In an excellent Year 4 lesson for example, the teacher worked the class at speed through doubling numbers up to 90. They then moved on to make 45 degree angles in circles; this was taken on to making angles of 60 degrees and eventually to working out the number of sections measuring thirty degrees there were in a circle. Once reception children can count to 100 they are challenged to count up in 2s. The consistent picture of sound and better teaching throughout the school is resulting in high achievement for a good number of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2.
17. Teaching of reading and writing is more variable and the school has adopted national guidelines for the teaching with mixed results. In reading, the overall quality of lessons has improved. Children read a greater variety of books either being carefully guided by the teacher or along with the whole class in a shared reading session. They show a keener interest in books and a greater understanding of what they read. In the best lessons, phonics, grammar and spelling are taught well through exciting activities which involve all the pupils. In a Year 1 lesson for example, the teacher used an elephant glove puppet to

ask the children how to spell the days of the week. The class were very keen to tell the forgetful puppet the correct spelling and were thoroughly engaged in what might otherwise have been a dull task.

18. The systematic teaching of spelling patterns and rules is inconsistent at Key Stage 2 resulting in pupils' poor spelling which hampers their progress in writing. In both the infants and juniors, teachers draw lessons together well at the end and use the time effectively to check what children have learned or give pointers for future improvement. The inconsistent marking of pupils' written work and lack of detailed reading records in Key Stage 2 restrict teachers' abilities to set work at the right level for all pupils.
19. Writing is generally not being taught well, particularly in Key Stage 2 because of the teachers' confusion of how to undertake writing in the literacy hour. Some teachers are unsure about how they should either guide pupils' writing in small groups or teach writing techniques by sharing a writing task with the whole class. In some lessons the over reliance on worksheets and grammar exercises gives pupils limited opportunities to practise and develop writing skills. In Key Stage 1, teachers develop writing to a satisfactory extent but insufficient attention is paid to guiding higher ability children to produce better quality writing.
20. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily in other subjects but not enough attention is given to developing different styles of writing in other subjects. Good speaking and listening skills are actively promoted in all lessons with emphasis placed on using the correct vocabulary. Pupils read texts and articles to gain information in history and health education and write their own reports about explorers and healthy living. However, there are limited opportunities for them to develop research skills by finding and recording information for themselves. Teachers promote and consolidate numeracy skills well. For example, Year 4 pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical knowledge of co-ordinates in geography lessons and to practise their skills in measuring accurately in their science and design and technology work.
21. Throughout the school, teachers share with pupils what they are expected to learn at the beginning of the lesson so that children are often aware how well they have achieved. In most lessons, teachers achieve a good match of work to the stage pupils have reached beforehand. Some teachers are skilled at asking skilful questions of individual pupils based on what they already know. After pupils have given their answers, further questions challenge them to extend their thinking and justify opinions.
22. Some teachers have very good subject knowledge, for example in history, science, design and technology and information technology. Where this is the case, pupils achieve well in these lessons. The quality of teaching overall is benefiting from the skill of these individual teachers because they give advice to colleagues and support them in trying out more adventurous activities which engage and motivate children. Teaching of children with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. Work is now better matched to their needs and support staff guide them well in coping with similar tasks to the rest of the class. It is difficult for teachers to check their progress well enough because targets set out in individual education plans are too broad. The small steps pupils make and the skills they gain are difficult to measure against these broad goals.

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

23. The school has managed to maintain a good breadth to its curriculum and is very successful in reinforcing pupils' learning in one subject through work in the others. For example, Year 4 pupils have developed their knowledge of geometry in mathematics through learning about compass points in geography. Years 4 and 6 combine science topics with work in design technology and learn about structures and forces while building bridges. Two years ago in line with national initiatives, the school started to adapt its curriculum to give even greater emphasis to the teaching of English and mathematics. Whilst this has been successful and has resulted in raised expectations for pupils' achievements too little attention is now focused on writing and as a result, standards in this aspect have not risen quickly enough.
24. The school makes excellent use of its local community to enrich pupils' learning. Involvement with businesses and other educational establishments have brought additional resources and many valuable opportunities for children to learn from practical experiences in a good variety of settings. For example, Year 4 pupils visit a local university and use building materials to construct bridges. These practical experiences increase their rate of learning about scientific and technological principles. Year 6 pupils develop their physical skills through coaching provided by a local football club and professional basketball coaches.
25. The curriculum for under fives in the reception class supports them well in learning at a good rate. They undertake a good range of practical activity within the required areas of learning.
26. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities in place and a significant number of pupils from Year 2 and above participate in the various sports and arts clubs. All staff are involved in the extra-curricular programme. This has a positive impact on the sporting and musical attainment of some and on the personal and social development of all who participate. A good range of extra-curricular activities in sports and the arts are open to infant and junior children.
27. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language.
28. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and has a high priority in school, enabling pupils to begin to make healthy lifestyle choices. For example, the school has already achieved its first Healthy School Award and is currently working towards its second. Participation in the programme encourages pupils to become increasingly aware of the decisions they need to make about their diet, health and exercise. A particular strength of the programme has been the very sensitive manner in which the school has supported children. For example, the headteacher and staff paid close attention to pupils' mental well being and introduced a counselling system for pupils worried during the recent national tests for pupils aged seven and eleven years.
29. There is good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Moral and social provision are particular strengths, encouraging pupils to become caring and useful members of society.
30. There is sound provision for pupils' spiritual development. Much of this takes place in collective worship, when pupils listen carefully and join in hymns and prayers with enthusiasm and joy. Pupils are provided with opportunities to express their feelings and they learn to recognise anxiety and come to terms with it

31. The headteacher and staff make very good provision for pupils' moral development. They try to set out clearly what it means to lead a good life and they offer very good role models in support of this aim. The school encourages pupils to be aware of the needs of the more vulnerable and younger members of the school community. Pupils are encouraged to treat each other and the school environment and resources with respect. The school, pupils and parents support local and national charities and this helps pupils to understand that many people are disadvantaged and need the help of society at large.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The school provides as many new experiences as possible for them including a large variety of sporting opportunities, residential trips, working with local artists and craftsmen. Some staff are constantly looking for practical ways to capture their pupils' imaginations as this helps to motivate pupils and to ensure they learn as much as possible from each experience. Pupils are given many opportunities to work co-operatively and mostly, they do this well and without fuss.
33. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. Staff promote a good appreciation of pupils' local culture and heritage through many of the subjects they study. Pupils have recently produced an extremely colourful and detailed banner depicting the main features of the local area such as the Tyne Bridge, the river and the Angel of the North. This activity has helped pupils to identify the main characteristics of the area in which they live and which they feel would appeal most to pupils in other countries.
34. Provision for pupils' moral and social development has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is of a similar standard to last time.

