

INSPECTION REPORT

THORNEY CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108828

Headteacher: Mrs J. Bell

Reporting inspector: Mr. Derek Nightingale
Rgl's OFSTED Inspector No: 18911

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th November 2000

Inspection number: 224539

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Juniors

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Torquay Road
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Tyne and Wear

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Appropriate authority: governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Short

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D. Nightingale Inspector No. 18911	Registered inspector	information and communication technology	what sort of school is it?
		special educational needs	what should the school do to improve further?
			the school's results and pupils' achievements
			how well are pupils taught?
			how well is the school led and managed?
Mrs B. Moore Inspector No. 9306	Lay inspector	none	how well does the school care for it's pupils?
			how well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr. J. Taylor Inspector No. 11848	Team inspector	mathematics	how good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		physical education	
Mrs. R. Whinn-Sladden Inspector No. 17445	Team inspector	English	pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		art	
		English as an additional language	
Mr P. Nettleship Inspector No. 23887	Team inspector	equal opportunities	
		science	
		design and technology	
		history	
		music	
Mrs. D. Bluett Inspector No. 1673	Team inspector	areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		religious education	
		geography	
Mr. R. Thompson Inspector No. 10781	Team inspector	hearing impaired unit	

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The Registrar

Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a primary school of above average size for children aged 3 to 11 years. There are 314 pupils on roll with a similar number of boys and girls. Information from the statistics available indicates that when children enter the school their overall attainments are well below those expected of children of their age. There are 63 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals; this is well above the national average. There are 80 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is broadly in line with schools nationally, although the 6.3 per cent of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above average. Most of these children receive support from the hearing impaired unit. The number of pupils from ethnic groups is low and a very small percentage has English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which is successful in raising standards of pupils' attainments. Pupils achieve very well when compared with similar schools. Children have very positive attitudes towards school, which is reflected in the improvement in standards over the past few years so that they are at least as good as they should be and often better by the time they leave the school. Behaviour is usually good. Pupils benefit from good teaching and a curriculum that is well planned to make sure they learn skills and knowledge systematically. The overall leadership and management of the school are good, reflecting the very good leadership of the headteacher. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the time they leave the school children achieve very well in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics and science and make very good progress.
- Provides a caring, supportive and good climate for learning from when pupils enter the nursery and throughout school, where all children are valued and helped to achieve their best
- The headteacher provides very good leadership in all aspects of the school's work.
- Relationships within school, both between adults and children and among children themselves are very good.
- Pupils with hearing and visual impairment are very well integrated into the daily life of the school.
- The school makes very good provision for moral and social development and this is reflected in the way pupils confidently accept a wide range of responsibilities, including the organisation and planning of investigations, and in their very positive attitudes towards their work.

What could be improved

- Standards in pupils' writing by providing more opportunities to write at length.
- Standards in information and communication technology need to be raised to at least the levels expected nationally.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1996 progress has been good in improving standards, as shown by the significant improvement in national test scores at both key stages but particularly at Key Stage 2. In most other subjects standards are close to national expectations. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and expectations of pupils' attainments throughout the school are much higher. Individual education plans (IEP) are now better written with targets that are more relevant to children's learning needs. Schemes of work have been introduced for all subjects, although the scheme for information and communication technology (ICT) has yet to be fully implemented. Requirements for reporting this subject to parents separately are now met. The level and quality of resources have improved and for some subjects there is now good provision. The roles of members of the senior management team have been appropriately reconsidered, to provide an effective leadership team.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	B	D	A
Mathematics	B	A	B	A
Science	B	A	A	A

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

Test results show that standards have been improving since the last inspection, often better than the national average at Key Stage 2. The most recent results for the current year confirm this improvement. In the tests in 2000 pupils attained standards that were well above the national average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools standards were very high in these subjects, showing that pupils achieve very well considering their overall attainments when they started school. Although there have been improvements in English so that standards are much closer to the national average they are still not in line with the average performance nationally. When compared with similar schools pupils' perform very well in English. Inspection evidence supports the improving trends in all subjects. Pupils enter school with poor skills in language and literacy and the school works hard to overcome these difficulties. By the time pupils leave the school they are developing good skills in speaking and listening, the standard of their reading is sound but the quality of their writing is not at the standard expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested in their work and take an active part in most tasks. They take a pride in their successes and those of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are tolerant and self-disciplined. They behave well in and out of the classroom.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils willingly take responsibility for organising their own work. They readily accept responsibilities for helping around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory and improving in previous years.

Pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and enthusiasm for their work help them to make good progress and achieve well. Relationships between adults and children are good. Children support pupils with hearing and visual impairment effectively and unobtrusively.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching of English at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at Key Stage 2 is very good. The teaching of English and science at Key Stage 2 and mathematics at Key Stage 1 is good. Very good relationships between children and their teachers create a good atmosphere where pupils want to learn. Well-managed discussions help pupils to clarify their thinking and improve their understanding. These discussions are a feature of many of the most successful lessons. Lessons are very well planned to make sure pupils learn new skills and ideas systematically. Teachers explain work well to pupils and give them a clear idea what it is they are expected to learn. As a result most pupils work independently, showing a high level of interest in their work.

In 64 per cent of lessons seen teaching was good or better; in 23 per cent of lessons it was very good. In one lesson it was excellent. In two per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Pupils' learning overall is good and leads to the very good progress most pupils make by the time they leave the school. They work with interest and enthusiasm and acquire appropriate levels of knowledge, understanding and skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is well planned to ensure that pupils are taught a range of worthwhile opportunities. Good development of citizenship awareness through the School Council
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Targets in individual education plans are clear and help teachers to provide appropriate work. The unit for hearing impaired children provides a good level of support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils are suitably integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Very good moral education teaches appropriate values and helps pupils develop pride and confidence in themselves. From an early age pupils are encouraged to discuss, negotiate and solve problems and given many opportunities to share and co-operate. Social skills are developed well, as they are given many opportunities to accept responsibilities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Assessment and its use in providing suitable work for children are good. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. Teachers have a firm knowledge of their pupils which helps them give very good personal development and guidance to all pupils.

The school has been successful in establishing an ethos where every member of the school community is valued. Parents are well informed about activities and their children's progress and are given encouragement to help with children's education. The curriculum is well planned to make sure that the pupils have a good range of experiences in most subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Weaknesses in ICT have now been addressed and an appropriate programme of work is being implemented. Children under six have work that is well planned to meet national guidelines. Policies and procedures for the care and well being of pupils are good and implemented effectively. Simple and well-understood rules are supported by a good range of rewards to help produce good behaviour. Pupils with hearing and visual impairment are an integral part of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership by the headteacher provides clear and purposeful direction to the school. Subject co-ordinators provide good leadership to their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school well and ensure that most of its statutory responsibilities are met. The chair of governors gives the governing body good, clear leadership. Individual governors fulfil their roles well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The recent monitoring programme was effective in identifying issues for improvement but not all co-ordinators see samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning in their subjects often enough.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of staffing, accommodation and resources to support pupils' learning. Financial planning is good.

There is an appropriate level of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. Accommodation is good and the school tries, successfully, to make it an attractive place to learn. The overall level of resources to help pupils' learning is satisfactory.

The headteacher is clear about what the school should achieve and how this can be done. Teachers with subject responsibilities give effective leadership. There is a supportive governing body which has a sound awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school strives to apply the principles of best value in its day-to-day work and in its evaluation of the impact of its expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • Their children are making good progress; • They feel well informed about how their children are getting on; • They feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems; • They feel the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best; • They feel the school is well led and managed; • They feel the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents raised no concerns.

Inspection evidence supports the positive views that parents hold of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children's attainments on entry to school are below those expected. They start school with skills in language and literacy that are much less well developed than would be expected. Inspection evidence shows that they make good progress by the end of the Reception year and achieve the expected levels in the nationally agreed early learning goals of mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Although progress in the area of communication, language and literacy is good, children do not reach the standard expected of their age. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is also good and this gives children good attitudes and working habits to help them make progress when they begin the National Curriculum.
2. In communication, language and literacy children develop good skills in speaking and listening. They speak clearly and enjoy using new words in their play. They listen carefully to stories and answer relevant questions confidently. Most children know sounds of single letters and many are beginning to learn more complex sounds. Few children are able to read many familiar words. Most children form letters correctly and some are able to write their name independently. Through a wide variety of activities children begin to understand about numbers and most count to ten although many are less confident in counting backwards. They know the names of shapes such as circle and square and talk confidently about sizes such as describing big, bigger and biggest when playing a game based on the story of Goldilocks. Children improve their knowledge and understanding of the world through observations, activities and discussions. The local area is used well to help children understand about changing seasons. They achieve appropriate standards in physical development when using large toys or moving around large spaces such as the hall. Their control over smaller tools is also at an appropriate level. In creative development children achieve the expected standards. They sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They paint, draw, colour, stick and cut with appropriate levels of skill.
3. National Curriculum tests results in 1999 for pupils at the end of **Key Stage 1** showed pupils' performance in **reading** to be very low and in **writing** to be well below the national average. The results of this cohort were not typical of the steady rise in standards that had been seen over the previous three years. The latest results in 2000, although well below the national average, confirm the overall trend of continued improvement. Given the low standards when most pupils start school, the results, particularly when compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, show that pupils make good progress. When the latest results are compared with similar schools they showed that pupils' performance was well above the average achieved by these schools in both reading and writing. By successfully analysing the test results the school has identified areas for improvement, particularly in raising the attainments of boys. Results show that boys do not achieve as well as girls in reading and writing. The school is implementing strategies to address this issue. In **mathematics** the test results in 1999 were very low, reflecting the particular problems of that cohort, but in 2000, pupils' average level of performance was just below the national average. The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level was similar to the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was well above average. Despite the poor results in 1999 the overall trend in the levels of pupils' attainment has steadily risen at least as well as the national rise, and in some years better than that. Inspection evidence confirms the school's steady improvement, particularly in mathematics.
4. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of **Key Stage 2**, they have made good progress and achieve well considering their levels of attainment when they started

school. Results in national tests for **mathematics** and **science** have shown significant improvement over the past four years at a rate better than that achieved nationally. The results in 1999 showed pupils' performance to be above average in **mathematics** and well above average in **science**. The most recent test results in 2000 confirm this high level of achievement, with pupils' performance in both mathematics and science being well above the national average. When compared with similar schools pupils' attainments are very high. This very good progress is also confirmed by comparing the results in 1999 and 2000 with the scores obtained when the cohorts were tested at the end of Key Stage 1. These show that pupils have made very good progress. Results in English are not as high. In the last two years pupils' performance has been below the national average but when compared with similar schools achievements have been well above average in both years. Progress in relation to results at Key Stage 1 has also been above average. Inspection findings confirm this good progress, as most pupils are working at or near the levels expected of them in their last year at school.

