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out analysis of all assessments, including the results of national tests. This provides an indication of the progress of pupils in Engfish, mathematics and science year by year. The school is beginning to set broad targets for groups of pupils in Engfish, and mathematics. These are not sufficiently specific to be really effective in matching work to the needs of all pupils. The school has yet to estabfish a good system to check and analyse the progress of pupils against these targets. The very effective use of assessment information in the mainstream support unit provides a good model for the school to build

decision to maintain small classes helps teachers to manage pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons. The school has a generous allocation of clerical support.

51 The school was originally built for many more pupils but numbers have dropped over recent years as families have been relocated and housing has been demolished. As a result accommodation is very good for the number of pupils on roll. It is well cared for by cleaning staff. There are many spacious rooms that have been adopted for separate areas of the curriculum. Most classrooms are bright and stimulating with attractive displays celebrating pupils' work. However, the library is unattractive and is not used well to promote the enjoyment of books and reading or to encourage pupils to carry out their own independent research. Outside the playground has plenty of space for pupils to play at break times, with an enclosed area for the youngest children.

52 Finances are managed carefully and the head teacher and governors ensure that the school has a high level of contingency funding to protect staff numbers in the event of further reductions in the number of pupils on roll. However, the good allocation of funding to resources identified in the previous inspection report has not been maintained and the amount allocated to the purchase of learning resources is low. Learning resources are satisfactory in the foundation stage; with good outdoors play equipment available. Resources are satisfactory in all curriculum areas apart from in art and design and design and technology where they are unsatisfactory. The library provision is unsatisfactory; the library is not well enough stocked or organised to support the development of independent personal study. There is a lack of books to develop awareness of other cultures.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

19 In order to improve the pupils' standards of attainment, and the quality of education offered, the head teacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Improve standards in English by:
- improving handwriting skills throughout the school;
- improving standards in reading by enabling pupils to hear examples of expressive and fluent reading;
- ensuring that the library is used effectively to promote reading and develop library skills at both key stages, and to develop research skills in Key Stage 2;
- ensuring structured opportunities are provided for pupils to develop writing for a range of different purposes.

(Paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 22, 77 – 81, 107, 111)

(2) Improve standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
- building on the good emphasis given to investigative methods of teaching and learning in Key Stage1;
- ensuring that pupils learn to apply their skills to real-life problems;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical understanding in other subjects;
- providing more opportunities to use ICT to support their mathematical learning.

(Paragraphs 8, 10, 12, 83, 89, 90)

(3) Improve standards in science by:
- allowing pupils in Key Stage 2 to plan and conduct their own independent experiments and investigations;
- improving pupils' skills in writing up their experiments and recording their findings.

(Paragraphs 11, 12, 92, 95)

(4) Develop teaching strategies that allow pupils to develop independent learning skills so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they can:
- choose their own materials and equipment to work out how to solve problems in their own way or find answers to questions they have raised through their own research in English, mathematics, history and geography.

(Paragraphs 10, 11, 16, 22, 88, 92, 107, 111)

(5) Ensure that the large amount of information gained from analysing assessment information, including test results is used to:
- set more precise targets for individuals and groups and monitoring their progress toward achieving them;
- ensure that teachers use assessment to predict more accurately what individuals can achieve.

(Paragraphs 25, 40, 41, 45, 82, 91, 96)

(6) Improve provision for children in the nursery and reception classes (foundation stage) by:
- ensuring activities provide a sufficient range of experiences within all the areas of learning to help children to achieve the goals identified for their age;
- ensuring that there is sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all children;

- ensuring that activities are not led by adults and provide children with opportunities to make choices.
  (Paragraphs 20, 26, 62 – 64, 67 – 70, 72)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Strengthen planning to give greater emphasis to pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures through subjects such as art and design, dance, music, history and geography.
  (Paragraphs 34, 98, 125)

- Ensure that pupils' programme of personal, social and health education includes regular opportunities to them to develop a greater awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
  (Paragraph 29)

THE WORK OF THE MAINSTREAM SUPPORT UNIT

54 The school has provision for up to 12 pupils in a mainstream support unit, The Bridges. These pupils come from other parts of the local education authority and most are brought to school by taxi from beyond the school's catchment. The pupils are aged between seven and 11 and have a broad range of attainment. However, all have learning difficulties, some quite severe, and these are met through provision identified in an individual statement of specific need. A full time teacher and specialist classroom support assistant teach the Bridges class, with extra part-time support to meet the provision identified in the statement of one pupil.

55 The provision for these pupils is of high quality due to the good and often very good teaching by all staff in the unit. All staff have a high level of specialist expertise and have a very good understanding of the very varied needs of the pupils and how best these can be met. The staff make very careful assessments of each pupil's progress and use the information to prepare work that is closely matched to the needs of each individual and to set realistic new targets. The work takes account of National Curriculum requirements and the staff have adapted the national frameworks for teaching literacy and numeracy in order to meet the needs of their pupils. Staff plan well together and work with mainstream colleagues to enable the pupils to work with others of the same age for lessons in areas such as music and physical education. Parents rightly value the work of the unit and the benefits they see for their children.

56 The staff work closely together and provide a very high level of care and support to the pupils in The Bridges. Staff value each other and work well together to develop very good relationships within the unit. These close and supportive relationships are a key to the success of the work with these pupils and instrumental in the good, and sometimes very good, progress they make. All adults manage the pupils' learning and behaviour very well. Any problems are handled sensitively and there is good rapport between staff and pupils. Staff work hard to build the self-esteem of the pupils but also have high expectations that the pupils will do the best they can and praise their achievements. The pupils respond well to all staff and are very secure within the good working atmosphere created in the unit. The staff ensure that pupils do not become worried about their work. For example, in a good literacy lesson the teacher emphasised the sounds of letters, ensured that all pupils were clear about their task of building words and reminded them 'If you have any problems I am here to help you'. As a result, pupils made good gains in their learning and began to use their understanding of the use of capital letters and full stops as they worked to put jumbled sentences in the correct order.

57 Standards are mainly well below those expected for the ages of the pupils but they make good progress in relation to their earlier learning because the planned work builds so well on what they already know. In a well-taught mathematics lesson with the Year 5 and 6 pupils in the class, the teacher used the pupils' skills to find different ways of solving problems linked to work in tens. Pupils rounded up numbers such as 27 + 3 =30 and used a number square to 100 to work out 9 x 10. By the end of the lesson they were beginning to realise the values of tens and units and could work out 20 x 20 and check their answers on a calculator. Year 3 and 4 pupils worked on shape and the Year 4 pupil confidently identified and named a square, triangle and circle while the Year 3 pupil was able to find circles and squares.

