

INSPECTION REPORT

**LANCHESTER ENDOWED PAROCHIAL CHURCH
OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lanchester, Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 131805

Headteacher: Mr. M. Webb

Reporting inspector: David Figures
10269

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 26th May 2000

Inspection number: 221528

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Front Street Lanchester Durham Co. Durham
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Revd Peter Waterhouse

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		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Music	Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Daljit Singh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Judith Charlesworth	Team inspector	Design and technology	
		Geography	
		History	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Religious education	
		Equality of opportunity	
		Special educational needs	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a Voluntary Controlled primary school catering for boys and girls between three and eleven years of age, most of whom come from the village of Lanchester. The full-time equivalent of thirty nine children were under the age of five at the time of the inspection.

Number of full time pupils:	276		Average in size
Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds	0		
Pupils with English as an additional language:	0		
Pupils entitled to free school meals	25	10%	About the national average
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	44	18%	About average
Pupils with statements of special educational needs	4		

The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is slightly below average; when pupils start the National Curriculum, their attainment is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lanchester Endowed Parochial School is a very effective school in which confident and self-assured adults and children enjoy each other's company. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology are high because good, frequently very good, teaching leads to effective learning. Very good leadership creates a secure atmosphere in which pupils have the confidence to do well; at the same time the school carefully monitors what is being taught and learned in these subjects as part of a programme of continuously raising standards. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school enables pupils to become mature and exceedingly well-behaved young people, whose attitudes to school are very good.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology are high, as the result of the effective organisation of the curriculum for these subjects and good quality teaching.
- By creating an atmosphere of care and security in which pupils have the confidence to learn, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governors, headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership and management for the school.
- Provision for children under five is very good.

What could be improved

- Planning the curriculum for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information technology, and their co-ordination, is not adequately established. Monitoring teaching and learning in these areas is too informal.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Newly formed, the school has not been inspected before. Of the precedent schools the County Nursery and the Church of England Junior school were inspected in 1996. The County Infant School had never been inspected. There have been many staffing changes in

the interim. Therefore it is not possible to make valid comparisons with the findings of a previous inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	N/A	N/A	B	B
mathematics	N/A	N/A	B	A
science	N/A	N/A	A	A

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

Standards are good when children reach the age of five. Attainment in reading writing and mathematics is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics are above average and the attainment of a high proportion of pupils is above that expected for their age. In science, the pupils' results are well above average nationally, and in mathematics and science the results are well above the average of schools with a similar intake. The school sets ambitious targets for attainment. Standards are good in religious education and information technology. They are good in music and physical education and satisfactory in art, geography and history. There is not enough evidence to judge design and technology standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' approach to their work is mature and thoughtful. They are keen to do well and fulfil the personal targets set for them, and they ensure that not a moment is wasted.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. It contributes to the school's purposeful ethos, and to the high standards achieved.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils accept increasing levels of responsibility as they get older. Relationships between all members of the school community are warm, cordial and productive.
Attendance	Good. There is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching overall is good and caters well for all pupils. As a result, pupils learn very effectively and achieve well. In nearly all the lessons seen it was at least satisfactory and in 75 per cent it was good or better. In 20 per cent the quality of teaching was very good. It was less than satisfactory in two per cent. The best teaching was seen at the upper end of Key Stage 2 and with children under five. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. The strengths lie in very good relationships, good planning, clear learning objectives and high expectations of pupils' attention, diligence and commitment, expressed through individual and group targets. Work is very well matched to pupils' needs: this challenges them, and maintains their interest; they work diligently and behave very well. The occasional weaknesses lie in insufficiently clear learning objectives, work not well enough matched to the pupils' needs and a slow pace of lessons. When this happens, pupils lose motivation and do not make enough progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good especially for children under five, English, mathematics, science and religious education. Learning activities are well planned and provide an education for the pupils which is both broad and well balanced. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Very good links with other local schools enrich the opportunities for learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Curriculum planning is good. The quality of the individual education plans is good and they provide relevant and realistic targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. As a result pupils can concentrate on learning and achieve very high standards. Insufficient attention is given to the multi-cultural aspect of the pupils experience, however.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A good standard of care, support and guidance enables the school community to learn in a safe and secure environment. Assessment arrangements are very good. They are excellent for English, mathematics and science; they are very good for other subjects but not yet fully implemented.

The school works very well with parents and carers, who speak highly of it.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good, with high quality team-work. There is an exceptionally strong commitment to raising standards. English, mathematics, science and information technology are well-organised subjects. Co-ordination of other subjects is insufficiently developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Committed governors provide well-informed support: they are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Careful account is taken of all relevant data. Excellent monitoring of English, mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	Good, especially the use of computers. Learning support assistants are used very well in support of pupils with special educational needs.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory; outside areas are very good. Principles of best value are applied informally at present, and spending decisions are not evaluated in terms of the impact they have on pupils' attainment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is easy to talk to about pupils' concerns and problems. • Teaching is good and helps children become mature and responsible young people. • The good range of extra-curricular activity. • Children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework should be more consistent over the years a child is in the school.

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive comments, but not the observation on homework, which they found to be thoughtfully and conscientiously set.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The standards achieved by pupils in the school are high, and are particularly high in science. The school sets challenging targets and helps pupils of all levels of ability make good progress towards them.

2. By the time they are five, the great majority of children have reached the goals expected for their age, particularly in personal and social development, language, literacy and mathematics. Many have exceeded them, some by a considerable amount. They make very good progress overall, and especially in these areas of learning.

3. The relationships the under-fives have with one another are very good. They understand about sharing and taking turns; they quickly learn to be independent and concentrate on their tasks. They learn also to collaborate well with each other. They listen carefully and contribute sensibly to a group discussion. They have made a good start to learning to read and write. Children have laid a good foundation for mathematics, and have the basis for good early scientific knowledge. They know about themselves and their environment and operate the computer with confidence. They paint, draw, sing and play instruments, and engage in imaginative role play. They are well co-ordinated for their age, move well and confidently use tools.

4. The National Curriculum Assessment results obtained in 1999 by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were also well above the average of schools with a similar intake. In reading, the attainment of half the pupils was at the level expected of nine-year-olds, and in mathematics a third of the pupils reached this level. In the science teacher assessments, an above-average proportion of pupils was attaining at the expected level for seven year olds. The proportion whose attainment was above this level was well above average.

5. The results were high at Key Stage 2 also. In the 1999 national assessments, results in English and mathematics were above the national average. The English results were above the average of schools with a similar intake, and the mathematics results were well above the average for similar schools. In science, the comparison with the national averages and with that for comparable schools places the school's results well above the average of each category. The forecast for the present Year 6 pupils is for similarly high results.

6. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with these results and with the pupils' high levels of achievement. In English, standards of speaking and listening are very good in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils speak clearly in well-formed sentences, and by the time they are eleven, they discuss their work with adults in appropriate terms and confidently speak to the class or to wider groups like the Team Assemblies.

7. Standards of reading are high in Key Stage 1 where the highest and average attaining pupils read accurately and with good expression, and very high in Key Stage 2. By the time they are eleven, most pupils read accurately and fluently, draw appropriate inferences from the text, and enjoy a full diet of varied reading.

8. The standard of pupils' writing is good. In Key Stage 1 pupils have good ideas, and the most able have the skills to express them well, although for a few, skills are less well established. The writing of pupils in Key Stage 2 is good over a range of styles; some is very good and the best is outstanding. Narrative is particularly well written, with convincing characters, good dialogue and well-organised paragraphs. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation are all good.

9. In mathematics, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 solve problems well, manage number operations competently and have a good grasp of measuring, weighing and shape. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a very good understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals. They carry out calculations using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of two and three digit numbers. They handle data well. They plot co-ordinates and extract and interpret information from different forms of chart.

10. Standards achieved in science are good in all areas of the curriculum and very good in Key Stage 2. Key Stage 1 pupils investigate, classify information and acquire detailed knowledge about living things. In Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge is extended and their scientific skills develop. They make informed predictions and record experimental data accurately. Most are able to interpret their findings logically and can draw sensible conclusions from the data.

11. Pupils achieve standards above those expected for pupils the same age in information technology and religious education. In information technology, Key Stage 1 pupils become familiar with computer operations and begin to use the computers confidently. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have good keyboard skills, use the cursor, communicate information, play sounds from a tape, use software, control everyday items, use the world wide web, and e-mail and load a program.

12. In religious education, standards of attainment, including those pupils who have special educational needs, are high at the end of each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of the life of Jesus and of selected parts of the Old Testament. By the time they leave the school the pupils have a sound factual knowledge and a good understanding of the significance of Christianity and other world religions.

13. Pupils' standards of attainment are good in music. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing confidently and joyfully, mostly in tune. In Key Stage 2 pupils listen to music and perform well. The choir and recorder, violin, cello and guitar give additional opportunities for performing and listening to music. Performance in physical education is also good. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop their skills through practising, for example progressing from two handed catching to throwing and catching with one hand. In Key Stage 2 they successfully apply their skills to team games. Nearly all pupils swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

14. Standards are satisfactory in art, geography and history. There was very little evidence on which to judge standards in design and technology. From the material that is available, the indications are that pupils' skills are unlikely to be at expected levels for their age by the time they leave the school. This is largely because, while the *making* component is often used to support other subjects, for example history, geography, science and art, pupils have had insufficient experience of the subject's equally important other aspects: the processes of designing, planning and evaluating.

15. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress in relation to their individual targets as a result of the early identification of their needs and stringent monitoring of their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They come eagerly to school and once there they demonstrate commitment, high levels of concentration, interest and enjoyment. Pupils are enthusiastic and conscientious learners. For instance, in a Year 3 science lesson pupils were observed listening attentively and eager to answer questions. Their spirit of enquiry encouraged them to pose interesting questions and contribute constructively to a lively and challenging debate. They shared information and ideas in groups and responded very effectively to the lesson prepared for them. Pupils speak proudly of their school and appreciate the efforts of their teachers. They have a positive attitude to teachers and visitors which is demonstrated in their helpful and courteous behaviour. Many pupils actively participate in extra-curricular activity during the lunch hour and after school. These opportunities encourage pupils to think positively about themselves and others, and build up their confidence and self esteem.

17. Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and are well integrated into the school community. They relate well to adults and to other pupils and as a consequence gain in confidence and make good progress.

18. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is evident in the playground and around the school as well as in the classrooms. Pupils consistently observe the school rules and there have been no exclusions in the history of the school. Pupils are supported by the fair and balanced approach of teachers, who actively encourage pupils to achieve the highest standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils are able to learn in a secure, warm and friendly environment which contributes to the high standards they achieve.

19. Pupils' relationships with each other and teachers are exemplary and complement their excellent behaviour and very good attitudes to school. Based on mutual respect and understanding, the relationships contribute significantly to the school's purposeful ethos and to the high standards achieved. The school community understands and appreciates diversity and the constant need to promote and develop friendships, which are evident across the school. Pupils enjoy learning in pairs and small groups and show a strong willingness to exchange information and ideas. They respond very constructively to visitors' questions and always reply positively and confidently.

20. Older pupils care for younger pupils and encourage them to play in a friendly and purposeful manner. Pupils at all points in the school share equipment, toys and conversation. There are no signs of bullying, or other types of anti-social behaviour and pupils respect property and the school environment. Pupils willingly accept the responsibilities they are given, which increase as they grow older, to serve as house captains, representatives on the School Council, librarians, class and school monitors. They take the responsibilities very seriously and discharge them conscientiously valuing the opportunity to serve the school and community. This creates a harmonious and stimulating learning environment, which supports pupils' personal development.

21. Attendance is good overall. Authorised absence is at the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. This results from the diligent efforts of the headteacher, teachers and the majority of parents. They all work purposefully to ensure that pupils attend regularly and arrive at lessons on time. However, a small but significant minority of parents take their children on holiday during term time and this has an adverse effect on the school's record of

attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The good overall quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' outstanding behaviour, what they learn and the standards they achieve. In nearly all the lessons seen it was at least satisfactory and in three quarters it was good or better. In a fifth of all lessons the quality of teaching was very good. It was less than satisfactory in two per cent, a much lower proportion than is usually found. The best teaching was seen in at the upper end of Key Stage 2 and with children under the age of five.

23. The very good quality of teaching for children under five is reflected in the children's very good progress. It is particularly good for pupils in the nursery in the area of personal and social development, and in the reception classes in literacy and numeracy. Staff have high expectations of the pupils but can make the children feel secure and comfortable if they are fractious or unwell. They never patronise or talk down to children. They explain carefully and provide tasks which are appropriate to the children's age and ability. Good planning ensures children's progress. Careful records of each child's achievement help staff to plan sessions, and to provide suitable support to those who are making faster or slower progress than others.

24. The quality of teaching is good both key stages. In Key Stage 2 there are significant strengths in Years 5 and 6. Teaching quality is good in English, mathematics and science. It is good in information technology, music, physical education and religious education; and in geography in Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory in art. No judgement was possible about how design and technology or history are taught as insufficient direct teaching of these subjects was observed during the inspection.

25. The good and very good lessons are characterised by the teacher's clear view of the learning needs of all the pupils and the requirements of the subject. This leads to good planning based on clear learning objectives, and with a high level of challenge. Tasks are prepared which are interesting and become progressively more complex, so that pupils' interest is captured and maintained. A good-humoured atmosphere of mutual respect enables pupils to be confident and not afraid to try out new ideas. It encourages them to work hard and to want to please the teacher so that excellent behaviour results. Skilful questioning uses pupils' contributions, checks their understanding, and challenges those of different ability. It obliges pupils to think carefully about what they already know, link aspects together and arrive at new ideas for themselves. This worked well in a Year 5 mathematics lesson where sensitive questioning by the teacher encouraged pupils to think carefully about their work, and consider practical activities to reinforce their knowledge of fractions.

26. In the successful lessons, clear explanations and instructions, expressed in suitable language, enable pupils to start work promptly, knowing exactly what they have to do. As a result, pupils settle quickly, work diligently and make good progress. This was seen working well, for example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, where pupils began work without fuss and continued in complete silence for half an hour. Supporting adults are used well to lead groups and to encourage pupils to learn, as in an art lesson in Key Stage 1. Lessons move forward purposefully when the teacher insists on a brisk pace which encourages the pupils to stay involved in the lesson and achieve well. This was seen in more than one literacy hour in both key stages. As a result, pupils of all levels of ability are eager to contribute and remain engaged in the lesson for significant periods of time. The assessment of pupils' work during the successful lessons is good and pupils, including, for example, those in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, are encouraged by the teachers' positive comments. Good assessment enables the teacher, where necessary, to alter the focus of the lesson; as in

one instance in Key Stage 2, when it became clear that earlier learning needed to be revised before the lesson's objectives could be tackled. In English, regular literacy interviews enable teacher and pupil to review progress, discuss difficulties and set personal targets for future work.

27. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, planning is thorough; teachers' explanations and instructions are clear so that pupils know what they have to do; there is good classroom management and lessons move at a suitable pace. Sometimes, however, expectations are not always ambitious enough, particularly for the higher attainers, and the work set does not sufficiently take account of different levels of ability. Sometimes, in some lessons in the lower juniors the pace of the lesson is too slow and time is not effectively managed. Occasionally, because learning objectives are not clear enough and work is not well enough matched to the pupils' needs, the quality of teaching becomes unsatisfactory. When this happens, pupils lose motivation and do not make enough progress.

28. Marking is mostly very well done. It is usually full and detailed with plenty of ideas for improvement. Often these ideas are expressed in terms of personal targets, and teachers' comments initiate a dialogue between pupil and teacher. This is very good practice. Homework is well used in English, mathematics and science, and in other subjects like geography, to support the work of the classroom.

29. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs, generally undertaken by the class teachers within the class setting, is good. The school follows a policy of inclusion but has a flexible approach and sometimes pupils are taught in withdrawal groups. However, the work is always planned with the class teacher and the content of the withdrawal lesson is similar to the main lesson. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs. They follow the correct procedures and set realistic targets to help their pupils work successfully in school. The learning support assistants working with pupils who have statements of special educational needs have very good relationships with the pupils and the class teachers. They collaborate well with them to ensure that the work is appropriate but still challenging.

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

30. The school's very good curriculum provides the pupils with stimulating and challenging learning experiences and promotes high achievement, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information technology. It is broadly based, provides all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, together with an introduction to conversational French, and statutory requirements are met. Good provision is made for the pupils' personal, social and health education, which includes appropriate sex and drugs awareness education. There is, however, a weakness in the provision for design and technology where, although pupils have satisfactory experience of making, the designing and evaluation strands of the subject are not sufficiently developed.

31. An appropriate allocation of time has been given to all subjects, and schemes of work are in place for all areas. The school has implemented the national strategies of literacy and numeracy and both initiatives have had good influence on the wider curriculum. For instance, teachers encourage pupils to use their good speaking and listening skills in subjects such as religious education where they discuss other faiths, and mathematics where they explain the reasons for their calculations. Mathematical skills are used in history and geography where pupils collect data and use co-ordinates in map reading. The high achievement of pupils is supported by suitable regular homework, including reading.

32. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Class teachers devise the individual educational plans in co-operation with the special needs co-ordinator and this ensures that pupils' targets are relevant and realistic. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. This is because of the well-focused support of the learning support assistants and the stringent monitoring of pupils' achievements.

33. The provision of extra-curricular activities for pupils in the upper part of the school is particularly good. Musical interest is nurtured through the choir, recorder groups and school concerts. An annual residential trip to a field studies centre allows Year 6 pupils to take part in outdoor activities and provides opportunities for their spiritual and social development. Every two years, pupils from Years 5 and 6 travel to France for a week to extend their geographical knowledge and gain further understanding of European culture and customs. The present Year 5 and 6 pupils were eagerly anticipating the trip at the time of the inspection. At the end of the summer term before they leave the school Year 6 pupils camp in the school grounds. There is a lunchtime craft club but no computer club. In preparation for the trip to France there have been extra conversational French classes at lunchtime.

34. There is a wide range of sporting activities. Team sports include football, netball and rugby. Pupils participate successfully in district and county cross-country competitions and in the county athletics festival. Additional after-school coaching is provided by the school and by Sunderland AFC. Rugby coaching which includes past pupils as coaches is run on Saturday mornings. The school uses well-planned visits to enhance pupils' curricular experiences. These include visits to local museums, churches and library, a nature reserve and South Tyneside Planetarium.

35. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and is a strength of the school. The school and its surrounding community provide a secure and happy environment where pupils are able to concentrate on learning and achieve very high standards.

36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school has a strong and positive ethos, which places high value on the worth of the individual and the need to care for one another. The well organised collective worship and the religious education lessons make a valuable contribution. In the daily assemblies where a lit candle adds to the special atmosphere, pupils are given time to reflect and pray, which they do with reverence and sincerity. At the end of the morning and afternoon sessions pupils pray with conviction. Pupils often contribute to assembly by playing recorders, string instruments or the piano. In one Key Stage 2 assembly pupils enjoyed the role-play scenario which taught them not to judge people by appearances. A whole-school assembly contributed very well by reinforcing pupils' knowledge of Ascension Day and Pentecost, and the necessity to look after themselves and consider the needs of other people, such as the elderly, during the midterm break.

37. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Throughout the school the pupils respond well to the teachers' very high expectations of behaviour. The school is rightly proud of a letter received from members of the University Women's International Group congratulating the pupils on their 'beautiful behaviour' during a visit to the Hancock Museum. Through assemblies and religious education, pupils are encouraged to consider the differences between right and wrong. In a Key Stage 1 class assembly pupils learnt through a whispering game that 'tittle tattle' can be hurtful and thought of occasions when they or their friends might be unhappy. Teachers and assistants make very good role models promoting the school values of co-operation, honesty and fairness.