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

35. Staff know pupils and their families very well and relationships between school and the community are long established. Great efforts are made to ensure pupils are happy and make the most of their time at school. Parents are very appreciative of the efforts the school makes in this area.
36. Arrangements for child protection are very secure and all staff are familiar with the procedures. The headteacher is one of two designated teachers responsible for child protection in the school. He is also a member of the local area Child Protection Committee and he has a very thorough understanding of the associated issues. Any concerns are followed up as a matter of urgency.
37. Health and safety procedures are very much better than at the time of the last inspection. They are now well considered and the school is a safe and well maintained learning environment. Issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed by the school, with the exception of the boys' toilets which are still an area of concern. All adults take it upon themselves to look after the children's needs. Lunchtime 'nannies' establish warm relationships with pupils and maintain the friendly ethos of the school. The school cook makes sure she uses fats suitable for vegetarians when she bakes so that no-one misses out on lunchtime treats because of dietary or religious customs. Pupils' medical needs are carefully documented and a qualified first aider is responsible for administering medication.
38. The school has good procedures in place to promote and monitor pupils' attendance. Registers are carefully completed and staff keep check of any absence and contact parents when children do not arrive at school.



39. There are satisfactory procedures to promote good behaviour throughout the school. The school consulted widely with parents, staff, governors and pupils when the latest behaviour policy was drawn up. However, some teachers are still inconsistent in their handling of some pupils with demanding behavioural problems and this can interrupt the flow of lessons at times and slow pupils' learning.
40. Procedures used by the school for checking on how pupils are getting on are satisfactory overall. However, there is no single method for doing this throughout the school and in some subjects it is more effective than others. For example, in mathematics procedures are good and staff have a clear understanding of what pupils can do. However, in reading and writing, particularly at Key Stage 2 pupils, arrangements do not provide a clear picture for teachers of what each pupil can do and what they need to do to improve further. The school has started to set personal targets for each pupil at the end of the academic year which provides new class teachers with an initial view of what pupils need to do next to improve.
41. Satisfactory procedures are in place to monitor and support pupils' personal development. Staff know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses and establish supportive relationships with them over the year. They are able to offer moral support and strong leadership when problems arise.

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

42. Overall, the school has maintained its good working relationships with parents and carers. Parents are still extremely positive in their views of the school and state that they feel well informed about daily routines and what their children are doing.
43. The school is keen to involve parents in school life and the headteacher invites parental opinions on particular matters such as security. More recently, parents, along with other members of the school community, helped to formulate the new behaviour policy and this has helped them to understand the school's expectations for their children. Parents are regular visitors to class assemblies and enjoy watching their children lead the whole school in collective worship as they focus on a specific theme. The school also responds well to suggestions parents put forward. During the consultation exercise on the Home School Agreement, the school included items considered important by the parent body.
44. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are detailed and provide parents with a good feel for the school and its philosophy. However, there is very little specific information provided about the curriculum and parents are not always aware of the topics to be covered during each half term.
45. The quality of individual, annual, written reports to parents is satisfactory overall. Some of the most informative reports tell parents exactly what their children can do and how they can improve. The most useful information is about children's progress in English, mathematics and science as well as their personal and social development. Reporting in the other subjects is often very brief and does not tell parents enough about what their children have achieved.
46. Parents make a sound contribution to the work of the school; they are supportive of any education initiatives which affect their children. A large number of parents attended the numeracy strategy meeting and some parents are now participating in a family numeracy project. This is helping to build their confidence and enables them to offer better support to their children at home. Very few parents offer regular support in classrooms but a large

number – almost fifty per cent – help with the regular baking fundraisers, when parents bake cakes and sell them in school to raise funds for trips and resources. A number of parents accompany pupils on educational visits and a few come into school to talk about their jobs or to share their expertise on specific topics. This helps pupils to learn more about the world beyond school. Many parents listen to their children read at home but overall, there is no consistent approach to homework by the school.

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

47. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has played an active and successful part in establishing the very good relationships and team work that are evident within the school. The way in which the school uses its community to enhance the quality of its curriculum is a good example of strong and purposeful leadership. There is also strong leadership demonstrated by the subject leaders for information technology, mathematics and science. They have a very good understanding of their subjects and have established effective systems for checking on how well the school is doing in these subjects. They are making good use of the school's systems for monitoring its own work to identify gaps and areas for development within their subjects. However the school's management needs to establish a more effective way of ensuring that agreed action to address the priorities identified are successfully implemented across the school.
48. There are some weaknesses in the way English is led in the juniors. As a result, teachers are not receiving sufficient guidance in important areas for example, in how to teach writing. This is having an adverse effect on the standards pupils achieve. The school is not successful enough in setting out the steps pupils need to take to improve their reading and writing and for some pupils the rate of learning is therefore too slow. Systems for monitoring the work or achievements of pupils in the other subjects are not effective enough.
49. The governors are actively supportive of the school, particularly in working on a day-to-day basis. For example, the link governor for literacy and special needs works closely with both subject leaders to check on pupils' progress and the implementation of new initiatives. The governors are not as effective in checking up on how well the school is achieving the targets it sets itself, for example through the school improvement plan.
50. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and this is having a positive impact on the school's work. It has made good use of its involvement to influence and bring about improvements in the teaching and resourcing for information technology. It has established a well-resourced information technology base, which is being well used to help pupils improve their skills and understanding of the use of information technology. It has also established a 'Family Numeracy Initiative', which is proving very beneficial to those parents who attend these sessions run by a teacher. It is helping them to help their children.
51. The budget is well managed. Funding for specific purposes such as support for children with special needs is well used to ensure these pupils have access to the whole curriculum. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. It compares itself with similar schools to see how it is doing and it consults with its parents on important issues such as the school's code of conduct.
52. The school's accommodation is adequate. It is clean and well maintained. The inside environment is well used to display pupils' work. These displays are of good quality and support pupils' learning and celebrate their work. The school's provision for outdoor play for

the under fives is unsatisfactory. The school recognises this and has set up a detailed action plan to improve these facilities by the start of next term.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The headteacher, staff and governors should now address the following issues:

(1) Raise standards in writing in the juniors and the rate of learning for higher attainers in the infants by:

- Increasing the range of writing styles that children learn, for example: narratives and stories, instructions, reports, explanations and arguments
- Improving teachers' knowledge of how to teach writing
- Ensuring that enough time is allocated for children to undertake writing tasks during the literacy hour and in other subjects
- Using consistent and systematic approaches to the teaching of handwriting, spelling rules and patterns
- Teaching children how to write different beginnings and endings for stories and the use of descriptive phrases from the beginning of Year 2.

