

INSPECTION REPORT

HEXHAM EAST FIRST SCHOOL

Hexham, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122203

Headteacher: Mrs Rona Lackenby

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jean Morley
(Rgl's OFSTED No: 25470)

Dates of inspection: 11 - 15 September 2000

Inspection number: 224172

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beaufort Avenue Hexham Northumberland
Postcode:	NE46 1JD
Telephone number:	01434 603467
Fax number:	01434 603467
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Tom Flaws
Date of previous inspection:	10 - 14 June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jean Morley (OFSTED No: 25470)	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Art	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Design and technology	How well are the pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Jim Griffin (OFSTED No: 12682)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jim Hall (OFSTED No: 11611)	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information technology	
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical education	
		Equal opportunities	
Gianna Ulyatt (OFSTED No: 29188)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Music	
		Religious education	
		Foundation stage	
		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PROVISION FOR PUPILS IN THE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION DISORDER UNIT	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hexham East First School, Hexham, Northumberland caters for pupils aged 3 to 9, most of whom live locally and come from a mixture of council and private housing. There are 164 pupils on roll including 21 in the nursery. In addition, the school houses a unit for pupils who have restricted language or other communication disorders. Almost all of these pupils work in the unit for part of the day and integrate into the main school for the remainder. Apart from those in the unit, 12 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs. This is below the national average. However, overall, the proportion of pupils with statements of special need is five times higher than the national average. Fourteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average but above average as pupils enter Key Stage 1.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. There is a particularly strong community spirit and every individual is equally valued regardless of their background or ability. The school achieves very high standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. The school is very well led and managed with key subject co-ordinators contributing very positively to the high standards achieved. Value for money is good.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are very high.
- Pupils are eager to learn, behave very well and relate very well to each other and to all adults in school.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in more than eight out of every ten lessons.
- A rich variety of learning experiences helps pupils to develop intellectually, morally and socially.
- The newly appointed headteacher has made an impressive start and is very well supported by all staff.
- There is excellence in equality of opportunity for all pupils regardless of background or ability.
- The partnership between school and parents is very good.
- Attendance is very good.

What could be improved

- Information technology resources should be developed to improve learning opportunities for all pupils.
- The school needs more resources to support the teaching of major world faiths.

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

The school could also consider more far reaching ways of using pupils' very good English and mathematics skills to support work in other subjects, for example science, religious education, geography and history.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Under the leadership of the previous headteacher there has been very good progress on all key issues raised in the inspection report of June 1996. In addition, standards have risen in most subjects: very significantly so in English, mathematics and design and technology. All unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and there is considerably more teaching of a very high standard. Capacity for further improvement is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	A	A*	A*	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	C	A	A	A	
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A*	

Over the past three years, all the standards achieved in national tests have been consistently at average levels or above, both when compared with all schools and with similar schools. In 1999 the results in reading and in mathematics were in the highest 5 per cent nationally. Inspection findings and the most recent test results indicate that the school is maintaining these high standards. Similarly high standards are achieved by Year 4 pupils as they transfer to middle school. Considering the very high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need, the school sets particularly challenging targets. Reading and listening standards are real strengths and it is because pupils read so well and learn so early how to listen carefully, that they benefit so much from all that is on offer in school. There are no unsatisfactory standards although there is still significant work to be done on information and communication technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen to learn and take a pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, both in and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work and play very well together. They like and respect their teachers and other adults.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

This school is an excellent example of social inclusion: the very many pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully integrated into the school and the school rightly recognises that it is a richer community for their presence in it.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the teaching observed, 18 per cent was satisfactory, 50 per cent good, 30 per cent very good and 2 per cent of the highest quality. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is never less than good and sometimes very good. There are no significant weaknesses and several strengths. The consistent good quality of teaching throughout the school is a particular strength: there are no weak teachers. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well and the teaching of reading, particularly to the less able pupils, is outstanding. Pupils learn well because they are well motivated and because their very well developed reading skills enable them to read what they need to in all of their lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and varied curriculum with a very good range of additional activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Support for these pupils is very good and their progress is particularly influential on the very high standards achieved in English and mathematics
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral and social provision is very good and spiritual provision, good. Cultural provision is satisfactory but with limited opportunities for pupils to gain an insight into cultures other than their own.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All teachers know pupils well and show genuine care for them, both through formal systems and informal support and guidance.

The partnership between home and school is very good. Parents make a positive contribution to their children's progress. The parents who work on the Reading Recovery programme in school are an invaluable asset. The school provides a sound academic curriculum with many opportunities for additional activities. It cares well for its pupils and prepares them well to be responsible young citizens.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The newly appointed headteacher has made an impressive start and she is ably supported by all staff, particularly those who co-ordinate the key areas of the curriculum and special educational needs.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body serves the school well, using the varied expertise of its individual members to good effect.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a realistic awareness of its current performance and its shortcomings. It pursues excellence.
The strategic use of resources	Grants for specific purposes are used well. The school fully realises the enormous potential of support staff in helping to raise standards and has provided high quality training to help make best use of the skills of this team.

The headteacher has very good inter-personal skills and has been quick to recognise the strengths and weaknesses in the school. She has a clear vision of how to move this very good school forward. Teaching staff are adequate in number and support staff numbers, generous. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are adequate except in religious education and, to some extent, information technology. Spending is prudent and good value obtained, particularly from the school's support staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children make good progress.• Children behave well.• The quality of teaching is good.• Everyone at the school is approachable.• Children are expected to work hard.• The school is well led and managed.• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No concerns held by a significant proportion of parents.

The inspection team fully endorses all the positive views of parents and agrees with them that there are no significant areas of concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The 1999 test results in Key Stage 1 indicate that, when compared with both all schools and with similar schools, standards were very high in reading and mathematics and well above national averages in writing. Current standards are the same. By the time pupils transfer to middle school at the end of Year 4, standards in both English and mathematics are well above those expected. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection when they were judged satisfactory and have now been consistently high for three successive years.
2. Standards in science are above expectations both at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. This represents good progress through Key Stage 1 and sound progress thereafter. While standards are still above expectations throughout the school, it is a lack of a more discrete, highly structured approach to the planning and recording of science which prevents them from being higher still, particularly by the end of Year 4. Standards have, however, risen since the last inspection when they were judged satisfactory.
3. When looking at test results it is important to recognise that all pupils in Year 2 take the national, end of key stage tests, despite there being a unit in school for pupils with language and communication disorders, all of whom have statements of special educational need. There were 5 such pupils in Year 2 for the 2000 national tests. Even so, the school sets targets which exceeded national expectations and was successful in meeting them. Given the current rate of progress, it will also be successful in meeting them in 2001 and 2002. The school's targets all have one expectation in common. It is that *some* of the pupils who *have* statements - and *all* of the pupils who do not - are expected to reach Level 2 by the end of Key Stage 1. The fact that the school is so successful with these challenging targets is a testament to the excellent work it does in ensuring that, at an early stage in their school career, pupils learn to read well enough to access the rest of the school curriculum.
4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their potential to do so. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the work set for them is challenging yet well matched to their potential to succeed with it. Secondly, the quality of teaching and additional support they receive is very good. The work set for pupils pays particular attention to the targets identified on the individual education plans. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and review their individual educational plans accordingly. In addition, the school recognises its most able pupils by making adequate provision for them.
5. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress. The majority are likely to have good levels of achievement in all six areas of learning by the time they are ready to go into Year 1. Many children exceed the learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development.
6. There are no areas of the curriculum in which standards fall below those expected. In religious education, art, design and technology, music and physical education they are above expectations and they meet expectations in information technology, geography and history. Very high literacy and numeracy standards support pupils well in other areas of the curriculum.
7. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls but it is an area that the school is monitoring carefully in order to ensure that this balance is maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good overall. Pupils are proud of their school and they like to attend. In addition to a variety of subjects, they particularly enjoy school visits and the good range

of clubs, including sports and music. Nearly all show interest in their work. Pupils settle without delay at the start of the day and at the end of breaktimes. In all year groups, they listen attentively and are comfortable answering and asking questions of their teachers. Most pupils enjoy reading. During literacy and numeracy hours, nearly all pupils work well in their groups while the teacher is working with others. The clear and consistent approach of teachers to behaviour and classroom routines provides pupils with a secure base from which to develop their liking for school and interest in learning.