5. The inspection found that by the end of **Key Stage 1**, the standards of pupils' **English** were about those expected for their age. The exception to this was in writing, where lack of opportunity to write at length has limited progress and pupils do not achieve as well as expected. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are developed well and reflect the emphasis the school has rightly given to them. Most pupils make good progress in reading and reach levels that are close to those expected for their age.
6. At **Key Stage 2**, the inspection found that most pupils made good progress and that by Year 6 most pupils were working at the levels expected of them. As at Key Stage 1, pupils' progress in writing was limited through the lack of opportunity to write extended pieces of work, both in **English** lessons and in other subjects. Many pupils need a lot of support in order to structure their work properly. Work in the literacy lesson is of a good standard, particularly in discussions. Pupils are able to share their ideas well when speaking to each other. They listen carefully when others offer interesting explanations or ideas. The emphasis on improving the standards of speaking and listening have not yet influenced the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils' reading is about the level expected, although those pupils whose attainments are below average are not heard to read often enough to help them improve their accuracy and fluency.
7. In **mathematics** the inspection findings are consistent with the results of the most recent national tests, with pupils' attainments being close to those expected by the end of Key Stage 1 but above average by the end of Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school pupils have made good progress. Pupils in Year 2 have developed a good understanding of number, being able to add, subtract, double and halve quickly and usually accurately. They know the significance of the place of each digit in larger numbers. When measuring they make sensible estimates and use appropriate units accurately. They explain sensibly how they reached their answers. At Key Stage 2, children use a range of suitable methods such as dividing up numbers or rounding up and down to help them answer problems. They use correct mathematical language well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to measure angles and use their knowledge of different types of angles to draw shapes accurately or calculate an unknown angle.
8. In **science**, the inspection found most pupils at both key stages to be working close to the levels expected. The significant help pupils receive in the booster classes helps them build on this to achieve good results in the national tests. Pupils have benefited from the emphasis the school has given to developing their skills in thinking, through discussion and this is shown in the way that most pupils approach their tasks and the above average standards of investigative work. Recording of their work does not always reflect the level of pupils' scientific knowledge. At Key Stage 1, pupils know and name external parts of the body, and are beginning to develop an understanding of sources of energy such as electricity. Teachers make great efforts to ensure pupils learn the correct vocabulary. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in extending

their scientific skills and knowledge. They understand that some aspects of an experiment must stay constant while other elements may be changed, through experiments in dissolving and separating. They know how to measure forces and are beginning to understand that gravity is a force. They know what plants need for healthy growth. Some of the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough to extend their understanding.

9. The standards pupils attain in **ICT** are below those expected of their age. Difficulties in establishing the computer suite have meant that pupils have not had the opportunity to learn the necessary skills. They are now beginning to learn appropriate skills. At Key Stage 1, children are using suitable programs to help them learn keyboard skills and to control the mouse. They can draw simple pictures on an appropriate program but few children have produced any written work using simple word processing. At Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to master techniques used in word processing, such as changing the size of print or the type of typeface used. The older pupils insert pictures into their work and are beginning to use appropriate programs to help present their work attractively. They have not yet developed skills to help them link different media, such as sound, to their written work. Pupils have had limited experience of entering information onto a program and converting this into graphs but they have no experience of using spreadsheets.
10. Pupils with **special educational needs** make good progress in achieving the targets set in their individual educational plans. Some pupils make sufficient progress as to no longer need additional support. Most teachers use their knowledge of pupils' needs to help modify work when appropriate. Pupils with hearing impairment make good progress overall but their levels of attainment are sometimes limited by their difficulties in communication. The school has identified a difference in boys' and girls' attainments, particularly in English, and has adopted a number of strategies, particularly improving spoken communication and thinking skills, to address the issue.
11. Pupils' learning in **religious education** has shown a significant improvement since the last inspection and now meets the standards expected for their age. Younger pupils know the need to care for the natural world and other living creatures through listening to appropriate stories. They know about some of the important features of other religions, particularly Judaism. Older pupils develop a knowledge of the Bible through research and through listening to stories such as the Good Samaritan. They know how some people have dedicated their lives to their religions and make comparisons between Christianity and other major religious faiths.
12. In **art, design and technology, history** and **physical education**, pupils make good progress; so that by the end of Key Stage 2 most children achieve the standards expected of their age. In **music**, pupils achieve appropriate standards by the end of Key Stage 1 but at Key Stage 2 they have not had enough chance to develop skills in composing or chance to listen to a wide range of music that is needed to achieve the expected standards. Children at both key stages sing very well with obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm. Owing to the way the curriculum is planned it was not possible to see sufficient teaching or work in **geography** to make valid judgements.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to their learning as they move through the school. Their behaviour in classrooms is generally good. Relationships between children and adults and among themselves are very good. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit are effectively integrated into the school. Pupils are willing to help others and accept responsibilities well. However, attention and behaviour can deteriorate when the pace of the lesson is slow. There were two fixed-term exclusions in the last academic year. Levels of attendance are satisfactory and have improved in recent years.

14. Children under the age of six develop confidence through the activities they undertake. They learn to take turns, make suitable choices and become increasingly independent. They work and play together well together. All children understand the daily routines of the classroom. They make good progress in their ability to work for longer periods of time.
15. Almost all pupils show an interest in their work and take an active part in the lessons. In most lessons they quickly settle to work and often work with a high level of concentration. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of the tasks they are set, seen, for example in their researching the causes of the Spanish Armada. They take pride in their successes and those of their fellow pupils.
16. The school's approach to discipline has a positive effect on behaviour in the classroom. Pupils are generally quiet and attentive and understand how they should behave. There are four easily remembered school rules that are known to every pupil and must be followed. These are displayed prominently in the classrooms. The school successfully raises pupils' self-esteem. As a result pupils are tolerant and self-disciplined. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that any incidents will be dealt with firmly and speedily. At the beginning and end of the day pupils enter and leave the school in an orderly manner. They are polite and courteous and respect one another's property; there is very little litter around the school. At lunchtime and break times pupils' behaviour is very good, particularly when the weather means they cannot go outside. Even when unsupervised pupils continue with their activities calmly and quietly.
17. Pupils readily accept opportunities to take responsibility throughout the school. They help with general classroom tasks as well as specific duties such as returning registers. They greet visitors and answer the classroom telephone. Older pupils were often seen helping younger ones by ensuring that they got their lunch to the table safely and could open packets or containers. Some pupils support mid-day supervisors by helping younger children with activities. A system of paired reading, where older pupils and younger ones work together on reading activities encourages collaboration and mutual respect. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit are supported effectively and unobtrusively by their peers, both in and out of the classroom.
18. There is a very successful school council comprising pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. Formal democratic elections are held each year, using polling booths and ballot boxes borrowed from the Local Authority. The pupils discuss and make recommendations on a variety of issues relating to the school such as improvements to the grounds and toilets. They have also been actively involved in Agenda 21, an authority-led initiative to involve children in future plans for the area. Pupils, in conjunction with Northumbria Police, have designed a logo and school watch brochure.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching overall is good and makes a significant contribution to the good quality of learning that children achieve. Teaching was good or better in 64 per cent of lessons and in 23 per cent of lessons it was very good. One lesson was excellent. Two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and this is reflected in the steady improvement in pupils' National Curriculum test scores. Teaching in the foundation stage is good overall and enables pupils to make good progress in developing appropriate skills and understanding. At Key Stage 1, the teaching of English is very good. The teaching of mathematics is good and helps pupils to make good progress and achieve well compared to pupils in similar schools. At Key Stage 2, the teaching of mathematics is very good and the teaching of English and science is good. This helps pupils sustain good rates of progress and achieve the targets set by the school. Teaching of history and religious education at Key Stage 1 and art and history at Key Stage 2 is good and helps pupils achieve standards that are appropriate for their age. Children supported

by the unit for hearing impaired pupils receive good teaching. Only a limited amount of teaching of art and physical education was seen at Key Stage 1 and no teaching of geography was seen at either key stage.

