

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHILBOTTLE FIRST SCHOOL**

Shilbottle Grange, Shilbottle, Alnwick,  
Northumberland. NE66 2XQ

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122238

Head teacher: Mrs. A. Jefferies

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. Tones  
1575

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 224281

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shilbottle Grange, Shilbottle, Alnwick, Northumberland.
Postcode:	NE66 2XQ
Telephone number:	01665 575285
Fax number:	01665 575285
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Wade
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. M. Tones	Registered inspector	Science	The characteristics of the school
		Design and technology	Attitudes, values and personal development
		Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
		Special educational needs	
Mrs. J. Menes	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs. B. Hudson	Team inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and achievements
		English	How well are pupils taught?
		Information technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Art	
		Geography	
		History	
		Music	
		Religious education	
		Under fives	
		Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Shilbottle First School serves the former mining village of Shilbottle and the immediate rural area. There are 63 pupils on role in three classes. The head teacher has a substantial teaching role. This is much smaller than an average primary school. Most pupils live in local authority housing with a small minority from private housing. Unemployment is high. The 23% of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs is well below the national average. There are at present no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The attainment of pupils starting school is below average when compared to other schools in the Local Education Authority.

The school aims to ensure that each pupil:

- achieves the highest standards possible;
- enhances all aspects of their achievement and development;
- maintains the above consistently and over time.

The school has identified a number of priorities for development. These include pupils' skills in ICT, the further development of literacy and numeracy, creative writing and outside play in the early years.

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

This is a very good school, which provides a high quality of education for its pupils. The quality of leadership and management is outstanding with a clear focus on fulfilling the school's most important aim of developing the full potential of pupils. The school ensures that the quality of teaching is very good. Pupils therefore make good progress and achieve high standards. Very effective systems are used to judge the school's performance and respond to needs identified. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The outstanding leadership and management of the head teacher, well supported by the governors and the senior teacher.
- The quality of teaching and learning, which is very good.
- The standards achieved in English, mathematics and science.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- The very good quality and range of learning opportunities.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

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

- Standards for lower-attaining pupils.
- Boys' achievement in reading.
- Standards of handwriting.

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

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

Ofsted last inspected the school in January 1997. Since then excellent progress has been made in improving all the areas for development identified in the report.

- At the time of the last inspection, standards in the three core subjects were in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. Standards have improved in all three areas and now reading and writing are above, and in mathematics well above, the national average.

- Standards in information technology (ICT) were below the national average. Since then there has been a considerable investment in resources and the training of teachers. A well-planned curriculum has been developed and the attainment and progress of pupils is now good.
- As recommended, the governors have established and implemented policies for child protection, sex education and teacher appraisal.
- Curriculum planning has been improved and it is now excellent. Medium and long-term plans provide a good range of learning opportunities within a broad and balanced curriculum. It is now very clear what pupils need to learn in each subject area.
- The good assessment practice found at the time of the last inspection has been extended to cover the foundation subjects. Information is, in general, well used to inform next steps in learning, especially for the more able. Work for lower-attaining pupils is not always matched closely to their learning needs.
- Excellent monitoring and evaluation systems are now established for both teachers and governors. Judgements are now regularly made on the performance of teaching, the curriculum and standards. The findings are then used to highlight areas for school improvement.
- The head teacher and governors have now established procedures for planning the purchase, renewal and replacement of resources and measure the improvement in pupils' learning as a result of financial investment and planned developments.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	A	E	B	A
writing	A*	C	B	A
mathematics	B	D	A	A

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

The standard achieved by pupils in the core subjects is well above that of similar schools. The table above shows that in the 1999 national tests, standards are above the average achieved nationally. Attainment in reading and writing was above the national average and well above in mathematics. Teachers' assessments show that attainment is in line with the national average in science, but well above for the higher levels. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is well above the national average. This is a significant improvement since the last Ofsted inspection when the standard in all core subjects was in line with the national average. The school sets challenging targets in English and mathematics and both were exceeded in the 1999 tests. It is expected to do the same this year. Judging from pupils' work, standards are above average, particularly in reading, writing and numeracy.

Over the last four years standards in writing have been well above the national average. In mathematics it has been close to the standard expected nationally. During the same period girls' reading was well above but boys' reading below.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and contributes to the very positive learning environment.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships encourage a family atmosphere and the development of self-confidence.
Attendance	In line with the national average.

Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are always polite to each other as well as to adults. Pupils are very interested in most lessons, keen to talk about their work and take a pride in what they achieve. They are able to take responsibility for their actions and are aware of the feelings and beliefs of others. Attendance is in line with the national average and pupils arrive at school and lessons on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is very good and strength of the school. In no lessons was teaching found to be less than satisfactory and over 70% was very good or better. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good. For pupils in the foundation stage and in Key Stage 2 it is very good. Teaching has improved since the last Ofsted inspection and pupils' learning is better. This is particularly noticeable for those pupils who are able to achieve the higher standards and in information and communication technology.

The best teaching throughout the school is characterised by very high expectations of attainment and behaviour. Teachers are very good at assessing and reinforcing what pupils have learned and identifying what they need to learn next. Well-established classroom routines and excellent relationships enable pupils to become confident and keen to learn. In a small minority of lessons the pace of work is slower than in the best lessons, too much time being spent explaining to the pupils what they are to complete. Pupils of all abilities are well taught but some activities could be better matched to the lower-attaining pupils and provide more challenge.

A significant feature of the school is the very high quality displays that have a positive impact on pupils' learning. A further strength is the very skilful way that teachers link learning in a number of subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a very good, broad and balanced curriculum with an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good systems are in place to provide extra help for pupils to make the best progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school gives a high priority to all areas of pupils' personal development. The very good provision develops in pupils a sense of personal responsibility and values that reflect the school's ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All the staff know the pupils well and their well-being and safety come first. Pupils are very caring of each other.

The school gives a high priority to developing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It has very good literacy and numeracy strategies, which are also used to teach basic skills in the other subjects of the curriculum. A very good curriculum is provided in dance and in ICT where pupils develop skills using up-to-date equipment. Staff use assessment very effectively to help them plan the curriculum and to set challenging targets for each pupil. Additional resources are used to support the learning of lower-attaining pupils. The development of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is very good. The school works very well with parents providing very good information, particularly on pupils' progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher and senior teacher share a vision for the education of pupils. The head teacher provides outstanding leadership and is very focussed on ensuring the highest of standards. Staff are clear about their roles and carry out their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective in meeting their responsibilities. They have reliable procedures for collecting information and know the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The review of performance is excellent. Staff and governors are involved and believe in monitoring their work, particularly teaching and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of finance to support educational priorities, particularly in raising standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

The leadership provided by the head teacher is outstanding. This ensures the whole school concentrates on enabling pupils to reach their potential and achieve high standards. Collectively, the school is very clear of its educational direction and of how to achieve the goals that have been set. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is a particular strength and provides on-going direction to the development of the school.