9. Pupils with special educational needs show a good, positive attitude to their work. They work hard and enjoy the extra, individual help they receive. Learning support staff are very effective in supporting pupils. Consequently, all concentrate well in both small group teaching sessions and in whole class situations. Their behaviour is good and staff praise and encourage their efforts so that pupils develop good levels of self-esteem and confidence in their learning.
10. Children who are working in the Foundation Stage are keen to come to school. They all have a good attitude to their work, playing sensibly with each other, sharing equipment and resources. They are learning to listen to each other and respect each other's ideas. They confidently choose activities and their concentration levels increase as they progress from the nursery into the reception class.
11. Behaviour in classrooms is very good overall. The good and reliable behaviour of all pupils is a key element in the very good atmosphere for learning. In lessons, pupils in all year groups are very well behaved. Prior to moving in groups, pupils form orderly lines and move about in a calm and responsible way. During the inspection, the behaviour of pupils at lunchtime and playtimes was very good. There was no sign of any bullying or other antisocial behaviour. Pupils, however, confirm that very rare incidents of poor behaviour do happen in the playground. Most relate to arguments about football, among boys. There have been no fixed term or permanent exclusions in recent years. Pupils take very good care of property and resources and help to keep the school in an attractive condition. Parents' questionnaire responses support this very positive picture. Nine out of ten parents are positive about behaviour, whilst less than one in twenty tend to disagree.
12. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good overall. Very good relationships among pupils, including those with special educational needs, is a striking feature. Adults act as good role models. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort. Pupils respond in a positive manner. They are very positive about the help they get from their teachers. They show caring and considerate attitudes towards each other. Most pupils work well in pairs and small groups. They become more able to work collaboratively as they move through school.
13. Pupils' personal development is good overall. They show respect for rules, which they help to create. Most pupils enjoy speaking with visitors. When questioned in groups, Year 3 and 4 pupils show striking respect for different views expressed by others and wait their turn to respond to questions. Nearly all pupils show concern for others, if they are ill or otherwise upset. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to help and take responsibility in the day-to-day running of their classes and school. In particular, Year 4 pupils have a good range of school responsibilities. For example, they help in school assemblies and in the infants' playground at breaktime. In significant numbers, pupils also participate in a good range of clubs, ranging from music to various sports. Little evidence of on-going initiative or independent learning was seen, either in or outside lessons.
14. Attendance is very good. It has risen since the previous inspection and is now well above the national average. The unauthorised absence level is well below the national average. Punctuality is good. Nearly all pupils come to school on time and settle to their work promptly and calmly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged sound overall but with significant variations between year groups and key stages. Two thirds of the teaching observed was satisfactory, close to 20 per cent unsatisfactory and the remainder good or better. The quality of teaching has improved substantially. It is now good overall and there is no longer any significant difference in the quality of teaching between the key stages or between subjects. Of the teaching observed in the current inspection, 2 per cent was excellent, 30 per cent very good, 50 per cent good and 18 per cent satisfactory. Teaching in this school is systematic and thorough. There are no significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching but there are several strengths. Teaching of this quality allows all pupils to make progress that is at least good overall.
16. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Class teachers, the special needs co-ordinator and support staff all work effectively together, ensuring pupils take a full and active part in the curriculum. Teachers plan according to the pupils' statements and work towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. They use small group withdrawal sessions for additional literacy support. Pupils also take part in the Reading Recovery programme. Additional support is often available in the classroom. Pupils in the special needs unit have small group teaching each morning for literacy and numeracy. Many join classes in the main school for some lessons in the afternoon. Here, with the very good support of classroom assistants, they are fully included in all learning opportunities. All adults working with pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic in their approach and liberal with praise. This effectively encourages pupils and helps them develop confidence. Comprehensive records are kept on each pupil's attainment and this information is used well to inform systematic planning and teaching.
17. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage ranges from good to very good. Adults have made a concerted effort to plan the curriculum through the Early Learning Goals. Plans show clear learning objectives. Consequently, children are acquiring many new skills and developing their understanding. Adults question them effectively and this ensures that children think for themselves. Activities are well planned and offer children a very good range of learning opportunities from which to choose. Adults set high expectations for good behaviour and place very strong emphasis on children's listening skills. This has a very positive impact on pupils throughout the school. Adults encourage children to share books or play games at home with their parents by having an efficient 'lending service'. In this way the learning that takes place in school is well reinforced at home.
18. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught at least well to all pupils in the school. However, the additional initiatives provided by the school to support pupils who experience difficulty, particularly with reading, are of exceptional quality. The Reading Recovery programme, Additional Literacy sessions, abundant classroom support, the Homework Club and the Holiday Learning Club provide a comprehensive and highly successful package of support that almost guarantees that progress in other subjects in school will not be restricted because of an inability to read well enough. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good in all areas of the curriculum.
19. Teachers know pupils very well and can make an accurate assessment of their work. They use this knowledge effectively when setting pupil targets, all of which clearly demonstrate a very precise understanding of their ability. Relationships between pupils and all adults in the school are very good. They are built on mutual care and respect.
20. Homework is used effectively to reinforce what pupils learn in school. The school ensures that homework is regularly set but that it does not intrude excessively on pupils' time outside the school day. A homework file for parents is ready in draft form. This will be a very valuable addition to the information which passes between school and parents as it will detail the content of the work that is undertaken in school and give parents detailed guidance as to how they can help their children progress.
21. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve. The pace of lessons is

brisk and in English and mathematics in particular, the work is always very well matched to the ability of the pupils. Where, in some subjects, the work set is similar for most pupils in the class, those who do find it more difficult are given the support needed to make it achievable for them. Teachers are always clear about what they want pupils to learn and they make a habit of sharing this with them at the beginning of each lesson.

22. The management of pupils is very good. Teachers are skilled at gaining and sustaining pupils' attention. They appreciate that pupils need to be attentive if they are to learn effectively and from the first day at school, pupils are encouraged to listen very carefully to their teachers and to other adults. This strategy is very successful indeed as pupils have exceptionally good listening skills.
23. In addition to the good work of all the teaching staff in the school, there is one additional factor which has a very significant impact on the progress that pupils make and the standards they achieve. This is the work of the classroom support staff. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the hours of support it purchases. Training has been provided for support staff and the contribution they make is very good indeed. The quality, for example, of the Additional Literacy sessions is very good, as is small group support in classrooms. The school also benefits from voluntary help provided by trained parents. Their support, particularly in running the Reading Recovery programme has been, and is, invaluable.
24. Pupils are keen to learn and have very good listening skills. They present their work well and take a pride in what they produce. They have a mature and responsible attitude to their work and their behaviour is invariably very good. They reward their teachers with intellectual, creative and physical effort. They work at a good pace on nearly all occasions because the work provided for them is challenging yet attainable. They know what they are good at and where they need to improve and it is common to see them refer, as they work, to the targets glued into their books.

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

25. The school meets statutory requirements for the provision and teaching of all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and sex education. The curriculum is broad and balanced throughout the school. The equality of access and opportunity provided for all pupils to study all aspects of the National Curriculum is excellent. This is typified by the total involvement of pupils with movement difficulty and physical disorders in dancing during a physical education lesson, providing a happy, inclusive atmosphere amongst staff and pupils alike.
26. Adults working in the Foundation Stage plan effectively towards the Early Learning Goals. They provide a very good range of learning opportunities for children. The balance is also very good, with some activities being directed and some chosen by the children themselves. Throughout the day, good support is offered to the children. This helps them develop their skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. All, including those with special needs, are given equal access to what is on offer and adults ensure that shy children also join in. Adults make sure that children clearly understand the rules of the school and positively encourage good behaviour through praise. Children visit other schools in the community and this contributes well towards their personal development.
27. The curricular opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are very good. All pupils on the special educational needs register have their areas of need identified and appropriate activities are planned. Pupils throughout the school receive very effective day-to-day support whether they are in the unit or in other classes. The special needs co-ordinator gives good, clear guidance to individual teachers and support staff and assists in the reviews of pupils' individual education plans.
28. Since the previous inspection, there have been major improvements in curriculum planning in English and mathematics. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy

strategies, and the very successful use of these in the classroom has helped to improve pupils' attainment significantly. Very good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' personal, social and health development, which reflect the strong communal approach of the school. There are appropriate programmes for sex education and drug misuse delivered largely through science lessons, with useful input, from a visiting local police officer, on the dangers of drugs.