Paragraph references: 4, 6, 18, 19, 23, 40, 48, 66, 67, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78

(2) Raise standards in religious education in Key Stage 2 by:

- Improving pupils' knowledge and understanding
- Using a greater variety of teaching styles in religious education lessons
- Ensuring that the contents of the agreed syllabus are taught at an appropriate level and build on what pupils already know and understand

Paragraph references: 7, 129, 130, 131, 134

The following issues, whilst not key issues for school improvement, should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- The use made of the information generated from monitoring the school's work (Paragraph references 47, 79, 135)
- Inconsistencies in the marking of children's work (Paragraph reference 18)
- The opportunities for children to develop the higher order investigative skills in science (Paragraph references 6, 20, 94)
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils (Paragraph references 10, 39, 77, 125)
- The level of detail in pupils individual education plans (Paragraph reference 22)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	13	31	42	7	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		239
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		91

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	15	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (77)	83 (73)	81 (89)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	29	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (80)	78 (84)	84 (82)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (82)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	9
	Girls	12	11	10
	Total	22	22	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (63)	71 (56)	61 (75)
	National	70 (65)	69 (54)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	11	11	13
	Total	21	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (67)	71 (73)	81 (69)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	236
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	23.9

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	445787
Total expenditure	440956
Expenditure per pupil	1838
Balance brought forward from previous year	24427
Balance carried forward to next year	29258

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	39

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	64	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	72	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	67	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	67	3	0	10
The teaching is good.	31	69	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	64	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	54	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	59	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	67	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	31	54	15	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	72	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	54	13	0	5



## **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**

54. Children are admitted to the reception class at the start of the school year in which they are five. There are 27 children in the reception class of whom seven (26 per cent) are still under five. Prior to starting school the children meet their teacher when she visits them in the nursery and they spend time in their new school. For the first two weeks of the term they attend school on a part-time basis. These good transition arrangements help children settle quickly into the routine of school life. Throughout their time in reception the children follow a curriculum for under fives which covers all the necessary areas of learning. Baseline assessment tests carried out when the children start school show that in reading and writing attainment is generally well below the levels expected for their age and very well below in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal and social development.

#### **Personal and social development**

55. Personal and social development is taught very well and children make very good progress. All children portray very positive attitudes to school and are eager to answer questions and join in all activities. They form good relationships with the staff and are confident in approaching them to tell them something of personal interest or ask for help. The richness of the environment and experiences offered motivate the children to learn. They often respond with feeling to the exciting teaching. For example, they were really excited when discovering that magnets will pick up a paper clip through different materials. In class lessons children sit still and listen well and show a high degree of concentration when working independently.
56. They become aware of what is right and wrong through staff continually praising good behaviour and reinforcing why it is good. Children are polite and well-behaved responding to the high standards set by the staff. Most children with behavioural difficulties respond very well to the excellent strategies used by the staff to involve them in lessons. All children are taught to take turns and share resources and they do this very well. The excellent organisation of the classroom encourages them to be independent in making choices and deciding how to go about things. Each area of learning is colour coded and clearly labelled as is each piece of apparatus that belongs in that area. Children soon learn to select their own resources and equipment and put them away in the correct place at the end of the lesson. The great majority of children achieve the standards they should do by the end of the reception year.

#### **Language and literacy**

57. The excellent teaching ensures that children make very good progress in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year the great majority of children achieve the desirable learning outcomes. The children are given a wide variety of opportunities in which to develop their speaking and listening skills. In all areas of the curriculum they are taught the correct vocabulary and encouraged to use it. Staff develop children's linguistic skills by constantly asking them questions about what they are doing and have discovered and helping them to be more articulate in their replies. Children confidently use language to re-tell familiar stories and serve customers in the café 'role-play' area. Acting out a wedding as part of religious education enabled the children to explore language and conventions used in such ceremonies. They are developing very good listening skills and this has a positive impact on all areas of their learning.

58. The enthusiasm of the teacher and exciting, imaginative tasks motivate all children to read. Big books are used successfully to teach the skills of reading. The teacher points to the words as she reads, talks about the story and encourages the children to use pictures to help understand what is happening. Skilful questions help the children understand the text and predict what might happen next. They are taught to read familiar words that occur in the text and to predict unknown words by spelling them out, using clues in the pictures or guessing their meaning from the sentence. Phonics are taught well through exciting activities and games. The excellent teaching has enabled all children to make a good start in their independent reading. They all enjoy reading books that are well matched to their abilities. All children use picture clues as well as their word recognition skills to make sense of the text. The higher achieving children use the meaning of the text and phonic skills to work out unknown words and talk confidently about the characters and plot. One child, for example, predicted how the character felt.
59. From the time they start in reception, children are encouraged to make marks on paper to represent writing. They write captions and labels for their pictures and re-tell their own experiences or favourite stories. Through regular handwriting practice they learn how to hold the pencil and correctly form letters. They are taught how to spell the words frequently used in their writing and to use punctuation. This gives them the confidence to write their own sentences and have a go at spelling more difficult words. Staff give very good support and use praise well to encourage children in their writing. Because of the excellent teaching, they learn at a very good pace and achieve well. Most children write sentences confidently spelling familiar words correctly and making good, plausible attempts at others. Higher achieving pupils confidently use correct punctuation and write neatly and legibly. Lower achieving children enjoy making marks to write stories which they read to the staff.