Excellent use is made of the accommodation. Since the last inspection, when it was an issue, accommodation for the youngest pupils has been significantly improved and extended. The school is well staffed and makes very effective use of additional staff made available through its partnership with other local schools. Very good resources effectively support pupils' learning. In ICT these have been enhanced since the last inspection and are improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The school applies the principles of best value through comparing its performance to similar schools. Although, as a small school the costs per pupil are high, good value for money is provided.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The expectation for pupils to work hard and achieve.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the head teacher.</li> <li>• The school is very approachable.</li> <li>• Relationships with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school, particularly about the positive impact of the leadership and management of the head teacher. Inspectors understand the view of a very small number of parents about the limited range of activities offered after school, but feel the school is doing all it can, within the context of a very small school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standard achieved in the core subjects is well above that of similar schools and also above the national average for all schools.
2. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is below that expected for four-year olds. The children in this class receive an extremely high level of education and care enabling them to make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the reception year most children achieve better than the expected levels. Children's use of language develops rapidly. This progress is a direct result of the many opportunities taken by the teacher to engage children in purposeful discussions of high quality. The teacher's high expectations of behaviour and the challenging, group activities, ensure that the children's personal and social development is excellent. Children work very effectively in small groups. The very good provision and routines contribute significantly towards their development.
3. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in reading and writing is above and in mathematics well above, the national average. Standards in these areas are well above average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels is consistently well above the national average and shows a considerable improvement from the last inspection. This is reflected in the results of the national tests taken in 1999.
4. Over the last four years, standards in reading have been close to the national average, although girls have out-performed boys. Over the same period, performance in mathematics has also been close to the national average. In writing the performance of both boys and girls has been well above the national average, although girls were slightly better. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 are consistently well above the national average. Overall writing is better than reading. This is due to the larger percentage of boys who do not achieve the national average of Level 2 in reading. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards are in line with the national average. The proportion of those achieving the higher levels is well above the national average.
5. In Key Stage 2, by the time pupils are nine years of age and leave the school, attainment is above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels is well above the national expectation, although there are a small number of pupils close to or below the national expectation. Standards are also above in the foundation subjects. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.
6. Pupils make very good progress in literacy and numeracy by the time they leave the school. They use their skills well in other subjects. For example, writing skills are well used in history where the pupils wrote a detailed account of the Great Fire of London. Handwriting is legible but many pupils do not write in a joined style, preferring to print.

7. The use of numeracy skills is well illustrated in a Key Stage 2 science lesson where pupils make accurate measurements in volume. In English, pupils read their books with accuracy and enthusiasm. They enjoy reading at home, often with parents. Where this is done regularly and well, the impact on pupils' reading standards and the enjoyment they gain from books is clearly evident.
8. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils are nine years of age and leave the school they are above national expectations. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to switch on the hardware, access the internet, find the relevant web-site of Beamish Museum and access information in response to a set of questions. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection. In both key stages, work in religious education meets the requirements of the local education Agreed Syllabus. Attainment is above average and progress is good.
9. The school makes detailed analysis of its intake, results of national tests and other assessments. The analysis is used to inform teaching, track individual pupil performance and set realistic targets. For example, there is a current initiative at Key Stage 2 to deal with pupils who are having difficulty developing phonic skills to enable them to read unfamiliar words. These pupils are given extra support in small groups and make good progress.
10. Progress in all other subjects is good and in dance it is exceptional. Progress in art, dance and music is particularly enhanced by the high profile it is given across the whole school and the skilful way in which it is linked with other subjects. In a Key Stage 2 dance lesson the theme used Picasso's work to develop high quality, mood- type movements. The music was perfectly matched in tempo and also enhanced pupils' awareness of music from other cultures. Progress in history and geography is good. The teachers concentrate on developing pupils' skills and this has a positive impact on their learning. The use of mapping skills throughout the school is very effective. In Key Stage 2 the skilful use of a question and answer session to make pupils deduce, predict and justify their decisions regarding the development of motor cars ensured that good progress was made. In physical education, pupils make very good progress.
11. Good progress is made by all pupils across the curriculum and throughout both key stages, including those pupils with special educational needs. However, some of the activities for lower-attaining and SEN pupils, lack the same level of challenge than those achieving the higher standards. The school makes good use of the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and the Small Schools Achievement Award to improve standards and the progress pupils make.

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

12. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They show pride in their work and readily explain what they are doing to visitors. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibilities and help younger pupils complete their work. The school operates in a 'family' atmosphere where each pupil understands they have a role. A good example was seen before a science lesson, where some pupils had a clear role in setting up an investigation. Pupils are able to recognise the value put on their efforts through the excellent celebration of their work through displays both in and out of school

13. Pupils always behave very well, both in class and around the school. They help to make the rules and the older ones assist in the orderly running of the school day outside lessons. They play well together at lunchtime and during breaks. Pupils recognise and respond well to the very good arrangements for managing behaviour and the positive systems for rewarding both individuals and groups of pupils. Parents are rightly pleased with the standards of behaviour in school. There have been no exclusions in the last four years.
14. Pupils are confident showing visitors around the school and have a high regard for their teachers. Their personal development and relationships improve with the confidence that comes with taking responsibilities seriously. This was seen when older pupils were helping younger ones to read.
15. Attendance levels for all ages are satisfactory throughout the school. They arrive at lessons on time and settle quickly into class. This has a positive effect on their attitudes to learning and the progress they make.

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

16. Teaching is very good overall and a clear strength of the school in helping pupils to achieve high standards and make good progress. There were no lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory and in over 70% it was very good or better. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good. For pupils in the foundation stage and in Key Stage 2 it is very good. Teaching has improved since the last Ofsted inspection and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who are able to achieve the higher standards
17. For the children in the reception class all areas of learning are covered, with an appropriate emphasis upon communications, language and literacy, and mathematics. The work is planned to provide a wide range of very challenging and focused experiences, which promotes pupils' learning in all areas. Day-to-day assessment and monitoring of pupils is very good and ensures that pupils make very good progress, especially those who are able to achieve the higher standards.
18. The very good and excellent teaching throughout the school is characterised by the very high expectations of attainment and behaviour. Teachers are very good at assessing and reinforcing what pupils have learned and identifying what they need to learn next. Lesson plans are detailed and pupils are told what they are expected to learn. At the end of each lesson, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have achieved and try something that is a little more difficult. Very good explanations, clear instructions and good use of questioning are skilfully used to ensure all pupils understand what is expected of them. This contributes to the very good progress that pupils make.
19. In a minority of lessons, even where otherwise satisfactory, the pace of work is slower than in the best lessons. Here, too much time is spent explaining to the pupils what they are to complete. Some of the activities in these lessons are not well matched to the lower-attaining pupils.

