

INSPECTION REPORT

STOBHILLGATE FIRST SCHOOL

Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122246

Headteacher: Mrs C Oliver

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Hooper
15334

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 November 2000

Inspection number: 224171

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stobhillgate First School Stobhill Morpeth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE61 2HA
Telephone number:	01670 513382
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Lowder
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Hooper (Ofsted No: 15334)	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Religious education	How high are standards?
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs K Anderson (Ofsted No: 9572)	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Hall (Ofsted No: 11611)	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information and communication technology	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Equality of opportunity	
Mr P Stevens (Ofsted No: 28200)	Team Inspector	Science	How well is the school led and managed?
		Geography	
		History	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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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?	12
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?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
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 small and caters for pupils between the ages of three and nine. It is situated on the east side of Morpeth, the county town of Northumberland. Most of the pupils come from the immediate area although there are parents who live further afield who choose to send their children to the school. The school houses a nursery unit, which has a much wider catchment area, and 49 children were attending part-time at the time of the inspection. Twenty-one children under five years of age were full-time members of the foundation class. There were 110 other pupils on roll of statutory school age in four other classes, thirteen pupils fewer than at the last inspection. Pupils come to the school from a wide range of abilities and have had many different experiences but, overall, their attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. The school has identified 30 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is above the national proportion. At present, two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above that nationally. All but one pupil of statutory school age are white, and two pupils of statutory school age speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Stobhillgate First School provides a good education for its pupils in a caring and friendly atmosphere. Overall, teaching is good and frequently very good or better at Key Stage 2. This is having a significant impact on pupils' learning and contributes greatly to the high standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science when they leave the school. Pupils enjoy being at school, are very well behaved and keen to learn and the school provides very well for their personal development. Very good relationships exist between pupils, and staff and pupils. Parents are highly supportive of the school. The headteacher has the full support of the staff and governors and provides very effective leadership. The school is giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and art are high the time pupils leave school.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and often very good, which is a great contributing factor to the good education the pupils receive.
- Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and the staff; they are well behaved and have very positive attitudes to their work, which has a significant impact on their learning.
- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes high standards of personal development and enriches the curriculum.
- The school looks after its pupils very well.
- The school has very positive links with parents.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and with the staff is committed to raising standards.
- Special educational needs provision is very good so pupils make good progress in their learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in history of the seven-year-olds and of pupils by the time they leave the school.
- Currently, the school does not have a formal overview of long-term development planning.
- The governors' role in the formulation of school developments and the monitoring of their progress as identified on the school development plan.
- As identified by the school, a formal system to ensure regular health and safety checks are carried out.
- Use writing skills more effectively to support other subjects as identified in the School Development Plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school's last inspection in February 1997 the school has made significant improvements in the education it provides for the pupils and is well placed to continue to improve. Teaching has improved considerably, so that many pupils by the time they leave school are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Also, standards in art, by the time pupils are seven and nine years old, and in music and design and technology, by the time they are nine years old, have improved. However, standards in history are not so good as at the last inspection. Teachers now plan their lessons so they clearly identify what they want pupils to learn and assess pupils' progress and attainment effectively in order to plan appropriate work to further their learning. Also, monitoring and evaluation procedures have been formalised to monitor the attainment and progress of pupils and co-ordinators are developing a good overview of these within their subject responsibilities. In addition to addressing the issues identified at the last inspection, the provision the school makes for children under five is now very good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are now very positive, a direct impact of the improved quality of teaching. The provision the school makes for the pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral and social development, has also improved, with highly significant improvements in their cultural and multi-cultural awareness. The way in which the school cares for the pupils is now very good. Links with parents are very effective, so parents are able to be fully involved in their children's learning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with					Key
	all schools				Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	C	C	A	D	B	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D well below average E
Writing	C	C	A	C	A	
Mathematics	B	A	A	A	A*	

The table shows that standards of seven-year-olds when compared with those nationally in reading, writing and mathematics steadily improved over the years 1997 to 1999. Although they dropped in reading and writing in 2000, the number of pupils achieving the expected standards was above the national figure and very high in writing, but unusually for the school, there were only a few achieving beyond this, especially in reading. The number of children achieving level 2 and beyond in the mathematics tests and teacher assessments in science was also high, with half of the pupils achieving level 3 in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, the overall performance is much better. It is important to stress that comparisons of trends in national assessment tests are unreliable where cohorts of pupils are relatively small as they are in this school. The school has also set realistic yet challenging targets in English and mathematics for the seven-year-olds for the next year and for the nine-year-olds for the next two years, and in response to government national research has started to improve further standards in writing throughout the school.

Most of the children who are currently under five are likely to surpass the standards expected for children of their age in their personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of development they are on line to at least meet the expected standards. By the time they are seven, most pupils are on course to achieve the expected standards for seven-year-olds in English, with a significant minority achieving beyond this, making standards average overall. In mathematics and science the picture is similar, although more pupils are likely to achieve beyond the expected standards, making standards above average. By the time the pupils leave the school, many of the pupils in the current

Year 4 are on line to achieve above the expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and science by the time they are 11 years old. Although pupils use their speaking, listening and reading skills widely in support of other subjects, there was very little evidence that they use their writing skills to the same extent and the school is currently addressing this. Throughout the school most pupils achieve high standards of work in art. However, in history, by the time pupils are seven and nine, standards pupils achieve are not in line with those expected for their ages nationally. In all other subjects pupils are achieving standards expected for their ages. In religious education standards are in line with the statements in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school caters well for all groups of pupils and especially those pupils who have special educational needs and who speak English as a second language: both groups usually make good progress in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They display a genuine interest and pleasure in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in class, at play and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils enjoy very positive relationships with each other and adults.
Attendance	Good

Pupils contribute greatly to the purposeful and orderly atmosphere existing in the school. Their attitudes and behaviour, and relationships built on mutual respect, have a very positive effect on their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is consistently good and more often than not very good or better at Key Stage 2. This has a very significant impact on pupils' learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Throughout the school, 95 per cent of teaching is good or better, 52 per cent very good or better and five per cent excellent. The quality of the teaching of the children under five is good and often very good. At Key Stage 1, all teaching is good or better with 36 per cent being very good. Of the teaching at Key Stage 2, 94 per cent was good or better, 82 per cent very good or better and 12 per cent excellent. Teachers are very conscientious and clear about what they expect pupils to learn. They have a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils in their classes and cater very well for the wide range of ability levels in their classes. They provide suitable challenge for those pupils who find learning easy and good support for those who find it more difficult. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and nearly all pupils rise to these, which enhances their learning. Teachers' enthusiasm for promoting learning frequently shows in their lessons. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons when teachers successfully provide a good balance between building on and reinforcing pupils' previous knowledge and presenting them with new ideas and information. In nearly all lessons the good and often very good progress pupils make in their learning reflects the quality of teaching. Support staff make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' education. Voluntary helpers are an asset to the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, which enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is good for the small number of pupils in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. This is especially so for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, which is well planned for in the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities enriching the pupils' education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school promotes pupils' welfare very effectively through its concerned attention to their physical and emotional well-being.

The school works very well with parents, many of whom play an active part in their children's learning. The school has very good relationships with other local schools and the community in general. Although staff are very safety conscious, no regular formal internal health and safety checks in and around the school are carried out.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very effective leadership, which has led to a significant number of improvements in teaching and attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties. However, they feel they need to become even more involved in school developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and staff are very strongly committed to raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the strengths of the staff effectively to support pupils' learning. It seeks best value in its use of finance.

The staffing, learning resources and accommodation of the school are adequate.

The headteacher has a very clear educational direction for the school but school development planning is currently too short-term and the school recognises the need to develop a longer-term overview.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The school expects their children to work hard so they make good progress.• Behaviour in the school is good.• Teaching is good.• The open door policy of the school where teachers are very approachable.• The school is well led and managed.• The school encourages their children to become mature and responsible.• They appreciate the information they receive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No adverse comments were brought to the attention of the inspectors prior to, or during, the course of the inspection

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments of the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards by the time pupils reach the age of seven when compared with those nationally in reading, writing and mathematics steadily improved over the years 1997 to 1999. Although they dropped in reading and writing in 2000, the number of pupils achieving the expected standards was above the national figure and very high in writing, but unusually for the school, there were only a few achieving beyond this, especially in reading. The number of children achieving level 2 and beyond in the mathematics tests and teacher assessments in science was also high, with half of the pupils achieving level 3 in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, the overall performance is much better. It is important to stress that comparisons of trends in national assessment tests are unreliable where cohorts of pupils are relatively small, as they are in this school. The school has also set realistic yet challenging targets in English and mathematics for the seven-year-olds for the next year and for the nine-year-olds for the next two years, and in response to government national research has started to improve further standards in writing throughout the school.
2. Most of the children who are currently under five are likely to surpass the standards expected for children of their age in their personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of development they are on line to at least meet the expected standards.
3. By the time they are seven, most pupils are on course to achieve the expected standards for seven-year-olds in English, with a significant minority achieving beyond this, making standards average overall. In mathematics and science the picture is similar, although more pupils are likely to achieve beyond the expected standards, making standards above average. By the time the pupils leave the school, many of the pupils in the current Year 4 class are on line to achieve above the expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and science by the time they are 11 years old.
4. By age seven and nine, the speaking and listening skills of most pupils are above average. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other with great interest. Almost all pupils express their ideas and thoughts coherently and with confidence. The attainment of most pupils in reading by the time pupils are seven years old is broadly average, although by the time they are nine many pupils have reading skills which are above average for their age. In Year 2, many pupils read simple texts reasonably accurately. By the time they are nine, most pupils read for their own interest and pleasure. They read aloud accurately and fluently, often with good expression. Overall, most pupils by the time they are seven are attaining average standards in writing whilst those in Year 4 are on line to achieve above average standards by the time they are 11 years old. Within the Literacy Hour pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Although pupils use their speaking, listening and reading skills widely in support of other subjects, there was very little evidence that they use their writing skills to the same extent and the school is currently addressing this. In general, standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory. The presentation of work and handwriting is satisfactory overall. However, many pupils still print their work and it is only when they are in Year 4 that pupils consistently join their letters in a neat cursive style.
5. Throughout the school, most pupils are achieving above average standards in mathematics. The school has adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well. Under this new scheme of work and curriculum pupils undertake a wide range of work in all areas of mathematics enabling pupils of all abilities to develop their mathematical skills and knowledge well and especially the basic skills of numeracy. Samples of pupils' work and planning demonstrate that pupils in both key stages undertake an appropriate variety of work on shape, space and measures, and tackle a range of problems involving handling data and investigation during the course of the school year.