### **Mathematics**

60. Most children make very good progress in mathematics because of the excellent, enthusiastic teaching and high expectations set. Clear explanations and practical demonstrations linked to relevant activities help the children gain a thorough understanding of mathematical concepts appropriate to their age. Imaginative, well-planned tasks motivate the children and enable them to explore mathematical ideas in a practical way. These activities are well thought out and gradually increase in difficulty challenging the children further. For example, when children can successfully count to 100 they are asked to count up in 2s. When they have learnt the terms smaller and larger they are challenged to identify a number smaller or larger than a given number. All the children enjoy mathematics and concentrate very well on their tasks. The higher attaining children can order numbers to 20 and calculate 1 and 2 less than a given number. Middle attaining children can record addition to 12 when totalling the numbers thrown by two dice. The lower attaining children and those with special educational needs are able to count and recognise numbers to 10 and 5 respectively. All children achieve well because the teacher sets them appropriate work based on a thorough assessment of their capabilities. Nearly all children achieve the standards they should do by the end of the reception year.

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

61. A rich variety of experiences and good teaching develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world well and they make very good progress in this area of learning. The teacher has a good subject knowledge and gives clear explanations and answers to questions. This enables children to gain full understanding. Good opportunities are provided for the children to investigate scientific processes and discover facts for

themselves. Through experimenting with magnets and a variety of materials and talking to the teacher about their findings, children are able to form hypotheses about magnetism and magnetic fields. By playing with different objects in the water trough children discover what will sink and float. In religious education they gain a thorough knowledge of weddings by acting out a class wedding. During the inspection, children dressed up and took parts of the main characters and guests. They acted out the complete ceremony including the groom putting the ring on the bride's finger and the signing of the register. The wedding march was played as they walked down the aisle, confetti was thrown and toasts were given at the reception. Through taking part in this class activity all children gained a thorough knowledge of the wedding ceremony. Their computer skills are developing well. They confidently use the mouse when dragging objects in mathematical games and use the keyboard for appropriate activities. The great majority of children achieve the standards they should do by the end of the reception year.

### **Physical development**

62. Not enough teaching was seen to be able to comment on the quality of teaching but from watching the children in the hall and in the classroom it is judged that they make very good progress in physical development. Nearly all the children will have achieved the standards they should do by the end of the reception year. They become aware of space and use this well when moving around the hall in different ways. Different parts of their bodies are used for balancing beanbags and they are learning to control balls using hands, feet and bats. The children make good attempts at running, hopping and skipping and respond well to commands from the teacher. Currently there is no large apparatus in the outdoor play area but good use is made of small apparatus.
63. Children's small manipulative skills are developing very well. They are given many opportunities to use scissors, paste brushes, crayons, pencils and construction materials and are using these with increasing precision and control. Good support enabled all children to cut out shapes of flowers and hearts and stick them onto wedding invitations.

### **Creative development**

64. The teacher provides many opportunities for children to develop their creative abilities. Throughout all areas of the curriculum the children are encouraged to respond to what they see, hear, smell, feel and touch. They experiment with the effects of paint and colour when painting and printing and successfully explore texture when creating collages using a variety of materials. Children choose materials thoughtfully, for example, when making wedding invitations paying attention to the texture and pattern that they want to create. They evaluate the completed invitation carefully and state what they would do to improve it if they made it again. The teaching of observational drawing is very good and children learn how to look closely and reproduce what they see. They concentrate well when drawing pictures and colour them in carefully, taking pride in the end result. In music the children sing in tune as they join in the hymns in assembly. They have made their own musical instruments and enjoy experimenting with the different sounds and playing them to accompany songs. A large majority of children achieve the standards they should do by the end of the reception year.
65. The quality of teaching is always very good and often excellent. The classroom assistant gives very good support contributing strongly to the very successful teaching and very good progress made by all children. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and carefully plan interesting and relevant activities that motivate the children. The rich learning environment in the classroom is particularly impressive and the opportunities

provided for investigation and exploration. The teacher has good strategies for managing children's behaviour and sets high expectations to which they respond. The enthusiastic teaching and constant praise encourages them to persevere and strive to improve. Assessment is used very well. The teacher uses information from her own detailed records of each child's performance in every area of learning to match tasks carefully to their needs. Parents have received training in family numeracy and borrow numeracy packs on a weekly basis to use with their children. They are also encouraged to hear their child read regularly. This is contributing to the very good progress that children make in these areas of learning. The quality of teaching and progress made by the children has improved considerably since the last inspection. Provision for children under-five is now a strength of the school.

## **ENGLISH**

66. The 1999 National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds show that pupils' attainment was close to the national average at the expected level (Level 4), but well below at the higher level (Level 5). With fewer pupils attaining higher levels than in other schools, average scores were lowered and the school's overall results were depressed. The school's own evaluation and inspection findings both identify that pupils are achieving better in reading than in writing in the junior classes.
67. The 1999 National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds show that pupils' attainment in reading was below the national average at the expected level (Level 2) and well below at the higher level (Level 3) but broadly in line with results of similar schools. In writing pupils' attainment was below the national average at both the expected and higher levels but in line with similar schools.
68. Unlike the national trend there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls at both key stages.
69. Pupils attain the nationally expected standards in speaking and listening. Their rate of learning is good due to the good quality of teaching and wide variety of opportunities in which to practise their skills. They listen attentively to the teacher in class lessons and to each other in discussions, respecting other's ideas and opinions. From a young age, pupils are keen to answer questions and express their thoughts and viewpoints confidently. The very good relationships in the school contribute to this confidence, as pupils know that their ideas will be valued and accepted by the teachers and their fellow pupils. By modelling the correct use of grammar and vocabulary well, teachers encourage pupils to improve their own vocabulary and use more sophisticated words. This was seen in a Year 1 art lesson where when evaluating pupils' work the teacher commented on the effects of the techniques used. Pupils confidently joined in the discussion and used the word 'effect' when stating their opinions. In a Year 4 lesson pupils confidently evaluated posters and adverts using terms such as 'short, snappy phrases', 'eye-catching' and 'use of alliteration' having heard these used by the teacher in previous lessons. Pupils of all levels of attainment are able to take a full part in discussions because teachers skilfully structure questions to their level of understanding. In the best lessons teachers follow up pupils' replies by asking more challenging questions which enable them to articulate their thoughts more clearly and use a more extensive vocabulary. At the end of many lessons pupils have the opportunity to develop speaking skills by explaining their task and relating what they have discovered to the other pupils.
70. Standards in reading are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The rate of learning is satisfactory and in some classes good.