20. Since the last inspection the teachers have made significant progress in ensuring that pupils who are able to achieve high results reach their potential. Teachers have developed their strategies for ensuring that work is matched to the full ability range. For low-attaining and some pupils with SEN, this is achieved through using the support of adults and a range of activities in lessons. However, for this group of pupils there are occasions when teachers provide too little challenge and too much guidance. This occurs during activities where prompts and answers are provided rather than encouraging pupils to try to solve the problem themselves. As seen in a lesson when pupils were shown where they needed a capital letter and what the correct order in a series of numbers should be.
21. The marking of the pupils' work is good. It informs the pupils what they have done well and where they can improve. Pupils are set targets and these are shared with their parents at regular intervals. Meeting targets is celebrated and this encourages pupils to make further effort. Homework is set regularly and is appropriate for the age of the pupils. Well-established classroom routines and the excellent relationships enable pupils to become confident and keen to learn.
22. The school uses whole-class teaching, group work and individual teaching to good effect. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a positive impact on teaching, pupils' learning and progress. The improvements noted have been helped by the employment of a literacy support assistant who is proving effective in improving standards for lower-attaining pupils.
23. The use of the new teaching suite for information and communication technology is developing quickly and teachers are adapting and rapidly gaining new skills through in-service training and personal interest. Teaching in ICT has significantly improved since the last inspection and standards have improved.
24. A significant feature of the school is the very high quality displays that have a positive impact on the ethos of the school. Through the displays it is evident that the teachers provide the pupils with all subjects in the National Curriculum to a high standard.
25. A further strength is the very skilful way that teachers link learning in a number of subjects. For example, when using the Hindu Festival of Divali, to support the learning of right and wrong in religious education, making diva lights in design and technology and of light in science.
26. All the issues raised in the last Ofsted report have been met and teaching has improved. Relationships in the classroom and within the school provide a positive atmosphere in which pupils are keen to learn and their achievements are celebrated. As a result of the good quality of teaching, the attainment and progress of pupils has significantly improved since the previous inspection, especially for those pupils who can achieve the higher standards.

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

27. The school offers a very good, broad and balanced curriculum with an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection, the school's guidance for the teaching of each subject has been completed. This now provides very good coverage of the curriculum and lays out what pupils need to learn.

28. Teachers have a very good plan of the whole curriculum. Sensible arrangements are being implemented to ensure that medium-term plans are up-dated in line with the new National Curriculum and provide good continuity and progression in each subject.
29. The school provides a very good curriculum for the pupils who are under five. The range of activities helps pupils to work alongside each other as well as promoting positive attitudes to work. Staff provide many opportunities to support pupils' speaking, listening and literacy skills, and a firm emphasis is given to the development of early number work.
30. Strategies for literacy and numeracy are very good. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the provision of a specialist teacher in dance. This is provided through an effective collaboration of local schools and provides high quality dance, drama and music provision.
31. The curriculum is relevant to the needs and interests of most pupils and helps them make good progress. The school effectively addresses aspects of the curriculum, such as personal and social education, sex education, health education, drug awareness and environmental education. The school meets the requirements to teach the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
32. The planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Children requiring increased differentiation are identified at an early stage. The co-ordinator maintains a register of pupils with special educational needs and provision meets the guidance of the Code of Practice. The policy provides very good guidance for class teachers on the identification and assessment procedures for pupils causing concern.
33. Teachers organise a good range of educational visits and visitors to add interest and excitement to the curriculum. Pupils visit museums and sites of historical value, and different environments such as a discovery museum, Beamish Museum and the Roman Wall. Similarly, visitors such as an author and a group of musicians playing string instruments all enhance the curriculum. Teachers work hard to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. For example, every pupil in Year 3 has the chance to perform dance and music at a local play-house. The school's playtime 'Buddy' system, to help children who need a friend, makes a positive contribution to the extra-curricular provision.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and for their moral and social development, very good. Pupils learn through weekly themes for collective worship, what is right and wrong, and to respect differences between people and their values and beliefs. The curriculum makes very good use of their cultural, religious and family backgrounds. Cultural development is well promoted through a range of visits locally and further afield. Good links are also formed in dance where different cultures like that of native American, Indian and African dances are studied.
35. Social development is well planned, building on the responsibilities given to pupils for managing their own affairs and by the introduction of a school's council, which involves pupils in decisions that affect the school community.

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

36. Very good relationships are a feature of this school and have a positive impact on pupils' welfare and guidance. Staff are friendly and approachable showing respect and concern for pupils and for each other. They all know the pupils very well and have a good understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers have built on the secure, welcoming atmosphere in this small village school to create an ethos in which pupils can develop to their full potential. This is evident in the willingness with which eight and nine-year-olds take on responsibilities and help younger pupils with their work.
37. The school has improved arrangements for the care and support of pupils since the last inspection so that appropriate policies are now in place for child protection and to deal with instances of bullying. There are effective procedures to promote good behaviour with an emphasis on praise and encouragement and a clear system of sanctions. Pupils have responded well to a new reward scheme whereby a child who has earned particular praise is given a marble to put in a jar. When the jar is full, an enjoyable whole-school activity such as an art event or a disco is arranged.
38. Teachers monitor pupils' attendance and follow up late arrivals and absences. Registration is conducted efficiently and lessons start promptly.
39. The school has improved and developed assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress since the last inspection. Baseline tests are given to children entering reception and this information is used with NFER and SATs results to track the progress of individuals from year-to-year and identify those requiring additional support. Test results are analysed and used to improve curriculum planning. Teachers systematically collect and record detailed information on each pupils' achievement of skills, mainly in English, mathematics and science, but with a similar system used less intensively for foundation subjects. This information is well used in planning to support pupils' progress. In lessons teachers use informal assessments well to ensure progression in the next lesson.
40. Teachers use assessment information effectively to enable them to set challenging but realistic targets for pupils. Pupils also set their own personal targets in consultation with their class teacher. Staff may set targets for personal development in consultation with parents in certain circumstances. Pupils are praised for good work. This is shown to the class and displayed around the school. Their achievements are also celebrated in assemblies.

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

41. The school works hard to build a partnership with parents, and in response, parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They are satisfied with all aspects of school life and are particularly enthusiastic about teaching, teachers' expectations of pupils and the progress their children are making. They feel welcome in school and confident that they can approach staff with any queries or concerns. Some parents and other members of the community help in school and on educational visits. They give good support for fund-raising, for example, for new nets for the school when a father was sponsored for the Great North Run. The school has canvassed parents' views through a questionnaire; the results of this were reported to parents in a newsletter, and the school has acted on points that were raised.