20. Where teaching is very good, the good relationships between pupils and teachers, which is evident throughout the school, is most apparent. Children are confident to ask and answer questions as teachers manage discussions very well. They make very good use of pupils' answers to develop ideas. As a result, pupils clarify their thinking and improve their understanding of their work. Through very good questioning skills and encouraging all pupils to take part, teachers keep pupils interested and help them to analyse their work. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils developed a good understanding of bias in newspaper reporting through group discussions on matching headlines to articles. The positive effect of the Thinking, Oracy and Literacy Project on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is clear in these discussions. When appropriate, good direct teaching of the class helps pupils to understand more effectively. Explanations are given very clearly and often begin by asking children to recall what they have learned in previous lessons. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson when the teacher made effective use of children's previous knowledge to carefully explain the importance of the place each digit holds in a number. In nearly all lessons pupils' behaviour is well managed, so that their high level of interest and enthusiasm is maintained. In the best lessons teachers manage the challenging behaviour of a very small minority of children very well and ensure that all pupils keep working purposefully. In these very good lessons teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave and what they will achieve. As a result, pupils work at a good pace.
21. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall and effective in raising standards in English and mathematics. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and their planning follows national guidelines. They are confident in teaching the skills required. Teachers provide good role models for children in the way they read stories or in how they provide examples of preparing writing. In most classes the work in literacy is supplemented well by the school's good strategies for developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Teaching of ICT is limited by teachers' lack of confidence in the subject and this has restricted the progress pupils have been able to make. Teachers are trying hard to improve their understanding in this subject through training provided by the school and through their own efforts.
22. Planning for most lessons or series of lessons is of a high quality. It gives a good structure to lesson so that the activities are well prepared and ensure that pupils make progress. Through the use of the characters WILF (What I am Looking For) and TIB (This Is Because) teachers share the objectives of the lesson and give pupils a very clear understanding of what it is they are going to learn. As a result, pupils are able to work well independently, as they know what it is they are trying to achieve. Effective use is made of these targets when the teacher reminds pupils of the focus of the lesson frequently during the lesson. Planning ensures that a good range of resources, often made by the teacher, is readily available. Resources are used well to provide information for pupils, give them challenging tasks or enable them to respond as a class to the teacher's questions.
23. Lessons are well managed. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of good behaviour and are pleased when they receive praise and rewards. Good planning ensures that lessons are very well timed and proceed at a good pace so that pupils are busy throughout the lesson. There is a good balance between the teacher's and the pupils' participation. Pupils are given a suitable length of time to consolidate and practise the skills they are learning. For example, when learning hockey skills children were given enough time to master controlling a moving ball before moving to the next activity. Effective use is made of the skills and experiences of visitors, such as a

journalist who helped in literacy lessons and two former prisoners of war who provided evidence for a history topic.

24. Well thought out lessons ensure that the content is appropriate for pupils with special educational needs. As teachers are responsible for setting the targets in pupils' IEPs they are well aware of what particular support they need. Targets in the plans are met through a balance of work, suitably amended, in class and limited sessions with other staff to address particular skills. This approach is successful in helping pupils make progress. Teachers give pupils who find learning difficult patient support. Pupils who receive support from the hearing impairment unit are integrated very well into classes. The success of this can be seen in the way that they manage many lessons without any additional support. When they do receive extra help in the classroom, it is well focused on helping their communication skills. Support for pupils with visual impairment is very good and ensures that pupils are able to take a full and active part in all lessons.
25. By observing what children are doing and through their marking of pupils' work, teachers make good use of their assessments to give appropriate guidance or set more challenging work. This is particularly effective in mathematics lessons. Short discussions at the end of lessons are used very well to assess pupils' progress by checking that the main objectives of the lesson have been understood. A good example of this was a brief discussion at the end of a science lesson to establish that pupils had understood the idea of 'fair testing'. Homework is set frequently in most classes to support what pupils are learning in class. The homework sheets sometimes provide a useful dialogue between school and home but the loose sheets do not provide a consistent record of what pupils have done.
26. Although teaching overall was good, there was some unsatisfactory teaching and minor weaknesses in some lessons. On the very few occasions when the management of pupils fell below the usual high standard, pupils did not always behave appropriately, as the teacher was not always aware of what was happening. In a few lessons too long is spent on introductions and explanations, with the result that pupils lose interest. Pupils were confused in a few lessons because the instructions given were not clear enough, particularly when a well-chosen resource such as a picture or chart could have been used to demonstrate the activity. Teachers do not always use opportunities to remind pupils of the intention of the lesson, particularly when pupils' attention has waned. Although planning overall is very good, in some lessons not enough attention is given to identifying what is expected of children of different levels of attainment, particularly in challenging the higher achieving children in science. As a result, some of the tasks are not demanding enough. In a few lessons the work on the class whiteboard does not provide a good enough example of presentation for pupils. In a small minority of lessons the short discussion at the end of a lesson is not used effectively to summarise what children have learned or to assess what progress they have made.
27. Overall, the quality of pupils' learning is good and leads to the very good progress children make by the time they leave the school. The high quality of some discussions is a significant feature in developing pupils' thinking and understanding. Children are keen to learn and work with enthusiasm and interest at most lessons. As a result they learn new skills and acquire an appropriate body of knowledge. The use of WILF and TIB helps pupils to know how well they have achieved in most lessons. When pupils do not behave as well as expected they make limited progress.

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

28. The curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection, when it was judged to have significant weaknesses. It is now good and provides a range of broad and balanced opportunities for learning for all the children at the school. There is

satisfactory provision for teaching literacy and very good provision for teaching numeracy. The continuity and progress of children's learning are well supported by the good quality of long-term teaching plans, while their immediate needs are met through lessons planned to achieve clear learning objectives, which are shared with children. Statutory curricular requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met and there is good provision for children in the foundation stage to enable them to achieve the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. The provision for ICT has improved recently but the diverse curriculum opportunities it offers have not yet been developed.

29. There is good provision for learning outside the school day, especially from homework and extra classes in literacy and numeracy for Year 6 children. The attractive weekly homework assignments sheets in Key Stage 1, which involve parents in their children's learning are particularly good. The number of extra-curricular clubs, which include netball, athletics, recorder and drama, is lower than that found in schools of similar size. Opportunities for some children to develop citizenship skills are provided through the school council and a regular group meets to learn skills in deaf signing. Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum; the school ensures that all children have at least one educational visit per year. Places visited include the Kingswood residential and Sunderland outdoor centres and Beamish museum. Theatre groups and live musicians regularly visit the school and organise workshops for children. Recently a Sikh father talked to children about his culture and religion and two former Japanese prisoners of war, described their experiences and showed artefacts and photographs, to help children understand more about the second world war.
30. Individual education plans for children with special needs were criticised in the last report for not containing enough detail. The special needs co-ordinator has worked hard with staff to ensure that these are now more carefully written, with more precise targets. These, and teachers' good knowledge of their pupils, help to make good provision to support their learning. This is shown by the very successful integration and the progress children with hearing and visual and impairment make.
31. Equality of opportunity has a high priority in the curriculum and the school works hard to fulfil this obligation to all its pupils. The presence of deaf and blind pupils as part of the school community has led to the school's providing relevant lessons for all of its pupils. When the school notices deficiencies, it is quick to take action. For example, the lower attainment of boys in National Curriculum Tests has been carefully addressed through re-location of male staff, consideration of gender differences in learning styles and seating arrangements during lessons. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with English as an additional language who are suitably integrated into the life of the school.
32. Lessons in personal, health and social education appropriate to the ages and needs of children are now an important part of the weekly timetable. This was shown in a lesson with younger children about people who are special, during which they were made aware of the their own value and uniqueness. Sex education and the misuse of drugs is taught as part of the schools' healthy living curriculum. There are constructive links with other primary schools and a programme of events is arranged each summer term by the secondary school to support the transfer of eleven-year-olds.
33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. It is now good overall. A positive, caring ethos is evident within the school. Pupils are taught appropriate values and they develop pride and confidence in themselves. Combined with the good role models of staff, these have a positive impact on the behaviour of pupils and their very good attitudes to learning.
34. Pupils' spiritual development is good. It is promoted well through assemblies, collective

worship and in lessons. A good climate for thinking is established and this helps pupils to reflect on the deeper meanings of their lives, particularly following stories such as that of the Prodigal Son. Pupils are also given the opportunity to consider the beliefs and values of world religions and how they affect on everyday life, attitudes and relationships. They develop a sense of spirituality when, for example, they are moved by the recollections of visitors who were Japanese prisoners of war or when they listen to an evocative rendition of the poem 'Flanders Field'. Music is also used to good effect to set the scene in assembly or as part of lessons. Pupils show reverence when saying prayers, having been taught that prayer is a way of communication with a god.