71. In Key Stage 1, teachers share texts well with pupils showing them how to use expression when reading and guess unfamiliar words from the illustrations and meaning of the sentence. They teach pupils to read the words that occur regularly in stories and how to spell out unknown words. Phonic skills are taught well through using puppets and exciting games. By the end of the key stage, all pupils enjoy reading and read confidently with expression. They spell out unfamiliar words and higher achievers correct their mistakes as they read knowing that what they have read does not make sense. All pupils are familiar with how to use information books and higher achievers use contents and index pages, glossaries and dictionaries competently. Books are well matched to the abilities of the pupils ensuring that they achieve success in their reading. Pupils continue to enjoy reading texts with the teachers and developing their own reading skills with well-matched texts as they move through the school. By the age of eleven they read confidently and fluently. They talk about the characters and plot referring to the text to justify their opinions. Higher achievers are starting to predict possible outcomes and meanings by reading 'between the lines'. All pupils can talk about the type of books that they like to read but few can name their favourite authors. They can all use information texts and dictionaries to find information efficiently.
72. When talking about preferences in reading all pupils stated that they liked reading poetry. This is due to the very good teaching of poetry. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of poetry and teach it with enthusiasm and confidence. Through very good questioning they enable pupils to understand and interpret extremely complex ideas. The confidence and enthusiasm of all pupils in offering their opinions on the meaning of the poem is impressive. They enjoy reading poetry out loud, having had the opportunity to practise beforehand. Where pupils are making good progress in reading they are learning to read challenging texts through good questioning and skilful teaching. For example in a Year 4 lesson pupils read a difficult rap with rhythm, confidence and expression after the teacher demonstrated how to read it and taught the difficult parts of the text.
73. By the age of seven pupils standards in writing are in line with national expectations and they are learning at a satisfactory rate. Handwriting and spelling are taught well from an early age giving the pupils the confidence to attempt their own writing. In Year 1, pupils write sentences that tell short stories and make a class newspaper. By the end of Year 2 pupils handwriting is neat with accurately formed letters and they are starting to use full stops and capital letters in their stories. The higher achieving pupils write more detailed stories but are not being taught how to use descriptive phrases and write exciting beginning and endings to stories. This is preventing them achieving the higher levels in writing.
74. The rate of learning in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. As a result, standards in writing are inconsistent and by the end of the key stage pupils' attainments are below national expectations. Handwriting is not taught consistently in all classes resulting in poorly formed letter formation and badly presented work. This has not improved since the last inspection. Pupils' spelling is poor because spelling patterns and rules are not being taught systematically. In many lessons there is an over reliance on grammar worksheets and exercises giving the pupils limited opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills. All of these issues are hampering pupil progress. Some good examples of writing were seen where pupils had written their own poems based on the style of ones they had studied. The higher achieving pupils used complex imagery based on personal experiences or images of the natural world. Pupils had had the opportunity to improve their presentation and spelling by editing and revising their work.

75. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a varied impact on standards and learning. It has been used successfully to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and knowledge of how to use information books. Reading is generally taught well and pupils are using more than one strategy for decoding unfamiliar words and making sense of the text. This is an improvement since the last inspection where pupils relied only on phonic strategies. There are sometimes missed opportunities in reading sessions to encourage pupils to make predictions about characters and plot by inference from the text. A misunderstanding of where writing takes place in the literacy hour and confusion between shared and guided writing is giving pupils too few opportunities to develop writing skills. In some classes an over reliance on worksheets and exercises prevents pupils consolidating and extending what they have learnt in the earlier part of the lesson. The final part of the lesson is being used very well by teachers to celebrate and assess pupils' work, reinforce what they have learnt and give pointers for future improvement.
76. English skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. Pupils learn correct vocabulary in subjects such as mathematics, art, design and technology and science and use this when discussing their work. They write reports in history, facts about healthy living and arguments for and against school uniform. In one history lesson pupils adopted the persona of a character on board a ship in the 1500's when writing a postcard home. They incorporated their knowledge of that person's lifestyle well into the prose. Pupils develop their reading skills when reading texts and articles in other curriculum areas but are given limited opportunities to find information for themselves and practise writing skills by recording their findings in different ways.
77. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory with some good lessons in Key Stage 1 but more varied in Key Stage 2 where it ranges from very good to satisfactory. In the very good lessons, teachers show a good subject knowledge and plan well for pupils to build on previous knowledge and extend it further. By giving clear explanations and asking challenging questions, they enable pupils to understand complex texts. They inspire pupils by their enthusiasm and set high expectations for standards of behaviour and work. All teachers match work well to the abilities of the pupils with special educational needs and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Not all teachers provide activities of the right challenge for the higher achieving pupils resulting in a slower rate of learning and in one lesson time being wasted when the easy task was completed quickly. In the weaker lessons time was lost through poor behaviour of some pupils resulting in a slower rate of learning for all. In the unsatisfactory lesson the main writing task was not explained clearly and pupils were confused by subsidiary ideas. The teacher did not keep a close enough check on children's progress as they worked. Few children achieved what she had planned for the lesson.
78. Teachers in Key Stage 1 keep detailed records of the words and sounds that pupils know and the strategies they use when reading. Writing is marked well with comments about what the pupil has done well and suggestions for improvement. Unfortunately this good practice is not continued in the junior classes. Teachers merely keep lists of the books that pupils have read and the marking of writing is inconsistent. Some teachers give pupils very good advice about their writing while others merely tick work or make simplistic remarks such as 'use full stops'. A sample of writing from each pupil is collected termly and marked in more detail but because reading and writing records are not comprehensive enough, teachers cannot plan appropriately for all abilities of pupils.
79. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall but more effective in the infants than in the juniors. Careful choices have meant that the quality of books has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils' work has been analysed and a very detailed report drawn

up indicating where standards need to improve. The governor for literacy has also made a valuable contribution by observing lessons and commenting on the quality of teaching and learning. These ideas have not been followed through well enough in Key Stage 2. The work of teachers and pupils is not checked closely enough to ensure that agreed action is being carried out and is having an impact on children's learning.