58 Staff make good use of visits out of school to stimulate and reinforce pupils' learning. This works well and after a visit to the Roman fort of Arbeia pupils used what they had learned to support their work on the religious beliefs of the Romans. The staff ensure good links with literacy and pupils used their skills to write sentences about the Romans. They used ICT to aid their learning and, with adult help, accessed information using a CD-ROM. The support assistant ensured that work was well presented and pupils showed substantial gains in their understanding of the Roman way of life. One pupil volunteered 'Romans had many Gods; they had a little shrine in their house and gave them gifts to

keep them happy'. By the end of the lesson, pupils could recall many facts about the Roman belief in their Gods; they knew that Jupiter was an important God and that Juno his wife cared for Roman women. Pupils in the unit are encouraged to take a pride in their work and they present their work carefully. Standards of handwriting are often good.

59 The staff work hard to ensure that the unit is a colourful and exciting place to stimulate pupils' learning. They have well-chosen books and artefacts and these are readily available to pupils. The pupils' work is displayed well and this promotes their confidence and self-esteem. The good quality learning environment means that these pupils are often eager to learn and staff have good strategies to maintain their concentration. They use time well and know that learning has to be broken down into small steps for these pupils. This consolidates well the pupils' learning and supports their achievement.

60 There are good links with external agencies and specialist services; these support the pupils' learning. There are good links with parents through the daily diary that provides useful information on how well their children have coped throughout the day. This is particularly useful since pupils come from other areas and parents do not bring them to school. The travelling distance makes it difficult for many parents to attend review meetings about their children's progress and the new targets set for them. However, the staff in the unit ensure that they are kept well informed.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	9%	58%	33%			

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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	8	75
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	28

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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
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	2000	4	5	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56% (57%)	67% (43%)	100% (86%)
	National	84% (82%)	85% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56% (57%)	100% (57%)	78% (57%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.
Where the number of pupils is 10 or less figures are omitted.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	6	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	14% (10%)	14% (10%)	21% (30%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	14% (10%)	14% (10%)	21% (20%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	80% (75%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.
Where the number of pupils is 10 or less figures are omitted.

Note: the standards at Key Stage 2 include the results of pupils with a statement of special educational needs who are taught in the mainstream support unit.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	66
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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.3
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y7 including SEN unit

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.0

Total number of education support staff	1.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	3.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999

	£
Total income	296,831
Total expenditure	260,037
Expenditure per pupil	2,922
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,000
Balance carried forward to next year	47,794

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	32	5	0	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	21	0	11	5
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	14	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	23	0	5	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	29	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	24	0	5	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	32	0	0	14

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

61 The school's provision for children is satisfactory although it was deemed good in the last inspection. The numbers on roll have fallen and the children are now taught in an early years unit with a teacher and nursery nurse. In the current organisation the nursery and reception classes are taught as a group for part of each day. In other sessions the class teacher works mainly with the reception children and teaches the nursery children two half days each week. For the rest of the time the nursery nurse teaches the small group of nursery children. This arrangement is managed satisfactorily by the staff who work closely together to plan activities.

62 The school's assessment of the children on entry shows that many have very low attainment, particularly in language literacy and communication skills. Children are often immature and personal and social skills are below those expected for children of this age. The programme planned for the children is broadly satisfactory but adults often dominate much of their learning and the children have too few opportunities to work independently on well-planned practical experiences to support their learning. When they do work independently they move between activities that do not always provide sufficient stimulation or challenge. Staff now take account of the school's assessment of the children when they start school to group children for some language and mathematical activities. However, planning does not sufficiently focus on providing tasks to meet the different needs of all the children. This slows progress, particularly for the higher attaining or more mature children.

63 The activities planned and presented to the nursery and reception children vary in their usefulness. Emphasis is given to the provision of a range of experiences to underpin future learning in reading, writing and number work. There is sometimes an imbalance in the time given to the activities needed to support the children's experiences across the other areas of learning. This means that for some there are insufficient opportunities for the range of useful practical experiences to underpin subjects such as early science and technology. The early years areas are set up to enable children to make choices of activities within all the areas of learning. The areas are not always clearly identified, for example with posters or photographs to show children what the activity is about. Writing on signs is not always carefully done and the areas are not sufficiently stimulating.

64 Teaching is broadly satisfactory and enables children to make mainly sound achievement over time. However, by the time they transfer to Year 1 the children's attainment is still well below that expected for five year olds, particularly in language, literacy and mathematical skills. The children are developing sound creative skills and many attain satisfactorily for their age, although learning is limited by too few opportunities to work with a wide range of media on a regular basis. Children's physical skills are sound and, by the age of five, are close to expectations for their age. The personal and social development of many of the children is mainly satisfactory but is not sufficiently reinforced in activities. Children with special educational needs are well supported in both their group and individual language and literacy activities.

65 Staff plan together and are beginning to adapt national guidance for children in the foundation stage. The induction of children into the nursery and reception classes works well and includes visits before they start school. There are no home visits. Staff have produced a useful written booklet to help parents prepare their children for school. There is no up to date policy to support the provision for children in the foundation stage and to provide a clear direction with regard to the organisation and development of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

66 The personal, social and emotional development of the children is sound and they enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. The inspection was in the autumn term and many nursery children had only been in school for a half a term. However, most children in the foundation stage are already well settled into the routines of their classrooms and relate well to the adults who teach them. The children are relaxed and happy and are secure in their class bases. They develop confidence in a range of individual, small group and whole class activities. Most children play and work well together and they are learning to co-operate and share. However, the small number of children in the nursery class makes it difficult for them to work and play in groups when separated from the reception class. The adults know the children and their families well and work hard to promote the children's self-esteem. Relationships are good and staff work well together to reinforce the children's social skills. The children are developing confidence but have too few opportunities to help to get out and return equipment. Many children are immature but are encouraged to take a full part in all activities at a level where they are confident.

Communications, language and literacy

67 Children in the foundation stage receive a sound start in their education for language and literacy. The staff rightly set a high priority on the development of early speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. They plan together to provide opportunities for children to practise their speaking and listening skills within all activities. The children listen carefully but speaking skills are poor. For example, they listened carefully as the teacher talked about Christmas and giving presents. When the teacher showed two parcels, one wrapped in colourful paper and one in newspaper, the children were reticent in giving their opinions on which they preferred. Most have very limited vocabulary and responded with simple one-word answers such as 'pretty' or 'lovely'. A substantial number of children do not pronounce words correctly and say 'pitee' for 'pretty' or 'noman' for 'snowman'. In the nursery some children rarely speak and others say 'me can paint' or 'wannit' when asking for something. Although adults persevere with questioning and provide opportunities for discussion the questions are not sufficiently open ended to extend the children's speaking skills and correct speech is not always reinforced.