6. By the time pupils are seven and nine, standards pupils achieve in science are above average. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of work undertaken indicate that pupils undertake a range of appropriate science activities developing scientific skills and knowledge covering all areas of the science curriculum, such as studying life processes and living things, materials and physical processes. Pupils at both key stages develop satisfactory investigative skills. Younger pupils make good progress in carrying out experiments such as comparing the effects on evaporation of placing the same amount of water in places with different temperatures. Higher-attaining pupils have a sound understanding of what it means to make a fair test. Discussions with older pupils also revealed high levels of knowledge and understanding in all areas of their scientific work. However, throughout the school opportunities are limited for pupils to record their scientific work.
7. Standards of attainment achieved by pupils at seven years of age in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with the standards expected nationally. Nine-year-old pupils are on line to achieve nationally expected standards when they are eleven. Pupils in Year 1 manipulate the mouse in order to create a picture of a house using a simple paint program. Year 2 pupils understand that text on a computer screen can be changed and improved by using the keyboard to delete and add punctuation. By the time pupils are in Year 4, they successfully use a range of simulation programs, confidently discuss how to enter and edit text, using appropriate vocabulary, and have a good level of understanding when talking about bar and pie charts that they have produced from data entered. However, their understanding of how to give instructions to control devices and achieve specific outcomes is weak and has developed little from what would be expected of seven-year-old pupils.
8. In religious education standards by the time pupils reach age seven and nine are in line with the statements in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Christian religion and associated customs, such as baptisms and weddings. Year 3 pupils clearly recognise important features, such as courage, in the lives of people they admire. Although there were no direct examples of pupils' work indicating their knowledge about other religions, teachers' planning and the range of appropriate books and artefacts show that they learn about other important world religions such as Judaism and Hinduism in their religious education lessons.
9. Throughout the school most pupils achieve high standards of work in art. Pupils have the opportunity to explore and develop their ideas, investigate and make using a good range of materials and tools, evaluate and develop their work and build up a good knowledge of other artists and cultures. Through the skills they develop pupils produce work in two and three-dimensions of a high quality.
10. However, in history, by the time pupils are seven and nine, standards pupils achieve are not in line with those expected for their ages nationally. This is mainly because pupils are not developing sufficiently a chronological framework for their knowledge of significant events and people. In all other subjects pupils are achieving standards expected for their ages.
11. The school caters well for all groups of pupils and especially those pupils who have special educational needs and who speak English as a second language: both groups usually make good progress in their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. This is a strength of the school and shows improvement since the last inspection, especially for the older children.
13. Staff in the nursery and reception class put a great emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result, these children quickly adapt to the routines of school life and move quietly and confidently around the school. Children in the nursery are quick to learn routines of good social behaviour from older pupils in the classes who frequently act as good role models. The children are friendly towards one another, listen with interest to what others have to say, particularly in whole-class discussions, and share equipment fairly.
14. Throughout the rest of the school pupils work hard, display a genuine interest and pleasure in

their learning and invariably try to meet the high expectations of their teachers. The safe, warm and friendly atmosphere provides an environment that promotes pupils' learning. There is a culture of constructive collaboration between adults and pupils built on mutual respect. Most pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic about their lessons and proud of their achievements. Although teachers do not especially ask pupils to work in silence, many, especially the older pupils, do so naturally when working individually, because of the dedication and concentration they put into their work. Pupils are also confident to answer questions and enter into discussion, giving their own ideas and opinions, as relationships are such that their contributions are valued by both their peers and adults.

15. Pupils behave very well in and around the school. Although the school has a small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties, its success in supporting them and developing them socially as well as academically is very clear. These pupils very rarely reveal their presence through inappropriate attitudes and actions and co-operate very well both with fellow pupils and with their teacher. Parents appreciate the behaviour standards promoted and maintained by the school. The positive behaviour management and the sensible ground rules developed with the pupils ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. All staff are excellent role models and lead by example and as a result relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Last year two pupils were excluded from school five times between them, on a temporary basis, as they did not meet the school's expected standards of behaviour. No anti-social or oppressive behaviour from pupils was observed during the inspection.
16. The personal development of pupils is now very good in all areas of the school. Pupils take responsibility for routine tasks, such as taking the register to the office, and carry them out quietly and efficiently and without the need of supervision. Others offer to help with 'jobs' in their own time. They also use their initiative and when they notice a need, they act unprompted. For example, pupils frequently tidy up after lessons without being asked. Many parents felt that the school helps their children to mature and promotes good attitudes and mutual respect. One parent said she was especially impressed how well her child with special educational needs was progressing in this aspect. Most pupils are courteous, polite, confident and many are self-assured for their age.
17. Attendance levels are good and above the national average. There was no unauthorised absence last year.
18. Pupils contribute greatly to the purposeful and orderly atmosphere existing in the school. Their attitudes and behaviour, and relationships built on mutual respect, have a very positive effect on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is consistently good and more often than not very good or better at Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Throughout the school, 95 per cent of teaching is good or better, 52 per cent very good or better and five per cent excellent. At Key Stage 1, all teaching is good or better with 36 per cent being very good. Of the teaching at Key Stage 2, 94 per cent was good or better, 82 per cent very good or better and 12 per cent excellent. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
20. The quality of the teaching of the children under five is good and often very good. This consistently high quality of teaching reflects the good rate of progress the children make in their early years at school. The teachers, nursery nurses and all members of the support staff have a clear understanding of the educational and social needs of young children. All members of staff have realistically high expectations of achievement and behaviour. There is a significant increase in the level of challenging and interesting tasks between the nursery and reception classes which ensures children progress systematically in their learning.

21. Teachers are very conscientious and clear about what they expect pupils to learn. They plan their lessons well and, in general, use their assessments of pupils effectively to provide appropriate challenge. In this way teachers cater very well for the wide range of ability levels in their classes. Children who learn more quickly than others are often given extension work to ensure they reach their full potential and the end result of this is that many achieve standards beyond the national expectations for their age in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Teachers provide suitable challenge for those pupils who find learning easy and good support for those who find it more difficult. Teachers are very aware of their responsibilities and successfully promote learning for pupils with special educational needs. For these pupils they conscientiously maintain Individual Education Plans and continuously review pupils' progress towards their targets. Teachers appropriately keep pupils aware of these targets, and also praise them for all their achievements. The co-ordinator and the support teacher work closely with class teachers. In this way any withdrawal is carefully planned so that the skills the pupils learn are relevant to their class work.
22. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and the nearly all pupils rise to these, which enhances their learning. For example, in a science lesson the Year 1 pupils were learning about electrical circuits. The class teacher ensured that the pupils knew what she expected them to learn so they focused fully on the activity. She used correct terminology to develop their scientific vocabulary in her preliminary explanations and instructions and left pupils with enough information to find out how to light up a bulb in an electrical circuit. Most made very good progress in their learning through discovering successfully in their experimentation how to make the circuit, with many, in a further challenging activity, making two bulbs light up.
23. Teachers' enthusiasm for promoting learning frequently shows in their lessons. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons when teachers successfully provide a good balance between building on and reinforcing pupils' previous knowledge, and presenting them with new ideas and information. For example, in a literacy lesson the teacher was introducing the idea of persuasive writing to the pupils in terms of advertising. Through discussion, well led by the teacher, the pupils evaluated a poster and its purpose. Using this information, pupils developed their own ideas for a poster to advertise the forthcoming School Fayre, building in previous learnt skills such as 'speech bubbles'.
24. Teachers frequently use skilful questioning techniques to extend pupils' thinking and learning. In a very good numeracy lesson, the oldest pupils were exploring ways of doubling numbers. Through carefully sequenced activities which produced thoughtful discussion, the teacher led pupils through to discover important facts and skills in doubling and the recognition of specific number patterns in their work. The teacher also used pupils' examples well to illustrate discovery of patterns. By the end of the lesson, almost all pupils were readily recalling mentally multiplication facts of two, three, four and ten, with a significant minority doubling three digit numbers to totals over 1000. This lesson was also a good illustration of pupils not only making good progress in their learning but also showing an enjoyment in learning.
25. Where teachers have particular specialisms, these are successfully exploited. This was seen, for example, in an excellent music lesson with older Key Stage 2 pupils. The teacher had a very good knowledge of the subject and the pupils, throughout the lively, stimulating and well-paced lesson, developed their skills of listening, appraising, composing and performing very effectively.
26. Teachers use marking effectively to support learning and they achieve a good balance between making supportive comments and suggestions for improvement and development. Homework is frequently used well to support learning. For instance, all pupils are encouraged to take their books home to share with parents.
27. All support staff and voluntary helpers are well prepared to meet the pupils' learning needs and make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' education. For instance, during a lesson the classroom assistant was recording assessments she was making of pupils' progress in their work on the computer.