29. The provision made for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a comprehensive variety of clubs and activities for pupils of all ages and all of the teaching staff contribute, by supporting at least one. These activities include a range of sports, knitting, dance and drama. A Homework Club is held weekly and during the Easter and summer school holidays. This is by invitation only and has a positive impact on pupils' academic development.
30. The school makes good provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school has a clear policy on collective worship. School assemblies are broadly based on Christian principles and pupils are given a short time to reflect on the theme. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about other faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism in religious education lessons.
31. The provision made for pupils' moral development is very good. A sense of right and wrong is interwoven into much of the daily life of the school. Both teaching and non-teaching staff act as good role models for pupils, and the use of praise and rewards encourages good conduct and caring attitudes.
32. The school provides well for pupils' social development. They are given opportunities to take responsibility such as operating equipment during assemblies, ringing the school bell, and looking after the arrangements for toys at playtimes. Older pupils help the younger ones in their yard. Pupils are actively encouraged by all staff to be aware of the school environment, for example by keeping books and cloakrooms tidy.
33. Cultural provision is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, library resources have been expanded to give more opportunities for pupils to study other cultures although overall resources, such as artefacts, are still underdeveloped. Visitors to the school give pupils an insight into other ways of life. For example, a South African visitor involved the pupils in a day of music, dance and cookery. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection in the opportunities provided for pupils to consider their local culture through such initiatives as a village study, a residential week and local studies of the Romans and the town abbey.
34. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits from local speakers and musicians. Their awareness of the local community is raised by groups such as child-care and parents and toddlers clubs that meet in the school regularly. The school has very good relationships with other schools. There are strong links with a local special school with interchanges of staff and pupils. Drama productions, athletics meetings and musical events form an integral and regular part of the close contact that the school has with the local high and middle schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. As at the previous inspection, the pastoral care arrangements for pupils are good. The procedures and use of assessment information has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
36. Procedures to promote and ensure pupils' well-being are good. Pupils are effectively encouraged to be sensible, to help, to respect and care for others. This leads to a supportive atmosphere in school and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils confirm that they are well cared for if they are ill or otherwise distressed. School has good arrangements for induction to nursery, reception and other classes. Year 4 pupils, most of whom transfer to the local middle school, are well supported.

37. Child protection procedures are good. There is a school policy, in line with local area guidelines. The procedures to follow and the designated staff member are known by adults in the school. Pupils are made appropriately aware of this issue as part of their personal and social education.
38. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are satisfactory overall. Teachers make pupils aware of health and safety issues in practical lessons, such as swimming. This effectively contributes to the development of a safety conscious attitude among them. Regular evacuation drills are carried out. Fire alarm testing and the inspection of portable electrical equipment are routinely carried out by external agencies. The practical arrangements, including first aid, to deal with any incidents or accidents are well established and appropriate.
39. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are very good overall. The main emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour and nearly all pupils respond positively. A clear range of rewards and sanctions are in routine operation. Pupils are effectively involved in creating rules for their classroom at the start of each school year. These are used well to remind individual pupils when their behaviour falls below the agreed standard. In all classes, teachers use praise effectively and routinely maintain clear and consistent boundaries between behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not. As a result, there is a very good, consistent climate for learning.
40. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying, are good. The few pupils with significant behaviour difficulties are clearly identified. Parents and outside support services are effectively involved in defining the source and nature of their problems. Individual behaviour plans are put in place and carefully monitored. The headteacher keeps an on-going record of serious behaviour incidents and the measures taken to address them. The school aims to prevent any bullying or other oppressive behaviour through its personal and social education programme and assemblies. The recently introduced 'Suggestion Box', creates an additional way of hearing about any recurring concerns among pupils. There are adequate links between lunchtime staff and teaching staff relating to the recording and reporting of incidents in the playground. Pupils confirm that bullying incidents, once disclosed to teaching staff, are well handled.
41. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. The few pupils with unsatisfactory attendance are systematically identified and carefully monitored. Notes from parents are sought for all absences. Parents understand the need to inform school when pupils are absent and are well aware of school's views and rules about holidays during term time. Recognition and rewards are given for full attendance, over the school year.
42. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good. Pupils and their needs are well known to staff. Good work and attitudes are regularly celebrated in assemblies. This recognition and reward provides pupils with frequent and public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. Assemblies also provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on the lives and needs of others. School organises a good range of clubs such as, netball, football, art and knitting. Pupils can learn to play a good range of musical instruments and join the choir. Trips and residential visits further develop pupils' discipline, team spirit and a wider knowledge of surrounding areas and their communities.
43. The procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Individual education plans include well-defined targets and strategies, with clear criteria for judging success. These are reviewed each half term. Regarding the assessment of pupils and the implementation of statements for pupils with special educational needs, the school liaises well with external agencies, including the speech therapy and psychology services.
44. The school has very good procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' attainment and progress. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection report. Good use is made of assessments in the Foundation Stage. Adults use a local authority system that clearly shows children's attainment and progress in all six areas of learning. They make use assessments regularly and use the information well to inform their plans. In Key Stages 1 and 2, individual pupil profiles are maintained. They incorporate examples of work, which are marked and

assessed against National Curriculum levels as a basis for future work. Teachers' assessment folders are thorough and comprehensive. Pupils are encouraged, through self-assessment sheets and statements of achievement, to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement and set their own personal targets. Attainment in English and mathematics, which is recorded when pupils enter the school, is now being used as a benchmark against which to set future targets. The effective systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and the use of these by teachers to provide work which meets their needs, makes a positive impact on the progress that the pupils of all abilities achieve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Overall the partnership with parents makes a very good contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. There has been improvement on the good links identified at the previous inspection.
46. Over a quarter of parents replied to the questionnaire and 17 attended the pre-inspection meeting. Overall parents are very positive about what the school provides and achieves. Also, they are very clear that the school has improved substantially in recent years. Judgements on parents' views are reported in the summary and, as appropriate, throughout the report.
47. The school's links with parents are very effective overall. The school consults with them as part of making changes such as the introduction of the home school agreement. Based on questionnaire returns, nearly all parents feel comfortable about raising questions or problems with school. The school takes an open-minded attitude in dealing with parents' concerns and, where possible, seeks to build on their suggestions. A Breakfast Club helps ensure that pupils are fed and ready for schoolwork. Homework and Holiday Clubs provide out of hours learning opportunities for pupils. Nearly all parents feel well informed on how their child is getting on. To increase the confidence of parents in supporting their child's learning, an eight week course for parent helpers was held.
48. The quality of the pupils' written annual reports, is good overall. They clearly describe pupils' work and all include some key targets in relation to pupils' attitudes or important areas of the curriculum. The inclusion of pupils' personal and social progress, together with the opportunity for parents to comment, are other positive features. However, in most reports, there is no clear indication of how well pupils are doing and whether it is well enough. Information and other links with parents of special education needs pupils are very good. School related information is of good quality. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about school life. The prospectus gives a clear outline of school's expectations and character. To be fully compliant, the governors' annual report needs to include the Year 2 targets for national tests, for the next two years.
49. The school provides a substantial amount of additional information which is clearly aimed at supporting pupils' learning. Each class teacher issues termly curriculum information, which gives parents a very good overview of pupils' schoolwork. All parents are given a very good range of commercial materials on how to support their child with literacy and numeracy. Parents of Year 2 pupils receive additional information, prior to the national tests. Parents of nursery and reception children receive a very good range of information about starting school and how to support their child's early learning.
50. Parents' involvement with the work of the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. At least one parent, of nearly all pupils, attends the termly consultation evenings. Discussions with pupils indicate that most have somebody at home who checks that homework is done and supports if needed. Adult helpers assist with Reading Recovery and 'Number Cruncher' schemes, which are well targeted to help pupils needing extra support. They also help on school trips and by making costumes for drama productions.
51. There is a very effective parent teacher association that works very well with school. They organise and run a wide range of fund-raising and social events, including termly pupils' discos.

These contribute to pupils' personal development. The significant funds raised are used well to enhance existing resources. The new library is a shining example. Many parents attend and enjoy festival celebrations including harvest and Christmas events, sports days, book fairs and musical evenings. These events help to establish and maintain good informal links between staff, parents, governors and pupils. All parent governor positions are filled.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher has made an impressive start as head of this school. She has been in post for little more than half a term, but she has very successfully familiarised herself with the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a whole and of the individuals who work within it. She has strong inter-personal skills and a clear vision of how this very good school can be developed still further. Clearly it is too early to judge the effectiveness of very recently introduced initiatives, but it is likely that they will build successfully on the high standards of work, behaviour and community spirit already evident in the school. The working partnerships between the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers, non-teaching staff and the governing body are already strong.
53. There is a clear commitment to high academic achievement and evidence that, since the last inspection and under the leadership of the previous headteacher, the school has been successful in raising standards significantly in a number of subjects including English, mathematics, science and design and technology. Furthermore, co-ordinators have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses within their subject and of how the weaknesses can be overcome.
54. The school has made very good progress on the six key issues identified in the last report.
 - i. *ensure that the outdoor area for the nursery is made safe and appropriate for the needs of nursery pupils;*
Since the last inspection, the outdoor area around the nursery has been enhanced by the addition of fixed playing equipment and safety surfacing.
 - ii. *improve curriculum planning to ensure continuity, progression and curriculum coverage;*
Curriculum planning is in the process of being built up and 'banked' so that it can be used as a permanent resource. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 will necessitate some adjustments but much of the hard work has been rigorously and successfully undertaken.
 - iii. *improve assessment procedures which enable teachers and pupils to set targets for learning and which help teachers to plan future work;*
Assessment systems in the school enable the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts to be tracked. This information is used well by the headteacher and by class teachers to set targets for these groups and to plan the most appropriate work.
 - iv. *clarify the role of the subject co-ordinators in developing and monitoring the subjects of the National Curriculum;*
Subject co-ordinators are aware of the standards across the school and have been instrumental in improving standards significantly in a number of areas since the last inspection. They know where the remaining weaknesses lie and have strategies to address them. They work hard and effectively.
 - v. *raise levels of challenge and provide more opportunities to develop higher order reading skills, particularly in Key Stage 2;*
Standards in reading are very high. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils understand what they read and also that they have opportunities to read a range of books. Despite its success, the school is far from complacent.
 - vi. *improve the teaching of design and technology.*
Throughout the school, standards in design and technology are now above those expected of pupils of a similar age. Pupils are taught to design imaginatively but realistically, to make accurately and to evaluate the success of their work thoughtfully.
55. The governing body provides good support to the school with all members contributing according to their individual strengths. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths of the school. They take the lead from the headteacher on ways of making further improvements and give their full support to new initiatives. All financial issues are dealt with efficiently. Spending is prudent.