38. Pupils' social development is very well supported. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively in groups in subjects such as English, religious education and

mathematics. They respect each other's work. For example, one pupil in the reception class complemented another on her 'beautiful' work, and a boy in Year 2 described another pupil's work as 'cool'. Through a very good range of extra-curricular activities including residential trips, pupils learn how to respond to each other in different settings. The under fives and pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy the daily 'juice and biscuit' session which encourages them to develop conversational and social skills. The school fosters a sense of citizenship by supporting charity collections such as the Guide Dogs for the Blind and Christian Aid. They are environmentally aware as shown by the collection of Christmas cards for recycling. Pupils behave courteously towards visitors and show respect for teachers and other adults employed in the school. There is a school council which meets regularly to enable pupils to have a voice in the running of the school and presents opportunities for pupils to discuss issues and listen to the views of others before making decisions. The meetings are conducted formally and minutes are recorded. Pupils respond very seriously to the responsibilities they are given within the school, such as the daily tasks within classrooms and the supervision of corridors taken on by Year 6 pupils. Year 5 and 6 pupils run a weekly tuck shop, Year 6 are given responsibility for dinner tables and Year 5 pupils are invited to help Reception class pupils with their reading. One member of Year 6 meticulously rings the bell to indicate the start and finish of lessons.

39. The provision for cultural development is good. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge of other cultures through teaching about beliefs of different religions. The main festivals of Christianity are celebrated and pupils learn about those of other cultures such as Divali and Hanukkah. Pupils benefit from the instrumental lessons provided at the school and listen to a wide range of music during assemblies. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of their local heritage through regular visits to museums. However there are missed opportunities for pupils to learn – for example, through the choice of the art or music studied - about the ethnic diversity of British culture and about non-European cultures.

40. Strong links with the community support and enhance pupils' learning. For example there is a regular weekly link between pupils in Years 5 and 6 and a group of pupils at Villa Real special school: this is beneficial to the pupils in both schools. There are good relationships with two local high schools to which most of the pupils transfer. There are formal bridging programmes with both schools which prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education, successfully extending pupils' competence in written English and conversational French. There are links with the local hospice with the pupils entertaining patients and the hospice using the school premises for its Christmas Fair. Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from the connection with the Newcastle Building Society as they can make savings in school every Tuesday.

41. Although the provision for pupils' personal development is very good, it is without a formal system for monitoring and evaluating it.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The good procedures and policies are consistently implemented and ensure the pupils learn in a safe and secure environment.

43. The arrangements for child protection are clear and effectively implemented by a caring, well-informed and committed designated teacher. He continues to provide clear leadership and co-ordination which ensures that all staff are informed, suitably trained and understand their role in relation to the issues. All incidents of concern are rigorously pursued, recorded and monitored.

44. The child protection arrangements are complemented by good, effective procedures to ensure that the health, safety and well being of the school community is given appropriate priority. Accidents are recorded and systematically investigated.

45. Teachers enjoy a very constructive, trusting and purposeful relationship with pupils. They celebrate and reward pupils' achievements, both inside and outside the classroom. They provide effective supervision, listen attentively to pupils' concerns, provide good quality information, educational advice and guidance. This ensures that pupils feel secure, confident and self-assured, which in turn leads to high standards of achievement.

46. The school and the educational welfare officer work effectively to monitor attendance and ensure that good levels of attendance are maintained. Parents are discouraged from taking family holidays during term time, a practice which affects standards and prevents the school from further improving its existing record on attendance.

47. There are very effective measures for promoting good behaviour, which is achieved consistently. These are complemented by good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour which ensure that pupils learn in a warm, caring and friendly environment.

48. Assessment procedures are very good. On-entry assessment takes place in the Nursery and baseline assessment seven months after children move into Reception. Children's progress is well secured by careful assessment which helps staff plan with a clear focus. Good recording systems enable children's skills to be carefully built up over the years in the foundation stage, and identify those who need to be supported.

49. National assessment takes place at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Optional, but nationally validated assessment take place in Years 3, 4 and 5. As pupils in Year 1 have a screening test, every year group from Reception to Year 6 has some kind of formal assessment annually, supplemented by the class teachers' careful continuous assessment. Assessment arrangements are excellent for English, mathematics and science and the information obtained is used to plan future programmes of study and set individual and group targets. In information technology pupils have their own skills lists which they complete every half term.

50. Assessment arrangements are very good for other subjects but in most cases they are not yet fully implemented. There is a class highlight sheet for each subject. This is very good in principle, but since it is not fully implemented it is not yet providing information to be used in future curriculum planning. Because pupils write comparatively little in history, geography and religious education there is little firm evidence by which to corroborate the assessments, and teachers and pupils do not have a written record of their attainment to look back on at the end of the year. The assessment of work in design and technology is weak.

51. The school meets all the requirements for those pupils who have statements of special educational need and all are well supported. Formal tests are used to identify pupils with special educational needs when they start school. Teachers consistently use the information well to help them set appropriate targets for the pupils and to reassess their needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Parents enjoy an constructive and purposeful relationship with the school and speak well of its work. Parents value the very positive ethos of the school and the very high standards of behaviour which are encouraged by staff and achieved by the pupils.

53. Links with parents are very effective. Most parents are pleased with the good quality of information they receive through the school prospectus and the annual report from governors. These school documents are written in an accessible style, and comply with statutory requirements. The pupils' end-of-year reports also provide good quality information about pupils' achievement, attainment and their attitudes to their learning. Realistic targets are set which encourage pupils to make progress. Information is provided in a style and language which is easily understood. However, in some foundation subjects the information is too descriptive and does not adequately report on pupils' individual progress.

54. Parents are consistently encouraged by the school to support learning in the classroom. A number of parents come to school and support activities in the lesson which help to raise standards and contribute constructively to the pupils' personal development. The home school agreement has been prepared in full consultation with the school council and parents generally support their children's homework. These arrangements further contribute to the high standards achieved by the pupils.

55. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern. Parents are always asked to attend review meetings which are well planned in advance and held regularly on Tuesday mornings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The quality of the leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff is very good and arises from effective team-work. It is energetic, strong and well focused, and provides a clear educational direction for the school, with a commitment to helping the pupils achieve high standards. It creates a purposeful ethos, based on clear values and contributes significantly to the pupils' positive experience of school and the good progress they make.

57. The well-informed governing body is very supportive of the school and fulfils its statutory duties well. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the direction it should take, and they are holding it increasingly to account. They make a careful scrutiny of the standards achieved by pupils in English, mathematics and science. Four governors with an interest in the curriculum maintain close and well informed contact with their four areas of interest, but the governors do not have a mechanism, such as a curriculum committee, to assist them in the task of overseeing the curriculum as a whole, or of monitoring the standards being achieved other than in these subjects. There is no overall curriculum co-ordinator to help them in this task.

58. The co-ordination of English, mathematics, and science is very good. The curriculum for these subjects is well organised and very effective arrangements are in place to support lesson planning and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the co-ordinators for mathematics and English analyse all available information and set targets for all the pupils. This is a strength of both subjects and, as a result, pupils are very clear about the knowledge they have acquired and the goals they should achieve.

59. These arrangements are not sufficiently extended to other areas of the curriculum, however, where the management is too informal. As a result there is insufficient guidance to help teachers plan lessons. For example in art, although the National Curriculum requirements year by year are set out, the scheme of work does not indicate what pupils are expected to learn progressively term by term during the time they are at the school. Also, there is no systematic way that pupils' learning and achievements are monitored, and the assessment system is not backed up by a scrutiny of pupils' work to give an overview of pupils' learning and development over time. As a result, the development of these subjects is inhibited.

60. This apart, the school evaluates its performance very well. Careful account is taken of all relevant data and systems for monitoring assessment results at key points in the school, identifying trends and using the information are very good. For example, assessment results are analysed question by question and skill by skill and the information thus obtained is used in planning the pupils' future programme and setting group targets. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored by a regular observation programme.

61. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised, with learning support assistants focusing their attention on assisting pupils to achieve their targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator maintains good links with a number of external agencies such as advisory teachers, speech therapist, and the Dyspraxia Unit.

62. There is a very well established, detailed and effective short-term school development plan which sets out a suitable hierarchy of priorities for the current and, to a lesser extent, the forthcoming school year. However, while short to medium term planning is very good, medium to long term planning is less formally established and does not record how the school will determine and achieve its long-term aims.

63. Good use is made of the resources available to the school. Governors carefully assess relative priorities, although they do not yet evaluate the effect of their expenditure decisions on pupils' attainment. The principles of best value are informally applied. The computers are particularly well used to support learning in many subjects. Learning support assistants are well deployed to support the pupils who have special educational needs.

64. There are sufficient suitably trained and experienced teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure the satisfactory implementation of the curriculum, and resources are satisfactory. The accommodation available to the school is very good, especially that for the children under five. The outdoor facilities are very good and not only support physical education and extra-curricular sport well but also provide much valuable material for science, contributing to the high standards achieved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To build on the school's high achievement and improve standards further, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:

- (1) Improve the management of subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information technology by:
 - strengthening the co-ordination of these subjects;
 - planning what pupils are to learn in more detail;
 - establishing more rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning, for example, by scrutinising pupils' work as a means of substantiating assessment records.

(Paragraph: 59)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Extend the perspective of the school development plan to embrace a longer planning cycle. (Paragraph: 62)
- Improve the provision to support pupils' cultural development by planning more opportunities for pupils to become aware of the wealth of music, art and ideas from other cultures. (Paragraph: 39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	55	22	2	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)	33	243
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	44

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	24	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	17
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	37	38	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (90)	90 (92)	98 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	23	24	22
	Total	38	41	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (90)	98 (92)	93 (92)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (84)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	18	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	14
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	27	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (83)	88 (86)	93 (92)
	National	70 (65)	70 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	16	15	15
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (76)	76 (81)	79 (83)
	National	70 (66)	69 (66)	78 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	201
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	23.9

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	402 756
Total expenditure	384 465
Expenditure per pupil	1 595
Balance brought forward from previous year	38 484
Balance carried forward to next year	54 952

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	305
Number of questionnaires returned	216

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	39	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	47	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	45	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	49	18	2	3
The teaching is good.	60	36	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	44	18	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	42	42	13	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	47	46	2	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	49	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	38	11	4	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Staff took the report written after the inspection of the old nursery school, now amalgamated into Lanchester School, very seriously. They have worked hard to develop the early years provision in the new school and have been very successful.