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

28. The school meets the statutory requirements for the provision and teaching of all subjects in the National Curriculum, and also religious education and sex education. The school also meets statutory requirements for a daily act of corporate worship.
29. The quality and range of learning opportunities, together with the breadth and balance of the curriculum, are good for pupils throughout the school and very good for pupils under five. The school has adopted the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies successfully. Pupils are supported well in their English lessons and teachers effectively use these strategies in their teaching of literacy skills. However, there is less evidence that pupils are provided with opportunities to use these writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. The very successful use of the strategies for teaching numeracy skills in the classroom has played a significant part in improving pupils' attainment from the time of the previous inspection.
30. Good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' personal, social and health development, which is typified by the significant part that class and group discussions play in pupils' development in many areas of the curriculum. This is having a positive effect on pupils' standards in speaking and listening and the way pupils co-operate with each other. The school has appropriate programmes for sex education and drug misuse, with good support provided by visits from a local police officer, nurse and dentist.
31. There are policy documents in place for all areas of the curriculum and teachers are successfully implementing the guidelines provided by government recommended schemes progressively throughout the school.
32. The school's provision for ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils is satisfactory. Teachers provide a good range of well-structured activities and tasks within lessons which cater well for pupils of all abilities. This is particularly evident in class discussions where teachers encourage everyone to participate and express their views. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in the life of the school, including joining in with its extra-curricular activities. There are occasions, however, where some pupils are withdrawn from assembly and lessons to do other work, although these withdrawals are brief and not regularly from the same curriculum area.
33. The provision made for extra-curricular activities is very good, a view which is strongly supported by parents. There is a comprehensive variety of clubs and activities for pupils of all ages, including football and netball clubs, choir, jazz and ballet classes. Some older pupils are learning to perform traditional clog and rapper dancing and they are very successfully acquiring the skills needed for the complex movements involved. Pupils are encouraged to learn to play musical instruments and older pupils have the opportunity to participate in residential visits to outdoor activity centres.
34. The contribution which parents and the local community make to pupils' learning is very good. The school plays a full part in local festivals, with pupils of all ages joining the recent parade with large banners they had made with an artist in residence at the school. The school takes advantage of a traditional music organisation, Folkworks, to enhance pupils' cultural development. Senior citizens are invited to take lunch with pupils in school. The school benefits from the help of parents in school and parents feel they are kept well informed of their children's progress. Parents contribute much to pupils' cultural development with visits to talk about their occupations and experiences, for example, a visit to a Bangladeshi restaurant and a talk from a fire officer.
35. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. The liaison with the local middle school includes termly meetings of headteachers and good quality information being passed on about pupils' attainment and abilities. The school is kept well informed about previous pupils' attainment in their national tests when they are eleven years old. There is partner-teacher scheme among many local schools, including the nearby special school, which enables expertise to be shared about teaching pupils with special educational needs, and this group has recently set up a

web site on the Internet.

36. The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes high standards of personal development and enriches the curriculum. Collective acts of worship play a significant part in raising pupils' spiritual awareness. In a whole-school assembly on the Christmas theme, in Year 3 pupils are made aware of the importance of the festivals of other religions. Class assemblies provide time for reflection on thoughts such as "What good have I done this week?" and circle time provides pupils with good quality activities and discussions throughout the school. In a music lesson in year 2, a reflective atmosphere is created by the teacher as pupils close their eyes and listen closely to the mood of the music.
37. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development. Pupils in year 2, for example, talk about feelings that are good or bad and discuss what is right or wrong about a given situation. A recently introduced project, "Philosophy for Kids", gives pupils very good opportunities to explore and develop an insight into the values of others. They share their own ideas with other pupils in a reflective atmosphere where views are listened to carefully.
38. The provision made for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibilities such as operating equipment during assemblies and older pupils experience residential visits at outdoor centres. Teachers actively promote an inclusive ethos in lessons where pupils are encouraged to work together, listen to the views of others and appreciate the qualities of their classmates. For example, in a class assembly, pupils are asked to nominate someone for an award who has worked hard as a workmate this week.
39. Very good provision is made for pupils' cultural provision. The school has worked hard at providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of cultures other than their own, and there has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection in this respect. Pupils celebrated the millennium by playing and listening to the music of other countries on the Greenwich meridian in a project organised by "Folkworks". A Japanese intern has spent a year in the school and pupils gained a valuable insight into many Japanese customs. Pupils learn African drumming techniques in music and through religious education and school assemblies they gain an insight into other religions. Pupils have a strong sense of their own local culture developed through opportunities such as playing and listening to traditional music, learning clog and rapper dancing and taking part in the town festival. Pupils in Year 4 learn about the significant part played by St Cuthbert in the spread of Christianity and his life in Northumberland.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. This school has further improved the good level of support it was found to give to pupils' welfare, health and safety at the last inspection. All staff know and care for pupils very well, show a great concern for their emotional and physical well-being and are extremely sensitive to their differing needs. Parents feel that their children are well cared for and, because of the strong family commitment, several siblings have attended this school.
41. The headteacher, governors and staff make every effort to ensure that pupils are safe. The health and safety policy has recently been updated. However, although all staff and non-teaching staff are very safety conscious, the headteacher is aware that at present there is no formal system for regular internal safety audits. Comprehensive systems are in place for recording and reporting of accidents. Effective child protection procedures are in place and the co-ordinator has received appropriate training. The school receives good support from the school nurse, who liaises with outside agencies when required. She is also involved in delivering the health education programme.