68 The children listen carefully to stories and know many action rhymes by heart. They learn to listen to each other and to adults in structured games and activities but speaking and listening skills are not sufficiently reinforced for all children in the class when adults are working with a specific group. Role-play provides some opportunities to promote the development of language and social skills and children use experiences from outside of school to act out different situations. The role-play area was set up as a 'home corner' and children 'answer' telephones, play with dolls and use cooking utensils to 'cook food'. However, while role-play and free activities offer some opportunities for the extension of children's language skills, planning for these activities does not provided sufficient variety and interest to extend children's language to the fullest. The children have few resources such as clothes for dressing up or artefacts to promote acting out different experiences.

69 Many children enter school with limited experience of books. They make sound progress in learning their letter sounds and those in the reception class are beginning to use these to identify simple, commonly used words. The children in the reception class recognise their own names but this is not sufficiently reinforced through regular opportunities for all children to find and use name cards, for example at registration or 'snack' time. The children enjoy a wide range of stories and rhymes with adults and visitors. Many use pictures to make sense of the stories when sharing a book with their teacher and know that they start reading at the top of the page. However, early reading skills are well

below the standards expected of four year olds. Early writing skills are very poor; a few children write over the teacher's writing and others copy sentences they have dictated to their teacher. The sentences written by adults are not always carefully written in order to provide the children with models of how to write. Most children's writing includes individual, recognisable letters and a few form letters with increasing pencil control. They cannot yet write simple words and sentences unaided. For example, when 'writing' a letter to Father Christmas, no reception children could write their names or any recognisable words. While teaching is satisfactory and there is sound teaching of letter formation, there are too few opportunities for children to explore a variety of writing tools and mark-making activities in their independent play activities. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most of the children are likely to be well below the standards expected for their age in early reading and writing.

Mathematical development

70 Most children are working well below expectations for their age in the mathematical area of learning. Teaching is sound and the staff plan suitable activities for work in groups, the learning is not sufficiently well managed to ensure that children persevere with their tasks when they are working independently. Children learn to count and reception children count to 10 and are beginning to match objects to the written number. All children know many number rhymes and songs and join in enthusiastically. They gain some knowledge of capacity through practical experiences but there are too few opportunities to enable children to experiment for themselves with sand, water and a range of containers of different sizes. Children learn the properties of simple shapes through building models, making pictures with paper shapes and using jigsaws. They can name simple two-dimensional shapes such as square, triangle and circle. Few children form written numbers well but most know that the numbers relate to real objects.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71 The children have little knowledge and understanding of the world about them and have limited experience from out of school to support their learning. The staff plan a range of visits out of school to extend their learning and during the inspection the children visited Newcastle to look at Christmas decorations and to visit Father Christmas. The children were excited and remembered what they had seen and could identify colours and the Christmas tree. Children learn that some things change over time and work on a display reinforces the ways in which they have changed since they were babies. They observe the weather and take it in turns to complete a weather chart. Children learn about the wider world through stories and games. For example, nursery children decided to act as nurses and bandaged the nursery nurse, their 'patient'. However, much of their response was dictated and only at her direction did they 'phone' her home to say she must 'stay in hospital'. There are few practical experiences to underpin early scientific concepts.

72 The children are developing sound computer skills and operate simple programs with use of the mouse to practise counting and matching skills. They use the mouse and control cursors to move pictures on the screen. They use play-dough to make 'biscuits' and 'pancakes' and know what they are. Teaching is sound and children's learning is satisfactory but by Year 1 many children are unlikely to have sufficient knowledge of early science or the world about them to achieve standards expected for their age.

Creative development

73 Standards of attainment in creative development are below those expected for children of this age. Children are enthusiastic and keen to take part but there are too few opportunities for them to regularly choose art activities. They have limited experience of exploring colour and texture or using a

range of materials to create pictures, collages, prints and patterns. Painting is available on a daily basis and children have regular free access to paint, paper and collage materials. However, adults direct much of the creative work. For example, in a collage of fish the children had stuck coloured paper to templates cut out by staff. Other work shows that adults prepare and cut out templates and the children do not practise sufficiently their cutting skills. The children showed sound manipulative skills as they printed their own wrapping paper with the sponge shapes of Christmas trees, angels and Father Christmas. They knew the colours the teacher had prepared and used red for Father Christmas and green for printing the tree, as directed.

74 Children regularly experience musical activities; they memorise counting and action songs and learn to sing in tune. The staff demonstrate well the actions and movements and this encourages the children to join in. The children in the reception class play percussion instruments with enthusiasm and respond to signals to begin or stop playing. They show a sense of rhythm and know the names of most of the simple percussion instruments.

Physical development

75 The reception children develop confidence in the large space of the hall through opportunities in physical education lessons. Physical activities reinforce some aspects of the children's personal and social development and they learn to work with the teacher to set out mats. In a well-managed lesson they listened well to directions and responded quickly to signals to stop or change direction as they jogged, ran or marched around the hall. Most showed sound control as they bounced on the spot. They are developing satisfactory co-ordination and this was evident as they practised different rolls across a mat.

76 The children are developing sound hand/eye co-ordination and learn to handle tools and equipment safely. For example, they use their manipulative skills in practical situations to make models using construction kits or play dough. They show dexterity as they make pictures and collages. The children have coloured and pasted to make Christmas cards.

ENGLISH

77 Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 have gone down since the last inspection and are now below the national average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below the national average. Results in the 2000 national tests show that standards in reading and writing are below those of similar schools by the age of seven, but pupils achieve better results at the higher levels in reading when compared with similar schools. Standards in the tests at Key Stage 2 were very low when compared to all schools and those with a similar intake of pupils. Standards in writing are weak throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2. Handwriting and spelling skills are very weak. Test results have not shown an improving trend over the last four years, but the small number of pupils in each year group does mean that there is year-to-year variation. Also, 83 per cent of pupils who took the 2000 national tests were pupils with special educational needs, and this made an impact on the standards achieved. At age 11, boys and girls achieve similar standards.

78 When pupils enter the Year 1/2 class their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are well below average. They make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills and by the age of seven, the majority of pupils listen well to the teacher's instructions and give appropriate answers to questions. Most pupils speak audibly, but have a restricted vocabulary. They usually keep to the point in whole class discussions, but their vocabulary remains limited for their age, in spite of good teaching, which seeks to widen it by drawing their attention to interesting words as they arise during the Literacy Hour. Higher attaining pupils are more articulate and are keen to engage in discussions about their work. In Key Stage 2, teachers are effective in promoting clear speaking during whole class activities and whilst pupils do listen carefully to others, their vocabulary skills are

still below average. Many pupils use slang expressions and do not adapt their style of speech to more formal settings. Pupils in the mainstream support base make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. They are confident when talking to the teacher. They listen carefully to their teacher, respond to instructions and respect the views and opinions of others. Very good teaching in the base focuses on constantly developing, extending and correcting speech in a sensitive manner.