67. Children make very good progress overall, particularly in their personal and social development, language, literacy and mathematical skills. By the time they are five, the great majority have reached the goals expected for their age, and many have exceeded them, some by a considerable amount.

68. The local education authority's initial assessment shows that children enter the nursery with skills that are below average for the area. Children make good progress in the nursery and, when they enter the reception classes, their skills are generally average. This good foundation is built upon, and the inspection judgement is that by the end of their year in reception, the majority of children have skills that are above average, and many have well-above average skills in personal and social development, language, literacy and mathematics.

Personal and social development

69. The staff place great emphasis on promoting children's personal and social development. The majority of children, including some of those with special educational needs, exceed expectations for their age by the end of their reception year. This makes a significant contribution to their learning and progress in all areas.

70. Children's relationships with one another are very good. They enjoy each other's company and work very well together, either in small groups, or as part of a large group. They praise and encourage each other, for example saying, 'That's beautiful,' when looking at a friend's art work. Children make firm friendships, and show emotion about one another. Two nursery-aged girls told the inspector that they were such good friends that, 'Sometimes we cry for each other.' Reception-aged children extend this further when they learn about the importance of a well-ordered and caring society. A display of work in one classroom is headed, 'We are talking to God about good manners.'

71. Children understand the informal rules that govern groups, such as waiting their turn. When outside, they share the bikes and space well with little squabbling. Children quickly learn to be independent. Most nursery children take care of their personal hygiene independently, and dress and undress with minimal help by the end of the year. Reception-age children tidy up and put activities away with no prompting. All children in both year groups choose classroom activities carefully, and are interested, keen to try them and motivated to learn. Children quickly learn to concentrate and persevere, and even the nursery children spend very long periods of time absorbed in their tasks. The youngest children play well with one another, and by the time they are at the end of their reception year, they collaborate very well on tasks.

Language and literacy

72. Children make very good progress in this area and their skills are generally above those expected for their age by the time they are five, and the skills of some are well above expectations. Nursery-age children listen carefully to stories and instructions during small group time, and contribute very well to discussions. They volunteer extra information, such as, 'Moles live underground and you can tell they're there because of the earth.' They see humour in situations, for example they enjoyed 'telling off' their teacher for dropping litter on the floor. By the end of their reception year, children's listening and speaking skills have further improved. They follow complex instructions in order to carry out their group tasks in literacy and numeracy lessons, and can offer very specific information towards a group discussion, such as a well-phrased sentence to go towards a group story.

73. Children in the nursery have a very good understanding of the purpose and pleasure to be gained from books. Almost all remember and join in with familiar stories and poems, such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Incy Wincy Spider*. Many recognise their own name, and some the names of others. Some children identify individual letters. Most children understand the plot of stories, gaining clues from the pictures and adding their own interpretation, such as what treasures might be in a parcel. One advanced child read a book jointly with the inspector, the child naming small pictures inserted in the text, whilst the inspector read the words. She understood the task immediately, did not falter over any words and 'read' with expression and enjoyment. By the end of reception, many children are advanced for their age. Many can read out loud together, and can re-order several sentences that have been mixed up to make a story. They read and name the letters of the alphabet and many sounds, such as *ai*, which helps them make up their own words and recognise nonsense words such as *keet* and *foad*. All children use a phonic approach to break down unknown words so that they can read them, although some of the slower readers do not yet recognise whole words which makes reading rather laborious for them. More advanced children read with confidence, expression and understanding. They predict what will happen next, and show skills that are about one year in advance of those expected for their age.

74. Most nursery-age children hold a pencil properly and join dots to make a given shape. Some colour in small pictures extremely carefully, for example making clear stripes on a bee, and several write their own names quickly and legibly. By the end of their reception year, many can write simple sentences, some with the right use of full stops and capital letters. They understand the language used in different sorts of writing, for example that letters start with *Dear* and end *Love from*, and they use descriptive sentences for re-telling stories such as: 'The ugly duckling was sad and cold outside.' Some children use dictionaries to look up the spelling of simple words.

Mathematics

75. Children make good progress in the nursery, and very good progress in the reception classes. By the end of the reception year, the majority of children have skills above those expected for their age, and the skills of some are well above expectations. Nursery children enjoy singing number rhymes and use counting and numbers in their everyday play, for example when using the cash register in the 'garden centre.' They can count to ten, and often further, and reliably count objects up to four. They name simple mathematical shapes and sort objects by their colour, shape, size and combinations of these. Children understand, and some use, the term *symmetrical*, and are developing their weighing and measuring skills in sand and water play.

76. By the end of their reception year, children count up to and backwards from ten. They count in tens to 100, and can count on in tens from a given number such as 30, or 50. Children select and name shapes from their description, for example naming a circle from the description *one curved side*, and a triangle from *three straight sides*. Many can describe, rather than name shapes themselves, and can manipulate small shapes to fill a larger one, such as small triangles to fit into an oblong. Children can calculate numbers which are, say, *three more than*, or *three less than*, and can complete number 'sentences' such as $2 + 1 + () \rightarrow 5$, recording their answers for themselves. Children can put items in order by size and know which may be heavier or lighter than others. They are starting to estimate numbers, for example how many more sweets will be needed to cover the top of their playdough 'biscuit.'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Children's skills are above expectations for their age by the time they are five. Nursery-age children have a good understanding of their relationship to close members of their families, and talk about them freely. They are familiar with the school environment and are beginning to get their bearings in the village, knowing, for example, where their friends live. They have good early scientific knowledge, for example knowing that caterpillars turn into butterflies, and that animals and minibeasts need feeding, but like different foods. One child described how she had fallen over and scraped her knees, but that 'they're scabby now, so they're getting better.' Children are developing a good sense of social and environmental awareness and are beginning to understand the hazards posed by litter to wild life and the countryside. They use a wide range of materials and commercial kits to make models of their own design, and are imaginative, for example creating a 'pirate ship birthday cake' from playdough and straws.

78. By the end of their reception year, children use simple computer programmes and can accurately click and drag items across the screen, using the mouse. They distinguish between various materials, and understand the basic workings of the body, for example that they have five senses and what each does. Children know that plants need soil and water to grow. They understand what makes something 'old,' for example recognising that a metal item is old because 'the paint is scratched off so it has been used a lot.' Children understand the importance that God has to many people which contributes well to their personal development. They use construction materials with increasing purpose and dexterity, their most treasured items being put on a special display shelf for everyone to see.

Creative development

79. Children make good progress in this area and their skills are above expectations for their age by the time they are five. In the nursery, children enjoy creative work such as art, collage and play dough, and their drawings show consistent development as they mature. For example, when drawing fruit after close observation, younger children used broad sweeps to depict their piece whereas older children drew a clearly defined outline of their fruit, including a banana and pear, and used colour carefully. Children enjoy experimenting with paint, for example when using bronze paint to print with, although some find it difficult to know when to stop and quickly revert to finger painting! Children listen to music and show a good sense of rhythm such as when using simple percussion instruments as sound effects in *Incy Wincy Spider*. They enjoy role play and play well together, creating their own scenes.

80. In reception, children's creative skills develop very well. They illustrate their written work, some with care and expression. For example, one child drew a very good bee and adorned it with an extremely cross face as it was chasing a giant at the time. Imaginative role play is further developed, and at times very elaborate, involving dressing up and the use of various items, such as binoculars, to develop the scenario more effectively. Paintings show greater control and children understand that they can mix two colours in different proportions to vary the shade of the third. They use musical instruments well, and join in with songs

enthusiastically, maintaining the rhythm well and singing all the words.

Physical development

81. Children make good progress and their skills are above expectations for their age by the time they are five. In the nursery, children learn to exercise control and co-ordination when playing outside and are confident in their abilities to run, jump and stop without collision. They ride tricycles safely and confidently, with good awareness of space. Children show good hand control as they practise their skills. They use scissors, dough cutters, spades and rolling pins, and most of the oldest hold a pencil properly and use it carefully. Whilst talking to an inspector, one girl absent-mindedly took off her hair 'scrunchie', gathered the stray bits of hair back together, and replaced the 'scrunchie' properly which is a fairly difficult task for an adult!

82. In reception, children's good progress is maintained. They throw and catch balls, hop, skip, run and balance appropriately. Their pencil skills continue to improve and many are very precise in their work, and write and draw very well. Their creative work, for example with playdough, is enhanced by their better-developed manipulative skills.

The quality of teaching

83. The quality of teaching is very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and all but one of the lessons seen were good or better. This high quality is reflected in the children's very good progress. Teaching was not observed in all the areas of learning in both nursery and reception classes. However, particularly good teaching with an emphasis on personal and social development was observed in the nursery, and teaching in both literacy and numeracy was particularly good in the reception classes. The advanced levels of children's skills in all curriculum areas indicates that teaching is likely to be of good or better quality in all areas of learning.

84. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority in the nursery, and promotion of their skills is threaded through all the nursery's work. Staff have high expectations that children will conform to the routines and rules, but are quick to offer comfort and warmth if children are feeling fractious or unwell. This helps children feel secure and comfortable, and in turn encourages them to rejoin the group and not to miss out. Staff remain calm at all times, and are good role-models for the children who are consequently calm and very well behaved for their age. Staff have an excellent attitude which never patronises: they question and talk **with** the children and not down to them. This helps the children to think carefully, and answer after careful consideration, for example saying that 'litter is bad because spiders get stuck in it.' Nursery staff explain carefully what the day's activities will be and ask children to plan what they will do. This helps children make informed choices and then go straight to the activity they have chosen with no time wasted. It also allows staff to check on each child's balance of activities over the week to make sure they all do everything and have equal opportunities for learning. The team-work between staff is very good at these times, with each adult keeping a careful eye on their own group, whilst also making sure that unsupervised groups are still getting the most from their activities.