42. The school, having tried different models, now has effective procedures in place to assess pupils' learning so that appropriate individual work can be planned for them. Planning clearly indicates assessment opportunities for most subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection and the development of these is ongoing. The school assesses the attainment of pupils both as they enter the nursery and again in the reception class to establish whether pupils have made appropriate progress. As pupils move through the school they undertake assessment tests in English, mathematics and science, which are analysed to ensure pupils are progressing as well as they should be. An important new feature of assessment procedures is the target setting by teachers for individual pupils in English and mathematics, which clearly involves pupils in their own assessment and learning. This system is to be developed to include other subjects, especially science. Using these targets teachers plan work to effectively meet the needs of individuals and/or groups. The school cares very well for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment procedures for them are very good. The register of special educational needs is conscientiously maintained and leads to appropriate action being taken. The school works very hard to develop these pupils' self-esteem, partly by working as closely as possible with their parents and partly by giving full recognition to their achievements. The school liaises well with and makes good use of outside agencies.
43. Procedures to promote good behaviour are very well established and very effective. School and class rules, which pupils helped to formulate, are well displayed. Good work and attitudes are rewarded with merits or 'I Spy' certificates and at the Friday assembly these awards, together with achievements gained outside school, are celebrated. Pupils take pride in this praise and say 'It makes me feel very happy' when they get an award. All staff are constantly alert to any signs of poor behaviour, bullying or harassment. When instances do occur, they are quickly identified and generally handled effectively.
44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very well established and effective. Registers are completed neatly and consistently at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Registers are monitored and any emerging patterns of poor attendance or lateness quickly identified and followed up. The Education Welfare Service is readily available for support.
45. The school provides very good personal support to its pupils. Informal monitoring of each pupil's personal progress is continuously taking place. The school places a high priority on raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The Record of Achievement files in the nursery and reception class give pupils the opportunity to monitor their own personal development and provide a valuable record for parents and staff. Pupils throughout the school are given a wide range of responsibilities. From the start in nursery children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning in class. They select their own resources and help to tidy up. Personal, social and health education covers appropriately such areas as healthy living, and the introduction to drugs and sex education is appropriately matched to the pupils' ages. The circle time gives pupils opportunities to express their own views and listen to others. The school receives good support from the health visitor and community paediatrician when required.
46. Arrangements for children joining the nursery are thorough and parents are encouraged to help in the nursery at any time. The nursery is positioned next to the reception class and there is regular contact between the two. As a result transfer into reception is smooth. Transfer to the middle school is carefully handled. Pupils are invited to a number of events and in the summer term they make a whole day visit when they meet the Year 5 teachers and have lunch. A further visit to the school by the head of Year 5 provides an opportunity for the informal transfer of information. The Year 4 teacher feels that this system generally works well and results in a stress-free transfer onto pupils' next stage of education.
47. The school effectively achieves its aim to create a 'stimulating environment in which all members are safe and feel happy and cared for'. The level of support and guidance the school gives has a positive effect in raising pupils' achievements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. This school has built on the good links it was found to have with its parents at the last inspection. It now works very well with parent many of whom play an active part in their children's learning. This aspect is now a strength of the school.
49. The overwhelming majority of parents have extremely positive views about the school. Through the questionnaire, parents' meeting and discussions during the inspection they express a very high level of satisfaction. All agree that their children like school and that their children are making good progress. The vast majority say that they feel comfortable to approach staff with any problems or concerns they may have and that the school encourages their children to behave well and become mature and responsible. The school encourages parents to be fully involved in their children's education: for example, at the end of each year parents are asked to complete a questionnaire expressing their views about the school. These are monitored and used to inform future developments. The parents' comment sheet at the entrance to school carries some extremely supportive remarks.
50. Parental involvement is a strength of the school. Their contributions have an extremely positive impact on the pupils' learning. Parents are encouraged to come into school and share their expertise. A number of parents and governors help in school on a regular basis and more are willing to help with out-of-school visits and school productions. The school values the help which parents give in class. Parents also help to run after school activities, such as the football club.
51. The Parent-Teacher Association organises a considerable number of events and generates substantial funds, which are used for the benefit of pupils to provide extra resources and to subsidise school trips. Recently, a grandmother raised an impressive sum of money to buy large wheeled vehicles for use in the nursery outside activity area. Parental contributions are greatly valued by the school.
52. Through the school brochure, weekly newsletter, topic letters and booklets parents receive very good quality information about the work and routines of the school. The VIP (very important papers) envelopes, which are sent to parents every Thursday, are an impressive introduction. Parents know to expect them and they have effectively reduced the unreliable nature of 'Pupil Post'. However, currently, the school does not produce translated documents for the few parents whose command of English is limited. Parents find school reports, which comply with statutory requirements, very detailed and informative. Two consultation meetings are held for parents each year and after their children have taken the national assessment tests; parents are shown copies of the tests and are therefore made aware of the tasks their children had to undertake. Parents are invited to school assemblies and classes hold their own events such as open afternoons and invitation evenings. Parents have access to staff at the beginning and end of each day when informal transfer of information takes place and they know and appreciate that they can make an appointment if a longer discussion is required. The school liaises well with parents of pupils with special needs in reviewing their progress. Communications are friendly and welcoming and the school gives parents every opportunity to be involved in their children's development.
53. Parents make good contributions to pupils' learning at home. They were consulted in drawing up the home/school contract, which the majority have signed. Most parents are pleased to help their children with homework. Parents complete comments in the reading diaries, which are an effective link between home and school. The school has organised a number of courses that were effective in encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's learning. Parents receive good advice about how they can help at home through the topic letters and notices in the entrance to the school and the nursery.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and management team are good. The headteacher gives very good direction to the school, leading to a large number of important improvements to teaching and learning. She has a broad vision for the future. This places great emphasis upon increasingly uniting everyone associated with the school in the common purpose of supporting its pupils' education and raising standards. Already, for example, she and her staff have succeeded in helping pupils with behavioural difficulties, so that they work and play happily alongside the others and in no way disrupt the classrooms. This is also being made fully possible by the increasing interest and involvement of parents in what the school is doing. In relation to this, the school has a welcoming feel to it, not least because it looks after its buildings and displays pupils' work very well. The school recognises the need to establish as soon as possible how the senior management team will work effectively, making the best use of the respective strengths of the two teachers recently appointed to the deputy headteacher job-share.
55. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively. Governors work closely with the headteacher and the staff and are very supportive. For example, each governor has a specific responsibility to work with one co-ordinator in developing her subject. Such good co-operation with the school now needs to include closer assessment of whether it is making best use of its resources. The fact that the school has addressed all the key issues arising from the previous inspection is partially due to the active involvement of the governors. They need to develop this approach by being more strongly engaged in the long-term plans for the school's development and in monitoring their progress. In this way they will be in a better position to co-operate with the headteacher and staff to build on the school's strengths and address areas for its improvement.
56. The headteacher, staff and governors are very strongly committed to ensuring the school continues to improve. This is reflected in the good teaching and learning whereby pupils' standards of attainment in numeracy and science, especially, are continuously getting better. The school attaches great importance to tracking individual pupils' progress, which particularly benefits those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The headteacher has a thorough programme for developing teachers in their classroom practice, through direct observation of their teaching. She also helps them in their professional development through interviews and has a very supportive approach to those who are new to the school or to posts of responsibility. Subject leaders work very hard in their involvement in developing teachers and will continue to need opportunities to have access to classrooms during the school day. They establish very good plans to develop improvements in their subject. The School Development Plan itself is clear and crisp. It establishes very appropriate priorities and what they will cost in terms of time and finance. The plan needs to include an outline of the school's objectives for the more distant future, so that it can begin to work out how it will achieve them.
57. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides strong leadership and steers the school well in ensuring a consistent approach to meeting the pupils' needs, especially where they have behavioural difficulties. There have been some improvements since the last inspection. Pupils make better progress, especially in lessons in Years 3 and 4, where previously it had been unsatisfactory. Individual Education Plans are better focused and there is a clear policy for provision. Staffing for special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator and support teacher are well qualified and this enables them to work with teachers over writing Individual Education Plans. Support assistants provide valuable guidance to pupils. Accommodation, when withdrawal is necessary, is adequate. Resources for special educational needs are good and include a variety of ways to help pupils with their literacy.
58. The school makes good use of all the resources available to develop its educational provision. Very good appointments have ensured a strong staff, which uses its knowledge and expertise to help pupils in their learning. Organisation of teaching is flexible so that, for example, teachers swap classes for music and physical education. Classroom assistants work well with teachers in planning and reviewing individual pupils' work and personal development, particularly where they have special educational needs. This includes very good records being made in the classroom. The caretaker and his staff work hard to maintain a pleasant environment and all the non-teaching staff adopt a very caring approach to the pupils. The efficiency of the office staff helps the school's

managers to make best use of its financial provision. Resources for subjects are satisfactory, and good for English and children under five. They are very good for music, with instruments which help the pupils appreciate different cultures.

59. The previous inspection report judged the leadership and management to be good, as it is now. The headteacher had been fairly recently appointed and has since developed her influence much further so that her own leadership is very good. However, the final shape of the senior management team has yet to be fully established. The school's plans now have clear criteria for success but currently they are too short-term and the school recognises the need to develop a longer-term overview. Classroom assistants now play a far more active role in working with pupils. The school now has firmly established procedures for leaders to develop teaching in their subject and it is far more focused on pupils' attainment and progress. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now giving good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to build on the improvements the school has already made, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:
- a) Improve standards in history throughout the school; (See paragraphs 10,107)
 - b) Develop a plan that establishes and prioritises long-term educational developments appropriately linked to financial implications and that shows clearly how these are going to be implemented and monitored (See paragraphs 55, 56, 59)
 - c) Develop the governors' role so they are fully involved in the formulation of school developments and the monitoring of their progress. (See paragraph 55)
61. In addition, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider including the following minor issue, as identified by the school, in their action plan:
- a) Develop a formal system to ensure regular health and safety checks are carried out; (See paragraph 41)
 - b) Use writing skills more effectively to support other subjects as identified in the school development plan. (See paragraphs 4, 6, 29, 77, 80, 88, 89, 103, 107, 123)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	47	43	5	0	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 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24.5	131
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	39

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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
		2000	15	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	15
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	25	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (88)	100 (96)	100 (88)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (83)	100 (88)	100 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	1
Chinese	0
White	109
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	5	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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	26.2

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5

Total number of education support staff	1.4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	300,017
Total expenditure	303,030
Expenditure per pupil	1,732
Balance brought forward from previous year	586
Balance carried forward to next year	2,427

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	155
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	37	3	0	12
The teaching is good.	73	25	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	27	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	17	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	68	29	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	51	47	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	29	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	37	0	0	7

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

62. The school has built on the provision for children under five since the last inspection and it is now very good. The school admits children to the nursery at the beginning of the term after their third birthday and at the time of the inspection there were 49 children, all attending part-time. Overall, the attainment of children when they enter the nursery is about that expected for children of their age. Children transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the September after their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children who were under five in the reception year. Most children in the reception classes attend the school's nursery before they enter full time school.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Staff in the nursery and reception class put a great emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is good and often very good so nearly all pupils by the time they are five are likely to exceed the expected levels in the development of their personal, social and emotional skills due to the very good progress they make. Children come happily into the nursery and the reception class and settle quickly into the secure and caring classes. The children in the nursery are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They settle quickly to the well-established routines as they decide on their initial activities. They thrive in the stimulating, caring and secure environment and soon learn to relate well to adults and each other. They are quick to learn routines of good social behaviour from older pupils in the classes who frequently act as good role models. The children are self-possessed and confident when moving around the nursery. They share and take turns amicably, for example, when using the outside equipment. The children concentrate well on their tasks, for example, when working at the computer. Children clearly enjoy their work in the nursery. They co-operate happily with each other and adults. The children take care of classroom equipment and quickly learn to tidy up after themselves. This good level of interest, enthusiasm and co-operation continues as children move into their reception year. They increase their ability to concentrate and to develop their levels of co-operation. The children work well independently and together. Most children persevere to finish their tasks and take pride in their work. The reception teacher encourages children to develop independence. For example, children have to register themselves when they start their school day by placing their name on a board and, when they go to the toilet, instead of asking they move the same nametag to indicate this on the board. The children quickly adapt to the routines of school life and move quietly and confidently around the school. Staff constantly reinforce good habits, such as putting up their hands to answer questions or make comment, and make sure that children tidy up after activities. Children change their clothes for physical education lessons independently and put them tidily into individual baskets.