79 By the age of seven, standards in reading are below average, but pupils are achieving well. During shared reading activities, the teacher constantly checks that her pupils understand the text as she models enthusiastic and expressive reading of a story. This is a successful strategy and pupils join in enthusiastically. When reading independently, higher attaining pupils are able to express a preference for favourite stories, but these tend to be books read at school with the teacher. Pupils read with understanding, but are often quite hesitant, reading in a flat tone without expression. Pupils of average ability read with some understanding, but struggle with many words. All pupils, including those of below average ability and those who have special educational needs, have sound strategies for tackling unfamiliar words, but these are often not successful in ensuring pupils read fluently. Skilful and enthusiastic teaching of reading during the Literacy Hour is being successful in developing confidence in reading. The home-school reading record does make a successful link with home, with the majority of pupils keen to take their books home every evening. However, the school could do more to develop good reading habits. The school library is not well stocked or organised appropriately and is a dull, uninspiring place. Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not use the library, which means they do not begin to develop their library skills. The library is an under-used resource.

80 In Key Stage 2, standards in reading are low by the age of 11. However, skills being developed well in Key Stage 1 are now beginning to show benefits. For example, in Year 3/4, most pupils are beginning to understand how a non-fiction book is organised and that the contents page is arranged in alphabetical order. Teaching in the Year 3/4 class is good and the teacher uses effective strategies to develop pupils' interest in reading. Reading resources are carefully chosen to maintain the interest of both boys and girls. When reading independently, higher attaining Year 6 pupils are able to identify their favourite author and show good attitudes to their reading. Many pupils state that they enjoy reading. Whilst reading skills are now being taught well, pupils have not made satisfactory progress in the past because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result, although pupils are now confident when discussing reading, they read with hesitation and lack fluency. Even higher attaining pupils still point to individual words as they read and they make many errors of pronunciation, underlining below average vocabulary skills. Pupils of average ability read with some understanding, but reading lacks expression. Punctuation within the text is not correctly observed. Pupils of below average ability and those with special educational needs enjoy their reading and although their skills are weak, they like books and are happy to talk about their favourites. Teachers do work hard to develop sound reading skills in the classroom and provide interesting homework tasks and activities based on books. However, pupils do not use the school library regularly enough. Indeed, many pupils were not able to explain how the library is organised. This makes their skills at finding books to research classroom topics weaker than they should be. Many pupils also have books that are too hard for them. They choose books to go through a reading scheme, rather than reading a variety of books within a similar level until they develop confidence and competence.

81 Writing skills throughout the school are weak. Standards in handwriting are very weak, pupils come into Year 1 with limited pencil control and do not form letters well; by the age of seven, many pupils are not positioning their writing correctly on the line and many letters are incorrectly formed. Handwriting skills do not improve well enough as pupils move through the school and by the age of 11, many pupils still write in a very immature style, with a mixture of joined and printed letters. No specific joined style is evident and many letters are the incorrect size. There have been many changes of staff at Key Stage 2 and the school handwriting policy has not been used consistently throughout the school. The presentation of work varies; it is better for work on display than in the pupils' exercise

books. Spelling skills are weak, but some clear progress can now be seen in Key Stage 1 as sound spelling strategies are being taught with some success. This will take time to work its way through school however. Spelling skills in Year 6 are better in higher attaining pupils, who successfully spell 'diagonally', 'touching' and 'suspension'. However, the majority of pupils make many common errors that are more typical of much younger pupils; for example, they write 'ansers' for answers and 'discrabe' for describe. Punctuation skills at age seven are usually correct if being carefully monitored by the teacher, but when free writing, many inaccuracies and inconsistencies occur. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils use correctly a range of punctuation but most pupils have weak punctuation skills. When writing stories and reports, pupils in both key stages do not have the vocabulary to choose interesting words and phrases. In Key Stage 1, pupils are still learning to write sentences that are correctly constructed, with very few pupils who can produce a well-constructed piece of writing. This is despite the teacher's best efforts, which provides pupils with many opportunities and strategies to write for meaning. In Key Stage 2, previous poor provision in teaching basic skills means that new teachers now have a lot to catch up on. In Year 6, even higher attaining pupils struggle to write well. Story openings usually set the story well, but this quality is often not sustained. During story writing, punctuation, grammar and spelling often become erratic, as does handwriting. As a result, writing does not sustain the interest of the reader.

82 The quality of teaching is now good in most lessons. In Key Stage 1, teaching is consistently good. Basic skills of English are well taught and the Literacy Hour provides pupils with a good balance of activities. However, the teaching of handwriting has not been given a sufficiently high priority in the past years when there were many supply staff in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs have tasks and activities carefully matched to the targets in their individual education plans and they are well supported in class. In Key Stage 2, teaching is always satisfactory and often good. As a result, the skills being taught in Key Stage 1 are now being built upon in a progressive way, and the school is well placed to make clear improvements in standards if the present staffing remains the same. Staff work well together, plan their lessons carefully and thoroughly assess what pupils know, understand and can do. The work in books is marked carefully, but targets for improvement are often not specific enough to the individual pupil, and are often too long-term to be meaningful. All teachers manage pupils well and as a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and behave well. Relationships in classrooms are good. Teaching in the special needs support base is very good. Literacy skills are well taught and as a result, pupils make very good progress against the targets set for them. Standards in handwriting and spelling are often better than in the main school, as is the standard of overall presentation. This reflects the stability of staffing in this class and the high expectations the staff have in respect of the presentation of work.

83 The management of the English curriculum is satisfactory. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has yet to have a positive effect on standards, but this will take time. Pupils use their literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum and in particular, writing skills in history are being closely monitored. The school has identified skills in writing as being a priority and this is entirely appropriate. Targets set by the school for the 2001 national tests are optimistic, but may be achievable if present staffing remains the same. Skills in information technology to support the work in the English curriculum are not yet developed well enough throughout the school. Many opportunities are lost to enable pupils to draft, edit and write using the computer.

MATHEMATICS

84 In the most recent National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, standards matched the levels attained nationally and were well above those of similar schools. Pupils in the Year 1/2 class are now attaining standards commensurate with their age and are likely to attain above average levels in tests by the time they reach the end of Year 2, with substantial number likely to be well above average. The school has an increasing number of pupils attaining at the higher levels in Key Stage 1 and this

reflects the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy that provides a clear framework for teaching and learning and is improving pupils' confidence and competence in mental arithmetic and problem solving.