85. The teaching observed in literacy and numeracy in both reception classes was particularly good. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies are being followed and contribute to children's advanced skills, but very sensible adaptations have been made to suit the needs of the children. In both subjects, for example, free-choice is given as one of the group tasks which is a way of taking account of the children's very young age. The very good teaching is characterised by a calm, yet lively and challenging approach, which encourages and stimulates the children to join in and do well. Teachers make the content of the lessons appropriate to the age and ability range of the children, and tasks set are well-chosen to move the children forward whilst also allowing them to succeed. As in the nursery, lessons

begin with a very clear explanation of what will be covered, and a whole class activity. Examples of these include quick-fire counting tasks such as counting to 100 in tens, joining in with lively, difficult, number songs, or re-ordering sentences to make a story. They end with a whole-class session in which the main points of the lesson are reinforced. In one such session, which was excellent, the teacher reinforced the main three teaching points of the lesson by playing games using excellent 'home-made' resources. These were cards with shapes on them to which the children point to show their answer. She also questioned individual children, phrasing the question to suit each one, to check their latest understanding. All the children found this session highly enjoyable, although suitably challenging.

86. Both the nursery and reception classes provide very stimulating, well resourced and well-ordered environments which contribute very well to the children's learning. Both reception classes share the larger classroom with the 'messy area', an arrangement which gives all the children equal opportunities for learning. Consideration is being given to greater involvement of the two age groups with one another as they move towards combining to create the new Foundation stage of the school. This will be of benefit to both children and staff.

87. Children's progress is secured through good planning and recording systems which help staff to plan with a clear focus and learning outcomes for each lesson. This enables children's skills to be carefully built up over their two years in the Foundation stage, and allows those who are making faster or slower progress than others to be identified and supported.

ENGLISH

88. Standards in English are high. As measured by the National Curriculum Assessments in 1999, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the national average, and also well above the average for schools with a similar intake. In reading, nearly half the pupils were attaining at Level 3, the expected level for nine-year-olds. In writing, however, although overall the results were creditable, not so many pupils achieved above-average results. The forecast for the 2000 National Assessments is for similar results.

89. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' results were above average in 1999, both in national terms and when compared with similar schools, and a high proportion of pupils achieved above the level expected for eleven-year-olds. The 2000 results are expected to be similar at this key stage also.

90. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with these results. Standards of speaking and listening are very good. For example, in Year 1, pupils talk enthusiastically about their reading books and in Year 2 pupils speak clearly and audibly, most of them using well-formed sentences, describing their likes and dislikes about what they read. They confidently lead the prayers in assembly with prayers of their own composition.

91. Pupils are confident and accomplished speakers in Key Stage 2. In Year 3 they listen carefully, and offer supported opinions about the text they are studying. By Year 5 pupils' answers show they are listening well to the teacher and each other and when they speak, they use good sentences. When discussing literature, they support their views by reference to the text. By the end of the key stage, pupils discuss their reading using a wide vocabulary and, in class or when talking about their work to adults, they speak clearly and confidently in well-constructed sentences. They competently and confidently speak to wider groups as, for instance, when Year 5 and Year 6 pupils prepared and led a Green Team assembly with a meditation on *Green*.

92. Standards of reading are high in Key Stage 1 and very high in Key Stage 2 and demonstrate the good progress pupils make. At the end of Key Stage 1, the highest-attaining pupils read accurately, confidently and with good expression, using different ways of tackling unfamiliar words. They talk intelligently about what they read. Average attainers read well, but with some inaccuracies, and the lower attainers manage the text with some errors, but with incomplete comprehension.

93. By the end of Key Stage 2, the highest- and average-attaining pupils read accurately and fluently, in some cases with very good expression and characterisation. They draw appropriate inferences from their reading, which they support with well-judged evidence selected from the text. Their reading diaries record a full diet of varied reading: they enjoy reading and know that wide reading, in the words of one girl, 'helps me write good stories'. The lower-attaining pupils have satisfactory technical competence: they read the words but are not able to talk about the content of what they read. Most pupils at this stage have good knowledge of the standard library classification and well-developed reference skills.

94. The standard of pupils' writing is good. In Key Stage 1 the highest-attaining pupils write well in a variety of styles. Their stories, such as 'Why the cat and the fish can't be friends', are substantial, with interesting ideas, a good choice of vocabulary and some dialogue. Their handwriting is accurate, legible and even in size. Full stops and capital letters are usually correctly employed. Over the year they have made very good progress, with gains in the quality of the content, in style and handwriting. Pupils of average ability write interesting narrative, in which the sequence of events is accurately described, but with conventions of spelling and punctuation not always secure. The lowest-attaining pupils retell a story briefly and accurately, but their skills are less well-established.

95. The writing of pupils in Key Stage 2 is good; some is very good. The best is outstanding. Pupils work in a range of styles, among them, for example, acrostics in Year 3, descriptive writing in Year 4, shape poems in Year 5, and book reviews in Year 6. At the top end of the key stage, the best work is carefully and thoroughly planned, based on a good understanding of narrative structure. Characters are convincing and dialogue is well executed, as in a piece entitled 'An unusual present'. Paragraphs are well organised, sentence structure varied to good effect and words judiciously chosen. Work is carefully redrafted until the desired effect is achieved, finally producing sentences like 'Sarah ran into the prison, her short untidy hair bobbing up and down behind her.' Pupils write in ink; handwriting is joined-up, neat and legible and spelling almost faultless.

96. More typically, pupils have good ideas which they develop conscientiously into narrative with a planned structure containing, in one case, 'problem, conflict, resolution.' In another instance it involved the sea, pirates and a tropical island. Action is well handled, paragraphing is sensible and helps the reader, but dialogue is less secure. Other styles of writing, such as persuasive argument and instructions are also well managed. The handwriting of these pupils is joined-up, clear and spelling usually right. The less able pupils have good ideas and competently produce a good volume of writing. They attempt dialogue, but do not manage to divide their work into paragraphs. Their handwriting is legible, but comparatively immature and spelling is sometimes uncertain.

97. Pupils' well established literacy skills are well supported in other areas of the curriculum. There are good opportunities for extended writing in history: there was a very good account of life as a nineteenth century miner, for example, and in religious education. Pupils take notes, write reports and accurately record science experiments. Pupils are well used to interrogating different sources for research in, for example, art and history.

98. Pupils are enabled to succeed in English because of the good teaching they receive,

particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2. Satisfactory in almost all the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in a third and very good in more than one fifth.

99. The most successful lessons take place in a good-humoured atmosphere of mutual respect, which enables pupils to be confident and not afraid to try out new things, to be prepared to work hard and want to please the teacher. Pupils' behaviour is accordingly very good, often excellent. Teachers know the subject and their pupils well so that good planning, seamlessly integrating the different elements of the lesson, provides pupils with a sequence of tasks which practise the central concepts of the lesson. The level of challenge is high and by insisting on a fast pace, teachers keep pupils involved and interested. Skilled questioning, with suitably open questions, draws in pupils of all abilities, keeping them attentive and eager to participate. The teachers pick up and use points made by pupils to good advantage in their teaching, thus making clear they value their contributions. The good use of praise motivates. Explanations, instructions and demonstrations are clear so that pupils know exactly where they stand and what is expected of them. As a result they settle quickly, work industriously and concentrate well, producing good work. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 literacy lesson where pupils, having been given their tasks, began work without fuss and continued in complete silence for half an hour.

100. Where lessons are less successful, it is sometimes because they tend to lack pace, or because there is insufficient challenge. Learning objectives are not always clear enough, and work is not well enough matched to pupils' needs, so that they find what they are asked to do either too easy or too difficult. Motivation dissipates and progress becomes unsatisfactory.

101. Marking is very supportive. Helpful comment assesses, corrects, supports and gives good ideas for improvement, referring to existing targets or suggesting new ones. Homework is regularly set and supports the teaching well.

102. The subject is very well organised in the school and all efforts are directed at improving standards. Both teaching and learning are carefully monitored. The results of formal assessments are painstakingly analysed, and lessons drawn for the pupils' subsequent programmes. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked as they move through the school and both individual and group targets are set. Pupils thus know what is expected of them and conscientiously work to achieve the targets: a half-termly literacy conference enables them to discuss their progress with their teacher, and review and replace targets as appropriate. In this way pupils are helped to do their best, and high standards are maintained.

MATHEMATICS

103. Standards in mathematics are high. The Key Stage 1 national test results in 1999 show standards of attainment to be high in comparison with the national average and also high in comparison with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining above the level expected of seven-year-olds is higher than found nationally.

104. The 1999 Key Stage 2 national test results show attainment to be above the national average. These tests show that the proportion of pupils exceeding the standards expected of their age group is also well above that found nationally. The results are well above average when compared with schools with a similar intake. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in the mathematics national assessment tests. The inspection judgement confirms the national test results, and early indications are that the school is on course to maintain these high standards in the 2000 assessments.

105. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher-attaining pupils know when to add, take away or

multiply when they are solving problems. They measure length and weight using the correct equipment and are developing an understanding of symmetry. The majority of pupils can classify items such as types of Christmas card and record the information on a frequency chart. The lower-attaining pupils make good progress in estimating weights, identifying odd and even numbers, halving and doubling numbers under ten and measuring lines to the nearest centimetre.

106. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a very good understanding of the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals. They are able to carry out calculations using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of two and three digit numbers. They can plot co-ordinates, extract and interpret information from frequency charts, line graphs and pie charts. The higher-attaining pupils are able to write clear explanations of how they solve mathematical problems such as the systematic ordering of fractions by value. Most noticeably, pupils of all levels of attainment enjoy mathematics and are at ease with a variety of mathematical problems and calculations.

107. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good. All the lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Eighty per cent were good or better and twenty per cent were very good. As a result, the classrooms are busy places and pupils eagerly get down to work as soon as they are told to. They concentrate and work hard all the time. Pupils are well-motivated and keen to attain their mathematics targets.