35. The moral development of pupils is very good. It is promoted consistently through the effective application of the positive behaviour policy. Pupils learn to put their thoughts and ideas into action by creating and agreeing on their own school rules. Values of honesty, fairness and a sense of what is right and wrong are strongly evident and pupils are especially keen to see 'fair play'. In one English lesson the teacher elaborated on the word "persecution" to reinforce how we should act towards each other and in a religious education lesson younger pupils learned how to interpret friendship and forgiveness in their own lives. Wider moral issues are dealt with effectively; for example Year 6 work with the police in their Zone Ranger project about the effects of drugs.
36. Pupils' social development is very good. From an early age they are encouraged to discuss, negotiate and resolve problems. Well-planned role-play situations, such as the "hospital" and the "home corner" give them opportunities to develop these skills in a very positive manner. Throughout the school paired reading sessions provide many benefits, including developing the self-esteem of older pupils and the nurturing of younger ones. Social skills and responsibility are reinforced when pupils act as monitors, show visitors around the school and answer the telephone. Citizenship is being developed in various positive ways. Some pupils raise money for endangered species; joint projects with a local special school help promote successful social contact; the full integration of both blind and hearing-impaired children helps all pupils to have an understanding of those with disabilities. More formal social links are introduced through the school council, where pupils successfully help make decisions and plan future developments for the school. Community visitors include a paediatric nurse, local clergy and members of other faiths. A joint venture with the local high school helps to further develop pupils' literacy skills.
37. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection. They have suitable opportunities to learn about the beliefs and practices of the principal world faiths. Although chances to visit different places of worship are limited, effective use is made of visitors such as a Sikh father who helped pupils to appreciate his culture and religion. Pupils learn about past cultures in history; in art, music and dance they learn to appreciate creativity, illustrated well by the oldest pupils' involvement in a recent performance at the Millennium Dome. Theatre groups and live musicians visit regularly.
38. The curriculum is well designed to enable the school to achieve its mission statement, which is to create a happy, stimulating environment in which children can enjoy living and learning, where the welfare of the children in its care is of paramount importance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Assessment and its use in supporting children has improved since the last report and is now good. Good practice does not occur in all subjects but it is clearly evident in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Good analysis of formal tests, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests, guides curricular planning, provides a check on the progress of children as they move through the school and enables the school to identify differences in achievement of groups of children.

Recently this has enabled the school to respond quickly to the issue of girls getting better results than boys in tests at the end of Key Stage 2. A range of school tests and records adds to this information. This gives teachers a clear picture of the progress in learning of each child; they can then plan lessons appropriate to their particular needs. For example, in mathematics, assessment sheets which include every learning objective have been developed. These provide the teacher with a detailed profile of individuals requiring additional teaching and support in specific areas of numeracy.

40. The new policy for assessment recognises that the wide range of assessments currently in use need to be rationalised so that they can be more precise in helping identify what children can do and what they need to learn. For example, the different ways of recording reading progress and understanding need to be united, particularly for the older pupils.
41. The school has established a series of tests in each year group to help assess pupils with special educational needs. Baseline assessment of the youngest children helps to identify pupils who may need additional support. Further annual tests help to identify pupils who have not made the progress expected. Pupils who need additional support have well-written individual educational plans with clear targets that help to assess progress. The school makes effective use of the support it receives, particularly for pupils with visual impairment and behavioural difficulties. Although only limited advice is available for pupils with learning needs, the school makes good use of what it has. Pupils with hearing impairment receive a good level of support both from within the school and from services such as speech therapy.
42. Since the last inspection report, procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety have become a strength of the school and are now very good. Policies are clear and staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. The school is a secure and caring community. The care and welfare of children are very good and are priorities for the school in its approach to health and safety. All staff know the children and their families well and this ensures the very good relationships which exist at all levels. This firm knowledge of their pupils contributes to the very good personal development and guidance that teachers can provide for all pupils.
43. Monitoring of academic progress, personal development, behaviour and attendance results in a very secure learning environment for all the pupils. For example, it ensures that extra help is targeted effectively, that children know about their achievements and how to improve them and that their personal contribution to the school community is valued. The school has successfully targeted attendance and punctuality which has improved as a result of the very good, careful and sympathetic monitoring.
44. The careful monitoring of pupils' behaviour results in an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. The very effective support provided by staff makes a positive contribution to children's well being, and enables pupils to take full advantage of the many opportunities offered. Staff place strong emphasis on creating a caring and secure atmosphere within the school. They have been successful in establishing an ethos where every member of the school community is valued.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents have a very positive view of the school and, although only one parent attended the parents' meeting, those returning the questionnaire gave a very positive view of the school. They feel that their children benefit from good teaching, which is why they enjoy coming to school. Parents feel that children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. They supported the statement that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. They attribute this to the good leadership of the school. Inspection evidence supports parents positive views of the school.

46. The school does all it can to improve links with parents. Teaching staff appreciate the support of parents and several parents welcome the opportunity to be involved with their children's education. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Newsletters are clearly written and very informative and provide a valuable link between school and home. The school works hard to encourage parents to be involved with their children's learning. Homework is set according to the school policy and some parents use the homework information sheet to communicate with the school. Not all parents support their children with homework.
47. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed about the targets set for their children. When appropriate they are involved in reviews of progress and of statements of special educational need.
48. Home-school agreements are in place, and the majority of parents have already returned these to the school. Reports about children's progress are very good and parents find them very informative. Parents appreciate the meetings held each month when they can visit to talk informally with teachers and to view their children's work. Also well attended are the workshops which the school put on to inform parents about aspects of the curriculum. Parents speak highly of the office staff, who are always welcoming and helpful to parents and visitors. The Friends of the School Association raises valuable funds to help provide resources which will improve the quality of education given to their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. One of the main reasons for the success of the school is the very good leadership provided by the headteacher. She provides a positive and purposeful direction to the school and has a clear view of the type of education the school should provide for its pupils. This view is supported by staff. The headteacher has made a significant contribution to the improvements made by the school since the last inspection through a strong commitment to staff development. She is building a team of high quality teachers and support staff. This is reflected in the significant percentage of teachers who were seen to teach very good lessons and the overall improvement in standards. All staff share a commitment to continue to raise standards. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff work well together to lead the staff in effectively putting the school's values into practice. These are clearly stated within the school's mission statement, which is prominently displayed around the school. Its effectiveness is shown through the very positive attitudes and good behaviour of children.
50. The headteacher has shown good skill in devolving responsibility for significant developments to appropriate staff, who have responded very well to this. Good examples of this have been the successful use of the deputy headteacher's experience and expertise to introduce the Literacy Strategy and the support given to the special needs co-ordinator in improving provision for pupils with special educational needs. This inclusive and corporate approach to school management means that all staff are aware of what needs to be done each year to continue improvements. Subject co-ordinators write a development plan for their subjects each year for inclusion in the annual school development plan. These have clear targets but the criteria for judging success focus on the completion of the task rather than judging how it has improved provision or helped to raise standards. A comprehensive monitoring programme last year successfully identified issues for development that have been incorporated in the development plan. This was supported by an effective analysis of the school's results in national tests. One outcome of this monitoring was the introduction of the Thinking, Oracy and Literacy Project aimed at improving pupils' communication skills. Early indications are that this project is proving successful. Although subject co-ordinators see teachers' plans or samples of pupils' work in order to judge the effectiveness of planning and monitor improvements in standards, this is not always done often enough as part of a regular programme.

51. The governing body supports the headteacher well and has a commitment to further improving the quality of education provided by the school. It benefits from a well-informed chair of governors who gives firm leadership to the governing body in its role of providing a sense of direction to the work of the school. The governing body meets most of its statutory responsibilities through well-organised meetings and the effective overview by individuals of key aspects of the school, such as literacy, special needs and developments in information and communication technology. The annual report to parents does not, however, include all the required information, as the following have been omitted: details on governors' terms of office; information on the next parent governor election; national test data; staff development; comments on the success of the school's action plan; statements on security; the success of the special educational needs policy. Subject co-ordinators provide the governing body, when relevant, with good quality information about developments in the curriculum and the outcomes of any monitoring they have done. This, combined with regular visits by individual governors, helps keep the governing body well informed about what it does well and where it needs to make improvements. The introduction of the performance management of teachers has been sensibly built on the school's existing good practice.
52. A good school development plan clearly establishes priorities for development which are firmly based on raising standards, and provide a secure base for strategic planning over a three-year period. Targets for each year are developed by subject co-ordinators for curriculum development and by the headteacher for all other areas. These identify suitable timescales, relevant strategies and estimated costs. The current key targets of raising standards in English, particularly those of boys, and in information and communication technology are very relevant to the school's needs. The headteacher and senior teachers co-ordinate the compilation of the annual school development plan and after discussion with staff present it to the governing body for further discussion, amendment and approval. Through this process both governors and staff are aware of the school's priorities each year. Although the plan contains criteria for judging success these are not always specific enough in relation to how developments will improve the quality of education and raise standards. This is too often left implicit rather than being stated explicitly.
53. Financial planning is good. It takes careful account of historical spending patterns and ensures that the basic requirements are met. Available finance is then matched to key targets for the year. The allocation of funds to curricular areas is decided corporately by the staff so that money is clearly targeted where it is most needed. This has helped significantly in addressing some of the resource issues raised at the last inspection. The governing body is consulted appropriately over major spending decisions. The results of this carefully considered expenditure are evident in the level of resources now available and the improvements to the premises which help to create an attractive and comfortable place to learn. The effectiveness of spending decisions is evaluated well. The headteacher and governing body consider the value for money of important decisions, not only in financial terms but in the impact they have made on the quality of education. Staff consider how well the budget for each subject has been spent as part of an annual discussion on the allocation of resources. This brings value for money in spending into sharp focus. The school has made good use of different grants it has received to meet clearly identified objectives. Taking account of available resources, the standards and achievements of the pupils and the quality of education provided, particularly the high percentage of good teaching, the school provides good value for money.
54. Financial and school administration are good. Administrative staff maintain appropriate records well and provide relevant information for the headteacher, staff and governing body and ensure that financial procedures are followed carefully. Recommendations of the last audit report have been implemented. The efficient running of the school office enables the headteacher and staff to concentrate on the central purpose of teaching

pupils and developing their learning. Information technology is used effectively to support financial record keeping and administration but its use has yet to be fully developed to include such aspects as analysing results, regular use of e-mail and access to relevant information on the Internet.