85 By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was very low in tests both in relation to the national picture and the attainment in similar schools. Pupils' learning has been disrupted over the past two years due to the many changes of teachers in Key Stage 2. Both teachers in this key stage have been newly appointed this term and are already having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school and this is improving their achievement. The very high numbers of pupils with special educational needs also affects standards in tests in some years. For example in the most recent tests, 83 per cent of the Year 6 pupils had learning difficulties. In some years the number of Year 6 pupils who are taught in the mainstream support unit in tests have remained very low over the past four years and are below the national trend. Standards are beginning to improve in current work in mathematics at Key Stage 2 but are still well below average for pupils in Year 6. The new teachers are building on the good progress made in Key Stage 1 and the sound implementation of the numeracy framework is ensuring that pupils are beginning to make gains in the mental arithmetic skills, basic rules of number work, and work on problem solving

86 By the age of seven, pupils have a good grounding in number skills. They add and subtract to 30 and higher attaining pupils work accurately with larger numbers and add on in 10s to find missing numbers in the sequence 87-?-107 and find the difference between 60 and 74. Pupils know odd and even numbers and recognise patterns in times tables. The good teaching ensures that pupils have many opportunities to carry out their own investigations and their learning is based on well-planned practical activities. They learn to estimate length and then measure accurately in centimetres to check their estimates. They have a satisfactory grasp of basic units of measurement. In a well taught lesson on time, the work interested the pupils because the examples reflected the important times in their own day. They worked with cardboard clocks to show breakfast, lunchtime, bedtime etc. The teacher's effective questioning enabled her to find out what pupils already knew and the tasks were well matched to the needs of the different abilities in the class. By the end of the lesson the pupils had a sound grasp of the hour and half hour and could read and write these times. Most pupils have a good knowledge of shape and space, recognising and naming three-dimensional shapes.

87 By the age of 11, pupils' use and application of basic mathematical skills to solve problems is unsatisfactory. Many pupils have gaps in their learning of basic mathematical skills due to the disrupted teaching in the past. Teachers now plan for this in lessons; pupils develop sound skills in using their previous knowledge. For example, in a well-taught Year 3/4 lesson, pupils used their number skills in the mental arithmetic session at the start of a lesson on fractions and accurately halved numbers such as 260 and 520 and could halve a number and then halve it again. The Year 3 pupils had a secure grasp of ½ and ¼ and the relationship between them and could find ½ of 16, or ¼ of 20. They responded well to the effective and clear instructions of their teacher and made good gains in their learning by the end of the lesson.

88 By the end of Year 6, most pupils have sound basic computation skills using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They can add decimals to two places. Many pupils have a sound grasp of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Whilst higher attaining pupils have a secure knowledge of multiplication tables, that of average and lower attaining pupils is inadequate. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge when working with shape, space and measures. They measure to work out the perimeters of squares, oblongs and triangles and identify and name different types of triangle such as isosceles and equilateral. They can construct and interpret simple graphs and tables. In current work their teacher makes good use of oral sessions to reinforce pupils' recall of number facts and to practise doubling and halving numbers and then applying this to measures in millimetres and centimetres. The pupils' learning was enhanced by the teacher's strategy

of asking different pupils to explain to the class their strategies for working out the answer. However, their estimates of one metre were often inaccurate and pupils trying to solve word problems had difficulty in deciding how to share 4.80 metres between four people. Many of the pupils had difficulty in cutting lengths of string to size or in measuring different lengths in metres and centimetres. The learning was limited because the pupils have had little experience of conducting their own investigations and, despite the teacher's careful planning, were often at a loss about how to complete quite simple tasks without help.

89 The rate and quality of pupils' learning is good in lessons and over time at Key Stage 1. It is sometimes good in lessons but has been very slow over time at Key Stage 2. Pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress in Key Stage 2 with the current greater challenge and a clearer emphasis on using and applying basic mathematical skills. At both key stages, pupils have some opportunities to develop and practise their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in science older pupils make sound use of measuring skills and they record information in graphical form, for example Year 5/6 pupils made graphs to show the speed at which seeds germinated. In their geography work in the Year 3/4 class, pupils created a table of different ways of getting to school but did not develop this beyond identifying the most/least popular methods.

90 Pupils display positive attitudes towards mathematics. They concentrate well and persevere with their tasks; this reflects the substantial amount of good teaching at both key stages. Most pupils show respect for their teachers, other pupils and resources. They are mainly supportive of each other, sharing ideas and taking turns if involved in group activities. Lessons are well planned and effectively organised, with teachers identifying very clearly what it is they want the pupils to learn. The teaching demonstrates secure subject knowledge which is often reflected in the good quality of questioning to assess the pupils' level of understanding, consolidate their learning and extend their thinking. In all classes, emphasis is placed on matching work to pupils' levels of ability. This is generally effective with the exception of some higher attaining pupils who are not always given sufficiently challenging work. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for through the provision of suitably matched work and the good levels of support; they often make good progress as a result. In the best lessons, the pupils are made aware of the aims for the session, there is a strong emphasis on the use and application of basic mathematics, the work is very well matched to the needs of all pupils and offers good levels of challenge. Although computers are available in the computer suite and in classrooms, insufficient attention is given to how work in mathematics can be used to extend pupils' ICT capability.

91 The leadership and management of mathematics have recently been taken over by a newly appointed teacher. He has a sound grasp of what is needed and is working with staff on strategies to improve standards. The co-ordinator has observed work in other classes to ensure that the National Numeracy Strategy is successfully implemented. There has been significant development in curriculum planning, supported by the National Numeracy Strategy. This has given a clear structure for teachers to plan lessons that build upon pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. Assessment procedures are good; pupils' progress is monitored through a series of informal and formal tests during the year. The detailed analysis of national test answers is beginning to influence curriculum planning as teachers identify areas of weakness and set targets for individuals but these are not yet specific enough for many pupils and the checks on their progress are not yet having sufficient impact on their achievement.

SCIENCE

92 Standards in science are below average for pupils at the age of seven and well below the levels expected at the age of 11. The most recent national test results showed attainment to be well below average, nationally and when compared to similar schools. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is often better than these results indicate, especially at Key Stage 2. Many pupils have a

better understanding of the scientific concepts than their limited command of English allows them to put into reading questions and writing answers. The teaching has improved at Key Stage 2 recently and this is beginning to affect work in the classroom and raise standards. It will take longer to impact fully through the key stage and improve significantly what pupils at the age of 11 know and understand. Pupils' standards are restricted by the careless presentation of their written work. Currently, work is poorly presented in all age groups. Pupils in Key Stage 2 also have too few opportunities to plan and conduct their own independent experiments and investigations and this impacts on their understanding of concepts. This reflects the many changes of staff in the top years of Key Stage 2 over the past two years; this has limited pupils' learning and achievement. The newly appointed teachers in Key Stage 2 are working hard to reinforce gaps in pupils' learning in order to improve their learning.