108. The successful teaching in Key Stage 1 is characterised by the way the work challenges pupils of different ability and by the teacher's good use of questioning to assess pupils' learning. Learning objectives are clear and the pupils understand what is expected of them. This contributes significantly to their good progress and high achievement. The varied practical activities prepared by the teachers, such as the use of a 'Treasure Map' to learn about directions and stimulate pupils' interest; as a result pupils enjoy the demanding mathematics activities. The very good relationships between adults and pupils create a happy and positive learning atmosphere where pupils make good progress and consolidate their skills. The very good use of the plenary session at the end of lessons reinforces pupils' new mathematical knowledge. This was seen working well when pupils were asked to sort three-dimensional shapes according to the number and shape of the sides. The plenary session is also used well to include those pupils who have special educational needs. A good example of this was seen when pupils shared what they had learned when working with a robot to investigate direction and movement. Mental mathematics is taught at a demanding pace at the beginning of the lessons and teachers reinforce the correct use of a mathematical vocabulary while doing so.

109. The consistently good teaching, regular homework and the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy lead directly to the high standards of achievement in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The best teaching is characterised by the lively pace and challenge of the lessons; as a result pupils become absorbed in their work, concentrate well and make good progress. Teachers use good assessment techniques to judge how well pupils are learning and to identify areas for further work. A good example was seen in Year 5, when the teacher planned to work on relating fractions to their decimal counterparts but quickly realised that pupils needed to revise their work on improper fractions before they could tackle the lesson objectives. Some lower-attaining Year 5 pupils working in a small withdrawal group made good progress in their understanding of fractions because of the sensitive questioning by the teacher which stimulated them to think carefully about the topic, and because of the practical activities which reinforced their knowledge.

110. Teaching is well organised. This was well exemplified in a Year 3 numeracy lesson, where pupils knew the classroom procedures well and wasted no time as they moved from

one activity to another. Careful explanations from the teacher and good prompting leads pupils to understand symmetry and to identify the lines of symmetry in squares, triangles and rectangles. The learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the lessons by reinforcing learning for those pupils who have special educational needs. In Year 4, for example, the assistant worked with four such pupils who, while enjoying a game of battleships, increased their knowledge of co-ordinates almost without realising it.

111. A sense of urgency and pace provokes an element of fun and competition in the lesson and the pupils enjoy the quick fire questioning. As a result pupils in Year 6, for example, are very confident in playing with and enjoying numbers. The plenary sessions at the end of the lesson are used very well for pupils to demonstrate their new knowledge in investigating fractions. Teachers, having made it clear to pupils at the outset what they are going to learn, at the end of the lesson establish with the pupils what has been learned.

112. Occasionally, when the pace of the lesson is insufficiently challenging, pupils still complete their work but without the enthusiasm and enjoyment shown by the majority.

113. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is well supported in other areas of the curriculum. In geography they learn about co-ordinates in map work, they collect data in history and geography, improve their understanding of measurement in science and use information technology to record mathematical information on spreadsheets.

114. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator provides strong, dynamic leadership which relates directly to the high standards achieved by the pupils. Teaching is monitored and teachers get verbal feedback. The co-ordinator takes in pupils' work, and tracks their progress. She is then able to decide on the areas for development in the subject and provide guidance to teachers about what topics need more attention. The co-ordinator analyses all available information and sets individual targets for all the pupils. As a result pupils are very clear about the knowledge they have acquired and the goals they should achieve. Consequently, pupils constantly want to achieve higher targets. Teachers take every opportunity to discuss work with pupils so that errors are corrected and pupils understand any mistakes they have made. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Within the action plan, the co-ordinator is continuing to promote information technology within

mathematics, develop a portfolio of pupils' work and be a role model for staff in teaching mathematics so that the subject is well placed to make progress.

SCIENCE

115. Standards in science are high. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show attainment to be above the national average. Ninety three per cent of pupils were attaining at or above the national expectation for seven-year-olds or above, compared with 87 per cent nationally. The results of 33 per cent, a proportion which is well above average nationally, were above the national expectation for pupils this age, reaching Level 3 or above.

116. Results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that the proportion of pupils (93 per cent) reaching the expected standards at Level 4 or above was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above was very high (67 per cent) compared with the national average. Although girls achieved higher results than boys in 1999, the predicted results for 2000 show the reverse. The results reflect differences in the two groups of pupils.

117. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with these results and the school is on course to maintain the high standards of attainment and achieve results in the 2000 assessments which are well above the national average for eleven-year-olds. Standards of attainment continue to rise from the good position in Year 2 to the very good position in Year 6: very good results which reflect the good teaching pupils receive.

118. The above-average and higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 know how to classify materials into natural and man-made. They know how materials change, for example that seeds become corn which in turn is made into flour. They investigate what happens to the sun's shadow as the sun rises in the sky. They name twenty one parts of the human body and parts of a flower. They use their knowledge about living things to describe basic conditions such as supply of food, water, air and light that plants need in order to survive. For example, in a Year 2 lesson about plants and seeds, pupils knew, when prompted, that seeds and plants need water and light, inspecting two boxes of cress - one with green leaves and one with yellow leaves. They know that in a fair test only one variable at a time is altered, and they conduct an investigation to see what happens when plants are watered or not watered. Pupils' books show that they understand the differences and similarities between themselves and a friend.

119. In Key Stage 2, Year 4 pupils know a great deal about seeds of ten different edible fruits from direct observation of the fruit the pupils had in front of them. They know why fruits have seeds, which has least and most seeds and which are symmetrical. They also know that the first job of a fruit is to protect its seeds and that fruits have different skins to do this. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils identify leaves, picked from multifarious trees in the school grounds. The higher attainers made good progress in identifying the leaves such as silver birch, ash and common hawthorn. Another group collected minibeasts, with the support teacher, also from the school grounds. They identified a wasp, mining bee and scorpion fly and by asking themselves various questions, were able to classify them. They were able to explain that different organisms are found in different habitats. Pupils record the details of their investigation into leaves and minibeasts on the computer. Pupils in Year 6 also learn by investigation how wood, flour, butter, salt and washing-up liquid reduce friction and record the results on a graph. The higher attainers know and understand about the heart and name the main arteries and veins. They record on a bar graph the pulse rates of pupils at rest, walking, sprinting, skipping and jumping. They investigate electric circuits and know how a particular device in an electric circuit may be switched on or off. They look at hardness and

density of rocks and observe the action of forces on objects. Pupils make informed predictions and record experimental data accurately. Most are able to interpret their findings logically and can draw a sensible conclusion from the data when asked to do so.

120. The quality of teaching in science is good. In Key Stage 1 the good teaching is the result of good planning. Very good whole class teaching sets the tone of high expectations and leads to challenging work for pupils of differing abilities. This helps the pupils make good progress. The teacher makes good use of resources and no time is wasted. Pupils' learning and behaviour are well managed. This leads to the positive attitudes pupils have towards science and contributes to the good quality of their learning. Pupils are given time for assessing their observations and recording them on their investigation sheets.

121. The features of good teaching in Key Stage 1 continue into Key Stage 2. As a consequence, the quality of learning and progress made by pupils are also good and lead to the very good results achieved at the end of the key stage. Classes are well managed and teachers know their subject. Expectations are high so that good progress is made. The behaviour and attitude of the pupils in lessons are good as a result. Instructions are clear so that pupils know exactly what they have to do. Accordingly, they listen attentively and follow the instructions carefully. Well-managed questioning establishes what pupils know and what they need to know to complete the tasks. Suitable homework is given to reinforce work done in class. In one instance the class studying fruit was asked to find out whether the number of seeds produced affected a tree's chance of survival. This homework was appropriately set because it practised numeracy skills as well as the pupils' investigative skills.

122. The subject co-ordinator has produced a good science policy emphasising the importance of scientific enquiry. The curriculum meets national curriculum requirements. It has breadth and balance and is suitable for all pupils. Assessment is good and there is a tracking system for each child. Marking is generally satisfactory. Resources for science are adequate. The very large school grounds provide an excellent resource and the pupils can undertake scientific discovery amongst the trees, plants and minibeasts. The school is strong in science and the teachers are confident in their subject which is well placed for future development.

ART

123. Pupils' standards of attainment in art accord with what is expected of children the same age and their achievement at all levels of ability is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 successfully use a variety of materials to create different visual effects. For example, Year 1 collages use mixed materials to create a strong impression of trainer soles in an exercise on 'tread patterns'. The pupils' observation of objects and their skills in recording ideas develop satisfactorily as they progress through Key Stage 1 and gain in maturity. Working on spring flowers in Year 2, pupils demonstrated careful observation, recording what they saw in pencil and crayon. In work after studying Van Gogh, Year 2 pupils show a confident and vivid use of paint. They have looked carefully, mixed their own colours and created convincing interpretations of the original.

124. In Key Stage 2, pupils work with pastels: pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 made portraits of each other, finished in the style of Picasso. They experiment with line and texture, pencil, charcoal and colour and create designs following Paul Klee. In Year 5, pupils extend their work on portraits into a study of cartoon and caricature, where a keen sense of observation and a sense of humour combine to make striking images.

125. However, there is little evidence that the present generation of pupils has had sufficient experience of sculpture or textiles or the opportunity to learn techniques associated with these areas of the subject.

126. The quality of teaching in art is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, the lesson is well planned, and the classroom well organised so that pupils know exactly what they have to do. Adult helpers are well briefed. In the lesson observing and drawing spring flowers, for instance, they directed the pupils' attention to the characteristic features of the flowers under study and helped them maintain concentration. Accordingly, the pupils felt supported and worked diligently. They were manifestly pleased with what they produced. In Key Stage 2 teachers' planning, explanations and instructions are clear: pupils know what they have to do. Lessons are well managed, but sometimes the pace is pedestrian, and expectations of what the pupils can achieve are modest.

127. There is a suitable subject policy. The scheme of work is in process of development, and although it sets out the National Curriculum requirements year by year, it does not extend to indicating what pupils are expected to learn progressively term by term during the time they are at the school. This leads to uncertainty and as a result pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 can be taught the same lesson. The potential contribution of the subject to the pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is not considered. There is a good scheme for assessment, but it is not supported by a portfolio of scrutinised work to validate teachers' judgements, and information gained is not used in planning future programmes of work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. There is insufficient past work to judge the standards reached by pupils in design and technology, and only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This is not enough to make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning, although the indications are that pupils' skills are not likely to be at expected levels for their age by the time they leave the school.