55. There is a satisfactory number of well-qualified teachers, many of whom are suitably experienced, to teach the National Curriculum, religious education and children under the age of six. Staff are appropriately matched to their responsibilities for subjects and various aspects of school organisation. There is a good number of well-qualified support staff, who work closely with class teachers. They have a good effect on pupils' attainments, particularly the achievements of those with differing special educational needs. The arrangements for staff training and development are good, with a result that the quality of teaching has improved significantly and staff have proved very capable when given additional responsibilities. Induction procedures for new staff are very good and the school has been commended on its work with students training to be teachers.

56. The school benefits from good accommodation which is being used effectively for class teaching and has a spacious library and a new ICT suite. There are plans in hand to make good use of other available rooms. Staff work hard to make the school an attractive place to work for both children and adults. There is plenty of space for storing resources. The level of resources has improved significantly in all subjects since the last inspection so that now there is an adequate level of resources overall. They are very good for science and good for ICT, religious education and for the youngest children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. Raise standards in pupils' writing by:
- providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of situations;
 - plan occasions for pupils to work at extended writing tasks;
58. Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
- Fully implementing the draft scheme of work;
 - Providing appropriate levels of training for all staff in ICT skills.
 - Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in different lessons.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

59. The school should also consider the following issues:
- Making more consistent and effective use of the different types of reading record.
 - Providing pupils with more opportunities to compose music and discuss different types of music.
 - Ensuring that the governing body's annual report to parents includes all the statutorily required information.

HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT

60. The school accommodates the only designated provision for partially hearing pupils in the Local Education Authority. The support centre, the unit for hearing impaired pupils, is an integral part of the school. It has places for 20 pupils. There are currently 18 pupils on roll. For the majority of the school day pupils attend lessons in the mainstream classes. All pupils are withdrawn on a regular basis to work in the unit. This is mainly for work in literacy and numeracy.
61. The provision in the unit is good. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Annual reviews are organised well and meet good practice as recommended by the national Code of Practice. Almost 100 per cent of parents attend annual reviews. They receive relevant information before the meeting, and appropriate professionals involved in their children's education attend when necessary. This is particularly important and helpful as pupils prepare to move from primary to secondary school.
62. Individual education plans are in place for every pupil. These show good practice, as they are detailed and specific for individual pupils. Most have an additional IEP written by the speech and language therapist. As a result pupils benefit from the additional support and clearly targeted work. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
63. The quality of staffing has improved since the last inspection. Both teachers are qualified teachers of the deaf. They are very well supported by special support assistants. At present there is an additional qualified teacher working part time in the unit. She is currently pursuing the qualification of teacher of the deaf. Her extra input is an asset. Staff in the unit hold training courses for other members of staff. Weekly signing classes are held as well as a lunchtime signing club for pupils.
64. The quality of teaching and learning within the unit is consistently good, and occasionally very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond well to this and give of their best at all times. Relationships are very good, resulting in pupils concentrating fully and persevering to complete their work. Teachers are very skilled at questioning pupils, not only to check for understanding, but also in ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to answer,

and by drawing out and extending the answers. This helps to increase pupils' communication skills. Although many attain standards in most subjects that are below what is expected of their age, pupils in the unit make good progress and achieve well considering the difficulties they experience with communication.

65. Pupils attend very well and are rarely absent. They have very good attitudes to lessons. Pupils have a high level of commitment to improving their performances and succeed. They develop confidence through the very good guidance provided by staff in the unit and the main stream. They have many opportunities to take responsibility and to play a full part in the life of the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	105
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	22	41	34	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	332
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	207

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	24
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	80

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
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	21	28	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	13	11
	Girls	19	22	20
	Total	28	35	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57	71	63
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	11
	Girls	20	21	17
	Total	31	33	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63	67	57
	National	82	86	87

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	27	19	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	23
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	34	36	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74	78	89
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	24
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	34	36	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76	78	91
	National	68	69	75

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	281
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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	771815
Total expenditure	790743
Expenditure per pupil	2098
Balance brought forward from previous year	77627
Balance carried forward to next year	58699

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	314
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	30	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	28	7	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	44	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	34	3	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	34	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	43	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	31	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	31	9	0	28

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. Children attend the nursery part-time until they transfer into full-time education in the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they become five. Currently the nursery operates only in mornings with four-year old children; younger children will start in the afternoons in January. There is a wide range of attainment on entry but it is generally lower than that found nationally, particularly in language and literacy. Children make good progress in nursery and reception classes and by the age of six standards in the decreed early learning goals of personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development are close to expected levels. Standards in the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy are below those expected of children of their age.
67. Children make good progress in their **personal, social and emotional development** because of good teaching and most of them reach the expected targets by the age of five. When children start in the nursery many have limited language skills and some have difficulty playing and working with others. The teacher and the nursery nurses have a very good understanding of how young children learn and they work closely together to create a purposeful and relaxed atmosphere. As a result children feel happy and secure, grow more confident and are eager to learn. They work and play with each other well and make appropriate choices, for example at snack time, and even the youngest children know the expected routines. Children become independent, fetching their own aprons and registering their own names. They learn how to take turns, for example when stirring the dough or playing dice games. Children enjoy exploring, investigating and experimenting with a wide range of materials. Although many of the children have short concentration spans, some persevere for a considerable time, as seen when one child followed instructions from a construction kit and spent a long time choosing the correct parts to make a very good model crane.
68. This progress is sustained in the Reception classes where very good teamwork and good teaching means that learning is very purposeful and all children are valued for the contributions they make. The organisation of the teaching programmes in the open plan rooms helps children become very independent in organising themselves. They respond well to instructions from both teachers and the nursery nurse and move confidently from one area to the other. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and as a result children respond well and understand how they are expected to behave. Sometimes teachers use simple sign language to help children develop this skill used in the school. Children's good attitudes are especially evident when they are playing together in "the home corner" where boys and girls share, take turns and co-operate. Children show improved levels of concentration and perseverance when they experiment and investigate with clay or when playing matching games. They take on responsibility very seriously, as when putting out mats in the hall or when taking the register to the office.
69. Children in the nursery make good progress in their **communication, language and literacy** skills because of the good teaching and the very many opportunities provided, particularly to extend their spoken language skills. They are encouraged to have conversations on the telephone and learn and remember many rhymes. Adults ask specific questions to encourage children to talk about their activities, especially when intervening in their play. A group of children playing in the water tray gave thoughtful responses when their teacher asked "What does it feel like?" and "Why is the water coming out?" When playing with toys children could name most of the pieces of furniture and answer questions about what they were doing. Despite the fact that many, on entry, have little knowledge about books, children regularly share books with a

friend or an adult in the book corner. They handle the books carefully, know how to turn the pages and enjoy looking at the pictures. At story time children listen attentively to stories which are sensitively read to them and their answers to questions show a good understanding of the story. Forty story bags, made by the nursery teacher, provide an exceptionally good resource for children to share with their parents. Most can recognise their name cards and one child can write first name and surname. Activities to practise pencil control, like tracing hedgehog shapes, indicate developing skills and some children can write recognisable letters. Teachers use names, labels and notices regularly to reinforce these skills.

70. Reception teachers build on this early progress, particularly in developing children's ability to speak and listen. As a result children listen well and become more confident in answering questions. They describe what they are doing, using more mature language. For example, following a visit by a nurse, children used many new words, such as "stethoscope" and "heartbeat" in their imaginative play. In this play they also write for a reason, making appointments and composing prescriptions. Their writing shows knowledge of letters and some children work hard at writing their names. Teachers show children how to form letters alongside developing their knowledge of sounds. A strong emphasis is put on teaching reading with daily sessions of the phonics scheme. Consequently, the majority of children know their initial sounds, some know more difficult ones like "oo" and "ch" and a few attempt to work out simple words. They do not know the names of the letters and despite regular practice of "tricky words" most children are unable to recognise many words by sight. They enjoy sharing books with adults and can follow pictures in a story making reasonable attempts at what might come next. By the end of the Reception year most children are likely to reach the expected standards in speaking and listening and in writing, but despite satisfactory teaching and considerable progress made through the foundation stage, they are unlikely to reach the same standards in reading.
71. Most children are on line to reach the expected standards in mathematics by the time they are six. Significant progress is made in the nursery because of the very strong mathematical environment provided and the many and varied opportunities given to reinforce and practise their skills. Mathematics permeates all areas of their curriculum. For example, children match and count plates and cutlery in the home corner or used words such as *full*, *empty*, *larger* and *smaller* in water and sand play. Some children recreate simple patterns using bobbins and know position words such as *in front*, *behind*, *below* and *above*. They recognise some basic shapes that they match and practise in games. The many exciting and continually changing activities planned by staff include a fund of number rhymes and songs that children enjoy enthusiastically. A number wall displaying various forms of the numbers being studied each day is referred to regularly by adults and many children can recognise and use them. Progress is maintained in the reception classes in almost all areas of mathematics, but there is a wide range of attainment, particularly in respect of recognising and ordering numbers. The majority can count to ten quite confidently but some have difficulty in counting backwards and putting numbers in their correct place in a line. Teachers check regularly for understanding and challenge children with quick fire number cards. Children use the computer to practise number skills and join in happily with songs and actions taught on a video programme. Some children complete simple sums, adding on one or taking away one; others still have difficulty in recognising number three. Teaching is very focused on the ideas being taught and staff persevere to ensure understanding. Games are used well to further practise skills. Most children can recognise and know shapes such as *circle*, *square*, *triangle* and *rectangle*, and they use mathematical language confidently to describe shape, size and quantity. Linked to their topic they have made and understand a block graph about the colour of their eyes.
72. Despite very limited knowledge of the outside world when they start in nursery, children learn well in developing their understanding and knowledge of the world and by the end of the reception year most will reach expected levels. During regular baking activities the youngest children observe changes in flour and salt when water is added and make

comment like “It’s getting darker”, when colourant is added. Topics provide a variety of experiences for children to observe textures, colours and similarities and differences, for example in trees, leaves and animals. A walk in the local area helped children to recognise autumn colours that they later successfully recorded in paint and collage. Work about hedgehogs has given them an understanding of hibernation and other animals who “go to sleep in the cold”. Their growing confidence enables them to share news about their families and talk about past events in their lives. During a walk with the reception classes the children contributed well to their current topic by using their senses to look, listen and see. They were able to focus their observations because of the very useful photographs provided for them to identify specific items. They had less success in identifying, for example, a seagull and a pigeon. In school they are able to explore and experiment with magnifiers (“it makes things bigger”) and they enjoy identifying various smells on their smell tree. They have identified their feelings, using good descriptive words about *tickly* feathers, *curly* cones and *rough* pasta. Each day children complete their weather chart, identifying and matching the correct weather picture.