Communication, language and literacy

64. The development of communication, language and literacy is very good in both the nursery and reception classes and most children are likely to reach the expected levels of attainment in this area of their development by the time they are five. In the nursery most children make good progress in their ability to enjoy looking at books. They quickly understand that pictures and print convey meaning as they listen to very well read stories and rhymes. Children who have limited vocabulary receive a very good level of individual help and support to increase their speaking skills through a range of carefully planned activities. Children learn to hold and use pencils correctly. The members of the nursery staff give all children a wide range of activities that increase their early writing skills and improve their hand and eye control. This good rate of learning and progress continues as children move into their reception year. Children with special educational needs continue to receive effective support. The reception class teacher uses and adapts the literacy strategy well to meet the developing need of these young children. This effectively develops further children's listening, speaking and reading skills and especially their knowledge of letter sounds. The teachers choose books and stories carefully to increase children's interest in reading. All adults in the reception class use precise and clear diction to assist children's

speech. They encourage the children to speak clearly in sentences. Most children consolidate and develop their early writing skills well. They hold and use pencils correctly and most make very good attempts at writing their own names.

Mathematical development

65. The provision for children's mathematical development is very good and most children by the time they are five are on line to meet the standards expected nationally for five-year-olds. Most children make good progress in consolidating and developing their number skills. The members of the nursery staff develop these skills very effectively through a carefully planned range of activities. They use everyday toys and objects to make number work real for the children. An example of this was when small groups of children looking at coins were placing them in order of worth and some were beginning to understand that a 10p coin was worth the same as ten separate 1p coins. In this activity the children were also developing their mathematical language through using terms such as 'more than' and 'less than'. The children use construction activities to develop awareness of space and increase their control skills. In these activities also children become familiar with shapes such as circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. All children learn and sing simple number rhymes. Children enter the reception year with a developing range of mathematical skills. The reception teacher continues to build on and develop these early skills well. For example, the children were using and developing their knowledge of coins further in practical situations. Most children count and order objects to 10 and some beyond. Many recognise numerals up to five and match objects to them correctly. The teaching is good. Teachers and assistants take every opportunity to make teaching points. For example, during their snack time in the reception class they used different two and three-dimensional shaped fruit, vegetables and biscuits, such as spherical tomatoes, round pieces and cylindrical chunks of cucumber and square crackers, to develop mathematical language and further their knowledge of shape.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

66. The school provides very well for children's knowledge and understanding of the world and most children are on line to meet the standards expected for children in this area by the time they are five. Teaching is good and teachers provide many exciting activities to develop this area of learning. The children have many opportunities in the nursery and the reception classes to explore the natural and man-made world in the development of their scientific skills. For example, children in the nursery and reception year hatch chicks and ducklings and watch them grow and observe caterpillars changing to chrysalises and then to butterflies. They study and make observations of different weathers and explore different materials, for instance when mixing water with dry sand. Most know where they live and some talk about where they have been on holiday. They develop an understanding of the passing of time through collating photographs of themselves as they grow older. They develop their design and making skills well through building, for instance, towers using large wooden blocks and designing a town in the sand. Children use computers as a matter of routine and develop a good understanding of how to use the keyboard and mouse for accurate control. Children in the reception class recognise the different symbols on the tape recorder and operate it independently.

Physical development

67. The school makes good provision for children's physical development and most children by the time they are five are likely to meet the standards expected for children of their age. They have access to a suitably wide range of tools such as pencils, crayons, scissors and glue from the beginning of their time in the nursery and most children by the time they leave the nursery are controlling these tools well. Children in the nursery develop their climbing and balancing skills effectively. They have opportunities to run, jump and balance. They use wheeled toys with an increasing awareness of space. For example, they manoeuvre them carefully and accurately around a set course. There is a secure area for outdoor activities for nursery children. Children in the reception class continue to develop their physical skills well. The school has a suitable selection of large apparatus for children to use in the school hall.

Creative development

68. The school's provision for children's creative development is very good and most children are likely to meet the level of skill necessary to reach the standards expected by the time they are five. Children learn basic techniques in the nursery and make very good progress due to the good and often very good teaching. This enables them to use and control materials effectively. They hold brushes correctly and apply paint to paper with much confidence. Children mix paint to achieve different colours. They experiment confidently with paint, printing with different objects such as wheels and sponges to make colourful patterns. They sing a variety of songs from memory and tap out rhythms and march in time to the music confidently and with enjoyment. In the reception classes children continue to develop confidence in using a suitably wide range of media and equipment. Most children show a good awareness of shape, pattern and colour. In both classes opportunities are made for the children to express their ideas and feelings through imaginative play, for instance, in the space station in the nursery and in the office in the reception class. Children enjoy the well-planned activities.
69. The quality of the teaching of the children under five is good and often very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching for children who are under five. This consistently high quality of teaching is reflected in the good rate of progress the children make in their early years at school. The teachers, nursery nurses and all members of the support staff have a clear understanding of the educational and social needs of young children. All members of staff have realistically high expectations of achievement and behaviour. There is a significant increase in the level of challenging and interesting tasks in the nursery and reception classes. This has a positive impact on developing the children's knowledge and understanding. All members of staff speak precisely and clearly. This helps the children to make good progress in developing their speaking skills. Children with special educational needs make good progress. All members of staff place careful emphasis on the teaching of specific skills, for example, how to use pencils, paint and musical instruments. They encourage pupils to work independently and make choices.
70. The nursery makes very good provision for the children's all round development and education. The planning gives specific expectations for what the children are to learn from each activity. Each area of learning has clear and systematic steps of progression. The teacher in the reception class builds effectively on the work of the nursery. All teachers plan carefully to meet individual needs and effectively challenge differing abilities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum planning for children who are under five meets the requirements of the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals for young children.
71. The level of staffing in the nursery, a teacher and a nursery nurse, is adequate and meets the agreed requirements. The teacher, nursery nurses and reception class teacher and her part-time classroom assistant plan together closely to ensure there is no unnecessary repetition of work. All members of staff ensure that children have full and equal access to the areas of learning. All members of staff who teach children under five have a clear commitment to raising standards. They liaise closely with parents through a 'Record of Achievement' file, which is a recording of significant pieces of work the children have completed and which parents share, and often add to, at the weekend with their children. Teachers work closely with Key Stage 1 teachers to continue to develop the current good practice.
72. The record keeping system is very informative. It gives all members of staff a well-informed base for the planning of work. The school uses a formal entry assessment procedure for children entering the nursery. The members of the nursery staff work together with parents to complete a record of what their child can do at home. This gives the members of the nursery staff a clear knowledge of what to expect from the children when they enter the nursery. They use this knowledge to plan future work on the basis of what the children know, understand and can do. The reception teacher continues to use the records from the nursery. The teacher also formally assesses the children at the beginning of their reception year. The nursery and reception classes provide a very effective level of support for children with special educational needs. They provide the children with a firm foundation for learning and a smooth transition to work at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

ENGLISH

73. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 based on an average points score show that pupils achieved standards in line with the national average in writing. However, in reading they achieved standards below the national average. This was because, although more achieved the expected standards for seven-year-olds than the national average of Level 2, fewer achieved beyond this (Level 3). When these results are compared with schools where pupils have similar backgrounds these results are above in reading and well above in writing. The results of the tests over the three previous years show that in reading and writing they were in line with those nationally in 1997 and 1998 and well above in 1999 when a higher than average number of pupils achieved Level 3.
74. Overall, the standard of work of the seven-year-olds seen during the inspection was in line with the expected standards and a few pupils are likely to achieve beyond this by the end of the year. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and are on line to achieve standards which are above the standards expected nationally by the time they are 11 years old. This represents an improvement since the last inspection especially for the oldest pupils.
75. By age seven and nine, the speaking and listening skills of most pupils are above average. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other with great interest. Almost all pupils express their ideas and thoughts coherently and with confidence. For instance, pupils in Year 2 were keen to participate fully as they confidently discussed their experiences of computers in the situation of text editing. Older pupils in Year 4 after hearing the story and background of St Cuthbert in a religious education lesson were talking confidently to the rest of the class, expressing their opinions and views clearly, and were keen to demonstrate their knowledge. The lively discussion, controlled very well by the teacher, was inspired by her interesting input based on a very good knowledge of the subject and her very good rendering of the story, which enthralled the pupils.
76. The attainment of most pupils in reading by the time pupils are seven years old is broadly average, although by the time they are nine many have reading skills which are above average for their age. In Year 2, many pupils read simple texts reasonably accurately. They recognise an appropriate range of words by sight and when faced with unfamiliar words they use suitable strategies to help them, such as blending letter sounds and using clues from pictures and other text. Most pupils understand what they are reading and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to predict what will happen next in the story. Many recount simply, but accurately, other stories they have read or heard. In the well taught literacy lessons teachers continually promote learning through consolidating and building on pupils' reading skills. Throughout Years 3 and 4, these skills continue to develop appropriately through regular practice and, by the time they are nine, most pupils read for their own interest and pleasure. They read aloud accurately and fluently, often with good expression. The better readers follow the main themes of stories they read and are beginning to refer to the text to support their views about characters and the setting of stories. Throughout the school, pupils become increasingly familiar with the layout of non-fiction books and pupils in Year 4 pupils use index and contents pages with ease. They illustrated their clear knowledge when researching about chosen animals in order to write a report about them.
77. Overall, most pupils by the time they are seven are attaining average standards in writing whilst those in Year 4 are on line to achieve above average standards by the time they are 11 years old. Within the Literacy Hour pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Pupils in Year 1 were successfully making lists and understood clearly that they did not need to construct sentences for this style of writing. The teacher, to stimulate learning in their practical written work, had chosen purposefully the very topical activity of making Christmas present lists. Year 2 pupils were considering story structures, having read one together and listened to another told by their teacher, and were planning their own stories appropriately to a set format. In Year 3, pupils, having developed an understanding of the purpose of advertisements with their persuasive and often extravagant language, were drafting their own posters to advertise the School Fayre. This is another good example of a teacher choosing a meaningful activity to stimulate pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils were analysing poems about animals written in different styles and were gathering ideas for appropriate verbs, adverbs and adjectives and developing imaginative phrases to use in their own poems. Although pupils use