42. The school provides good information to parents on school issues and events through the brochure, newsletters and a school notice-board. Meetings are held for parents of children about to enter reception to explain school procedures and provide the opportunity for questions. Very good quality information on pupils' progress and targets is given to parents through annual written reports and regular meetings with staff.
43. Parents are interested in the quality of their children's education and the progress they make. They have attended open afternoons in school and are invited to special events such as concerts and dance demonstrations. The school has responded well to parents' desire for more information on the curriculum. This is provided through the school brochure and half-termly sheets showing work the children will be doing in each curriculum area. Parents help their children at home through listening to them read, and respond well to requests from teachers for support with particular aspects of pupils' work at home. Some parents ask for guidance in helping their children and a help sheet has been sent to parents of Key Stage 2 pupils. Parents' involvement and support has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

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

44. The leadership and management of the school are very effective. The head teacher, assisted by the senior teacher, provide excellent leadership and a very clear direction to the school so that pupils are given a good quality of learning and an incentive to achieve high standards. The governing body is supportive and takes a keen interest in all aspects of the school. They are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through performance management systems. The ethos of the school is excellent and stems from the clear vision, aims and philosophy that are shared by the head teacher, the staff, governors and parents.
45. The curriculum initiative, started just before the last inspection report, has been developed further and governors now have a valuable role in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' attainment. In addition to this, very good support is provided by a highly committed and hardworking staff in establishing a strong and positive ethos.
46. Since the previous inspection all of the key issues for action have been addressed and there has been very good improvement in the quality of education. The standards in ICT have improved. Policies for sex education, child protection and teacher appraisal are established and monitored. Significant improvements have occurred in curriculum planning and assessment practices which have been extended to the foundation subjects and the results are used to inform daily planning. The standard of teaching has improved and a very comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme involving teachers and governors is in place. Procedures provide for best value in the planned purchase, renewal and replacement of resources. Pupil attainment has also risen steadily, with a particular increase in challenge for those pupils who can achieve the higher levels of attainment.

47. The consultative approach of the head teacher towards development planning results in all staff and governors playing a full part in the identification of, and working towards, relevant targets and priorities. The high quality monitoring and evaluation of the school in terms of teaching and learning, pupils' attainment through test results and moderation of work, and the monitoring of subjects, ensures that the development of the school is securely rooted in its strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are relevant to the school and these are closely linked to budget setting. Grants are used well to improve the school's resources. Excellent use is made of available accommodation. A strength of the development plan is the belief that this is a working document to be constantly reviewed and modified in the light of new pressures and opportunities.
48. The number and qualifications of staff are appropriate to the size and needs of the school. Staff development procedures are very good and an excellent induction programme is in place for a recently appointed teacher. Teachers have access to an effective appraisal process. The school's involvement in training new teachers is excellent.
49. The governing body and the school meet all statutory requirements. The school applies the principles of best value through comparing its performance to similar schools. Although, as a small school the costs per pupil are high, good value for money is provided.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

50. This school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is performing well. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education further, the head teacher, staff and governors should work together to:
  - raise standards of lower-attaining pupils further by providing challenging activities that better match their learning needs; (Paragraph numbers 11, 19, 20, 62, 68, 75)
  - improve the good standards already achieved in literacy by raising boys' achievement in reading; (Paragraph numbers 4, 60)
  - improve standards of handwriting by ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the development of cursive writing. (Paragraph numbers 6, 60, 63, 64)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	28	19	11	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)	0	58
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	9

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	7	7	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86	86	93
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	12	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86	93	93
	National	82	86	87

### Ethnic background of pupils

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

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.3:1
Average class size	19.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	6

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	149,826.00
Total expenditure	147,269.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,338.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,614.00
Balance carried forward to next year	24,171.00

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	46	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	35	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	54	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	27	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	81	15	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	23	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	38	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	44	0	0	4

**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**

51. Provision made for children in the foundation stage is a strength of the school. Since the previous inspection the classroom has been enlarged and outdoor play is fully planned into the curriculum. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of abilities and experiences. On entering school the majority of children are below average in the school's baseline assessments. In Class 1 (reception) the children receive a positive start to their education and make very good progress in all areas of learning. The children make excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development, being able to work independently or in pairs for prolonged periods of time. The very high priority given to communication, language and literacy, and mathematics is reflected in the children's growing confidence, so that they are very well prepared for the National Curriculum by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Most of the children exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception class.
52. The quality of teaching is very good. Planning to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational need, is very good and the curriculum provides experiences that are based on the nationally identified early learning goals. Progression is effectively built into planning by gradually introducing the children to more directed activities. For example, the teacher uses the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy but reduces the time that children are expected to work on independent tasks to match their concentration levels. The teacher has an excellent understanding of the needs of young children and her expectations are very high, to which the children effectively respond. A wide range of challenging and focused experiences, for example working with a partner to create a model that includes five cubes, promotes the children's learning. Staff engage the children effectively in both planned and spontaneous conversations, helping them to listen and respond appropriately to their work. There are many opportunities for the children to explore and create for themselves. The ability of the teacher to use various lessons and inter-link them makes a significant contribution to the children's learning.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

53. Children make excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development and meet the learning goal by the time they enter Key Stage 1. They show an enthusiasm to learn. They enjoy sharing their activities with other children and adults alike. They concentrate well and take pride in their achievements. They co-operate with one another well, take turns and have a good sense of right and wrong as observed in a lesson where the children drew and coloured in poppies. The behaviour of the children is very good. Staff make very good use of praise to encourage the children, raise their self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning. All relationships are of the highest quality. The standards are a direct result of the excellent role-models and enthusiasm provided by the staff.

## **Communications, language and literacy**

54. Good standards are achieved in the skills of communication, language and literacy and by the time the children enter Key Stage 1 good progress has been made by a large majority of pupils. Children work confidently and make very good progress in speaking and listening, reading and in writing. They listen attentively and respond well to questions giving clear and simple explanations. They enjoy books and are proud to demonstrate their emerging reading skills to adults. They sing songs such as “Ten little children” with enthusiasm. Most children know the sounds that some letters represent, for example “r”, and the higher-attaining children are able to use their letter sound knowledge to read simple words, for example “r-e-d” makes red. Computer programs are used to develop word recognition and spelling. Opportunities are provided to develop their writing skills and the children are beginning to form letters accurately and make good attempts at early writing. Many children can write their names and some familiar words and numbers. They practise their writing in many areas of the curriculum and their work is displayed well and valued. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned, good use is made of a wide range of teaching techniques and there is a very good balance between the children experiencing directed teaching and being able to explore for themselves.