73. Children’s physical development is at least satisfactory. All play outside every day, weather permitting, in a good-sized, safe and secure area. They progressively develop their climbing, pedalling and pushing skills on a variety of toys and equipment. Adults intervene well in their play, to teach new skills (for example with hoops, which the children handle successfully). Nursery children have no opportunity to practise their skills in the hall, but staff regularly provide sessions for groups in their classroom, where they learn to use space as well as curling up, hopping and jumping. Reception children have regular sessions in the hall where they show good attitudes as well as the levels of control and balance expected for their age. They understand and respond to words such as *dodging*, *darting* and *jogging* and think carefully about how they are moving their bodies whether quickly or slowly. Children are continually challenged and make significant improvements owing to the high expectations of their teachers and their good teaching. In both nursery and reception, children cut, join and stick satisfactorily, and show considerable dexterity when playing with puzzles or constructing models. They handle tools and implements well and know their use. Nursery children have no opportunities to use computers. In both nursery and reception classes children are able to manipulate tools and malleable materials with appropriate control and concentration. They use construction kits and bricks confidently to make quite complex models. To improve their finer physical skills they roll, mould and cut dough and clay. Their success is apparent in, for example, their carefully made hedgehogs, which have distinctive features.
74. In their creative development children’s attainments by the age of six are what they are expected to be. Singing is a strength in the nursery because of the very good teaching. Both adults and children are keen and enthusiastic. The children sing in tune, keep the beat and know words of many songs. Children copy the actions for songs such as “Going On A Bear Hunt” and display awe and wonder at the “wet nose” bit. Children in the foundation stage handle and play musical instruments. Nursery children are all able to explore texture, colour, shape and form, using a variety of materials and tools. They mix and use paints well and show control of paint and brush. For example, they made good representations of coloured flowers; paintings of their faces showed a good awareness of shape and facial features. Children experiment with paint on wet paper with pleasing results, paint with a selection of implements and draw with felts and pencils on a wall mural. They are happy to talk about what they have drawn. Painting, drawing and sticking support learning across many areas in the reception classes. Their favourite smells are carefully illustrated; Cinderella is represented skilfully in tatters and ballgown, accompanied by well chosen words; mathematical language, such as *shortest* and *longest*, is developed when cutting shapes to make kites. Before building with bricks reception children make their own plans. Some of these show imaginative and careful drawing which result in carefully constructed models.
75. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good in both nursery and reception

classes. Very good teaching was observed in the nursery. Detailed planning and regular day-to-day assessments are completed in both classes, which help all children to make further progress. However, even though the foundation stage is firmly established, and all three teachers work very hard and very well together, joint planning and agreed assessment do not take place often enough. Through their sensitivity and care, nursery nurses make a very positive contribution to the children's learning, particularly that of those having difficulties with their learning.

ENGLISH

76. The inspection found that pupils' attainments overall by the end of both key stages are close to those expected of pupils of their age. Evidence from the inspection supports the trend in National Curriculum test results since the last inspection. Results of the tests show that standards in English at both key stages have improved steadily. Given that pupils start school with low levels of skills in language and literacy, test results show pupils make good progress. When the most recent results at Key Stage 1 are compared with the results of similar schools, they show pupils' performance in reading and writing to be above average in reading and similar to most schools in writing. Similarly, at Key Stage 2 the results in English tests showed pupils achieved well, as the average performance level was better than similar schools.
77. Children start school with speaking and listening skills that are generally poor. The school has identified that this is restricting pupils' progress in writing and has introduced a consistent and successful strategy which is improving speaking and listening skills across all the year groups. This is based on a recently produced scheme of work which has been commended to other schools by the local education authority. Teachers use skilful questioning to ensure that all children contribute to discussions. Times when pupils are involved in discussions in pairs or small groups is a part of most lessons and as a result children are improving their ability in spoken communication.
78. Inspection findings are that reading standards at both key stages are generally sound. The approach to reading varies from class to class. At best, pupils read regularly to a teacher or other adult and progress is carefully monitored and recorded. Pupils take books home regularly and an effective dialogue between home and school is maintained through reading diaries. Younger pupils benefit from being heard by an older child in paired reading sessions. In some classes, mainly at Key Stage 2, some pupils do not read their books at school, other than within the literacy lesson, and in some cases do not take the opportunities offered to take a reading book or library book home. The school has introduced "Reading Logs" which are being used by some pupils as an alternative to their previous reading record. While these logs are successful in providing pupils with opportunities to reflect on what they have read, they do not provide a record of what children have read and how successful they have been. Using both the reading diary and log will provide teachers with a good means of monitoring and assessing pupils' progress.
79. Standards in writing are generally below average for both seven and eleven year olds. The range of written work is too narrow. Pupils do not benefit enough from wider experiences of writing factual accounts, plays, poetry or imaginative writing. They are not given enough opportunities to complete extended pieces of writing in other subjects. Some examples of good writing were seen during the inspection - for example, work by the older pupils on recounting incidents from the story of Beowulf. Many pupils, particularly the lower attaining children, need a great deal of help from their teachers in order to structure their work appropriately. Their writing is disjointed; handwriting, spelling and grammatical skills are weak. The overall presentation of their work is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence of pupils regularly using word processing to present work attractively.

80. Good support, initially from the deputy headteacher and more recently by the literacy co-ordinator, enabled teachers to successfully put the National Literacy Strategy into action. It is followed well and is having a positive effect on children's learning. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is often very good and leads to good learning by children. Planning is effective and the objectives for the lessons are clearly understood by the pupils, so that they know what it is they are expected to learn. Lessons are often lively and stimulating and proceed at a brisk pace and help pupils to work at a suitable rate. Resources are good and are used effectively. For example, big books are used very well as a stimulus for the lesson and help hold pupils' attention and interest. As well as developing pupils' understanding of the stories they read together, teachers' questioning and the use of opportunities to discuss aspects of the story with a partner is helping improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. Through sensitive encouragement, pupils are encouraged to learn from the mistakes they make when reading.
81. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall and leads to good learning by pupils. In almost all lessons the National Literacy Strategy is taught well and the different activities well managed. Planning is comprehensive and gives a very good structure to the lesson so that activities are well organised, although in a few lessons not enough time was available to complete writing tasks. Discussions with the pupils about the learning objectives in the introduction to the lesson ensure that they fully understand what is expected of them. This enables them to concentrate clearly on what they are to learn in the lesson. Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills by working in pairs or in small groups are used effectively by teachers. Pupils' reading skills are also suitably developed through guided reading activities. Teachers remind children of the skills they need to use so that they are able to work effectively; for example, in one lesson, pupils were encouraged to scan a text to find 'witty' and 'powerful' words. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson in which the teacher's management of the pupils' behaviour was poor and the choice of group writing activities was not well planned or appropriate for the lesson.
82. Pupils' attitudes are often very good. They are well motivated and they enjoy their lessons. In some lessons a few pupils do not follow the class rules and call out or talk during the teacher's input. This is often the result of simply being so keen to answer the questions or put forward their ideas. Teachers usually manage this well by using the school's approach to discipline effectively.
83. Following a detailed analysis of results and an careful monitoring of English throughout the school in November 1999 and February 2000, the school identified English as a priority for development. The literacy and English co-ordinators have identified a need for a more consistent approach to reading and writing across the whole school. They have put in place effective strategies to improve oracy through the introduction of the Thinking, Oracy and Literacy project. This aims to provide many opportunities for children to think critically, be involved in problem-solving situations, work collaboratively in pairs and small groups and to be continually challenged to explain and express opinions. This is already proving effective in raising pupils' standard of speaking and listening skills. This is particularly good in Literacy lessons although its effect is also evident in other lessons such as science and physical education. The co-ordinators know that they must now ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to read and write regularly. For example, time for pupils to complete pieces of extended writing must be included in the timetable and opportunities to write in other subjects exploited. Some lessons provide pupils with activities which help develop literacy skills, such as research in history or using word-processing to produce writing.
84. Through demonstration lessons, followed by observations of teachers, the literacy co-ordinator monitors the work in classes and is giving valuable help in improving teachers' expertise. The co-ordinator also looks at samples of pupils' work to identify areas of writing that need to be improved but there is not the evidence to show the same approach to ensuring consistency in the teaching of reading.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they were below average. They are now reaching those expected of pupils of their age at the age of seven and above them at the age of eleven. This is consistent with the National Curriculum test results for 2000. At the end of Key Stage 1 these were in line with all schools nationally and well above average in comparison to similar schools. They were well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2. The comparisons with similar schools is a reflection of the good progress pupils make in order to achieve as well as they do.
86. The numeracy hour has had a distinct impact upon raising standards through developing mental skills and teaching children how to learn from correctly describing the methods they use. It has awakened interest and enthusiasm for mathematics. It has also improved the quality of teaching by giving teachers precise objectives for what children need to learn in order to improve. While Year 6 children's' standards are above average at this stage in the year, the additional lessons organised during the Spring and Summer terms boost their performance in the end of Key Stage tests. These have been high over the last four years and have improved above the national trend.
87. At the age of seven children have good number skills, understand place value and are quick and accurate when counting, adding, subtracting, doubling and halving numbers. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson when they were finding the total value of three amounts of money. They showed good numeracy skills in adding mentally, in knowledge of coin values and understanding of place value when expressing sums of money correctly, using a pound sign. Most explain how they find an answer and, when measuring, make sensible estimates using correct units.
88. By the end of Key Stage 2 children use partitioning by place value, rounding of numbers and inverse functions to find answers to problems. Many are quick and accurate in mental work and use well-developed vocabulary such as, *arbitrary*, *irregular*, *sequence*, *prime* and *prediction*. This was well developed in lessons with Year 3 and Year 4 pupils when they learned how to explain repeating, horizontal, vertical and diagonal patterns. They use this knowledge to find future answers. Mental recall and the use of multiplication tables was improved in a Year 5 lesson when the class attempted to beat a time target using question and answer cards. In a Year 6 lesson children were quick to understand how to work out the size of angles on a straight line, to use a protractor accurately to check them and to measure one or two angles in a triangle. They applied their knowledge of the sum of the angles of a triangle to find the size of the unmarked angles.
89. Children with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported in the classroom through the effective match of work to their needs and through the quality of classroom support. A group of six year olds, one with hearing impairment, made good progress in ordering numbers to twenty, while a blind boy, using Braille aids, made very good progress in learning the properties of regular and irregular two-dimensional shapes. Children from the hearing impaired unit are well integrated into classes but on occasions are taught within the unit to reinforce their learning. Two of these lessons were observed when younger children, although achieving below average, made good progress in their understanding of two-digit numbers and the value of coins.
90. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Almost all teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of teaching basic skills. This was shown effectively in lessons when Year 3 and 4 pupils were investigating patterns, when vocabulary such as *repeating* and *arbitrary* was taught and