and closely linked to the major initiatives from the school development plan. Administrative routines are satisfactory and the school office functions adequately. Plans are in hand to adopt new computer software and this should increase the efficiency of financial administration.

56. There is an adequate number of teaching staff, all of whom are effectively deployed. The school is very well served by hard working and effective support staff who know what is expected of them and who are very effective in helping individuals and small groups. Additional Literacy sessions for Key Stage 2 pupils are a good example of the high quality work of support staff. The high calibre work of parents who, on a timetabled, long-term but voluntary basis run the Reading Recovery programme in school, is also invaluable. The value placed on them by the teaching staff and the training they undertake to help them run the programme well, is testament to their commitment to the programme.
57. Accommodation is satisfactory with good use made of the space available. Classrooms are light and bright and made attractive with inspiring displays. The library is a very attractive and a useful recent addition. However, there are some weaker features. The unit for pupils with communication and language difficulties has no toilet, washing facilities or water supply to the classroom and the pupils taught in this classroom have to walk to those housed in the main building. Furthermore, the detached nature of the unit detracts from the inspired efforts made by the school to include and involve all pupils from the unit into the school family. The current scattered arrangement for housing computers does limit the opportunities for teaching computer skills in a 'hands-on' way. The renting of the hall every day for the After School Club does mean that classrooms sometimes have to be used for school clubs, such as dancing, when the hall would be a more appropriate venue.
58. Most resources are adequate. Religious education resources are shared between local schools and this sometimes means that they are not available at a time when it would be most appropriate to use them, for example, at the time of the religious festival to which they pertain. Library and English resources are good and pupils have open access to both fiction and non-fiction texts. All specific grants, such as those to support the development of literacy and information technology skills, are used well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, teachers and governors should work together to:

- Improve the learning opportunities in information and communication technology by:
 - as soon as possible, updating and expanding computer resources; (*Paragraph 118*)
 - providing more access to computers by reorganising the location and pattern of their use in school. (*Paragraph 119*)

- Develop the school's resources that support the teaching of major world faiths. (*Paragraphs 58, 136*)

Other areas for development:

The school could also consider more far reaching ways of using pupils' very good English and mathematics skills to support work in other subjects, for example science, religious education, geography and history. (*Paragraph 81*)

PROVISION FOR PUPILS IN THE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION DISORDER UNIT

59. This unit serves the needs of pupils from west Northumberland who have statements of special educational need resulting from difficulty with language and communication. The quality of the provision is very good. Although Hexham East School is rarely the closest school to their home, it is testament to the very good provision, offered both by the unit individually and the school as a whole, that almost all parents elect for their children to attend the school on a full-time basis, rather than to transfer to a more local school for the afternoon session.
60. The very good provision is achieved through a skilful and highly effective combination of individual and small group teaching within the unit and supported teaching in main school classrooms. While not exclusively the case, pupils are taught in the unit in the mornings where they cover English and mathematics. In the afternoons they frequently go to the main school classroom appropriate to their age and are given the support they need to help them take an active part there too. The combined benefit that the unit pupils accrue from all the elements of provision is very good but the social inclusion aspect is outstanding. Hence, despite the fact that the unit is housed in a building separate from the school, its pupils feel that they are full members of the school community. Furthermore, the school rightly recognises that it is a richer community for their presence in it.
61. The quality of teaching in the unit is good overall and often very good. All adults working with pupils work hard and successfully to help build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The work set always achieves a good balance between that which challenges and that which is attainable. This is particularly commendable given the wide variation in age and ability of the pupils in the unit class. As a direct result, pupils learn very well in relation to their individual ability and make rapid progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. These, in turn, are regularly reviewed. There are very good assessment procedures in place and very good links with outside agencies such as the psychological service.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	30	50	18	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)	21	164
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	31

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (88)	97 (88)	97 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97	97	94
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	163
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	291284
Total expenditure	288513
Expenditure per pupil	1815
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2540
Balance carried forward to next year	231

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	164
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	32	6	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	42	11	2	0
The teaching is good.	63	33	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	32	9	2	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.	64	34	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	31	4	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	54	35	0	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	31	9	2	2

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. Provision is now good in the Foundation Stage, with the quality of teaching ranging from good to very good. The school has made improvement since the previous inspection when much of the provision was satisfactory. Adults working with the children in both reception and nursery classes plan well towards the Early Learning Goals, with clearly defined objectives. As a result, children make good progress on the *Stepping Stones* that lead to these goals. Assessments effectively include all six areas of learning.
63. Children enter the nursery with skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development ranging from average to good when compared with children of similar age. Scrutiny of past work shows that by the time they enter Year 1, all children make good progress and the majority achieve well in all six areas of learning. Many exceed the learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development.
64. The school admits children into the nursery for either a morning or afternoon session in the term after their third birthday. Children, therefore, who are born between September and December, benefit from five terms in the nursery. The majority of children transfer to the reception class to start full-time education at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. New children starting the nursery are welcomed gradually into the classroom over a period of two weeks. In this way they enter a calm environment and quickly settle.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children in both reception and nursery classes make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and overall attainment is good for the majority of children. The quality of teaching is good, as are learning opportunities. Children are interested and motivated to learn. Adults make effective use of props when reading stories, such as the story about daddy doing the washing. This encourages very young children to concentrate well. In the reception class, children confidently make choices about their activities and adults support them well and ask them to explain what they are doing. Adults praise children frequently and this helps them to build up their self-esteem. They encourage children to be sensitive to others and aware of their own needs. Nursery children sometimes visit a nearby special school and reception children take turns being the 'milk monitor'. In this way they develop an increasing sense of responsibility.
66. Children are learning about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. They learn about Christianity through stories of baby Jesus. Reception children attend school assembly and experience spirituality as they listen to a variety of stories from major world faiths. All children have the opportunity to acknowledge Diwali and Chinese New Year through planned activities. Very good relationships exist throughout. Adults are very good role models for the children. They welcome each child and help them all to feel comfortable and settled in the classrooms. Consequently, children are quick to establish good relationships and friendships with each other, sharing equipment and toys and playing harmoniously. Behaviour in both classes is very good and adults have high expectations. Children are already becoming familiar with rules and routines. The adults are consistent in their approach, explaining carefully, so that children are clear about right and wrong. For example, in the nursery, adults explain to children why they should not run indoors. In the reception class, the teacher explains and demonstrates clearly to the children how they should handle the crabs so as not to cause them harm. Children are encouraged by adults to show initiative and independence when selecting their own activities. Resources are placed in easily accessible locations. In the nursery, children are given some support but older children in reception are well able to select and work independently for considerable periods of time. The majority of children manage their own hygiene and are learning to dress and undress themselves when playing in role or when getting ready for physical development. They are becoming aware of the needs of others. They are encouraged to listen to

each other in whole group sessions and adults make sure that all have the opportunity to participate. Adults plan group, class and independent activities to encourage children to play, learn and work together and to share staff attention.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Very good planned priority is allocated to communication, language and literacy. Children are taught well. All children, including those with special needs, make good progress and the majority of children exceed the learning goals by the time they are ready to start Year 1. The promotion of listening skills is very strong and has a significant impact on children's learning throughout the school. In the nursery, children learn rhymes and songs and listen well to stories. In reception, they can easily identify words and phrases wrongly spoken in familiar rhymes. Adults make very good use of puppets to encourage children to listen and respond to questions. Children in both classes learn to speak in good, clear sentences, follow instructions and express their ideas, such as in role-play. In the nursery, children decide together who will take which part in the scenario. In reception, a group of three children were well able to decide which 'lego' models each would make so they could play a game. Here, adults encourage children to talk about their activities and explain what they are making with dough, for example. In this way children learn to talk to adults with increasing confidence. Adults make very good use of stories to promote new vocabulary and the role-play scenarios change from time to time to encourage children to use many new words as they play.
68. Adults place strong emphasis on books. Children in both classes visit the school library each week to select a book to take home to share with parents. All children show genuine interest in stories, have good, regular access to books and know how to handle them correctly. Adults in the nursery and reception classes effectively teach children all the skills needed for early reading; they teach them to identify letters. The majority of children who have just left the reception class and are currently in Year 1 are confident readers. They show clear recognition of many letter sounds and join these together to read unfamiliar words. Writing is well taught. Children in the nursery draw pictures to communicate their thoughts and ideas, staff scribe for them and children copy underneath. In reception children are taught to write some words for themselves, for example they write their own news. Staff effectively teach children how to form letters and many children in the reception class can already write their first name from memory. In the nursery, they learn to identify their own name as they self register. Adults use assessments effectively to plan work for the children so that each child is well challenged.