129. The single lesson observed was in Year 2. Here, pupils had planned the construction of a wheelbarrow. They selected and used tools and glue sensibly, and good quality teaching and support gave them confidence and helped them find solutions to their construction problems. As a result, the pupils fixed the components together competently and concentrated well, with enjoyment. Each pupil in the group completed their work and was proud of it. The barrows were finished to a satisfactory standard for the pupils' age. Some started to evaluate their work, but many did not have enough time left to complete this.

130. In the rest of the school, a few examples of completed design and technology work were available. Whilst the finished items themselves are sometimes of a satisfactory or better standard for pupils' age, the process of designing and evaluating them is generally inadequate. It is sometimes better in the younger classes, although not consistently so. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 had designed and made a Viking village. The models are of good quality, but the design and evaluation processes are not sufficiently detailed. Pupils in the same year groups, however, made items for a school exhibition on ancient Egyptian culture. They made a wide range of items such as jewellery and mummies. Some based their models on detailed plans and carefully evaluated their work and methodology

afterwards. This is good. In contrast, the design and planning process of some other pupils contributing to the same exhibition is poor, although the quality of their finished products is very good and makes for an exciting and attractive exhibition.

131. Over the last two years, design and technology has received a decreasing emphasis in the school. There is no current guidance to help staff plan teaching and learning and patchy provision is the result. The *making* component is often used to support other subjects, for example history, geography, science and art. Whilst this is a good approach, and encourages helpful cross-curricular work, teachers tend to under-emphasise the processes of designing, planning and evaluating which are equally important. Furthermore, the teaching of designing and making skills is not systematic enough which limits pupils' development in this area.

132. The co-ordinator's role is currently under-developed and does not include monitoring of teaching and learning, which contributes to the lack of suitable provision. However, she is fully aware of the shortcomings in the design and technology provision, and is keen to reintroduce the subject in full when the revised statutory National Curriculum is introduced in September. The school's planning for how this will be achieved has not yet taken place.

GEOGRAPHY

133. Geography lessons were observed in only Years 3, 4 and 5, and consequently an judgement on the quality of teaching in the school as a whole cannot be made. However, the teaching observed in these classes was good overall. The majority of pupils' work is of a satisfactory standard, and some of the older pupils' work is good. This indicates that pupils' geographical skills and understanding have been systematically developed as they have moved up the school.

134. There was little past work on which to make judgements, but by the end of Year 2, most seven-year-olds understand how localities can be represented in different ways, such as maps, plans and bird's-eye views. They can draw their own, for example after a visit to a lake. Pupils use geographical terms to describe areas, and indicate preferences in places they visit.

135. During Key Stage 2, pupils' skills develop well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can describe and compare many of the physical and human factors of localities, and begin to offer reasons for the differences. For example, a pupil in Year 3 said that it was colder in Seaham than Lanchester because the wind came off the sea. Pupils give their own views on the environment, for example explaining how the beaches in Seaham became polluted and what problems this brings. Many of the pupils in this age group have a geographical knowledge and understanding above expectations for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils compare localities in more depth and have a greater understanding of the human and physical reasons why they may be different. They interpret maps easily, for example when looking at different scale maps of the area they are to visit in France in the near future, and use co-ordinates to locate features. Pupils recognise many symbols and can estimate distances, such as how far and how long it will take to walk between two points. Pupils understand the importance of the water cycle in agriculture, and the effect of different weather systems on the world's communities. They identify the features of a river, using

terms such as *meander*, *gorge* and *erosion* in their descriptions, and use simple equipment in investigative work, for example to estimate the speed of flow of a river.

136. The quality of teaching observed was good overall: some very good teaching was seen in Year 5 but some less effective teaching in Year 4. The best teaching is characterised by very good questioning which helps pupils to think hard, remember what they already know, link aspects together and arrive at new ideas for themselves. In Year 3, the teacher also made it very clear that some of these ideas needed further investigation, and that there is not necessarily a clear-cut answer to everything. In an introductory session in Year 5, the teacher moved around the room whilst pupils sat at their tables, questioning them rapidly and adding a wealth of detail and anecdote as he went. He continually recapped, and checked that pupils understood where they were at, and what they would be doing next. This approach made sure that all pupils were fully involved, listening and learning well. Pupils understood exactly what their group task was to be and how to use the different maps and work sheets provided. As a result they settled down immediately to productive, collaborative work with no time wasted. Behaviour was very good and pupils of all abilities made good progress in the lesson.

137. Central to the most effective teachers' work is their desire to ensure that pupils really understand what they are doing, and once again this is largely achieved by careful, penetrative questioning. On one occasion, the teacher checked pupils' understanding of the term *five minutes away* to see if they could translate this into a distance. He asked them if it meant 100 metres, a mile, or three miles, and asked them to work it out in relation to where they thought they would reach if they took a five minute walk into Lanchester village from school. In this way, the pupils, who knew broadly that a place five minutes away was fairly close, really grasped what this meant in terms of distance.

138. The less effective teaching observed was more mechanical and the teacher did not strive to develop pupils' understanding as far as possible. Questioning was used, but there was less discussion and elaboration on the pupils' answers than in the most effective lessons. Consequently, pupils did not learn and enjoy the lesson as much. The pace of the lesson was much slower, and the teacher often paused for a few seconds for no particular reason which resulted in a rather disjointed introduction. This also upset the balance of the lesson, and too much time was spent on the introduction, which left only ten minutes for the task. The slower pupils were unable to complete their work to their own satisfaction which left them feeling rather dispirited. Despite this, all pupils were very well behaved and tried hard, which says a great deal for their positive attitudes to learning.

139. Geography is taught through topics. Suitable guidance helps teachers plan lessons to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they mature. The guidance is helpful and outlines the skills pupils should use, what they are intended to learn and how this should be achieved. However, it has yet to be updated into a more suitable format which matches the revised National Curriculum. A newly introduced assessment system is beginning to give useful information to help teachers identify pupils who need support in certain aspects, and to revise their teaching plans to be more effective.

140. The co-ordinator's role is under-developed. Much of the management side is informal and pupils' learning and achievements are not systematically monitored. The new assessment system is not backed up by looking at samples of work to give an overview of pupils' learning over time. This contributes to a weakness, and that is the lack of well-kept pupils' work. In lessons, the investigations and lively discussions are not always recorded and pupils do not always organise their own completed work files effectively. As a result, some less well-organised pupils do not keep their geography work together. Both of these factors prevent pupils having nicely presented work to look back upon, and prevent teachers,

and the subject co-ordinator, from monitoring the standards attained by the pupils and ensuring they are making as much progress as they can.

HISTORY

141. No history lessons were observed during the inspection and so judgements on the quality of teaching cannot be made. However, most pupils' work is of a satisfactory standard, and that of the more able is good, particularly in the upper part of the school. This indicates that pupils' historical skills and understanding have been systematically developed as they have grown older.

142. Most seven-year-olds have a clear understanding of the passing of time and can compare aspects of their own lives with those of older members of their families. They are beginning to understand that they can gather historical information from various sources, such as directly from their own parents and grandparents, and from books and other people's knowledge, for example to learn about Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot.

143. The oldest pupils' historical skills are much further developed, and those gained in other subjects help them approach history in a well-rounded way which brings topics to life. For example, these pupils studied aspects of Tudor and Victorian life. They described some of the characteristic features of these periods, such as the life-style, clothes, explorers and sanitary arrangements of the Elizabethan era, and what life in the workhouse and mines was like for poor Victorians. They offer their own opinions, for example that teachers were more strict in Victorian times than today, because they used the cane. Good literacy skills help the majority of pupils research these topics, make notes, and expand upon them to write detailed accounts. In one case, a high-attaining Year 6 girl wrote very movingly about the dangers of working in the mines. She took the part of a miner in her essay, and described how 'his' brother fell down a tunnel and died in the bad air which extinguished the candle light.

144. Pupils use books and the Internet to gather information. They learn from people who have actually lived through the periods being studied, such as when researching Lanchester since 1930. Pupils always give their sources of information at the end of their work which is good practice. Visits into the community, for example to local museums and Lanchester village itself, help bring history to life for the pupils. They use their geographical skills to compare maps of the same area in different eras and identify developments over time. They use their art and craft skills to illustrate and enhance their work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 researched and learned about the ancient Egyptian culture. They were clearly very interested in the ancient gods and, particularly, the mummification process. This was demonstrated by the number of models of associated items such as a life-size mummy in a sarcophagus, various death masks, and the special jars in which to keep organs of the body as part of mummification. There was insufficient evidence to judge whether pupils understand that historical fact is open to different interpretation, or that there are generally complex reasons behind historical events and changes.

145. History is taught through topics. Guidance for each topic helpfully poses key questions, and outlines what activities and resources should be used. What pupils are intended to learn is also clearly outlined so teachers can assess whether they have been successful or not. The six-year programme of work meets the requirements of the revised National Curriculum, and also ensures that pupils' historical skills develop in breadth and depth as they mature. This effective guidance helps teachers plan interesting lessons which are focused on promoting pupils' learning. The newly devised assessment system complements this guidance very well. When fully implemented, it will give very useful information which will help teachers identify pupils who need extra help in certain aspects, and also help them to revise their teaching plans to be more effective.

146. The co-ordinator's role, however, is under-developed and much of the management side is informal. There is no systematic way that pupils' learning and achievements are monitored, and the assessment system is not backed up by looking at samples of work to give an overview of pupils' learning and development over time. This contributes to a weakness, and that is the lack of well-kept pupils' work. In lessons, the investigations and lively discussions are not always recorded. Furthermore, because older pupils organise their own completed work files, some less well-organised pupils do not keep their history work together. Both of these factors prevent pupils having nicely presented work to look back upon, and prevents teachers, and the subject co-ordinator, from monitoring the standards attained by the pupils and ensuring they are making as much progress as they can.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

147. Standards of attainment and the progress made by pupils in information technology are good. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use, explore and handle equipment confidently. They communicate, manipulate information and use control and modelling techniques. Pupils in Year 1 use a word processing program to enter text. They enter the number of pet owners - cat, dog, rabbit and goldfish on to a block graph. Year 2 pupils process data by exploring the different methods of travelling to school. They also record weather recordings made over a period of time in a bar chart and pie graph.