when, as the result of an incorrect answer, a teacher consolidated children's understanding of division. In a very few lessons the oral and mental sessions were low and teaching lacked pace. Lessons are well planned and almost always challenge and inspire children to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

91. However, while children are always grouped according to ability, the faster learners are not regularly given a high enough starting point with their tasks. There was good practice in this respect in a Year 6 lesson about angles, when children were encouraged to work speedily through the initial tasks and extend their learning by investigating the size of angles in different types of triangles. Time, support staff and resources, other than ITC, are used very effectively. For example in a Year 5 lesson assignment cards had been produced to challenge children to identify a shape, by a process of elimination, in a given time. There was also excellent support for the blind child in this class. The very good quality of relationships results in positive attitudes and good behaviour. This was shown in a lesson where the understanding of nets, which can be folded to make cubes, was being taught. In this the teacher was able to direct a great deal of time in supporting the slower learners while other groups worked sensibly and independently. Teachers make accurate and consistent assessment of children's work and use it effectively to plan future lessons. This is sometimes done through marking but often through discussions and questioning, especially during the plenary session. This is particularly good in Key Stage 1 when children are often asked what they have learnt and lessons conclude with class activities to consolidate children's learning. Teachers make very good use of homework which is well linked to the work in the classroom.
92. Mathematics is well managed. Resources, which were a weakness at the last inspection, are now generally satisfactory, although there is a need for better learning opportunities using ICT. Pupils use skills learned in mathematics in other lessons – for example, to measure in design and technology, using coordinates in geography and producing graphs to record in science. The analysis of annual tests is very good and is used effectively to inform the curriculum, identify groups which are under achieving and set targets for individuals. Monitoring of teaching has been undertaken and, whilst it has resulted in a more consistent approach to teaching numeracy throughout the school, now needs to include newer members of the staff.

SCIENCE

93. By the end of both key stages pupils' attainments are about those expected for their age. This reflects the very good improvements, particularly at Key Stage 2, made since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be well below average. Each year since then test scores have risen. In the National Curriculum tests of 1999 the performance of pupils aged eleven was well above the national average. The most recent test results in 2000 confirmed this improving trend. A major reason for this is the encouragement given to children to think for themselves. They enjoy being challenged to devise their own experiments and to reach their own conclusions through careful testing and observations. An emphasis on group work encourages good levels of discussion so that all pupils benefit from ideas that are shared. Another factor in helping to raise standards is the thorough preparation given to Year 6 pupils prior to the national tests. The co-ordinator promotes changes to the curriculum very well. The new policy and scheme of work provide very good structures on which teachers develop their planning. The emphasis on developing thinking skills has greatly improved levels of understanding. However, the quality of work produced in pupils' books often fails to reflect these raised standards.
94. At both key stages pupils attain standards in all aspects of the subject, including living things, physical science and materials that are close to those expected for their age. In investigative and experimental work pupils' attainments are better than average. Pupils gain a good understanding of the language and working skills of science. This often

requires staff to work very hard to compensate for many children's limited basic vocabulary and general knowledge. By the age of eleven pupils' good progress is seen in the confidence they show when discussing scientific work and their use of correct terms. Pupils in the Key Stage 1 classes are achieving better levels than previously but their progress is not as marked as that of the older pupils. Children of all abilities make good progress. The faster learners are well challenged to think and to draw their own conclusions. Their ideas are successfully shared with other pupils, both in class discussions and in the mixed ability working groups. However, opportunities are missed to allow these more able pupils to work together, occasionally, on more difficult tasks. Very good levels of support are given to those with hearing or visual impairment. They successfully undertake the same investigations as other pupils.

95. Many children have very low levels of ability on entry to the school. Standards of teaching are good to enable pupils to make the progress they do. Teachers' knowledge of science is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. They have higher expectations of what pupils are capable of understanding and also have a greater confidence in their capacity to work well together. Discussions at the end of lessons are very well used to assess and refine pupils' thinking skills as they report back their findings to the class. Improved formal assessment procedures are now in place throughout the school, based on the themes undertaken each term. The best teaching, seen in Years 4, 5 and 6, makes intellectual demands on the pupils, enabling them to learn well. However, not all teachers have equally high expectations of the pupils' ability to work accurately and neatly in their books. Marking is inconsistent. Poor recording skills are too often accepted. Opportunities are missed to teach pupils through their misunderstandings or errors.
96. Examples were seen of science being well used in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in technology lessons pupils designed illuminated Christmas cards containing electric circuits. Such work helps to make the science learning more relevant. Pupils enjoy undertaking investigations and are rightly proud of solutions that they find. However, the same pride is not extended to their workbooks. Another reason for the raised teaching levels is the high quality and quantity of science resources. These are very well stored and are easily accessible for use. Although the school has a good range of suitable programs for use on the computers these are not used enough.
97. The subject is now very well established. The recent high-quality evaluation carried out as part of a school monitoring exercise rightly identified the need to ensure that all pupils know how to ask the right questions in their investigations, progressively develop their investigational skills and understand the idea of conducting a fair test so that conclusions are relevant. Best practice in the school is being analysed, shared and spread through all the classes. This is helping to raise standards of teaching and learning ever higher.

ART AND DESIGN

98. During the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only a small amount of art teaching: three lessons were observed. However, from these lessons and from a scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of the artwork displayed in classrooms and around the school, it is clear that standards in art are good.
99. At Key Stage 1, pupils use a variety of materials and processes to communicate their ideas. They draw portraits of themselves and comment on differences in their own and others' work. They can suggest ways of improving their own work. Pupils contribute to larger displays, such as one about the Creation as part of work in religious education.
100. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils observe and draw buildings, looking for shape and line. In Year 4 a study of the Arctic and Antarctic provided an opportunity to explore colours and materials to see which would give a real feeling of the coldness of the region in paintings and models. Artwork is often linked closely to other subject areas, seen in the

large paintings of Victorian buildings and street in Year 5's history topic. Paintings on Harry Potter's Life and Times provided a cross-curricular link with literacy. The Year 6 work on form and movement used the work of Ritva Airaksinen as a stimulus. In response to this pupils produced some good drawings.