## **Mathematical development**

55. Good standards are achieved in mathematics and by the time the children enter Key Stage 1 good progress has been made by a large majority of pupils. Mathematical development is the area that the school identified as the weakest area from the baseline assessment that they conduct when the children start school. For the present intake the school had produced a booklet for parents to help their children prior to attending school. This has resulted in the children in this cohort having mathematical knowledge that is nearer to the expected levels. All children can count to 10 and a few can count up to 30 accurately. The children can recognise and name a cube, sphere and cone. Many are able to recognise the face, a corner and an edge. New words such as flat, roll, curved and a flat bottom were introduced to the children and some could use these in a follow-up lesson. Many children could also use words such as next to, behind and in front of accurately. Children use mathematical equipment successfully for counting and experimenting. Counting rhymes, games and activities in the role-play area help to widen the children’s mathematical language. The teacher’s very good explanations, instructions, question and answer sessions all help the children to learn.

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

56. The children work confidently in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world and the quality of teaching is very good. By the time the children enter Key Stage 1 the majority will have achieved the learning goals. The teacher plans this aspect thoroughly ensuring that science, design and technology, history and geography are all included. Through a simple mapping activity children are very familiar with the location of various parts of the whole school such as the front door, car park, play-school building. They use the vocabulary in front of, beside, behind gained in a mathematics lesson to very good effect when describing where they are standing. The children are able to use computers and are able to use the mouse effectively to create a pattern using red, green and brown. They also learn the names of parts of flowers such as leaves, stalk within an art focused lesson.

## **Physical development**

57. Physical skills are very well developed and pupils have good physical skills by the time they enter Key Stage 1. This is an improvement from the last inspection due to the classroom accommodation being extended internally and externally. Children now have access to a wide range of outdoor activities on a regular basis. All space is well used to enable children to become confident in their movements in and around school. Many opportunities are provided for the children to cut and fold paper, use paint brushes of various thickness effectively, to build with construction kits, to explore materials, including sand and water and to manipulate puzzles. They are developing good control of pencils and use them successfully for writing, drawing and colouring a picture of poppies. The quality of teaching is very good. In addition to this a dance teacher makes a significant contribution to the improvement in children's gross motor skills.

## **Creative development**

58. By the time they enter Key Stage 1 most children make very good progress in their creative development and attain levels of understanding and skills that are in line with the early learning goals. Expression of ideas and feelings is developed well through dance, art, music and role-play. The children are able to select colours to create shades of red for their pictures of poppies. Paintings and drawings are beginning to show good detail. They have opportunities to sing songs and rhymes and play simple musical patterns. The quality of teaching is very good. The visiting teacher for dance, music and drama makes a significant contribution to children's experiences and learning and this supplements the work of the class teacher.
59. The teacher offers a high level of care, creating a secure and stimulating learning environment. She receives good support from the teacher-training student attached to her class. The teacher knows her children well and makes very good use of assessment procedures to support the development of the children. The first experience of school life received by the children in Class 1 provides them with positive attitudes to their work. Children's working in pairs is well established in this class, and underpins the very good co-operative group work that goes on throughout the school.

## ENGLISH

60. Attainment in English at Key Stage 1 is above the national average. Standards are well above average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils consistently achieving the higher standard in reading and writing is well above the national average. Attainment in English by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school is above that expected nationally. In 1999 and 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 has remained consistently well above the national average. This is maintained by the pupils in Years 3 and 4. Since the previous inspection, the school has addressed the issue of ensuring a closer match of work for the more able pupils. Although attainment in English is very good overall there is a significant group of pupils who are achieving the lower levels, particularly in writing. In reading, more boys are achieving the lower levels. The school is aware of this and it is an area that they are planning to address in their 2001/2002 draft school improvement plan.
61. Attainment in speaking and listening at Key Stage 1 is in line with national averages for all pupils but well above the national average for the pupils who attain the higher levels. Pupils listen attentively to their teacher, other adults and to each other, remembering to take turns when speaking. They offer appropriate answers to questions and opinions. They listen carefully to instructions and explanations. Higher and average-attaining pupils form clear sentences to ask and answer questions. Attainment in Key Stage 2 is well above the national average. By the age of nine, when pupils leave the school, they apply their speaking and listening skills in a wider range of opportunities, both formal and informal. Pupils in Year 4 confidently express their opinions about the work of the author Frank Rogers who recently visited the school for a day.
62. In Key Stage 1 attainment in reading is close to the national averages for all pupils, but well above the national average for pupils achieving Level 2B and better. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils read fluently, with few errors and with expression. The higher-attaining pupils understand the main features of a plot, talk about characters and predict what they think will happen next. They use picture, phonic and contextual clues well. They are able to use dictionaries and word banks confidently. Many use an index and content pages to look up information. The lower-attaining pupils are less confident readers and are hesitant. They use more picture clues and are just beginning to use letter sounds to recognise simple three letter words. Sometimes the work for the lower-attaining pupils does not challenge them, such as in one lesson the children were required to match sentences to a pictures within a story book. The sentences, however, were numbered and as a consequence the pupils managed the problem through successfully ordering numbers one to eight. By the age of nine, when pupils leave the school, they read well with fluency and accuracy. Many read with good expression. Pupils talk confidently about plot and character and are willing to give their opinions. A number of pupils participate in the additional literacy support and pupils' confidence and reading skills are seen to improve quickly. Pupils have developed sound library skills and locate specific information within the school library using the colour coding system. Pupils are able to access information from books and computerised systems. Reading development is supported through a home-school reading record that involves teacher and parents. However, these records show what the pupil can do and not what they are trying to achieve. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are much less aware of their reading attainment and how they can improve. This is in distinct contrast to their knowledge and understanding of their writing attainment and areas for improvement.

63. In Key Stage 1 attainment in writing is close to the national average for all pupils. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is well above the national average. By the end of the key stage most pupils write in sentences using full stops and capital letters appropriately. Higher-attaining pupils order events well in writing stories for example "The rainbow that lost it's blue" or descriptions of events. They are spelling simple words correctly and are encouraged to use word-building skills to attempt more difficult words unaided. The lower-attaining pupils, however, are instructed what to do rather than encouraged to try and learn from their experiences. In one lesson, pupils are told when they need to put in a capital letter rather than being asked or reminded what they require now. Handwriting is not consistently in a joined form.
64. By the age of nine pupils' attainment is above that expected nationally. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their writing, such as through note-taking to create a newspaper article and using the Internet to gather more information. This work has developed from an educational visit to a newspaper office. They show grammatical correctness in most of their writing, and spelling is sound. Handwriting is usually well formed and presented, however it is not always in a joined script. They write for a variety of purposes and this includes story, instructions, factual accounts and poetry. Pupils are very aware of their writing attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels and where they can improve. This knowledge is used to form pupils' individual targets.
65. Standards in literacy are good in both key stages. Pupils also use their literacy skills well in other subjects such as answering a questionnaire about Beamish Museum using information from the Internet.
66. When taken as a whole, progress is good. Progress is very good for the higher and middle-attaining pupils and is satisfactory for the lower-attaining pupils. During Key Stage 1 pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils are challenged by skilled questioning, and listening to adults and children speak in a wide variety of contexts. Pupils meet many reading and writing opportunities each day. The higher and middle-attaining pupils make rapid progress with their reading and writing skills. The lower-attaining group and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2 pupils are provided with more opportunities to develop more formal skills in addressing an audience and listen with more sustained concentration. They are willing to share ideas and to learn from others. Pupils' writing is extended in the variety of tasks that they complete and also in the length of their work. Pupils also develop a more fluent joined handwriting style. Overall pupil progress at Key Stage 2 is very good. The higher and middle-attaining pupils make the most progress with the lower-attaining and pupils with special educational needs making good progress.
67. Pupils' attitudes to their work in English is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Most pupils work hard to complete the tasks set for them. Many are well motivated, maintain concentration and take a pride in their work. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, other adults and each other. A strength of the school is the way in which pupils from the earliest age are able to work together in small groups.