## MATHEMATICS

80. Standards in both key stages have been maintained overall since the last inspection but there has been a significant improvement in the numbers of pupils achieving higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2. Key factors in this improvement have been the school's decision to teach mathematics lessons to children in ability groups and the school's implementation of a national numeracy initiative. As a result of these changes, lessons are more demanding of pupils, more ground is covered and work is better matched to pupils' level of attainment. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
81. Having entered school with well below average skills in number and understanding of mathematical ideas, children learn at a steady pace in the infants. They make solid gains in their knowledge of number facts and their understanding of space, shape and measure. Most children are achieving the average for their age at 7 years although this year, an increasing number are exceeding expectations and reaching above average standards. This is because of the school's new approach to teaching mental arithmetic. Teachers are placing more emphasis on developing children's skills in finding different ways to add, subtract, multiply and divide; they are required to explain their methods and to think quickly when asked to work out sums in their head.
82. In the juniors, the rate at which pupils learn picks up and they learn at a good pace in most lessons. This is because teachers have high expectations of what they will achieve and lessons are run with energy and real enthusiasm. This lifts pupils' expectations of themselves and they become confident to attempt increasingly difficult work; their attitudes to mathematical work are very positive and they relish the challenges offered to them. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress, particularly in working with number.
83. Some teaching in the junior classes is excellent and over half of the lessons seen were judged to be good or better. Teachers are good at matching work well to children's needs and lessons are planned carefully to ensure that pupils move on at the right pace. Often teachers will amend their lesson plans in the light of how well pupils have managed the current work they are doing and move them on from there.
84. Teachers also vary their methods and this maintains children's interest. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher worked the class first of all on quick-fire mental arithmetic questions which made them respond as individuals and provide speedy answers. After a recap of the previous day's work by the teacher, they then worked in pairs to explore the relationships between percentages, fractions and decimals. Work was matched well to their abilities and because they were given different numbers according to the level they had reached, they were challenged and made to think hard but still coped well with the work and made good progress.
85. Teachers use good questioning techniques which bring out children's knowledge and lets the teacher know how well they are understanding the work. For example, in a lesson on right angles and compass points with the mixed age Year 3/4 class, the teacher marked the walls of the room with four compass points and asked the class to turn to different points either clockwise or anti-clockwise. They were then asked how many degrees they had turned through and whether or not this was a right angled (90 degree) turn. To discover which children could move further with their learning, the teacher introduced another four compass points and repeated the exercise. Some pupils were able to tell that between some points there were only 45 degrees, while between others there were 90 degrees.



86. A couple of lessons were noted as unsatisfactory and this stemmed from a poor match of work to the level the children had reached. Both had a similar outcome in that children did not move on well with their learning, with some finding the work too easy and others struggling to understand what they were expected to do.
87. Mathematics is being used well to support work in other subjects, for example in design and technology. Year 1 pupils for example, learn the appropriate names for shapes and use them to plan their robot designs. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 use their skills to measure materials before cutting as part of the process of making products. A weakness is that too often, children are given worksheets to record their work. This does not allow them to develop presentational skills securely enough or decide for themselves how to set work out.
88. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader checks on teachers' plans and watches them at work; she then provides comments for development. This is resulting in better teaching because teachers are constantly evaluating what they do and finding ways to improve further.

## **SCIENCE**

89. Inspection findings are that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are close to the national average and are average at Key Stage 2. These are similar standards to those identified in the previous inspection report.
90. In last year's national curriculum tests for Year 6, pupils were well below average when compared with all schools and below average when compared with schools similar to Lord Blyton. There are a number of reasons why the school's results were not as good as previous years and for the apparent discrepancy between this current Year 6 and last year's group. A small minority of pupils were very close to achieving the average. There were also changes within the year group with some higher achievers leaving and some lower achievers joining from other schools.
91. The strongest achievement by pupils at both key stages is in their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. Pupils' achievements and their rate of progress are closely related to the quality of teaching in the school. They learn at a satisfactory rate in Key Stage 1 and go on to make good progress over time in Key Stage 2. The teaching in the infants is satisfactory but in some classes in the juniors it is good and at times very good. Overall the quality of teaching is better in the juniors and this is why the progress is better. Some teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this really well to support pupils' learning. As a result pupils are developing a very good understanding of scientific vocabulary. For example, in Year 6 the teacher guided the pupils well as they classified living things according to their features and habitats using the correct terminology for the different groups of living things. In the best lessons teachers also make good use of practical work to help their pupils improve their learning. For example, in Year 5 pupils made really good progress in understanding about gravity, forces and friction by making a working model of an 'SAS man' which ascended two pieces of string. By the end of the session, pupils had discovered that the figure moved up the string when the forces of gravity and friction worked together; when he was balanced they found that there was no movement. This practical approach, evident in the junior classes is also helping pupils to develop a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test.
92. In another very good lesson in Year 4 pupils were really motivated and excited by the activity the teacher set up for them. The teacher made the learning fun for them by letting

them play the 'Eco-game.' This involved them in taking on the role of different creatures and plants within the environment. The teacher made sure they understand the meaning of terms such as top carnivore, producer and consumer and let them loose to hunt for food based on the role they were playing. One child for example approached another and asked, 'Are you dead?' and then followed this up by saying, 'Well, I don't eat dead things.' By the end of the lesson they had developed a good understanding of food chains and had learned new vocabulary, for example that a detrivor only eats things that are dead.

93. The teachers make really good links between science and other subjects of the curriculum and particularly with design technology. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 6 learn about forces at a rapid rate because teachers use work in design technology to teach scientific principles. For example, Year 4 pupils design and build bridges and test structures , which helps consolidate their knowledge. In Year 6, this is also developed well as pupils build space rockets with plastic bottles. In a lesson observed, great excitement and enthusiasm was generated as the children tested out their rockets and learned that the force which propelled the rockets was a push and that their rockets would move in the direction of the force.
94. Whilst pupils are doing well in developing their knowledge and understanding of each aspect of science, there are some weaknesses. Too much of the practical work done is directed by the teachers. As a result, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to set up their own experiments, to answer questions they have raised and interpret their own ideas and findings. There are also inconsistencies in the way teachers require pupils to record their work. As a result pupils are not refining their skills in writing up reports and recording conclusions.
95. Management of the subject is very good. There has been detailed analysis of test papers to identify areas of weakness, pupils' work has been examined and teaching has been observed. Through these activities the subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. A detailed action plan has been drawn up to address these issues.