93 There was good teaching in Year 1/2 that excited and motivated the pupils. In a good lesson the teacher gave each group of pupils a shoebox and created a sense of anticipation as pupils wondered what could be in them. Pupils did not easily grasp the point that as they allowed more light into the box they could see the contents more clearly. They thought initially that they had answered the main question when they could see what was in the box. Pupils are, however, making good progress over time; they learn well through practical work and pupils are competent in investigating and finding out. The Key Stage 1 teacher marks work carefully with positive and challenging comments. Standards are rising to provide a better base on which to build learning at Key Stage 2.

94 Teachers in Key Stage 2 seek to maintain the enjoyment of finding out exciting things that characterises work in the Key Stage 1. They harness pupils' interest to help them concentrate and learn. Tasks are good and at a suitable level for pupils present understanding. Pupils know what makes a test fair and make careful observations. Year 3/4 pupils leaned forward eagerly to observe what happened when sugar and water mixed and then tackled their own experiments with similar enthusiasm. Behaviour was good because pupils were fully engaged on their tasks. They used equipment carefully and were safety conscious with the glass tumblers they used. Group captains were proud of the extra responsibility with which they were charged in this respect. Small classes at both key stages help class management but teachers' good level of preparation and organisation are mainly responsible.

95 Year 5/6 pupils showed interest in their lesson about bread losing moisture as it becomes stale. The teacher reinforced the principle of the need for a fair test and this was clearly understood. There was a clear disparity between pupils' knowledge and understanding, which were just below average and their subsequent written work. This was well below the level for pupils in this age group. Pupils cover the work identified in the National Curriculum programmes but their work is at too low a level for them to achieve well in tests. It is immature both in the writing and in the drawing and labelling of diagrams. The more able pupils particularly could improve their work considerably with better English skills and more attention to presentation.

96 Teachers assess work both formally through marking and the collection of examples of work, and informally in lessons. They know what pupils understand. Some marking is clearly intended for later reference by teachers to help future planning. This helps them to plan suitable tasks based on what pupils can do. The school generates a great deal of documentation from the analysis of test results and other assessment information. This is used to set targets for groups and individuals. However, these are mainly broad targets for the term and are rarely sufficiently specific to impact on achievement.

ART AND DESIGN

97 During the week of the inspection, no teaching of art and design was seen, so judgements have been made by looking at pupils' work displayed throughout the school and from discussions with staff and pupils. No judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. Standards of work are the same as

those found in the last inspection. By the end of both key stages the pupils reach levels similar to those normally seen for their age group. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs, both within the main school, and within the support base for those pupils with statements of special need, make good progress against their individual targets.

98 By the age of seven, pupils develop skills in drawing and painting portraits of their friends and they attempt self-portraits. They look at the work of famous portrait artists, for example, Rembrandt, when practising their skills. Pastels are used to create bonfire and firework pictures to represent how light is reflected on dark surfaces. This theme is explored further as teachers provide opportunities to make Diwali lamps using clay, or to use paint and collage to make pictures of candles to represent the coming of light at Christmas. By the age of 11, pupils look at the work of famous artists in quite thoughtful ways. They develop their literacy skills by writing perceptive comments as they interpret modern works of art, particularly 'The Unadilla Diner' by Ralph Goings and Peter Blake's 'Self Portrait with Badges'. Drawings are carefully executed. A strength of the art and design curriculum is the way in which teachers plan to use many other subject areas to offer pupils further experiences in art and design, for example in their science, religious education, history and music studies. However, there are weaknesses in the specific skills and techniques required within colour mixing, textile and three-dimensional work. These aspects of the art and design curriculum are not developed well enough throughout the school. The school does not plan enough opportunities for pupils to find out about the art of other cultures and as a result, many opportunities to enrich the art and design curriculum are lost.

99 The use of sketchbooks is rare. Pupils use them as a scrapbook or notebook, rather than a record of their developing skills and techniques. They are not used effectively to help pupils learn to develop, refine and extend their work. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a structured way, but opportunities to explore the techniques of printing, modelling with clay and working with textiles are not developed well enough. This is mainly because teachers do not have the resources available to develop these aspects of the curriculum. Resources for the art and design curriculum are uninspiring and are unsatisfactory overall.

100 The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. He has only recently been appointed and as a result, he has not yet had the opportunity to influence work in the art and design curriculum. He has, however, already identified aspects within the curriculum, which will be developed, for example to develop portfolios of pupils' work and to present pupils with examples of the work representative of other cultures and genders.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101 Very few lessons could be observed in design and technology. Pupils' books of designs and the little work on display together with discussions with pupils and teachers form the basis for judgements. The sound standards in design and technology have not been sustained since the time of the last inspection and standards are below average for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. However, pupils' practical skills are often ahead of their ability to design and draw. Many pupils in the Year 6 group, for example, showed considerable practical skill in making three-dimensional shapes. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand some design principles; they find ways of achieving strength in simple paper constructions for example. They know that paper rolled around a piece of doweling will be more even and therefore less likely to have weak spots.

102 Display in the Year 1/2 classroom showed pupils' lively work on food technology. Little teaching was seen but in a Year 6 lesson, explanations were crisp and clear enabling pupils to become quickly involved in practical work. This helps behaviour and in turn pupils' concentration and level of working. It also means that pupils enjoy the work because they enjoy successful practical activities.

In another group in the same class, work was less successful because pupils did not co-operate so well. Although pupils enjoy design and technology they do not present their written work well. Almost all the books of design showed poor presentation; rulers were not used where they would have helped, for example, and labelling was untidily done. Teachers sometimes draw attention to this in their marking but not always and only rarely to noticeable effect. Some quite good designs look less competent because of the way pupils have presented them.

103 Teachers mark design work fully and helpfully ask some challenging questions. For example 'Why does this work well?' or, 'Why is this one the most successful design?'. At the end of some lessons teachers and pupils discuss difficulties encountered. Pupils' books, however, show that they rarely use this advice and revisit designs and improve them after working on the model. This limits opportunities to make more rapid progress and to achieve a higher standard of work.

104 Design and technology work is based on the most recent national guidance and the school has a satisfactory scheme of work. The school does not give sufficient time to the subject to ensure that pupils experience fully the benefits of both designing and making.

105 Pupils' books of designs go with them through the school. This gives some idea of what each pupil has done and how successful he or she has been in the work. It does not form a satisfactory system of assessment however because for many pupils it is not complete. Similarly, teachers do not always follow the school's system of photographing two pieces of completed work for each pupil every year for inclusion in their portfolios. The co-ordinator has identified as a priority the development of more secure systems for assessing designs and, especially, finished products.