Mathematical development

69. This area of learning is very well taught. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of reception, most children will have exceeded the early learning goals for mathematics. Children routinely learn to count in both classes. Number stories and rhymes, are used effectively to help them learn how numbers work. They learn, for example, how one can be added on or taken away, in practical everyday situations in the nursery. In the reception class, children recognise and record numbers. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, they successfully add numbers within ten and accurately record their work using the correct symbols. Numbers in both classes are clearly displayed to support children's learning in ways which are meaningful; for example in the nursery, 1, 2 and 3 are written on the sacks belonging to the 'Black Sheep'. In reception, children solve problems through everyday routines such as checking that there are enough milk bottles for the class group.
70. Children learn to handle and discuss equipment of various shapes and sizes. They name and sort objects as they play. Most of the equipment is silhouetted, so children match items to the correct shape as they tidy away. They understand and use positional vocabulary as they play with small toys and learn to compare, order and sequence objects in practical situations. Children make mathematical patterns as they thread beads and small bears, for example. In the reception class, they record patterns onto worksheets. They learn to identify and name shapes in the nursery. In the reception class, they find out some of the properties of shape; for example, which object will roll and which flat and solid shapes have corners. Planned activities help children to learn to use mathematics to solve problems in a practical way. Role-play sometimes includes a 'shop' where children 'buy' items and pay out the correct money. They work out different combinations of

numbers, for example to reach seven or ten. Adults use assessments effectively to identify the learning needs of all children. As a result, challenging activities within mathematics are well planned.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. The quality of teaching is good. Children's progress and achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world is good and adults provide many interesting activities to develop children's understanding. Each class has natural displays of items collected from the beach and children are well encouraged to handle these and talk about them. They use many unusual materials in their art work and in the reception class, adults carefully discuss the suitability of different materials for the work in hand. All children have good opportunities to learn about living things. The nursery has a well-populated fish tank and children can see plant root systems through transparent containers. In the reception class, the children have recently purchased a pet rat and a real undersea world has been created. In here, there are rocks, seaweed, pebbles and small crabs. Children have handled the crabs carefully and have noticed that they walk sideways which is different to the way humans walk. Children collect wild flowers and press them observing the changes that occur. Water and sand is readily available with suitable equipment and children are well encouraged to question why things happen. There are regular well-planned activities for children to model make and learn the basic skills of designing and making. Younger children in the nursery access a wide range of commercial construction equipment and they also learn to use recyclable materials, joining them together with glue and spreaders. Older children learn to draw their ideas and then make them using a good range of materials and tools. All children use scissors well. Adults value all children's efforts by labelling their work and displaying it for all to see.
72. Children use information technology, including the computer, and programs support learning across the curriculum. Older reception children use the keyboard to write their name and use the 'mouse' to input data and access information, with adult support. Younger children use the 'mouse' to paint pictures and this effectively develops good hand-to-eye co-ordination. They also learn to switch the tape recorder on and off. Children have very good opportunities to develop an idea of the passage of time. They are all encouraged to talk about their news from home and parents support them well by sending in photographs of their family and their recent holiday. In the reception class each morning, with support, children display pictures of the activities of the day in chronological order. In this way children develop a sense of time and quickly become familiar with the daily routines. Children are learning about their local environment and the buildings within it. They have recently been on a very interesting bus ride around their local town and could identify several features, including their own homes. They have also been on a train journey to a town nearby. They often visit a local special school and go to the shops or post office to support planned topic work. Children are learning about the wider world through planned activities. For example, they know about cultural events that occur throughout the year, such as bonfire night and they take part in activities to celebrate religious events such as Christmas and Easter. They have also had some involvement in Chinese New Year celebrations.

Physical development

73. In response to the previous inspection, the play area has been developed for the nursery children. This has been a major factor in helping the children to make good progress in physical development. Throughout the week, children have access to a good range of apparatus. Adults interact well and support children as they move under, over and through climbing and balancing equipment. They access a range of wheeled apparatus and learn to negotiate around others. Children run vigorously showing good body control and are developing an awareness of safety, their space and the space of others. In the reception class, adults plan through a thorough commercial scheme. They make good use of both nursery and school equipment to provide a range of activities. Children learn to move with imagination and control, during music and movement sessions. In the reception class, for example, children pretend to be many different animals and move to music accordingly. In both classes, the quality of teaching is good.
74. Well-planned topics effectively help children to recognise the importance of keeping healthy. In the nursery, role-play areas involving hospitals and doctors are set up; during planned activities they learn to care for their teeth. They learn about healthy foods as they make vegetable soup

and fruit salad. In the reception class, a display with a model of a hand basin reminds children about the importance of keeping clean. Before each physical activity lesson, they feel their heart and head and then feel the difference after vigorous exercise. In this way, they recognise that changes occur to their body when they are active and begin to understand the importance of regular exercise. Hand-to-eye co-ordination is effectively developed through the regular use of small skills apparatus. There is a range of tools and equipment available and children are developing their fine finger skills. Children have access to a range of commercial construction equipment and can push and pull to effectively join pieces together. They use tools correctly when manipulating malleable materials, such as dough and handle small items of class equipment well. In the nursery, they learn to carefully pour liquid or rice from one container to another without spilling any. Children demonstrate very good small motor development and this is evident in the written work they produce towards the end of the reception class.

Creative development

75. Children's achievements and progress in creative development are good. Adults encourage the children as they work and show how much they value their efforts by displaying their work well and showing it to others. For example, in the nursery, one child's very good painting of 'Jack-in-the-Box' was shown to others. Children work with a variety of media in both classes and learn to experiment with texture, shape, space and form. Their work is already showing clear features. An extensive variety of resources are easily accessible to them. Displays and observations of their work, show that children produce well formed drawings and paintings and know how to mix colours to create good effects. There is a range of musical instruments and, in the nursery, children play in the 'music box' and learn how each instrument works. In the reception class most can clap to a steady beat. They have a good repertoire of songs and rhymes and have good opportunities to use musical instruments to experiment and explore sound for themselves. There are well-planned activities each day to encourage imaginative play and most children make up stories as they play. They are supported well as they act out nursery rhymes through movement sessions in the reception class. Children learn to respond to their senses when they handle soil and plants. They are also encouraged to observe and handle the good variety of items displayed for their interest. Children express their ideas and communicate their feelings well in both classes. Adults provide a very good range of opportunities with appropriate equipment and resources and children are encouraged to make choices about what they want to do and to communicate their feelings well. The quality of teaching is good.

ENGLISH

76. The 1999 annual test results show that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are well above those expected both when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Inspection findings support these results and also show that similarly high standards pertain at the end of Year 4. These standards are significantly higher than at the time of the previous inspection when they were judged sound overall.
77. The standards attained in all four elements of English – speaking, listening, reading and writing are above expectations. They are highest in reading and in listening where standards are very high. They are also high, albeit slightly less so in writing and in speaking. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls although the school keeps a vigilant check to ensure that this broad equality in standards is maintained.
78. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support which, particularly in reading, is of an exceptionally high quality. The progress that pupils make in acquiring reading skills is remarkable. Three factors in particular combine to create this success. Firstly, pupils experiencing difficulty are identified early in their school career. Secondly the school offers support in a range of ways, all of which are well considered and thoroughly planned. These include Additional Literacy Support, Reading Recovery programme, in-class support on a day-to-day basis, a Homework Club and the Holiday Club which runs for one week each in the Easter and summer holiday periods and is by invitation only. Finally, those who provide the additional

support are given the training they need to enable them to do their job very effectively indeed. The whole package is an exceptional one.