their speaking, listening and reading skills widely in support of other subjects, there was very little evidence that they use their writing skills to the same extent. The school is aware of this and is planning to remedy this in the near future. Overall, standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory. At both key stages pupils use dictionaries effectively to help with their spellings. Most of the Year 2 pupils are beginning to use capital letters and full stops to punctuate their sentences correctly. In their work Year 4 pupils are gaining a clear understanding of the main parts of speech and how they are used in sentences. The presentation of work and handwriting is satisfactory overall. Final drafts of work for display are usually presented well with neat handwriting. However, many pupils still print their work and it is only when they are in Year 4 that pupils consistently join their letters in a neat cursive style.

78. In general, most pupils, throughout both key stages, are making at least satisfactory and often good progress in their knowledge and use of English, generally through the reinforcement and consolidation of previous learning. Often, during Literacy Hours, pupils were observed to be making good progress due to the high expectations of the teachers and brisk pace to lessons. Overall, the pupils with special educational needs often make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They are well supported in lessons and work is matched to their particular needs. Throughout both key stages, most pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. They generally respond enthusiastically to their teachers, make constructive contributions to lessons and answer questions appropriately. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and say they read for pleasure at home.
79. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching. In general, teachers plan their lessons in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. The basic skills of phonics are taught well, especially in the classes of younger pupils. Teachers ensure the work is matched to the varying attainment levels of pupils in their classes but is challenging enough to make sure pupils maintain a good rate of learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for with appropriate work set for them and good support to promote their learning. In the introductions to lessons, teachers use skilful questioning techniques to revise and review work covered in previous lessons and they value the contributions made by their pupils. Also, they give clear instructions and explanations for follow-up work and have high expectations that pupils produce their best work. Throughout both key stages, teachers monitor pupils' reading carefully, both through the guided reading sessions in the Literacy Hour and through pupils' independent reading. Pupils regularly take their reading books home to share with their parents and the reading record book is used as an effective vehicle for a two-way dialogue between staff and parents.
80. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator has been very effective in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Currently, the school is working towards raising standards in writing throughout the school, and more especially to encourage pupils to practise and use their writing skills in support other subjects. The headteacher and co-ordinator have undertaken some monitoring of the effects of the National Literacy Strategy on pupils' attainment through direct classroom observation. As a leading literacy teacher in the local education authority the co-ordinator is involved in both leading and receiving training courses and the knowledge she gains from this she passes on to benefit other teachers in the school. Resources are generally good as the school has seen the need to fund resources to meet the demands of the National Literacy Strategy as a priority. The new school library is well stocked with a wide range of appropriate books, which are organised very well thanks to voluntary help of parents. The school uses a range of commercial reading schemes, appropriately graded, to support pupils' reading.

MATHEMATICS

81. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that standards were very high in comparison with the national average and very high compared with similar schools, with the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 being well above the national average. Results over the five years up to 2000 indicate that standards have risen substantially and that the trend is significantly better than the national average.
82. The standard of work seen during inspection week by pupils who are seven years old is above the

standard expected nationally, which is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Pupils in Year 1 use one, two and five pence coins to add up to ten pence and a significant minority of pupils use three coins to add amounts up to 20 pence. Most pupils measure a variety of objects in non-standard units and recognise comparisons of size. Most pupils in Year 2 recognise the division symbol and its place in a number sentence when discussing the idea of sharing, and some pupils recognise the concept of having a remainder when using sharing counters, but not always reaching an accurate conclusion. Pupils identify two and three-dimensional shapes and spell correctly names such as 'cube' and 'cone'.

83. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through Years 3 and 4, and by the time they are 9 years old, are on line to achieve standards which are above the standards expected nationally by the time they are 11 years old. Most Year 3 pupils readily identify a half and a quarter as fractions in words and numbers and understand that they are several parts of a whole. They build on their previous knowledge of three-dimensional shapes and are beginning to identify more complex shapes such as cuboids. A significant majority of pupils in Year 4 confidently double numbers up to 20 and readily recall multiplication facts of two, three, four and ten. Some pupils double three-digit numbers to totals over 1,000, explaining how they reached their answers and recognising patterns of numbers. Their use of individual whiteboards gives them confidence to try out ideas and develops their number skills through quick trials and tests, although it does not give a permanent check on progress.
84. The quality of teaching is very good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during inspection week, with all lessons observed being good or very good. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection report. The high pace of lessons, through both discussions and group activities, encourages pupils to sustain their effort. Pupils show a lot of enthusiasm for the subject, which is sustained by the energetic approach of teachers and the interesting range of activities. Teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils and the tasks and activities that teachers set are very well matched to the abilities of the pupils. They are planned carefully and enable pupils of all abilities to develop their mathematical skills and knowledge well. Teachers throughout the school expect the most of pupils in their attainment and behaviour. This is evident in the substantial amount of work produced by pupils and the high levels of concentration and effort. The tasks that teachers set for pupils are demanding. For example, in Year 4, the teacher makes very effective use of work by individual pupils on patterns in numbers to extend the ability of the whole class to develop their own strategies.
85. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy, which they use very effectively to develop their planning and strategies in the classroom. Mathematical concepts are reinforced well by the relevant use teachers make of information and communication technology. For example, pupils in Year 3 use the computer to reinforce their learning on fractions by solving progressively more difficult problems on the screen. In year 2, lower-attaining pupils consolidate their understanding of division by using a visually stimulating program and answering questions on the screen.
86. The management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has been effective in supporting the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator, together with other teachers, has had opportunities to monitor the teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy and mathematics curriculum. There are good assessment procedures and the work of pupils is carefully monitored. There are good procedures for the transfer of pupils to the middle school, which enables teachers in both schools to monitor the continuity and progression of pupils' work across the key stage. The very high targets that the school set for pupils' attainment at seven years of age in national tests were met in 2000. The targets which the school has set for pupils' attainment at seven years of age this year in mathematics are realistic in the light of the standards of work seen amongst pupils in Year 2 and the close match of Teachers' Assessments to actual results over the previous three years.

SCIENCE

87. Teachers' Assessments of pupils' attainment in science at the age of seven suggest that it is very well above the national average. This further suggests that not only the higher-attaining pupils but also those with special educational needs are achieving very well. The inspection evidence broadly confirms these assessments.
88. Pupils' current attainment in Year 2 is already at a level above the national average for those aged seven. No lesson was observed in their classroom but a judgement was made on the basis of talking to pupils and looking at their work. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the parts of a plant and an early understanding of their function. They know what plants and animals need to survive but have not yet begun to understand that animals adapt to their environment. They make good comparisons between different materials. Higher-attaining pupils can classify and categorise solids, liquids and gases and already understand that changes caused by heating are not always reversible. Pupils have a clear understanding of the effects of changing the number of batteries or bulbs on the brilliance of the light which is obtained. Higher attaining pupils understand that gravity keeps things on the ground and that distance affects the volume of sounds. Pupils make good progress in carrying out experiments such as comparing the effects on evaporation of placing the same amount of water in places with different temperatures. Higher-attaining pupils have a sound understanding of what it means to make a fair test. However, pupils are not learning the habit of recording their observations on a regular basis. This means they cannot gain an overview of the whole process of an experiment from setting it up to answer a question, through predicting, carrying the experiment out, recording observations, evaluating them and finally drawing conclusions.
89. The level of work of pupils in Year 4 is well above the national average for pupils of their age. In the lesson observed they spoke confidently about the workings of the Earth, Moon and solar system, knew about the Milky Way and the 'Big Bang' theory about the origin of the Universe. They easily understood that the moon's light was caused by reflected sunlight. Higher-attaining pupils went further and explained the causes of 'black holes'. Discussions with pupils also revealed high levels of knowledge and understanding. They fully grasp the functions of the parts of plants and know what distinguishes living from non-living things. They have the knowledge of the main bodily organs and systems expected of eleven-year-olds. Higher-attaining pupils can explain the meaning of food chains. Pupils have a sound knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet. Their knowledge of materials and physical processes is equally good. They can explain conductivity and the effects of a broken electric circuit. Through their experiments they have appreciated the occurrence of evaporation. Higher-attaining pupils make the accurate suggestion that evaporation would be a way to recover dissolved salt. This, again, is the level of thinking expected of eleven-year-olds. Pupils, again, are limited in their opportunities to record their scientific work. However, in all other respects, they are on course to produce test results in their next school which are at least above the level expected for eleven-year-olds.
90. Standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils are very keen to make new discoveries and show a deep interest in all they do. This is demonstrated particularly in Year 4, where pupils are beginning to pose their own questions to the teacher. In the other lesson observed in Year 1, six-year-olds were easily able to sustain work for well over an hour because of their involvement and concentration. This reflected the teacher's appropriately high expectations as well as the interest generated by the lesson.
91. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. In the two lessons observed it was very good. Teachers have very secure knowledge about the subject, which helps them bring out very advanced knowledge of outer space in Year 4, for example. They insist on pupils learning correct scientific words in experiments, so that six-year-olds talk about using 'crocodile clips' when setting up electric circuits. Teachers plan their lessons very well, so that pupils have time to revisit previous learning and use it to make thorough investigations before reporting their discoveries to the class. Acknowledging pupils' differing abilities, they have appropriate extension activities to hand. Teachers adopt very good methods to put across new ideas. When asking pupils to draw a diagram of a circuit, for example, they do not show standard symbols straightaway but expect pupils first to devise their own. Where necessary, however, they make very good use of time and resources to make clear demonstrations of how day and night occur. Teachers manage their classes very well but in a way that implies that they should control themselves. Consequently, pupils co-operate very well in group-work. Lessons have a very good

variety of pace, with brisk revision followed by sustained activities. Classroom assistants and parents provide good additional support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make good use of homework where it will consolidate their learning, or provide opportunities for children to gather their own evidence more independently. They now need to provide pupils with the opportunities they need to use their literacy and computer skills to record what they are thinking and doing.