68. Overall, teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. At both key stages all levels of planning and preparation are very good. Teachers use their accurate assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to plan appropriate activities for their pupils. This they achieve with far greater accuracy for the higher and middle-attaining pupils. However, teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations for the lower-attaining pupils and as a result do not provide them with sufficiently challenging work or provide them with too much support. In most lessons, particularly the very good lessons, tasks are varied, interesting and challenging. A very high standard of work and behaviour is expected and obtained. When marking pupils' work the teachers use appropriate praise but also indicate where pupils can improve.
69. The subject co-ordinator joined the school in September. She is already involved in lesson observation and analysis of test results so as to inform the teachers where further developments need to be made. The subject is well resourced.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. The standards achieved throughout the school are higher than the national average and above those of pupils in similar schools. This is reflected in the most recent national tests, where high proportions achieve the higher grades. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is due to good teaching and the promotion of positive attitudes towards high achievement. By the time pupils are nine and leave school standards are above the national average. A very high proportion of this age group attain standards that are above the national expectation.
71. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a secure foundation in number skills. Pupils with higher attainment can add, subtract and multiply to 20. Lower-attaining pupils can recognise and add numbers to 10. Pupils with average attainment and above are secure in their understanding of place of tens and units whilst the lower-attaining pupils have an early understanding of place value. Many can order numbers to 100. Pupils have developed a good understanding of the days of the week and the months of the year.
72. By Year 4 the pupils' mental arithmetic skills are good. They are able to add or subtract from 267 in groups of 100, 10 and single units. Those with higher attainment know their multiplication tables whilst those with average attainment use aids to help them. Pupils are able to measure accurately up to 1000 millilitres. The higher-attaining pupils are more confident in estimating volume. Knowledge and understanding of data-handling is sound, the higher-attaining pupils being able to create and use information from simple tallies and graphs. Pupils' knowledge of shape and space is good.

73. Progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 is good. The higher and middle-attaining pupils make very good progress, whilst the lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in Key Stage 2 is very good. Throughout the school, both in lessons seen and work undertaken over a period of time, pupils consolidate their knowledge and skills particularly within their number work. In Key Stage 1 they make good progress in understanding place value, shape and space. In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in solving simple problems and using data. Information and communication technology is beginning to have an effect on standards in data-handling with graphs being more accurately produced.
74. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. In Key Stage 1, when the work is appropriately challenging, pupils concentrate and work hard to complete the task. If work is too easy or too well supported by an adult the pupils lose their concentration and begin to fidget. In Key Stage 2 the pupils are remarkable at the level of independence, concentration and the amount of challenging work that they complete in a set amount of time. In Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in their use of mathematics and are willing to solve problems and learn from their deductions.
75. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. In the very good lessons the pace is fast and all pupils are set challenging work. An adequate amount of support is provided for the lower-attaining pupils whereby ideas and suggestions, but not the answers to a problem, are given. Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and in their ability to work independently. In the weaker but satisfactory lessons the pace is slower and explanations are too lengthy. The work set for pupils is more challenging for the higher and middle-attaining pupils than for the lower-attaining pupils. The effectiveness of the National Literacy Strategy is having a very good positive impact on standards of attainment.
76. Subject leadership is good. A very good development plan has been followed and targets met. Monitoring of standards, analysis of test results and of lessons is exceedingly well established and thoroughly and thoughtfully carried out. The information gathered is used by the school to improve the quality of teaching and the standards attained. The subject is well resourced.

## **SCIENCE**

77. The standards achieved are above the national average and well above those of pupils in similar schools. Teachers' assessments for seven-year-olds in 1999 were in line with that expected nationally and very high for those attaining the higher levels in similar schools. Pupils explore science practically, for example when investigating what happens when light is reflected through a prism. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can make generally accurate observations and recall a range of facts. They are learning to recognise a fair test and can make sensible, but not always accurate, suggestions when predicting the possible outcomes of investigation.
78. By the time pupils leave school standards have improved further and continue to be above that expected nationally. Pupils use good techniques of research when investigating, for example, the properties of solutions, and write up their work using appropriate scientific language. Many pupils understand the importance and effect of science on everyday life and they can recall a range of scientific events. Most pupils are able to understand the concept of a fair test and higher-attaining pupils can explain the possible effect of "variables" on an investigation. Pupils of all abilities can choose appropriate equipment, measure accurately and check their observations.

79. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, often make good progress and build up their knowledge and understanding of science as they progress through the school. They build on the experiences and skills acquired in previous lessons. They are making noticeable improvements in their skills of investigation. Younger pupils are learning to make sensible predictions and are more prepared to change their views in the light of new information and increased understanding. Pupils' progress at learning to be independent is improving, especially at Key Stage 2, but needs to be maintained in Key Stage 1 to enable them to think and make decisions for themselves.
80. Pupils at both key stages have very positive attitudes to science, show an interest in their work and like to explain what they are doing. They are enthusiastic and keen to be involved, especially when working in small groups.
81. The teaching of science is good in most lessons. Staff are knowledgeable and practical activities have a positive impact on attainment and progress. Lessons are usually well organised with good working routines established. Teachers make their intentions clear to pupils and they use questions and discussion to support and extend children's learning. Lessons have clear learning objectives and are usually well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers have high expectations and, especially in Key Stage 2, challenge pupils to develop or practise scientific enquiry and become independent learners.
82. Lessons are very well planned and co-ordinated to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, including those with special educational needs. Procedures for the assessment of science are good and are used to plan the curriculum. There is an effective policy and comprehensive guidelines to help teachers plan their work and ensure that the curriculum takes account of pupils' previous experiences.