79. Standards in speaking are good. From an early age pupils speak clearly and in full sentences. Most speak with confidence, although they do not have the breadth of vocabulary for this skill to be judged *very good*. Pupils have very regular opportunities to speak in front of their classmates about what they have learned although these end-of-lesson sessions are seldom used deliberately as a tool to improve specific speaking skills. All pupils put up their hand when they wish to speak and it is rare for them to speak out of turn. Listening skills are very good. Even the youngest pupils listen attentively to their teacher or another adult. Throughout the school, incidence of inattention is infrequent. These highly developed listening skills serve pupils well in all lessons.
80. Pupils achieve standards in reading that are very high. The approach adopted by the school to teach pupils to read is one of its major strengths. Few pupils have long-term difficulties that seriously hamper their ability to read whatever they need to in other areas of the curriculum. They read a range of books and other printed matter. Year 4 pupils, for example, after completing the work set for them on the contents section of newspapers, became engrossed in the papers themselves. They enjoy stories and poems but are equally at home with information books. Older pupils skim, scan, use a glossary and dictionary and some are adept with a thesaurus.
81. Pupils' written work is of a high standard. Presentation and spelling are particular writing strengths. Opportunities to write cover an exciting range of purposes: letters to complain about the building of a local motorway, questions to ask the experts prior to a visit to Hexham Abbey, a diary of their week at Ford Castle, passport details, and their aspirations for the new school year. Punctuation is usually accurate and some particularly able pupils demonstrate its more sophisticated use: a colon, a semi-colon and the use of a comma to introduce or to conclude direct speech, for example. Regular opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing are limited and only a few pupils are really imaginative with the vocabulary they use or with their sentence structure. Pupils have opportunities to write in many areas of the curriculum other than English but these are often on worksheets which are not always the best medium for pupils to develop and 'show-off' the writing skills that their teachers have taught them so well. However, these weaknesses are only relative in what, overall, is high quality work throughout the school. It is testament to the very high aspirations of the school and, commendably, the English co-ordinator, that an intention to raise standards of writing still higher, features prominently in the school development plan.
82. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils come into the classroom ready to learn and they are all attentive. They are keen to answer questions and to offer their own ideas. When they change from one activity to another, they do so sensibly. They work together well and are happy to share what they know if it is of help to someone who finds the work hard. They take a pride in the presentation of their work and do not need constant reminders to maintain this, and other, high standards.
83. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and this enables all pupils to make progress that is at least good and sometimes better. There are no significant weaknesses but several strengths. Teachers successfully establish an environment in which pupils can learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and pupils can try out their ideas without fear of failure. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and share these objectives with the pupils in terms that they can understand. There is a clear work ethic in the school and this enriches learning in all lessons. Teachers explain well. They motivate pupils. They have high expectations of presentation, work-rate, contribution and concentration. They set work that has a well-judged level of challenge. Homework is used to reinforce learning. Assessments are good and are used well to direct teaching and to set targets for individual pupils. Pupils experiencing difficulties receive very good support.
84. Resources are good. The school has a new library and pupils are learning to use it independently. Classrooms are well stocked with dictionaries and, for the older pupils with thesauri. Reading books are attractive and easily accessible to pupils. The co-ordinator works extremely hard to

pursue excellence in the subject and has implemented a wealth of ideas and initiatives which serve the pupils very well. In particular, pupils who experience difficulties are given all the help they need to ensure that these difficulties are short-lived.

MATHEMATICS

85. The results of the 1999 national tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 show that attainment in mathematics is very high, both in comparison with the national average and in comparison with similar schools. Over the last four years these results have gradually improved, so that they are now significantly better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Given the current rate of progress, these very high standards will be maintained throughout Years 3 and 4 so that, by the time pupils transfer to middle school, the majority will be likely to have high levels of attainment. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by girls and boys.
86. The school is successfully using the National Numeracy Framework alongside commercial schemes of work and a dedicated numeracy lesson operates daily in each class. Teachers' termly plans and schemes of work are written in good detail. Weekly plans clearly show what pupils are intended to learn. In order to consolidate pupils' learning, teachers provide well planned activities that are very closely matched to their varying abilities. Consequently all pupils make good progress in mathematics itself and use their skills to help them make progress in other areas of the curriculum.
87. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with good standards in mathematics. This good foundation is built on well to improve and develop pupils' attainment. Throughout Key Stage 1, high quality oral and mental work both engages all pupils and challenges them to solve simple problems and gain a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. In Year 1, pupils learn to recognise number bonds up to 10 and to understand that $3+4$ is the same as $4+3$. They learn to deduce that $3+4=7$ so, $7-4=3$ and therefore $7-3=4$. They are encouraged to explain their ideas and solutions in mathematical terms. They can already read, write and order numbers up to 20. In Year 2, pupils use the 100 chart as they count forwards and backwards in 10's. They know that 99 is the biggest two digit number and can explain why this is so. They learn to link numbers such as 6, 4 and 10 together using appropriate symbols. By the end of the key stage, scrutiny of work shows that the majority of pupils interpret diagrams of family members and solve problems involving capacity, weight and measurement. They understand place value to 1000 and multiply and divide by 10. They halve, quarter and double numbers, rotate objects through 90 degrees and recognise right angles in solid shapes.
88. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress and work well beyond national expectations. The well planned oral and mental work, which is a key feature of mathematics in the school, is very well demonstrated in the pupils' ability to try different approaches and find differing ways of carrying out calculations to solve quite complex problems. Pupils in Year 3 work through number problems methodically and are able to describe concisely and accurately the strategies they use. They are encouraged to describe two or three different methods of achieving the correct answer, for example, when subtracting 8 from 20. One pupil suggested $(20-10) +2=12$ and another suggested $(10-8= 2) + 10$. High attaining pupils consolidate the understanding of these strategies to calculate subtractions within 1000. In Year 4, pupils count beyond 1000 in 10's and learn to be accurate when moving up from 999 to 1009. They identify the patterns in numbers and recognise that 84 and 14 each need 6 to take them up to the next 10. By the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 and accurately add and subtract three digit numbers. They add and subtract decimals to one place and convert fractions to decimals. They use their understanding of number to solve problems. They correctly draw reflections of simple shapes, calculate the perimeter of flat shapes and match nets to solid shapes, including prisms, cubes and cylinders. They use standard metric units for measurement.
89. The quality of learning is good and often very good. All pupils are treated as young mathematicians and rise to the challenge. They are confident and enthusiastic and all, including

those with special educational needs, make at least good and sometimes very good progress throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic in mathematics lessons. They concentrate well on the learning objective and are keen to answer questions. They settle quickly to the written tasks set by the teacher and often help and support each other in their learning.

90. The quality of teaching in mathematics ranges from good to very good. There are significant strengths in the teaching of mathematics and these were evident in all lessons observed. All lessons are very well planned and follow-up work accurately matches pupils' abilities. Teachers make very good use of support staff to work with pupils with special needs, in small group situations. This effectively improves opportunities for progress for all pupils. The very good practical, mental and oral mathematical work prepares the pupils well for confident problem solving and contributes greatly to the very high standards they achieve. Teachers ask pupils questions which are searching and challenging; they place good emphasis on mathematical language. Lessons have a good pace and this, combined with their vigilance in ensuring that pupils are always attentive to what is being taught, results in very high standards. All teachers make very good use of the plenary session to deepen pupils' understanding. Homework is also offered to pupils on a regular basis and this effectively consolidates their learning and involves parents in their children's mathematical work. Assessment procedures are very good for mathematics. Teachers make good use of short weekly assessments to identify how well pupils are learning. This information is used very effectively to inform future planning.
91. The mathematics curriculum is well planned, delivered through the numeracy hour and contains all the elements required by the National Curriculum. Resources for mathematics are good and are used effectively to promote and support learning.
92. The mathematics co-ordinator provides strong leadership and has a good vision for mathematics. She has undertaken a detailed audit and devised a very good numeracy action plan in response to the findings. She has shared her knowledge and expertise with teachers and has monitored the planning and delivery of the subject. The numeracy governor offers good support throughout and is looking to establish extra 'number cruncher' sessions for pupils, to be organised by parents with support from the school. The PTA also supports mathematics well by assisting in the purchase and making of resources. Standards in mathematics are now a strength of the school.

SCIENCE

93. The results of the 1999 teacher assessments in science indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils at the school achieve above the national average standards and that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level, 3, is well above the national average.
94. The standard of work seen during inspection week by pupils who are 7 years old is above the standard expected nationally, which is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Most pupils in Year 1 understand that the pitch and volume of different sounds are produced by different sources and identify these. Some pupils recognise that distance is important in the noise produced by a variety of sources such as birds in the sky. Pupils in Year 2 correctly identify natural and man made materials such as wool, coal and plastic. They discuss and decide in pairs, which materials are best suited for making an article, such as a cooking pan of paper, wood or metal, and why. They record their results in a pre-prepared table. There is evidence in their folders that most pupils record their observations when conducting investigations into movement, heat and electricity and say whether what happened was what they expected.
95. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress through Years 3 and 4, and by the end of Year 4, achieve standards which are above the standards expected nationally. Pupils use their investigative and experimental skills well to further their knowledge in science. In Year 3, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of how to record experiments in the growth of seeds and some pupils record the changes in a shadow's length and direction as the sun moves, drawing conclusions and making predictions from their observations. Pupils in Year 4

identify most bones on a diagram from a list provided and use a CD-ROM to investigate the skeleton in three dimensions. They understand that a skeleton provides support and protection to the human body. In their recordings of an experiment with water, pupils present and structure their work well and draw relevant conclusions on water displacement by volume.

96. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching observed and no significant weaknesses identified in lessons, which is a notable improvement from the previous inspection. Very good teaching is typified by a high level of activity and interest by the pupils due to the exciting range of resources provided and lively, stimulating questions and discussions. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, are provided with many opportunities to make observations and carry out investigations. They have access to a range of appropriate resources, which, together with a range of well-organised activities, develops their scientific knowledge well. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject that is illustrated by the confident introductions to lessons and discussions with pupils.
97. Teachers' planning and pupils' files demonstrate that there is a thorough approach to the National Curriculum programmes of study and a good balance of investigative and written work, which addresses the issues raised in the previous inspection report. However, pupils' work is currently not organised in discreet workbooks or folders or in a systematic way. This makes it more difficult, for pupils and teachers alike, to monitor progress and progression through the school. Pupils have opportunities to use both literacy and numeracy skills in science. While the standards of recording are good, there are *some* missed opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills when worksheets are used for recording.
98. The subject is soundly managed and the current policy and schemes of work are appropriate. The issues of concern raised in the last inspection report have been addressed well. The subject co-ordinator has recently monitored science teaching through the school as part of an on-going programme.

ART

99. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards in art that exceed those expected of pupils. These same high standards are sustained through Years 3 and 4. Standards, since the last inspection, have been maintained.
100. Pupils work with a wide range of materials and in both two and three dimensions. Pupils in Year 1 for example explore the different colours of sunrise, mid-day, sunset and midnight in paper collage. They use triangles to make buildings, fish or designs from their imagination. Year 2 pupils work on a seascape but with a range of media and very successfully create a wide range of moods ranging from anger to tranquility. They use pastel or pencil for still life drawings of fruits and tie and dye fabric before creating butterflies. Having looked at aerial photographs, Year 3 pupils produce their own in paint and experiment with the many shades of green. Year 4 pupils use clay skilfully to produce fish and demonstrate their expertise in creating light and shade with pencil drawings. Key Stage 2 pupils have done impressive work having looked at the work of famous artists, Van Gogh, Turner, Lowry, Rubens, Lippi and Gower for example.
101. There has been much work with local artists. All pupils, for example contributed to the magnificent school gates. Pupils have made paper and used it for a range of art work of a very high standard. Local artists also helped pupils to produce millennium books that make a stunning display in the school foyer.
102. The quality of teaching and learning in the three lessons observed ranged from good to sound; one good and two sound. However, the wide range of work available for scrutiny indicates clearly that these observations were not typical of the usual quality of teaching and learning in the school. Over time, it is of a higher quality. In one sound lesson pupils were too tightly constrained and, although the skill teaching was very good, they were able to make no selections or decisions of

their own. In the other, the work rate of several pupils in the class was unacceptably slow, yet went unchecked.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. The last report judged that standards in design and technology throughout the school were below those expected. Since that time the school has worked hard to raise standards and has been successful: they are now higher than those expected, both at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. As it was not possible to see the subject being taught, these judgements are based on close scrutiny of an exciting range of work on display throughout the school and following discussion with the co-ordinator and with pupils.
104. When looking at pupils' work, there are two features in particular that stand out. The first is the quality of pupils planning in the subject. Relative to the age of the pupils it is very detailed and clearly the result of a lot of thought. The second is the individuality of the work. No two ideas are the same. Some are sophisticated such as the system of pulleys used to operate a bridge and the pneumatic system used to create a moving monster. Others are delightful for their sheer originality. One, for example, is a purse for which there is a fully labelled design followed through very precisely into the item itself. The pupil writes, 'My purse has a pipe-cleaner hook to go over your ear. It only holds rolled up notes though.'
105. Pupils have opportunities to work with a full range of materials from wood and fabric to food and junk materials. Their work is often linked to a topic. For example, Year 4 pupils model Hexham Abbey in clay, make Easter Island statues out of wood, design and make a millennium bridge to cross the Tyne at Newcastle and make books with many moving parts to support work on Ancient Greece.

GEOGRAPHY

106. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, attainment in geography is in line with those standards expected nationally.
107. Pupils in Year 1 identify, from a supervised walk, local features such as the post office and hospital and use a simple map to place these features. A minority of pupils understands the importance of words on a map to identify places. Most pupils recognise the importance of a map when moving from one place to another. They mark a path through a picture map of the countryside and identify features to the left and right. In Year 2, pupils study local and national seaside photographs, identifying and describing physical and human features. Most pupils express views on the seaside and give reasons why people like to go there.
108. Pupils in Year 3 build on the skills and knowledge they have acquired. They construct a map of a journey through the school and place rooms and areas. They develop their map skills by identifying a variety of buildings on a map of the local town, and a minority of pupils attempt to colour a large scale map and produce a key. Year 4 pupils carry out a comprehensive study of a building project in a village. They decide which plots of land to buy at auction and give reasons for their choice. They show a thorough approach to the detail and structure of their work using surveys, maps and drawings well. Good use is made of computers to plan and print out maps of the plots of land and to draw suggested house types.
109. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory or better. Good teaching is typified by good choice and use of resources and a very clear outline of the task. This enables pupils to begin work quickly and sustain their effort throughout. Good levels of concentration are maintained by very effective prompting and questioning of individual pupils. Behaviour in lessons is good and enthusiasm for the subject is high.

110. Schemes of work are comprehensive and appropriate references are made to the National Curriculum programmes of study. However, the way in which pupils' work is currently organised makes it more difficult for teachers to monitor progress and progression in a systematic way, and for pupils to build upon previous work. The timetabling arrangements of the subject place some restrictions on pupils' ability to practise skills such as mapwork regularly through the year.

HISTORY

111. Only one lesson was observed. However, evidence was also gathered from an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils, subject schemes and teachers' planning. These indicate that pupils achieve standards which are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4.
112. Pupils in Year 2 write, in sentences, the sequence of events of the Great Fire of London. Most pupils understand that these events were recorded in a diary and some pupils recall other names such as "Pudding Lane" which are associated with the fire. Most pupils, in discussion, understand the effect that wind had on the spread of the fire. Pupils recognise chronological order by identifying postcards of the seaside according to their age. They draw pictures of seaside holidays past and present, identifying similarities and differences. Pupils in Year 3 have carried out a study of Roman letters and patterns. They increase their knowledge of ancient times by visiting a Roman site and, by drawing artefacts in a museum, they show an understanding of some of the differences between ancient and modern times. Year 4 pupils show their developing sense of time by charting major historical events on a time line from 3000 B.C. to the present day. They research the daily lives of the Vikings and record their findings with good quality written work. They begin to recognise the effects of the past on the present day in their studies of Anglo-Saxon words and the local abbey.
113. Only one lesson was seen and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. In that lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The teacher's engaging, enthusiastic story telling skills involved pupils well and added much to their ability to recall facts and events. Support staff and resources were well-deployed enabling pupils to make the most of the time available. Good class management is evident in the way pupils responded quickly and without fuss to very limited instructions, signifying that routines are well established.
114. Schemes of work are comprehensive and planning makes appropriate references to the National Curriculum programmes of study. However, the current organisation of pupils' work makes it more difficult to monitor progress and progression in a systematic way through the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards of attainment achieved by pupils at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Year 4 in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with the standards expected nationally.
116. Pupils in Year 1 understand a variety of functions and uses of computers such as the keyboard, printing and scanning. Most pupils can identify the main terms related to computers, such as mouse, keyboard and key. Year 2 pupils demonstrate a good level of understanding of words such as floppy disk, A-drive and C-drive and can describe their various functions. Seven year old pupils understand that a device can be controlled to achieve specific outcomes by giving a series of simple instructions such as forward 2 steps, back 1 step and so on and they record their findings. An analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils show that pupils in Year 2 have used a paint program to produce a colour picture of the seaside and printed their work. Pupils have, with help, retrieved information from a CD-ROM, about animals and understand how the index system works.