148. In Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are good. As pupils move through the key stage, they make good progress in all areas of the subject. Pupils' skills with the mouse and keyboard improve steadily along with their understanding of the computer's functions. As they gain maturity, pupils become increasingly proficient at creating texts and communicating information. By the end of the key stage, pupils have good keyboard skills, use the cursor, communicate information, play sounds from a tape, use software, control everyday items, use the world wide web, use e-mail and load a program. Year 5 pupils have their e-mail addresses beside the computer.

149. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers have good subject knowledge which they are able to convey to the pupils. They plan challenging tasks for them based on clear learning objectives. Explanations are good; pupils are well managed. Careful recapitulation of earlier work at the start of a lesson gives pupils a firm starting point. Teachers move from pupil to pupil giving help and encouragement where necessary. As a result, pupils make good progress

150. Information technology is supported well in other lessons. A great deal of research in History and Geography is done with the help of the computer. In Year 6, in mathematics, pupils reinforce multiplication facts and analyse tuck shop data with laptops. In English, pupils use the computer to draft and redraft their work. Year 2 pupils write stories on the computer. Year 5 pupils have written poems. Pupils in Year 6 practise and revise literacy skills with the help of the computers.

151. The subject is well led. There is a detailed scheme of work which is well thought out and helps the teachers achieve the good planning which goes into the lessons. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in promoting helpful staff development. This has resulted in the enhancement of teachers' knowledge and confidence which in turn has been passed on to the pupils, particularly where it supports Literacy and Numeracy. Assessment arrangements are good: pupils have a skills list as part of their assessment, which helps them see where progress is made and extra work is needed. The school is well equipped. Each of the ten classrooms has a computer and a colour printer and there is a suite of seven computers which provide the pupils with plenty of opportunities to practice their computer skills and which is sufficient to support a computer club if one were available.

MUSIC

152. The standards of pupils' attainment in music are higher than those that would be expected of pupils the same age and they achieve well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing confidently and joyfully, mostly in tune and with an accurate rhythm. In one instance the quality of singing helped make the morning assembly an effective act of worship. They play percussion instruments accurately, for example to accompany the singing in assembly.

153. In Key Stage 2 pupils sing tunefully with an accurate rhythm. By the end of the Key Stage they know note values from quaver to minim and can clap them accurately. They are familiar with other musical terms such as 'melody' and 'dynamics'. They compose an accompaniment to a given song, working co-operatively in groups, referring to the original recording to check their work. They combine the different instruments, sensitively and sensibly revising their work as they proceed. They assemble a performance involving violins, recorders, keyboard and different groups of percussion. They record it in conventional notation with the help of the computer. The quality of pupils' musical experience is enhanced by their participation in or listening to the choir, through contributions by the recorder and violin groups to collective worship and through listening to well-chosen music before and after assembly.

154. The quality of teaching in music is good. In Key Stage 1 the teacher's positive approach ensures pupils listen, participate and enjoy singing. In Key Stage 2, teachers' energy, enthusiasm and good humour motivate and encourage the pupils. Lessons are well planned with material that is interesting and progressively more complex so that pupils' interest is captured and maintained. Teachers explain and demonstrate carefully, introducing relevant terms as appropriate, so that pupils know what is expected. A well-chosen mixture of challenge and praise ensures a suitable response from them. Pupils accordingly work hard to produce a good performance. As a result, they enjoy music making and want to do well; this contributes to the progress they make and to the potential for the subject's further development.

155. A good policy distributes topics, including the development of musical skills, over the years pupils are in the school, but learning outcomes are not clearly enough identified stage by stage. The subject's potential to raise pupils' multi-cultural awareness is insufficiently explored. Because there is no co-ordinator, there are no arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and arrangements to assess what pupils have learned are not fully implemented.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. Pupils achieve well in physical education and attain expected standards by the age of seven. At eleven, their standards of attainment in those areas of the subject observed are in advance of those expected of children of the same age.

157. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils move to music, run on the spot, move their arms, shake their bodies, make firm steps, push or pull imaginary rocks, and move on hands and knees. They link a series of actions and repeat the sequence. Year 2 pupils know how to warm up before exercise. They bounce and catch a ball and, practising with a partner, progress from catching with two hands, to catching with one hand and then to throwing with one hand and catching with the other. They evaluate their work at the end of the lesson.

158. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know how to warm up at the start of sessions and cool down at the end. They have further developed their ball skills and successfully apply them to games. For example, they practise in pairs picking up, passing and receiving a ball. This is extended into fielding skills and, in one instance, successfully applied to a form of rounders where all the pupils were active on the large playing field in two simultaneous games. Extra-curricular football and netball, leading to matches and tournaments such as 'high fives' netball, also enable pupils to practise and improve their skills. All teams are mixed. By the time they leave the school, nearly all pupils can swim 25 metres. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

159. The quality of teaching physical education is good: it was good in all the lessons observed. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. They plan carefully and effectively with clear learning objectives designed to challenge pupils with diverse attainment. They have a high expectation of pupils' abilities which contributes to the good progress they make. Explanation and demonstration are good. For example, in a lesson with Year 6, the teacher demonstrated how to pick up and throw a ball to a partner, on the run. As a result, the pupils knew what to do, and steadily improved their catching and throwing skills as the lesson progressed. Teachers manage the lessons and the pupils well: accordingly, pupils enjoy their lessons, behave very well, try hard and make good progress. Their attitude to physical education and sport is very good as a result.

160. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. The schemes of work from the local education authority and available commercially are helpful, with good model lesson plans which support the teaching and enable the teachers to gain good subject knowledge. The curriculum, especially for games, is wide: during the year eight different games are played and some of these are continued as extra curricular activities. Facilities are very good and contribute to the high standards: there is a large playing field, three marked-out hard-play areas, two halls and a learner swimming pool. However, assessment arrangements, to determine and record what pupils achieve by the end of each year are not fully implemented.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. Standards of attainment in religious education, including that of pupils who have special educational needs, are high at the end of each key stage. By the time they leave the school the pupils have a sound factual knowledge and a good understanding of the significance of Christianity and other world religions.

162. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the life of Jesus and of selected parts of the Old Testament. They know the story of Jesus being lost in the temple and discuss how his parents might have felt when they found him. They know that Jesus had special friends called apostles and discuss the value of friendship in their own lives. In their study of the Old Testament, pupils learn about Joseph, his coat of many colours and the way he was treated by his brothers. They talk about their own families and try to imagine how Jacob felt when he heard what had happened to his son Joseph. Further discussion includes doing good deeds and bad deeds, with the pupils thinking about their own lives and deciding on good deeds that they will try to do during the year. One pupil aims to 'tidy my house and make it sparkle'. As a result of discussing one New Testament story, pupils imagine what it must be like to be blind, how it would affect their lives in for example writing or tying shoe laces. Pupils know that the story of creation is at the beginning of the Bible and that after creating the world, God made the seventh day a day of rest. They work hard in thinking about all the things God has created and make their own prayers of thanks. Pupils know that when they respond 'amen' to a prayer they mean 'we agree.' As a result of this wide range of activities, pupils learn that religion plays an integral part in the way they lead their lives.

163. Pupils' knowledge and understanding increase in Key Stage 2, as they learn about Christianity in more depth and also find out about other major religions. They make a study of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist churches in the area, visiting the churches and recording data from the visits. They know terms such as 'font', 'pew', 'lectern' and 'altar', 'priest' and 'congregation'. They talk readily of the significance and symbolism of the cross, candles, wine and chalice. As part of their work on churches pupils think about the feelings evoked in different places and especially their own feelings when describing the atmosphere in the churches. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 consider the similarities and differences between Hindu and Christian wedding ceremonies, and accept that there are faiths other than their own. Others study some aspects of the Jewish and Hindu faiths. They attempt mehndi patterns and compare birth celebrations and baby naming ceremonies. They know of the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah and understand the significance to Jewish people of the lighting of the menorah. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 know of the Sikh sacred book Guru Granth Sahib, are aware of ceremonials attached to Divali, and have researched information about synagogues.

164. Having studied religions other than Christianity, pupils think about their own personal image of God and also consider the ways they treat different people in their lives such as parents, teachers, friends and visitors. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are familiar with the different books of the Bible. They think carefully and maturely about the concept of free will and understand that free will needs to be tempered with responsibility to keep the world a safe place. As a result of this broad curriculum, pupils are growing up to respect the views and beliefs of other people and to think deeply about their own convictions.

165. The quality of religious education teaching is good. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory: half was good and a quarter very good. Teachers' planning shows clear links with the guidelines of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the Diocesan Syllabus. Pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss and think about different aspects of life and religion. Where there is good teaching, pupils respond well to the careful questioning from their teachers, which provokes thought and reinforces the Christian concepts of consideration and thoughtfulness that are evident throughout the school. Teachers give clear explanations and opportunities for pupils to ask questions and to make observations which increase their understanding of, for example, the Ten Commandments, in the context of laws to keep people safe. Religious education lessons are used well to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. Older pupils develop their writing skills, for example, in producing a report for the newspaper 'Peasant Woman Needs Home', and write empathetically about how Mary,

Peter, Pilate, Judas and Barabbas respectively felt at the death of Jesus.

166. This is a church school with a very strong Christian ethos which fully complies with the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. There are seven visits to church each year, to celebrate the main Christian festivals and each year Year 6 pupils attend the Leavers' Ceremony at Durham Cathedral. The lessons, assemblies and example of staff contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The content of the lessons extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and beliefs, and creates opportunities for reflection and the development of an individual response to religion.

167. The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped and there is no consistent monitoring of standards of pupils' work across the school. Pupils especially in Key Stage 2 do not organise their work well or have clearly defined folders for the subject. Because of this, pupils do not have nicely presented work to look back upon as a record of their achievement during the year; teachers and the subject co-ordinator are not able to monitor the standards attained by the pupils or ensure they are making as much progress as they should.