## ART

83. During the inspection only one art lesson was observed and that was in Key Stage 2. Evidence was taken from planning, discussion with pupils and staff and the abundance of high quality display throughout the school. Attainment in both key stages is above standards expected of pupils the same age nationally. This is an improvement on the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school.
84. At Key Stage 1, pupils have explored a wide range of media and techniques. They draw, paint, use clay and collage material and fabric in connection with many topics. They are also integrating photographs taken with the digital camera into their work. The many examples of their work provide colourful displays in classrooms and corridors. The skilful way in which art is linked to other subjects such as in science when work on texture, the difference between man made and natural materials, was incorporated into a lesson focusing on observational drawing.
85. Pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their use of different media, including pencil and charcoal, to develop tone and shade when completing a still life picture. They make careful observations producing very good sketches such as those that were on display from a visit to the Welfare Hall. They study various artists including Picasso. Five facts about Picasso and his "Weeping Lady" picture were successfully integrated into a dance lesson. Their use of clay is skilful and there are some very good clay faces where the quality of colour is very effective on display.
86. Pupils work well in art. They share materials and willingly offer help to each other. They treat materials with respect. They evaluate their own work and that of others with maturity and appreciate that art is a personal view of the world. Art permeates every aspect of the school and contributes very significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
87. The quality of teaching in art is very good. The high quality planning and the effective way art is integrated into every subject to maximise the use of time is a contributory factor to the high standards that the pupils achieve. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and are skilful in supporting and extending pupils. This was very evident in a dance lesson where the theme was to use Picasso's paintings to develop movement. The teacher provided the children with sufficient information to stimulate great interest but did not provide examples ensuring that all pupils needed to create their own dance sequence. Pupils are given direct teaching to gain and improve skills and techniques and are introduced to a very wide range of media and materials. Careful use of very good questioning skills by teachers enables pupils to think for themselves, to evaluate and contrast.
88. The subject is well co-ordinated. The policy and scheme of work are detailed and support progression. Resources are readily available. Children's artwork around the school is good and teachers show that they value what the children produce. This has a direct impact on the ethos of the school and individual pupils' self-esteem.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 is above standards expected of pupils of the same age nationally. This is an improvement on the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school.
90. In Key Stage 1 pupils use designing skills to produce plans and select tools to make models. Good use is made of ICT to help pupils with their designs. Pupils use a good variety of materials to model their designs. They design and make artefacts to illustrate current themes and topics in their learning, as when designing and making an object associated with Hindu festival of Divali. Pupils learn to use simple tools and are introduced to a range of media for making models.
91. By the time they leave school pupils can produce accurate designs based upon chosen and modified ideas. They can select suitable materials for a range of making tasks and use a range of tools correctly. In making artefacts they can work to good scale and proportion. Pupils know the properties of materials and discuss with confidence suitable materials from which to make models incorporating an electric circuit. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at both key stages.
92. The quality of teaching is good. The stages of designing, planning and making are carefully taught throughout the school. Teachers use effective demonstrations and questioning to help pupils to develop existing skills and acquire new ones. Opportunities are given to pupils to work independently and they are encouraged to choose their own tools and materials.
93. Pupils enjoy design and technology and look forward to lessons. They learn and remember a wide range of skills, which they apply well to their work. The quality of finished products is generally good and pupils are proud of them. In the course of their work pupils learn to share and take turns. They help each other with difficult problems and acknowledge and value each other's work.
94. The design and technology curriculum is well co-ordinated and meets National Curriculum requirements. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and they are encouraged to reflect on the success of their designs and products. The design and make process is clearly established in the school and sufficient suitable resources in the form of tools and materials are available.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

95. During the inspection, due to the topic structure, no geography lessons were observed. Evidence was taken from workbooks, planning and from discussion with pupils and staff. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above the standard expected nationally for their age. These standards are above those reported in the previous inspection.
96. In Key Stage 1 pupils discuss the local environment and make very good use of maps to locate places around school and in the immediate environment. They use simple charts and plans to record their work. They are developing a good understanding of places within the world by locating postcards onto the Barnaby Bear world tour.

97. By the end of Year 4 pupils' knowledge and use of mapping skills increases. They use newspapers to collect weather data that they use to compare and contrast the climate in various places. They use scenarios such as winning a 1st prize, a raffle that is a holiday to anywhere in the world, and the pupils have to decide their destination and why they have chosen it. Pupils also learn about life beyond their own locality by looking at the similarities and differences between villages. Pupils use the Internet to enhance their knowledge.
98. Pupils' attitude to geography is good. They enjoy learning about the world around them and have strong opinions about ways in which the environment can be improved. Their knowledge of the local area is good and this contributes to the pupils' cultural knowledge.
99. The subject is well co-ordinated. The policy and scheme of work are detailed and support progression. There is an appropriate range of topics for geography teaching. The long and medium-term planning highlight the geography skills that are taught. Resources are readily available. The school's two-year rolling programme ensures a systematic coverage.

## **HISTORY**

100. During the inspection only one history lesson was observed and that was in Key Stage 2. Evidence was taken from workbooks, planning and from discussion with pupils and staff. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is in line with the standard expected of pupils of the same age nationally. By the end of Year 4 pupils' attainment is better than the standard expected nationally for pupils of the same age. These standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection.
101. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about changes in their local areas and community over time and explain how people's everyday lives have changed in terms of their homes, clothes and employment. They learn about famous people from the past and begin to develop some idea of the language of history and time by using such expressions as "before" and "after" and "then" and "now".
102. By the end of Year 4, pupils approach investigations in a well-informed way and are able to justify their decisions and modify them in terms of new information. They are able to chronologically order motor cars and identify the period in history when most development occurred. In work on Beamish Museum the research activities used make a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and information technology skills.
103. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 it is good. At Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of the changes that have occurred in their local environment, especially in terms of employment and the importance of the recently opened Skills' Centre. The curriculum, experiences in school and the outside visits to a range of historical sites such as Hardy's House make a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
104. Pupils show a high level of interest and commitment to the subject. They enjoy activities that involve making decisions and refining these in the light of new evidence. The Key Stage 2 pupils have a pride in their work and the capacity to undertake in-depth studies successfully.