106 Accommodation for design and technology is very good with separate rooms for practical work at both key stages but more resources and equipment are needed. Year 5/6 pupils were firm in their view that they needed more resources. They thought that their shelters could have been better if they had been able to work with a wider range of materials. They also thought that having to share equipment slowed their work and this was certainly a factor in the Year 6 lesson seen.

GEOGRAPHY

107 Pupils' attainment in geography at the ages of seven and 11 is below the expected levels for their age. However, this often reflects the pupils' lack of writing skills. Their understanding of the geography is only marginally below what is expected of pupils in their respective age groups but work in books is of a lower standard. Year 5/6 pupils have begun to grasp the idea of collecting data but cannot set down adequately what they have found out. A long piece of writing in Year 6, for example, lost its thread as the writer struggled to write about her discoveries. Pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to conduct their own investigations.

108 Pupils understand that different places have their own characteristics and know many of the ways in which the English Lake District is different from their own environment. They know that many people will be doing jobs that are special to the area, such as helping tourists. Year 3/4 pupils have a good grasp of some of the basic changes that will take place when a great many new houses are built in their area. Again, pupils' written work is less good than their ideas in discussion but three Year 4 girls in this class wrote well in sentences about these changes. There was little evidence of pupils using maps but those Year 6 pupils taking part in the residential visit last year had experience of orienteering and of using plans. However, their work was below the expected level for 10 and 11 year old pupils.

109 Geography is now well taught at both key stages although this good teaching has not yet impacted sufficiently to raise standards of work, especially at Key Stage 2, where both teachers are

new this term and follow two years of disrupted staffing. The tasks set in both key stages are based on recent national guidance and pupils are learning geographical study skills although these are at an elementary level for the age groups. In mixed age classes, where there are two year groups, teachers plan work to suit pupils' ability rather than age. This works well and allows the more able pupils in both year groups to forge ahead with tasks that excite them and pupils with lesser skills to do work with which they can cope. Pupils do not present their work well however and teachers at both key stages are trying to encourage pupils to use skills taught in literacy lesson to improve work in geography. At present pupils' poor reading and writing skills restrict their attainment in geography.

110 Teachers prepare and organise lessons well and so create a background against which pupils can work and understand what they are doing. Teachers manage pupils and pace lessons well; this also contributes to pupils' learning by making a calm atmosphere in the classroom and helping them to concentrate on their work. The good attitudes and behaviour observed in the lessons seen owe much to these good teaching skills and this encourages pupils' enthusiasm for their work.

HISTORY

111 Only two history lessons were seen during the inspection, one in Key Stage 1 and one in the base for pupils with special educational needs. Judgements have therefore been made after looking at the work in pupil's books and talking to staff and pupils. As only two lessons were seen, no secure judgement on the quality of teaching can be made, but in both the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good and pupils were making good progress in their learning. Standards are the same as those found at the last inspection; by the end of both key stages the pupils reach levels similar to those normally seen for their age. As identified in the last inspection, pupils' low attainment in writing skills, particularly in Key Stage 2, restricts the quantity and quality of completed work in pupils' exercise books. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to conduct their own independant research to support their learning. The school is working to respond to this issue however, by now providing pupils with skills to develop their writing techniques. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning over time in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs, both within the main school and within the mainstream support base, make good progress against the targets set for them.

112 By the age of seven, pupils develop a sense of chronology as they learn about the Great Fire of London. Pupils know that the fire occurred in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane a long time ago. They know that the fire spread quickly because of a very high wind and the fact that many homes were made of wood. Their factual knowledge is developed well because the teacher uses many effective strategies to enable them to know the difference between fact and opinion. For example, the teacher uses resources such as extracts from the diary of Samuel Pepys and photographs of paintings drawn by eyewitnesses. In discussions, pupils know that someone actually saw the event and they compare this with how such accounts are used in courts of law today. This work is successful and pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of events in the past because the teacher has a clear grasp of the subject and her enthusiasm transmits itself to her pupils. Skills of how to use contemporary accounts to gain information, and how to write in the style of a diary, are taught well.

113 No teaching of history was seen in Key Stage 2, but an examination of pupils' books indicates that they receive a suitably broad curriculum. Teachers use the local and wider community effectively to develop pupils' first hand learning experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 visited the Greek Museum in Newcastle University to look at how artefacts can be used to interpret past events. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class further develop their knowledge of Anglo Saxon life by taking part in a workshop led by an 'Anglo Saxon' visitor to school. However, whilst pupils have experience of using artefacts, they do not develop their research skills well enough by regularly using the school library or ICT. The school library is not well enough stocked or organised to enable pupils to develop independent research

skills. Pupils' writing skills are weak, particularly in their ability to take notes from a variety of sources, and then write a report or account from a particular viewpoint, although there are some examples of pupils writing about a Greek soldier as he prepares for a naval battle. However, too many pupils copy-write large amounts of text and show little ability to sift through evidence.

114 The subject is satisfactorily led. A planned programme of class observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work in books has resulted in a focus on developing pupils' writing skills, particularly in Key Stage 2 and this is entirely appropriate. However, the curriculum time devoted to history has been cut and as a result, there is sometimes a lack of focus on the development of pure historical skills, particularly in analysis and research skills in Key Stage 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115 There have been significant improvements in the provision for information and communication technology since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils in both key stages make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The pupils' learning has improved due to the relatively recent investment in new computers and software, the development of a structured curriculum and increased teacher knowledge and confidence. The previous report found standards to be at the levels expected nationally. This is still so at Key Stage 1 where pupils' standards broadly match those expected of seven year olds. However, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 11 are below the national expectation, this is essentially because of gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of the previous limited access to computers.

116 The new computer suite has given pupils greater opportunities to develop skills through structured teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). The school is still in the early stages of developing this method but already standards are improving.

117 In Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of different forms of information storage and ways in which information and communication technology can be used. They can open up programs and they are developing skills in locating letters on the keyboard and use the enter/return keys. Many are developing sound typing skills and many are able to alter colours and font sizes. Their learning is rapid due to the effective teaching. The teacher's planning is very good and work is linked well to supporting learning in other subjects. For example, pupils worked very well with the 'Creative Writing' program and practised spellings learned in class in their literacy lessons. The teacher's effective questioning and clear demonstration meant that pupils gained confidence in their use of the screen displays and keyboard to move and alter text to communicate information. They use the space bar correctly and use capital letters when needed. Many pupils are aware of how to create pictures or use simple graph programs to support their work in science and mathematics. With help, pupils are able to close down the computer.