92. The subject manager provides good leadership. Although not able to visit classrooms on a regular basis, she is strongly committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning. She achieves this by using a very detailed action plan and close assessment of pupils' progress. Resources are adequate but rather disorganised and inaccessible. The school has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. This is particularly evident in test results, where standards have risen markedly from being as expected for seven-year-olds and below the average for nine-year-olds. This is a noteworthy achievement for the school and reflects its concern to bring out the best in all pupils. Teaching is now of a consistently high quality.

ART

93. Standards of attainment achieved by pupils at seven years of age in art are above the standards expected nationally. Nine-year-old pupils are on line to achieve above the nationally expected standards when they are eleven, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection report.
94. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 investigate the qualities of clay. They experiment with a variety of objects to make impressions of a fish on a flat surface and relate the patterns that the objects make to their desired outcomes, such as scales, fins and eyes, with good results. Year 2 pupils produce good quality line drawings based on observations of real fish, which they use as a basis for their relief work in clay. They develop their original designs and discuss with each other the effectiveness of various objects in achieving the desired effect. They have responded well to a visit to a local museum to see the work of William Morris and collect visual information, from which they have developed and adapted their own wallpaper designs. Pupils in Year 3 demonstrate a good level of skill in observational drawing from plants. They show a good level of understanding of tonal perspective when painting a cityscape based on a study of "Toledo" by El Greco. Year 4 pupils discuss the works of a number of artists in a lesson on perspective. They comment on the ways in which artists such as Hobbema have represented distance in their paintings and explore how this was achieved. They have a high level of understanding of the ways in which tone, size and line are used to portray distance in paintings and use this knowledge very well in their own work. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school.
95. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and give pupils a range of tasks and activities which extend their understanding of what they are doing and enable them to acquire a good range of skills and high levels of understanding. For example, in a lesson in Year 4, the teacher reinforces knowledge by the use of appropriate words such as "linear" and "tonal", and uses the school corridor to demonstrate size, distance and perspective. The good use of a large number of illustrations of the paintings of famous artists enables pupils to gain a valuable insight into their own work. Teachers challenge and inspire pupils with stimulating activities and very good use of the available resources, and have high expectations of pupils' attainment. This is reflected in the good quality of the displays throughout the school, providing a stimulating and exciting visual environment.
96. The subject is very well managed, and the co-ordinator has worked successfully with teachers to develop the subject throughout the school. This is reflected in the good quality of the displays of work in the school and the confidence with which teachers approach the subject. Schemes of work have been developed with teachers working together and elements of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines have been successfully integrated into teachers' planning. Initiatives which have involved the whole school, have benefited pupils. For example, the school hall has an exciting display of large-scale banners produced by pupils of all ages together with an artist in residence, which were carried by the pupils in the local festival procession.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Due to timetable arrangements only one lesson was observed during inspection week. Judgements are based on this lesson, an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and staff.
98. Standards of attainment achieved by pupils at seven years of age in design and technology are in line with the standards expected nationally. Nine-year-old pupils are on line to achieve nationally expected standards when they are eleven, which represents an improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection.
99. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use small tools, joining techniques and a variety of materials such as card, dowelling and straws to make model houses based on observations on a local housing estate. Pupils incorporate simple hinges into their models for doors or windows. The work they do is based upon simple designs which they have drawn up to plan their models. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their design skills through projects involving money bags and pneumatics. They construct models where air pressure in balloons is used to open doors on a model of a labyrinth and progress to larger scale work on imaginary monsters, where movements become more complex. Pupils talk confidently about their ideas for designing money bags, using appropriate language and vocabulary to describe what they are doing; for example "Which material will carry the weight?" and "The stitching could be destroyed with too much use". They make, compare and then contrast a medieval bag and a modern one.
100. Only one lesson was seen during the week of the inspection, and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. In this lesson, a thorough approach in the planning, leading of discussions and preparation of materials by the teacher, meant that pupils wasted no time and maintained good levels of concentration. The teacher skilfully prompted group discussions, helping pupils to make decisions and recognise the connection between the design and making processes.
101. Good relationships are evident in the way pupils co-operate in groups. They share ideas well and are prepared to accept the ideas of other pupils to improve their own work. Pupils participate well in discussions and show an enthusiasm for the subject.
102. Recent in-service training for teachers has provided a sound basis of understanding and knowledge of national guidelines for teaching the subject. Elements of these guidelines have been successfully incorporated into teachers' planning, schemes of work and recording of pupils' attainment. The subject is soundly managed

GEOGRAPHY

103. Pupils' level of attainment is in line with expectations in Years 2 and 4. Lessons were observed in Years 1, 3 and 4. However, pupils were also interviewed and their work was examined. Pupils in Year 2 can outline different types of buildings to be found in the locality of the school and know their function. They can also explain how the land is used where it is not built on. Pupils can distinguish which features of the landscape have always been present and those which have been created by people. They confidently state the effects on people's lives of different types of weather. The higher-attaining pupils appreciate the need for symbols in map-work. Pupils can discuss what they like and dislike about living in Morpeth but do not make comparisons with other places. This knowledge and understanding are above expectations. Two factors depress overall attainment. First, pupils are not in the habit of using written language, charts or graphs on paper or on computers to record both what they are trying to find out and what they discover. Consequently they are not using their literacy and numeracy skills to develop their thinking or communicating. Moreover, they cannot assess their own progress over time or revisit what they have learnt. Secondly, they are not learning the skills of independent research, asking their own

questions and finding ways to provide answers.

104. These limitations to geographical skills continue into Years 3 and 4, although most pupils' skills are in line with expectations in other respects. However, a significant minority are unable to compare different places and find it difficult to express views about human features and their effects on the landscape. They are not used to gathering evidence and sifting it for its usefulness to them in their studies. Standards of attitudes and behaviour are good. Where teaching is excellent, so is initiative and behaviour.
105. The quality of teaching is very good. In one class it is excellent. Consequently, pupils achieve very well with what they are learning. However, the school's current practice with recording is strongly reducing teachers' effectiveness in raising overall standards of attainment. Teachers plan lessons very well so that pupils learn new ideas through a range of strategies. For example, to help her pupils understand what a plan-view was, one teacher first asked one pupil to draw round an object and then the rest of the class to guess what it was from the plan-view created. Next she showed them plan-views on an overhead projector. Thirdly she showed them aerial photographs. Fourthly she asked them to create a model village and then draw around it to create a 'map'. Teachers make very good use of resources. They use the 'Big Book' from the Literacy Hour when it is relevant, so that pupils learn the relevance of English to other subjects. Teachers also use high quality maps and illustrations to make their point. They ask pupils to use a digital camera to demonstrate the difference between plan views and side-views.
106. The subject leader keeps a very thorough file, with a good action plan for developing teaching and learning. There is now a need for the staff and herself to consider ways to ensure that all the skills outlined in the National Curriculum Programme of Study are developed. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection. However, the execution of mid-term planning is not as good as it was and omits the skills referred to.