## **ART**

96. Standards in art are typical of those found in most schools for children of this age. Their skills in observational drawing are better than seen in most schools. Pupils are given a wide range of high quality learning experiences using media such as paint, pastels, charcoal, chalk, clay and various collage materials. From a young age they are given the opportunity to experiment with different printing techniques and observe and explore the styles of famous artists. As they move through the school their drawings become more detailed and accurate and they use colour and different media with more confidence and imagination. By the time they leave the school the pupils have acquired a good understanding of art from different times and places and can produce effective paintings in the style of famous artists. They use shade and tone in detailed, accurate drawings and express ideas and feelings through a variety of media.
97. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1. Only one lesson in Key Stage 2 was seen due to timetabling arrangements. An overall judgement on teaching in that key stage has not been made therefore but teaching in the one lesson seen was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and demonstrate techniques well using clear explanations and correct vocabulary. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher demonstrated printing using different objects and techniques to produce patterns that overlap, repeat and rotate. All pupils had the opportunity to practise the techniques before working on a large collage.

Good questioning by the teacher as they worked enabled them to choose colours and objects carefully to produce the desired effect. At the end of the lesson when they evaluated their work and the collages of others they used the correct vocabulary and displayed a good knowledge of printing techniques.

98. The teacher of the mixed age Year 3/4 class used constant praise and encouragement as the class worked at paper folding techniques. This enabled all pupils including those with special educational needs to successfully make the butterfly as demonstrated. Pupils from a young age use sketchbooks well to plan their work and practise their skills. All pupils work hard and concentrate well as they draw from still life or thoughtfully choose which colours, textures and techniques to use in collage and prints.
99. Display work throughout the school is of a high standard. Teachers display work carefully and thoughtfully, celebrating all pupils' achievements whilst at the same time providing a visually stimulating environment for learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 take great pride in seeing their paintings based on Turner's 'The Fighting Temeraire' mounted in a frame before being displayed. Teachers plan carefully to enable pupils to develop their art skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example in geography, Year 4 pupils have produced observational drawings of the Tyne bridge using charcoal, pastels, chalk, pencil and felt tips. They have also drawn other types of bridges with which to compare it. Pupils have used their mathematical knowledge to paint pictures from co-ordinates in Year 6 and to produce collages of two and three-dimensional shapes in Year 2. All pupils draw their design before making products in design and technology.
100. The school's very good links with the community artist further extend the pupils' experiences. She is currently helping pupils produce a huge banner depicting images of the North East. This is part of the European project where pupils have been designing their own banners to send to their European friends. Standards in art have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Standards are generally typical of those seen in other schools although work undertaken by pupils in Year 4 is of a much higher quality than normally seen. Here, they give careful consideration of the purpose of the products they make and the quality of the preliminary sketches and draft designs they produce is excellent. When making bird feeders for example, they noted that rope or string to hold the feeders would not be appropriate, as it would rot. They considered the effects of toxins in certain paints on birds and how they could prevent larger birds from taking all the food. The completed feeders were constructed to a very high standard using mesh with a variety of cutting and joining techniques.
102. Although their skills are never refined to as high a degree as in Year 4, other juniors achieve well in using a broad range of skills to plan, make and evaluate products. They tackle a good range of interesting and purposeful tasks. Year 6 pupils for example, learn to follow instructions from commercial kits. They demonstrate a good level of competence in measuring, marking wood and in cutting, shaping and smoothing it. Written work shows that they also carefully evaluate what they have made and suggest improvements.
103. Younger children develop a good range of basic skills and understanding about the design process. They have plenty of opportunities to practise cutting and joining techniques and to plan and evaluate their work.

104. Teaching overall is satisfactory although it is very good in one of the Year 4 and one Year 6 class. It is particularly good in these classes because work in science and design technology is successfully combined. This not only produces a good range of work, which motivates children and inspires enthusiasm but it also reinforces scientific principles. For example, work undertaken by Year 4 pupils on building bridges and testing structures consolidates their knowledge and understanding of forces. In Year 6, this is also developed well as pupils build space rockets with plastic bottles and test them out.
105. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Much of the exciting and stimulating work undertaken by Year 4 and Year 6 pupils is as a result of keen teacher interest and good subject knowledge. Overall, the quality of work is better than at the time of the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

106. Only a small number of geography and history lessons were observed. Further evidence has been drawn from a scrutiny of teachers' planning files and discussions with teachers and pupils. Standards in both subjects have been maintained since the last inspection and are typical of those seen in most schools. Both subjects provide pupils with a worthwhile experience and a good range of work is covered across the school.
107. Younger children have a sound knowledge of places and can name the countries of the United Kingdom on a map and place their own area on it. They describe houses after looking at different ones in their locality and they enjoy looking for evidence of the past from photographs to distinguish old from new.
108. Older pupils have a good recall of facts about the main events and people they have studied in history. They have also developed a good understanding of why things happened as they did.
109. Teaching in both subjects is at least satisfactory. In one very good history lesson seen in Year 4, the teacher showed very good subject knowledge and provided very interesting resources, such as a cat o' nine tails to help children understand what life was like at sea during the 1500's. The high expectations he set meant that the lesson demanded a great deal of the class. They were motivated and excited and wrote down some varied and interesting accounts of what it would have been like to be in the navy at the time of Sir Francis Drake.
110. Leadership and management of the subjects are good. The subject leader is the same for both and she provides good guidance for staff on what to teach and how to teach it. The school makes very good use of visits to increase pupils' geographical and historical knowledge. Children's knowledge and understanding develops well because they gain first hand experiences of places. They are keen to talk about where they have been and remember these visits even when they have taken place some time ago.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

111. Pupils achieve standards of work that are in line with those expected at the end of both key stages. Most pupils learn at a satisfactory pace, although this is accelerated in some lessons. All classes are allocated an hour period each week in the computer room. During these lessons, most pupils rapidly acquire new skills and learn at a good pace. However, as most of the school's computers are now sited in the computer room, there is little

opportunity for children to practise skills in between sessions. Consequently, the rate of learning is slowed and they are not able to use computers on a daily basis or develop their skills to a high level through using them in other subjects of the curriculum.