105. In Key stage 2 the lesson observed was good, due to the clear focus of the lesson that was shared with pupils and the good paced delivery. Objectives within the planning are precise so that activities are very appropriate.
106. The co-ordinator provides good leadership to the subject. There is a clear subject policy and scheme of work that focuses on the skills that are to be taught and which aspects of content are most going to help pupils' skill development. Resources for history are good and contribute effectively to learning.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards are above the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Staff in-service training and a significant financial input into hardware have achieved this. The school has potential to improve further as they have recently undertaken a major review and expansion of its information and communication technology facilities, and, while these new initiatives could become a strong feature of the school's work, there has been insufficient time for their benefits to be felt. Pupils now have access to a computer suite and also computers within each classroom. The teacher training students are frequently usefully deployed into the computer suite with groups of pupils.
108. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils enter text into the computer using a word-processing package. They use the keyboard and mouse to control the program and can retrieve and store work with appropriate help. Pupils have had opportunities to use other aspects of information and communication technology, such as the use of a digital camera on the making of gingerbread display. Pupils also have experience of control technology through the use of roamer. They use a simple "paint" program to create a picture.
109. By the age of nine, when the pupils leave this school, they word-process, amend and correct text for basic grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors. They save and retrieve files from hard disk. They use the Internet to find and print out information on a specific topic such as Beamish Museum. They also have opportunities to use CD-ROM based software for reference purposes. They understand the importance of information and communication technology in the wider world.
110. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their control of the mouse so that they can use simple programs. They begin to use appropriate technical vocabulary such as "mouse" and "keyboard". They develop an increasing accuracy in word-processing. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress in word-processing skills. They change the colour and shape of text in addition to changing the size and style to create bar graphs and pie charts. By using CD-ROM and the Internet, pupils develop research skills in several subjects.
111. Pupils enjoy using computers and are confident in their ability. They have a very good attitude to work, respond well to challenges and persevere with tasks. When working with the computers they willingly explain what they are doing and enjoy demonstrating their skills to each other and adults.

112. During the inspection two lessons within Key Stage 2 were observed. Teaching in these lessons is good and very good. Since the last inspection teachers have increased their own knowledge and capability with a computer and this has had a positive impact on the pupils' learning, attainment and enthusiasm for the subject. In the very good lessons pupils are set challenging work such as finding out information from the Beamish web-site to answer a series of questions. The higher-attaining pupils are set tasks such as drafting reports with pictures, using a spell checker or their own alterations. Teachers use computers to support other lessons as in Key Stage 1 where pupils used the computer to create poems with a rhyming second line.
113. The subject is effectively co-ordinated. A strength of the curriculum is how information and communication technology is taught using topics from other subjects such as art, English, mathematics, geography and history and how it is used to reinforce literacy and numeracy.

## **MUSIC**

114. During the inspection no music lessons were observed. Evidence was taken from planning, discussion with pupils and staff, an interview with the peripatetic dance, drama and music teacher and pupils' singing in assemblies and numeracy lessons. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above the standard expected nationally for their age. These standards are the same as those reported in the previous inspection.
115. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing songs confidently, tunefully and with expression. They listen attentively to taped music and are able to distinguish between music played fast and slow. In a dance lesson their interpretation of movement to music is very good. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop a wide repertoire of songs. Pupils recognise and name instruments. In a dance lesson the music chosen for the work related to Picasso's "Weeping Lady" was excellent. It set the mood perfectly. This type of opportunity improves pupils' knowledge, understanding and interpretation of music.
116. Pupils enjoy their music lessons. This is partly due to the enthusiasm and dedication of the peripatetic teacher and how she uses music in dance lessons.
117. The curriculum for music is well co-ordinated and meets the statutory requirements. Resources for music are very good and include instruments and taped music from other cultures. Music contributes to the cultural development of the pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

118. Standards are above the national expectations at the end Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave school. In dance, which formed the main focus during inspection, standards of achievement are high. Most pupils are aware of issues related to the health advantages gained from exercise. Pupils can arrange a variety of appropriate ways to move, using good posture and balance. They are skilful at evaluating performance to refine what they have devised. For example in a Year 4 dance lesson interpreting the 'Weeping Lady' by Picasso. Games' skills are accurately performed, such as passing, catching and throwing a ball. Children's basic fitness levels are good. Pupils' progress, including those with special educational need, is good and sometimes very good when planning and refining the quality of movement. This also applies to the progress they make as they move through the school and become increasingly independent when finding their own ways of improving their performance.

119. The pupils' attitudes to physical education are good and in dance very good, throughout the school. All pupils dress appropriately and they change for PE efficiently. They work well in groups and in pairs in virtually every context.
120. The teaching of physical education is good, and in dance very good and sometimes excellent. The best lessons are seen when the teacher maintains a brisk pace of activity and pupils are given periods of practice to learn and adjust to new movements or skills. This quality is especially evident in the way pupils are encouraged to recognise and perform quality positions during dance movements. The best lessons have real vigour and the pupils work physically hard. Teachers comment accurately on performances and practice is lengthy and relevant. Very good use is made of demonstrations where pupils learn to recognise elements of good performance.
121. The school extends the curriculum with a good range of out-of-school sport, and with worthwhile activities in the playground during the breaks in the working day. Swimming forms a regular part of the curriculum, which is based on the local education authority scheme. The subject is well co-ordinated. Good resources are available to support pupils' learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

122. During the inspection only one religious education lesson was observed and that was in Key Stage 1. Evidence was taken from assemblies, workbooks, planning and discussions with pupils and staff. In both key stages work in religious education meets the requirements of the local education authority Agreed Syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attain standards in line with that expected nationally in religious education. Attainment is above that expected nationally at the end of Year 4 before pupils transfer to middle school. These standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Religious education makes a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils throughout the school.
123. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know many stories and traditions about the Christian faith. During the inspection pupils demonstrated their knowledge of Advent as preparing for Christmas. They learn about the Hindu celebration of Divali. They can relate to the importance of light in many faiths.
124. By the end of Year 4 pupils attain well in relation to the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils can describe events recorded in the scriptures. They are able to consider in depth the beliefs and actions of others and apply their own experience. They demonstrate maturity in thinking about receiving and giving presents.
125. Across the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Throughout both key stages pupils' questions indicate their interest in the subject and respect for the values and faiths of others. Pupils in both key stages acquire knowledge of the Christian faith by the good relationships the school has with the local churches.
126. Pupils' attitudes to work in both key stages are good. In Key Stage 1 and whole-school assemblies, they are keen to express ideas, offer opinions and relate relevant experiences. Pupils co-operate very well and show respect and reverence during the assemblies. Their very good behaviour is a positive factor in the success of assemblies and class discussions.

127. The scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that teaching is good. This was confirmed by the lesson observed. Planning is very good, lessons frequently begin with reference to previous work to remind pupils of knowledge already gained. Lessons maintain a steady pace which sustains pupils' interest and teachers ask a good range of questions which provoke active discussion and reinforce pupils' understanding of other faiths. The lower-attaining pupils are more reluctant to join in class discussions but the teacher tries to involve them through targeted questions.
128. The subject is well co-ordinated. The policy and scheme of work are detailed and support progression. Resources are readily available. The school uses the local churches to support their work and this is having a positive impact on the pupils' attainment. The very good use of questions to enable pupils to reflect has a direct impact on the very good ethos in the school.