HISTORY

107. Pupils' level of attainment is below expectations in both key stages. Lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, but none in Years 3 or 4. However, pupils were interviewed and their work was examined. In the two lessons seen, pupils had enough knowledge of the story of Grace Darling to pose sensible questions. Pupils do not know when the periods in history they have studied occurred and in what order. Those in Year 2 have a good knowledge of houses and how people lived in one period but are not able to talk about the changes that have occurred since. They are not beginning to understand that history can be represented in different ways. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are starting to explain why people in the past acted as they did. They are not in the habit of independently using a wide variety of first and second hand sources of evidence; nor do they regularly record their learning in writing or on computers. This means they do not learn to communicate about history and have no way of seeing how they have progressed. Once again their critical powers are underdeveloped in that they do not learn that history can be told in many ways. These limitations to their learning do not affect their attitudes and behaviour, which are very good and sometimes excellent. They respond well to imaginative teaching and show initiative with their questions. They settle down quickly in group work and co-operate very well with one another.
108. The quality of teaching is very good. Consequently, pupils achieve very well in what they are learning. However, the school's current practice with recording is strongly reducing teachers' effectiveness in raising overall standards of attainment. Teachers make pupils thoroughly aware of the aims of their lessons and use revision to assess their knowledge and understanding. They plan imaginatively, so that, for example, a pupil pretends to be Grace Darling and answers very well prepared questions from their friends. The excitement and interest this generates ensures that pupils learn a great deal about this historical figure.
109. The subject leader keeps a very thorough file, with a good action plan for developing teaching and learning. There is now a need for the staff and herself to consider ways to ensure that all the skills outlined in the National Curriculum Programme of Study are developed. Standards of attainment have declined since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, this relates to the breadth of the curriculum and the skills taught. It does not reflect on classroom teaching, which has improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. Due to timetable arrangements only one lesson was observed during inspection week. Judgements are based on this lesson, an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and staff.
111. Standards of attainment achieved by pupils at seven years of age in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with the standards expected nationally. Nine-year-old pupils are on line to achieve nationally expected standards when they are eleven. These judgements are in line with those made at the last inspection.
112. Pupils in Year 1 manipulate the mouse in order to create a picture of a house using a simple paint program. They successfully use colour and line to produce their picture, which they print, with help. They enter information about themselves into a database and, with help, produce a bar chart showing the results. In a lesson on text editing, pupils in Year 2 understand that text on a computer screen can be changed and improved by using the keyboard to delete and add punctuation. Most pupils talk about their knowledge of the keyboard to edit text with a sound degree of understanding. By the time pupils are in Year 4 they have a good understanding of how to make choices to help them solve problems when using a range of simulation programs. They confidently discuss how to enter and edit text, using appropriate vocabulary such as "font" and "edit". They have a good level of understanding when talking about bar and pie charts that they have produced from data entered about house types and building materials. However, their understanding of how to give instructions to control devices and achieve specific outcomes is weak and has developed little from what would be expected of seven-year-old pupils.
113. Only one lesson was seen during the week of the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. In this lesson, the teacher's planning was good with objectives clearly stated and resources very well prepared. The teacher worked hard to emphasise and reinforce computer skills and pupils responded well but learning was restricted by the lack of immediate "hands on" experience as only one computer was available. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to use their skills and knowledge of ICT in other subjects, as for example in Year 4 when the pupils researched information on a CD-ROM in a lesson about the universe and galaxies. Pupils in Year 3 combine text and graphics and print out an advertisement in colour in an English lesson and support their work on fractions in mathematics by solving problems on the computer. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and work very well individually and in pairs when working at the computer.
114. The subject is soundly managed. Current assessment procedures, as well as new schemes of work nearing completion, are soundly based on the guidelines provided by a government recommended scheme. A new computer suite, which is almost ready for use and recent training undertaken by staff, should help to ensure that pupils are provided with more opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge more quickly and that more rapid progress is made.

MUSIC

115. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations in both key stages. Observations were made in all classes, but not of the complete range of the National Curriculum Programme of Study. By the age of seven, pupils learn to listen very well to music and respond equally well with words that describe their feelings. By the age of nine, pupils perform rhythmically simple musical phrases on a variety of drums. They learn to discriminate between different rhythms by careful listening. They also sustain a beat without getting faster, except for a few pupils with special needs. They also learn to vary how loud and how fast they play in response to the lead from the teacher. Singing in the school is generally satisfactory and sometimes good with accurate pitch and suitable volume. Pupils are always well behaved. They show excellent self-control when handling instruments and when asked to stop playing them. They concentrate very hard when asked to listen to music. Pupils co-operate very well in group work for composing, showing

willingness to give and take when new ideas are involved. They are especially interested in music from different cultures. Pupils are spontaneous in their appreciation of one another's achievements.

116. The quality of teaching is very good. It is sometimes excellent. Teachers insist on pupils using the correct musical terms such as 'masmoudi' for African drumming. They have high expectations of self-discipline in listening and using instruments, and of thinking about what makes high quality music. Teachers plan very well and expect pupils with high ability in music to compose and perform more complicated rhythms. They make very good use of the good range of instruments which the school owns.
117. Pupils have access to a wide variety of music from different cultures and times. They listen to drumming, classical music, jazz and other idioms. Resources for the subject include a very good range of percussion, enabling pupils to learn about different cultures through first-hand experience of their music. The subject manager provides very good leadership. She maintains a thorough action plan with an appropriate set of priorities. The school places great importance on the subject as a means of maintaining a broad curriculum. This reflects the school's commitment to nurturing the creative side of pupils' learning. While there is no direct monitoring of teaching, there is a continuous programme of staff development through in-service training. The school participates in local events which involve music. Pupils regularly join pupils from the nearby special school in a lunchtime choir practice. The school also has a strong group of keyboard players, and all pupils in Years 2 and 3 have the opportunity to learn to play the penny whistle at no cost to parents.
118. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection in Years 1 and 2 but have improved in Years 3 and 4 where they had been below average. Teaching has greatly improved. This reflects the hard work of the subject leader as well as the commitment of the teachers and is what has raised standards. Resources have also improved from being barely adequate to being rich and of good quality.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations in both Years 2 and 4. Lessons were observed in Years 2, 3 and 4. However, the complete range of the curriculum was not observed. Pupils aged seven are imaginative in dance lessons and perform a wide variety of movements to illustrate waves. Pupils aged eight or nine carry out forward rolls successfully and make up successful sequences of movements. Overall, their swimming is quite advanced, with nearly all of them able to swim and nearly half already swimming 25 metres or more. Standards of attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils change very sensibly, attend to safety at all times and tidy away without having to be told. They show total self-control, both when moving and when asked to stop and listen. They are very enthusiastic about every aspect of physical education and are very keen to improve their performance of gymnastic skills. Consequently, they always work very hard. Where fellow pupils are successful, pupils give spontaneous applause in appreciation.
120. The quality of teaching is good. Half the lessons were good and half were very good. The overall judgement of standards is made on the basis of the levels of attainment being still average in spite of good progress within individual lessons. Teachers plan lessons well so that they always have a balance of teachers' input and pupils' activities, with built in warm-ups and cool-downs. This maintains interest and keenness to learn. They make good use of pupils to demonstrate and have high expectations of their classes when they ask them to assess their own and one another's performance. Consequently, pupils develop a sense of high quality in all types of movement. All instructions are clear and lead to time and resources being used very well to learn new skills.
121. The subject manager provides good clear leadership. She maintains a good action plan with appropriate priorities for developing the subject. The school places great value on physical education, which helps it to maintain a broad curriculum in which pupils with special needs can often perform well. The school offers a good variety of extra-curricular physical activities, including netball, football, dancing and clogging. Parents unite in a common interest in their children performing well in inter-school sports. The school liaises well with the local high school, which

helps develop the provision for its pupils. Staff are able to provide good knowledge and expertise and swap classes where it is advantageous to the pupils' learning. Accommodation and resources are good. The school now needs to consider ways of raising standards to reflect both the quality of teaching and the level of pupils' enthusiasm. The inspection week would not have revealed whether individual pupils' skills are developed over time, which would be learnt through a thorough system of assessment.

122. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection. Teaching, on the other hand, has improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. Attainment at the time pupils are seven and nine years old is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This indicates a similar judgement for the seven year old pupils as at the last inspection. Judgements are based on the lessons seen and the pupils' work. However, there was very little recorded work from the class of oldest pupils.
124. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Christian religion. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that the Bible is a special book, that Christians worship in a church and that there are customs associated with the religion, such as baptisms and weddings. Year 3 pupils clearly recognise important features, such as courage, in the lives of people they admire. They also give some well considered reasons in their writing as to why Mother Teresa should be made a saint. Year 4 pupils in discussion in their lesson demonstrated a good knowledge of the background and story of St Cuthbert. Although there were no direct examples of pupils' work indicating their knowledge about other religions, teachers' planning and the range of appropriate books and artefacts show that they learn about other important world religions such as Judaism and Hinduism in their religious education lessons.
125. When they visited the local church, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in their knowledge about the importance of the church to Christians and also about the life of St Aidan, whose name the church has. The children thoroughly enjoyed the visit. Most listened attentively to each other as they posed some thoughtful questions, and to the vicar who gave some informative answers. The pupils behaved well and moved around the church quietly and sensibly. The teaching in the lesson was good. The teachers had planned the visit thoroughly. Pupils were well prepared to ask questions about facts they wanted to know and appropriate work sheets had been produced for follow up work. The volunteer helpers were well briefed.
126. In their lesson the Year 4 pupils made very good progress in their learning on the theme of saints. They were totally enthralled as they listened to the story of St Cuthbert. They demonstrated high levels of questioning, enquiry and investigation as they confidently discussed his life and background, expressing their opinions and views clearly. This also made an effective contribution to their spiritual and moral development. The high quality of learning was a direct result of the very good teaching. The teacher had prepared the lesson very well and had a good knowledge of the subject, which she delivered confidently. She used resources, such as beads, fossils and photographs, to illustrate the story well.
127. The curriculum is properly based on the local education authority agreed syllabus. Currently, there is no policy for religious education but the co-ordinator's development plan for the subject shows this has been identified for development next year. Her expertise is used effectively as she teaches both classes at Key Stage 1, and this also ensures pupils' learning is built on progressively as they move through the two classes. The school has an adequate range of resources and also has the facility to borrow others from the local resource centre.