112. Pupils in Key Stage 1 explore information from a various sources and most can enter, retrieve and save work. They undertake a wide variety of work when working in the computer room. They show rapidly developing levels of skill in controlling the mouse and making the computer respond to their instructions and prompts.
113. By the time they leave the school, pupils edit and combine different types of information and present it in different forms. For example, Year 6 pupils produce an annual Christmas quiz book containing text and graphics. These are adapted well to meet the needs of younger children. Children also communicate with other schools through e-mail. They recently studied a geography programme produced by secondary age pupils. Afterwards they sent e-mail messages to the school giving their views on the usefulness of the programme. Year 6 pupils have recently worked in collaboration with a local school and university to produce a CD Rom. This is a simulation programme through which features of a river may be explored.
114. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have worked hard at raising their own levels of knowledge and competence to cope with the rapidly developing demands of the subject. When working with the whole class at once on the computer room, they are well organised and prepared. As a result, lessons are productive and children cover a lot of ground. They waste little time waiting for the teacher's attention, as they know what to do. Teachers deploy the support assistant effectively and this ensures good back up if there are problems with the computers.
115. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is knowledgeable and skilled. This gives other staff an excellent means of support in planning for lessons and developing confidence to work with up to thirty children and ten computers at once.
116. The school has expanded and improved its provision in this subject rapidly over the past few years. Planning for development is thorough and well thought-out. The subject leader has a good overview of the quality of work being undertaken and the school's needs. Plans for development are appropriate and based on this.

## **MUSIC**

117. Only a limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection. Further evidence has been provided by scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. From this, it is possible to judge that standards are typical of those seen in most schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory.
118. Pupils sing well. They have good control of their voices and can sing the melodies of songs with reasonable accuracy. Throughout the school, they show a good sense of pitch and rhythm.
119. Older pupils communicate their musical ideas to others well. For example, in Year 4 they clap out the rhythms of each other's names. Year 3 pupils clap out each other's rhythmic patterns. Pupils respond to different characteristics and moods of music, expressing their ideas about it and recognising some of the instruments being played. Year 6 pupils can

sing in tune and maintain a steady beat with percussion instruments. They sing rounds in two or three parts showing a good awareness of other performers.

120. Teachers generate enjoyment in lessons so that pupils are keen to join in and enthusiastic about their work. Lessons have a good balance between the children listening to music or to performances by others and in participating themselves.
121. Whilst most teachers do not have strong subject knowledge, they have good guidance for the subject leader on what to teach and how to teach it. This has given them confidence and raised standards in the subject overall. The lesson taught by the subject leader was of good quality. Her knowledge of how to guide children towards improving their performance resulted in a good pace of learning. In this instance, she coached their singing well and enabled them to go from one note to another without sliding.
122. Some children attend a lunchtime recorder club. They play in assemblies and this raises the standard they achieve in lessons as they develop an understanding of how to read music and play as part of a group.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. An overall judgement on standards cannot be made because no work was observed in gymnastics or dance. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection.
124. Based on pupils' records the majority of Year 6 pupils have already met the expectation of being able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The school provides well for swimming with all classes from Year 2 having lessons each year.
125. Of the lessons seen, one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory. Insufficient emphasis was given to teaching skills and not enough use was made of all the available resources to support learning. Pupils spent long periods waiting for a turn and small minority became restless; their behaviour was poor. As a result of these factors, children achieved very little from the lesson.
126. In both lessons seen, teachers presented themselves as good role models by wearing appropriate clothing and paying good attention to health and safety. All the pupils were appropriately kitted and moved from their classroom to the hall in a sensible way
127. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and as a result are able to participate fully and actively within physical education lessons.
128. There are a number of positive features about the school's provision. Children are able to access a good range of sporting activities outside normal school time. This gives them valuable opportunities to improve their skills, for example in badminton and football. The school also makes very good use of the community to enhance the quality of the curriculum. During the inspection for example, basketball coaches worked with Year 6 children to improve their skills in dribbling a ball. The pupils really enjoyed the activities and were well motivated to try hard and gain success. As a result they achieved well and improved their skills of dribbling and ball control. All pupils in Year 5 and 6 have the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor pursuits centre each year. This supports their social and personal development very well and further increases the overall range of activities they experience. Some of the more adventurous activities such as abseiling are obviously not possible in normal school lessons. All of these factors add to the good overall

quality of the curriculum, which was noted by the last inspection and has been maintained since.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. At the end of the Key Stage 2, the standard of pupils' work is below that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with these requirements. This represents a weaker picture than at the time of the last inspection. In the past two years, the school has put a great part of its efforts into raising standards in literacy and numeracy and less attention has been directed towards religious education. As a result, it has less prominence in the timetable and is often squeezed in and around other subjects.
130. Pupils in Year 6 have insufficient knowledge and understanding of the main facts or key features of topics they have studied. They are unclear about much of the symbolism, meaning or signs associated with the practice of different faiths including Christianity.
131. The pace and depth of pupils' learning varies throughout the junior classes. It is best in Years 4 and 5 where the subject is presented in a lively and informative way. Pupils are motivated to learn and remember through visits and videos. For example, when studying the Islamic faith, they visited a mosque and developed a good understanding of Muslim prayer customs. Good use of artefacts also supports their learning. In other year groups, too much teaching is dependent upon the class reading information on the topic to be covered and then completing a worksheet to check their understanding. There is too little use of research or investigation throughout the junior classes or opportunities for pupils to find out facts for themselves.
132. Pupils in Year 2 can talk confidently about other religions they have studied. For example, they describe the prayer customs of Judaism including prayer caps, the Torah (holy book) and the importance of a Mezuzah (prayer scroll) in Jewish homes. They also have a good understanding of religious symbols. For example, they are able to describe how the cross is an important symbol to Christians and how traditions such as Easter eggs and hot cross buns are associated with religious beliefs.
133. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1. Children in the infant classes learn at a good pace because teachers ensure that much of what they learn is presented in an interesting and relevant way. Children are able to understand the meaning of stories and parables for example, because the main messages are drawn out well and related to their own lives. Ceremonies such as weddings are re-enacted by Reception children and important language and symbolic actions are emphasised.
134. At Key Stage 2, teaching in lessons is generally satisfactory although there are weaknesses which affect pupils' progress over time. Not all the teachers follow the requirements of the scheme of work closely enough. This results in unnecessary repetition of work and pupils do not build well on their previous knowledge. For example, in the infants, work on the Christian festival of Easter is focused on events of the Easter story. This work is repeated in the junior classes. The scheme indicates that the topic should be covered in greater depth, emphasising the more symbolic aspects.
135. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Weaknesses in the approach to teaching in the juniors have been identified through checking pupils' work. These have yet to be tackled effectively enough.