118 Where pupils have had the benefit of being taught specific skills, they build effectively on their previous attainment. By Year 6, for example, pupils change the size and style of the font when word processing and make effective use of the mouse functions to move objects and menus around the screen. Most pupils are able to maximise and minimize screens and open and close programs. They display satisfactory skills in many aspects of word processing. For example, they confidently change the font size, style and colour, and they know how to carry out a spell check. They are beginning to understand how to select and add pictures to their work from an encyclopaedia on CD-ROM but they have not had sufficient opportunities in the past to search clip art files and import images to their writing. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of data handling and spreadsheet work. In a well-resourced lesson pupils were able to recall previous work on spreadsheets through the sample spreadsheets made by their teacher. These were related to the results of well-known football

teams and interested the pupils who were able to use the spreadsheet to find information about goals scored for and against different teams.

119 The pupils then began to build their own spreadsheet using similar data. The teacher's good subject knowledge enabled him to help pupils to understand the headings and to lead pupils in building the spreadsheet by changing column sizes. By the end of the session all pupils could open the Excel program and enter information in the correct columns. However, only a few pupils locate letters on the keyboard and type quickly and so the pace of their work is slow. Pupils have satisfactory understanding of how ICT can be used to control devices. For example, they control the movements of an on screen character by giving a sequence of instructions, and they know that computers can be programmed to control a floor robot. However, they have had no opportunities to use sensing equipment to monitor experiments in science and have little expertise in using simulations to solve problems. Most pupils are familiar with the procedures for opening and closing programs, saving and printing work. Pupils use CD-ROM to support their learning in other subjects of the curriculum such as history and geography.

120 In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good at both key stages. Lessons are carefully planned with teachers identifying what new knowledge, skills and understanding pupils are expected to acquire during the lesson. This gives a clear focus to lessons and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The new computer suite gives good opportunities for pupils to learn new skills within a group and more pupils can have direct, hands-on experience. The organisation of mixed age classes to work in single year groups in the ICT suite results in more effective use of the ICT resources and improves pupils' learning opportunities. Staff in the mainstream support unit use ICT well to support pupils' learning; pupils use programs to reinforce basic skills in mathematics and English and to support topic work.

121 Pupils have positive attitudes towards ICT. They are keen to talk about their work with computers and they are enthusiastic in their discussions about what they have done. Only a few pupils have relevant experience of computers at home to support work in school. Behaviour is good and pupils are always ready to help each other. They work well in pairs and wait sensibly for their turn.

122 The subject is soundly led and managed by the new co-ordinator; there has been significant development in curriculum planning for ICT with carefully thought out purchases of computers and software and an increase in teachers' knowledge. This has had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. There is still some way to go with regard to gaps in pupils' experiences but these are being resolved over time. The co-ordinator has little opportunity to formally check on, or influence, the development of the subject throughout the school.

MUSIC

123 It was possible to see only a small number of music lessons and judgements rest on these together with discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of teachers' planning. Standards of musical skills and understanding are below the expected levels for pupils by the end of each key stage. Pupils sang in assembly, however, and the sound from a small gathering was pleasing and reasonably in tune. In this, pupils are making music at a satisfactory level for their age.

124 Year 5/6 pupils have an elementary understanding of texture in music. Although the work seen was low in standard for the age group, it represented good learning in real music making. Pupils gained some insight into the skill of showing moods in music by using different textures as well as loud and soft or fast and slow sounds. The teacher used his own musical skills well; his knowledge of what would work well, and of what the pupils could use, resulted in effective learning in the lesson. Some

groups also successfully used the technique of adding instrument gradually to build a piece of descriptive music.

125 Pupils enjoy music making. In the discussion with Year 5 and 6 pupils they showed immediate enthusiasm when asked to talk about music. Their knowledge of what they have done in music lessons however, is disappointing. For example, they recollected only a small number of hymns and songs that had been learned for assembly and could not recall any other singing. They could not talk about music that they have listened to although they clearly enjoy the opportunity to listen to music during wet playtimes. There is no evidence that pupils have listened to music from other cultures and the school misses opportunities to reinforce multicultural education.

126 Violin and viola lessons are available for pupils who wish to learn. There is no charge and the school uses these opportunities to enhance the experiences of those pupils showing aptitude for music. In class lessons however, the most able pupils are capable of working at higher levels in music. The school has not progressed in its music making since the time of the last report but a new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is already developing her ideas for raising standards and involving pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127 During the inspection it was only possible to observe lessons in dance and games skills. Discussions with staff and pupils, plus the examination of documents and teachers' records demonstrate that the physical education curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the areas of physical education are taught according to the season. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain standards that match the levels expected for their age. These are similar to those identified in the last inspection. The school provides an extra-curricular football club that is well-attended and older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit where they enjoy outdoor activities. Key Stage 2 pupils learn to swim at the local leisure pool and activities are well planned and build progressively each week. By the time pupils transfer to secondary education most can swim a recognised stroke for 25 metres and many swim well beyond these National Curriculum requirements.

128 Most pupils in the Key Stage 1 class showed sound control as they practised dance movements and then worked well with a partner to link the movements in a sequence. The teacher's clear directions ensured that pupils were aware of what they had to do. She provided good opportunities for pupils to watch each other's dance movements and to then improve their own performance. These Year 1/2 pupils were developing satisfactory co-ordination as they found different ways of moving around the hall. They listened carefully to instructions and responded imaginatively to opportunities to plan together. The pupils moved in a variety of ways to interpret their ideas and could hold a balanced position. The good teaching in the Year 3/4 class enabled pupils to achieve well as they practised their games skills. During the session they refined their ball skills as they bounced a ball with each hand and then bounced the ball to a partner. The teacher intervened well to enable the pupils to improve their co-ordination in order to catch the ball. They demonstrated good hand/eye co-ordination as the teacher quickened the pace of the lessons. Pupils refined their aiming skills and could direct the ball to bounce into a hoop and then on to their partner. They then applied the skills they had learned to a team game. This reinforced well their understanding of why skills need to be practised before a formal game. The pupils from the mainstream support unit were integrated well into the lesson and took a full part in all activities. They were well accompanied by their classroom support assistant who worked well with the Year 3/4 teacher to ensure that they were able to work at their own level. They worked well with other pupils and achieved well in the lesson.

129 Pupils understand the need to warm up muscles and move quickly into well-taught routines. Staff plan brisk warm-up sessions and ensure that safety points are well made. The pupils are well managed; they enjoy physical education and behave well.

130 The teachers have sound subject expertise time and resources are used well. Lessons are planned carefully and take account of the published guidance adopted by the school. Staff ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Pupils are encouraged to plan and work together in group activities and to learn from the examples of others. The pupils show a clear understanding if what is expected and most respond well.

131 The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject. She works with colleagues and outside agencies to develop the range of activities available. The school has good links with the Gateshead Athletics Stadium and older pupils have opportunities to attend training sessions there each week. Visiting specialists come into school to teach athletics skills and pupils can practise these skills at the Stadium. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to observe work in other classes or to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory although the climbing frames are heavy and not suited to the younger pupils and there is only a limited range of music for dance.