117. All pupils in Year 3 have, with help, sent e-mails and describe the process confidently. Most pupils understand, by using simple simulation games, that the decisions they make affect the outcome and are aware of the consequences of their choices to progress to the end of the game. They have combined text and graphics to present and print information about insects. Year 4 pupils understand the "scissors" symbol as representing cut in a word processing program and develop their knowledge of editing. Most pupils understand the need to re-order statements to make sense of a story and that this can more easily be accomplished using ICT. An analysis of pupils' work shows that Year 4 pupils have made good use of ICT in a village housing development study. They have experimented with a drawing program to produce drawings for different types of houses and drawn maps of the overall development. Pupils in Year 4 have their own floppy disk and confidently describe how to save and retrieve their work.
118. The standard of teaching seen during inspection week was good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and the requirements of the National Curriculum. They work hard to produce good resources for whole class lessons enabling pupils to increase their understanding, despite the limited access to hardware and software resources in the school. Pupils are given opportunities wherever possible to use computers in other areas of the curriculum and recognise the advantages of information technology in a variety of situations. Expectations of what pupils should achieve are high, given that there are limitations on computer access, and further progress is clearly curtailed by resourcing deficiencies. Pupils are enthusiastic in their approach to the subject and there is an industrious working atmosphere evident in lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils who clearly enjoy the well-ordered structure in classrooms, which enables them to sustain concentration well. There is time given to teach the subject to whole classes of pupils that contributes, notably, to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills demonstrated by pupils.
119. Whilst, at the time of the previous inspection, ICT resources enabled good progress to be made by pupils, the current access to updated hardware and software by pupils is insufficient and both curtails pupils' opportunities to develop their learning and hinders future progress. This deficiency also means that the link between what pupils are being taught as a class and their access to "hands on" experience, is not as immediate as it should be to reinforce learning. The school is aware of the need to provide better access to computers and is currently seeking ways to address this. As a result, ICT is not yet fully integrated into the curriculum, but the school is trying to address this issue. The subject is soundly managed by the co-ordinator. Subject policy and planning are satisfactory with schemes of work being based on national guidelines.

MUSIC

120. Since the previous inspection, the good standards achieved in music have been maintained in both key stages. Lesson observations, assemblies and discussions with teachers indicate that, by the ends of both Key Stage 1 and Year 4, most pupils achieve standards which are above those are expected for their age.

121. In Key Stage 1, all pupils including those with special needs, make good progress in music. They learn to listen and enjoy music from different cultures and eras and discuss what they hear. For example, when listening to a Kenyan folk song, they recognise the difference between the sound and texture of one voice and that of several voices. They listen well to taped music and enjoy it. They recognise the similar repeating patterns in songs and sing Frere Jacques', copying the pattern well. Pupils use percussion instruments with taped music and keep a steady beat. They confidently perform for others in the classroom.
122. In Key Stage 2, progress in music is good overall for all pupils: it is very good in Year 3 and satisfactory in Year 4. In Year 3, pupils learn to use and understand musical symbols. They willingly suggest how to record notes and rests. They record their own musical patterns and confidently perform for the class. In Year 4 pupils become aware of dynamics as they learn to control loud and soft sounds with percussion instruments. The majority identify a good range of percussion instruments and know how to use them effectively. They learn to sing a taped song from African culture and sing well in unison.
123. From the evidence of lessons seen, pupils are enthusiastic to learn and respond well to music. They listen well and display good behaviour. Many are keen to perform for the class. They show consideration and co-operation towards each other and are very supportive when their classmates are performing. All pupils treat instruments with care and consideration and show pride in their musical achievements.
124. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers place music lessons well in context by discussing previous learning with them. They demonstrate well for pupils and encourage good interaction, offering appropriate praise and encouragement. Teachers' knowledge of the subject varies and this is reflected in the overall quality of learning. Where the teaching is good, pupils make good gains in their understanding; where the teaching is satisfactory, teachers generally lack confidence and offer pupils limited challenge. All teachers create an effective learning environment and manage pupils very well. They make good use of the resources and the range of instruments.
125. A commercial scheme of work that links in well with the Quality and Curriculum Authority documents has been introduced by the co-ordinator. Assessment statements are recently available to assist staff in their short-term planning. Resources are sufficient, overall. Assemblies are well supported by music as pupils listen and sing to a range of music from different eras and countries. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and is valued by the parents and the community. An African drummer recently visited the school and taught the children how to use drums effectively. The choir recently sang at the Tynedale Music Festival and achieved third place.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Year 4 are above the standards expected nationally for pupils of a similar age. This shows an improvement in attainment since the previous inspection, particularly in the gymnastic activities of the Year 4 pupils.
127. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate, through their responses, an understanding of the dangers and conditions of a swimming pool. They listen carefully to the teacher and respond appropriately. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils perform complex dance movements and figures when performing to traditional country music. They respond well to the rhythm of the music with appropriate stepping and figure movements. They change the speed and direction of their movements in response to the instructions and music. Some pupils use what they have learnt to instruct or "call" the dance for the rest of the class. Year 4 pupils perform sequences of movements and positions on the floor, creating ways of joining these positions fluently. They suggest ways in which their performance could be improved and observe the performance of others, describing what they have

seen. Most pupils show co-ordination and control when selecting and using their movements and actions.

128. The quality of teaching is never less than good overall with some very good teaching observed. Teachers' planning is clear and learning is maximised in the time available by very good pace to lessons. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with others and describe what they have done. A balance of instruction and activity, which engenders enjoyment amongst pupils and a very good working relationship, exemplifies very good teaching.
129. The behaviour and response of pupils is very good. Pupils work very well together in pairs and groups. Support and co-operation amongst pupils is excellent. For example, in a country dance lesson, pupils with movement difficulties and physical disorders were involved totally in the activities by staff and pupils alike creating an outstanding atmosphere of social and physical inclusion.
130. The subject is well managed. The policy and schemes of work are sound and include appropriate references to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good. The development of pupils is well supported by the provision of sports events, including football, netball and rounders. Opportunities are provided to participate in swimming and coaching sessions for cricket and football. However, some access to the school hall is lost after school by its use for non- physical activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, standards of attainment in religious education are above those which are described in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In recent months, the school has worked hard to raise the status of this subject: at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are now good and, at the end of Year 4, very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection where attainment was judged to be satisfactory overall.
132. In Key Stage 1, pupils explore issues of care and responsibility very well. They understand that their actions affect the feelings of others and that everyone has a need to respect beliefs other than their own. They compare their actions to the actions of Jesus and become familiar with some of the parables he told. In Key Stage 2 pupils have an understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity. They know about some of the major religions of the world and the festivals and rituals associated with Christianity, Hinduism, and Judaism. They know that people try to live better lives by following their faith. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know facts about the life of Moses. When learning about Hinduism, they know that God is shown in many forms.
133. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both key stages. In lesson observations, discussions with pupils and work scrutiny, pupils demonstrate a growing awareness of spiritual values. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to compare their good actions with the actions of people in the stories Jesus told. For example, they compare the way they take care of each other at playtime with the way the 'Good Samaritan' acted. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 become more aware of similarities and differences in major religions. They are aware that they live in a multi-faith society and learn about some Hindu and Jewish festivals. They have visited a synagogue and in class, they learn about important events from the Old Testament. They know Jewish people were enslaved by the Egyptians and that, while Jewish people worship one God, the Ancient Egyptians worshipped many. Assemblies often have a good spiritual dimension and pupils display respectful attitudes during moments of prayer. They openly discuss some of the parables Jesus told and relate these to their life experiences. In the spring term they undertake a wide-ranging study of the Chinese New Year. Much of the work undertaken in lessons is through discussion therefore the balance of oral work and consolidation of learning through written work needs further consideration.
134. Pupils' response in two lessons seen ranged from good to very good. All pupils show interest and have a very positive approach towards learning in this subject. They behave very well and listen

very carefully to the teacher. They volunteer suggestions and examples from their own experiences. For example, pupils in Year 3 compare the way the Egyptians felt during the ten plagues to how people in Europe felt during the Black Death. Younger pupils in Year 1, when working with a partner, volunteer very positive feedback about his or her qualities as a person. This effectively raises the self-esteem of all pupils in the class.

135. The quality of teaching in both key stages is at least good. Lessons are well planned, with a clear learning objective and activities are appropriate to the pupils' understanding. Teachers make sure that pupils can link religious understanding to other curricular subjects. There is a good balance between story, discussion and activity. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and manage pupils very well.
136. The co-ordinator has recently worked with all staff to produce a scheme of work. Teachers' planning covers the Locally Agreed Syllabus and provides effectively for the needs of both teachers and pupils. Although the co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans, there has been little opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the new scheme of work. The school is currently piloting a scheme for community religion and is working closely with staff at Hexham Abbey. Although there is a range of artefacts and visual aids to support the teaching of religious education, these are shared with other schools and are not always readily available during special festivals. This can prevent pupils developing a greater sense of the significance of symbol and ritual in the religious practices of world faiths.