101. Although only three lessons were observed, it can be judged that the overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons are carefully planned in line with national guidelines. Teachers make good use of questioning and discussion to check pupils' understanding and the presentation of the lesson content is clear, with good introductions. Resources are carefully selected and used well. Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate well on the tasks. This was helped in some lessons when music was used most effectively to create a calm working atmosphere. In one lesson, where the introduction to the lesson was too long and the pace slow, pupils became restless and did not listen well. This affected the quality of their work.
102. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about children's art and supports and guides other staff well. She has identified what needs to be done, put schemes of work in place and revised the long-term plan. National guidelines are currently being used throughout the school and the impact will be reviewed at the end of the academic year. The co-ordinator has successfully raised the profile of art throughout the school by improving the quality of displays which value pupils' work. A rota for display areas ensures that work from all year groups is displayed in different parts of the school, giving pupils and teachers the opportunity to see work from other classes. The co-ordinator supports colleagues in their planning and in the provision of good quality art resources. She now needs time to evaluate standards in the subject throughout the school.
103. Resources are good and sufficient to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The school makes good use of artists in residence. Pupils are working on designs for a mural in the dining hall to be painted with a visiting artist.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. It was possible to see only four lessons during the inspection. Further information was obtained through discussions with pupils and staff, by looking at photographic evidence and displays and through examining school documents. On the basis of all the evidence, standards at seven and eleven are about those expected of pupils of their age. They are better now than when the school was last inspected. Issues raised then (the lack of skills development and pupils' limited practical experiences) have been addressed and are improving. Pupils' planning, designing and evaluating skills are good. In comparison, their making skills are only satisfactory. Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress to the age of seven and good progress to the age of eleven. Older children are able to accept ever-increasing responsibility for their own work. Challenges increase in complexity and children's response rises accordingly. For example, in Year 5, children produce attractive Christmas cards, each one containing an electric circuit to illuminate a feature of the front design. The range of designs and solutions bear testimony to the freedom given to the children to plan and adapt their own ideas.
105. Standards of teaching are satisfactory at both key stages. Class management is good, so that different strategies such as whole-class teaching or close, co-operative group work are effective. The encouragement of pupils to take responsibility for developing their own ideas is a particular strength. The good teaching accounts for the pupils' good progress. The scheme of work provides a good framework ensuring that all subject elements are covered adequately. Teachers use the scheme to successfully plan together in year-group teams, sharing thoughts on what went well and what problems were encountered.

106. Pupils are assessed at the end of each project on recently introduced recording sheets. These are consulted when the next activity is being planned and records are later passed on to the next teacher. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils use an increasing range of tools, components and materials, including food. Different techniques for fastening materials together are taught - for example, to produce model playground shelters in Year 6. In discussions pupils speak with pride of their designs and explain how plans have been adapted in the light of experience. The use of construction kits is better developed at Key Stage 1. The use of computers in design and technology remains at a low level throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Owing to the construction of the school's topic plan it was not possible to observe any class during the inspection. Evidence from planning shows that geographical topics will be covered adequately later in the school year.
108. From discussions with pupils and analysis of photographs and displayed work it is clear that by the age of seven pupils are able to identify features of the school and landmarks in the local environment. These are used to develop planning and mapping skills. Pupils are beginning to use coordinates to identify features on a map grid and some are able to identify and correctly place the capital cities of the United Kingdom. They can successfully contrast this locality with another, drawing maps and pictures to a satisfactory standard related to Struay in the book Katie Morag.
109. In Key Stage 2 pupils have studied Tynemouth in considerable detail. Their fieldwork has been recorded photographically and indicates that they extend their knowledge and observations of another locality using previous learned skills and knowledge. Global perspectives are beginning to be addressed with maps relating to the current historical topic on World War 2 and to current affairs such as the elections in the USA, problems in Yugoslavia and the Sydney Olympics.
110. The co-ordinator has monitored the geography curriculum and has found that the teaching of geography is inconsistent, with some skills being taught out of context. She has produced a new scheme of work and provided training aimed at improving pupils' enquiry skills.

HISTORY

111. By the ages of seven and eleven, children are working at levels similar to those seen in most schools. Standards also remain similar to those found at the previous inspection. However, one problem that was highlighted then still remains. Many pupils continue to have limited language and reading skills to enable them to locate information quickly. As pupils receive much encouragement to undertake their own researches, this factor limits progress for some pupils of all ages. Faster and average learners are not as restricted in their ability to work as are those who learn at a slower rate.
112. By the age of seven, children develop a sense of chronology; for example they study photographs of different generations of their teacher's own family. Differences are noted, for example in clothing and hairstyles, enabling children to put the photos correctly into their historical order. Some go on to recognise relationships and realise that, "He must be the grandad of your children then". In discussions they point out how life in the past was different; for example, they stated that "Toys and computers have changed from when our teacher was a girl". Challenges become progressively more difficult. Children in Year 4 work together to research the causes of the Spanish Armada. A good range of books helps provide suitable texts for most children. However, some find these texts too difficult and alternative, more easily understood information is not sufficiently provided. Older pupils researched newspaper articles from World War II about an air raid on Sunderland. They sifted through contrasting

accounts of the events to find out exactly what did happen on that dreadful night. Pupils are able to imagine what life was like in the past, such what it was like to be a servant in a large Victorian house or a child evacuee in World War II. Such experiences as role-playing life in a Victorian classroom, wearing typical clothes of the day, transport pupils into the past. Visitors also relate their own experiences, such as two former prisoners of the Japanese talking about the construction of the Burma Railway. They bring the past to life for pupils. Pupils enjoy their history projects greatly.

113. Good teaching was seen at both key stages. Pupils are encouraged to act as detectives. Teachers have high expectations of them and imaginative ways are found to provide evidence on which pupils can base their researches. As a result they apply themselves very well and show much interest in their work. This was well illustrated when Year 6 pupils recognised that newspaper reports on the blitz contained conflicting evidence making false claims about the heroic behaviour of a child trapped in a bombed building. This enabled children to distinguish between accurate and inaccurate reporting, as well as introducing them to the concept of morale-boosting propaganda.
114. History is well led. A recent review of the subject was made to determine how successful the school has been in its aim to place a higher emphasis on pupil-based enquiries, rather than simply teaching historical facts. Teachers are adapting well, enabling this new approach to succeed. Pupils do think as historians as they find answers to the questions which often they have posed themselves. However, on many occasions, pupils' research and interpretation skills are not well enough developed to enable them to undertake studies to the depth required. There is also a need to re-examine the history curriculum, as it contains certain elements no longer required by the National Curriculum.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainments are below those expected nationally. This is what was found in the previous inspection. The lack of progress in raising attainment has been significantly influenced by the problems the school has experienced in setting up the ICT suite. This has meant that pupils have not had sufficient access to computers. Now that the ICT suite is in operation pupils are beginning to make good progress in learning the necessary skills.
116. At Key Stage 1, most children can switch on the computer and select the program they need, although a few pupils need support with this. Through using programs to draw pictures most pupils make good progress in control of the mouse and in using a toolbar. Children are beginning to use the keyboard correctly. The more competent pupils can already type, using the middle line of letters properly. Several children, particularly those for whom delicate movements are difficult, find the precision needed for these skills difficult. Pupils do not yet use keys such as "shift" and "enter" in order to help them make effective use of word-processing. There is little evidence of pupils' having used a CD-ROM to search for information or of pupils' having given simple instructions to be followed by a model.
117. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils are learning how to alter and amend text but few can do this confidently without help. Pupils have used a suitable program to produce repeated patterns but this is at a level below that expected of pupils of this age. The older pupils are more confident with word-processing skills and are beginning to insert pictures into their writing or to use facilities, such as "WordArt", to present their work attractively. They have not yet used the digital camera to add relevant illustrations to their work. Some pupils in Year 6 extend their mathematical knowledge by giving commands to a programmable model - for example, to draw an equilateral triangle. They have not yet had the opportunity to develop this control technology work further. With help, some of the oldest pupils can gain access to the Internet - for

example, to find pictures suitable to illustrate their work on Autumn - but few pupils know how to efficiently conduct a search to find relevant information. Pupils have not yet learned how to send and receive e-mail. Although the oldest pupils have some experience of collecting and entering information onto an appropriate program they have only used this to produce attractive graphs rather than as a means of exploring ways of searching specific information. Pupils have had no experience of using spreadsheets.

118. The school is very aware of the weaknesses in pupils' skills and is actively addressing the issue through very effective use of the ICT suite to teach the basic computer skills and techniques needed. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Well-planned lessons are suitably organised to make sure that pupils learn skills systematically. Specific skills are clearly taught - for example, how to save to a disk. Most teachers ensure that pupils have understood each instruction before giving individual support to those who need additional help. As a result most pupils clearly understand what they have to do. Sufficient time is given for pupils to practise skills in each lesson. As a result most lessons proceed at a steady pace and pupils usually work hard. Their high level of interest and enthusiasm is channelled, if somewhat noisily, into their work. They are excited by their success, when, for example, they change the size of script. Pupils' lack of prior knowledge means teachers have to balance allowing time for consolidating skills with teaching new work. For example, pupils in Year 2 needed time to develop control of the mouse but the teacher sensibly placed this in the context of producing pictures and patterns that helped further develop the use of the program. Several teachers acknowledge the need to improve their own skills. Their limited knowledge means that expectations of pupils' attainments are not always high enough, particularly of the more competent pupils. For example, some pupils in Year 4 knew how to correct errors in their word-processing but had not been taught how to use the cursor effectively to prevent their having to delete too much of their work. Good use is made of support teachers and staff to help with teaching individuals.
119. There are limited examples of ICT being used to support other subjects. There has been some information gathering in science and mathematics to help produce graphs and some written work has been neatly presented using word-processing. The co-ordinator is well aware of what needs to be done to raise standards. A relevant scheme of work has very recently been adopted. This carefully structures what needs to be taught and gives the less confident teachers good support. The scheme also acts as an effective means of assessing pupils' progress. The need to improve staff expertise is being addressed through training programmes for all teachers and support for individuals. The range of resources available to the school is now good, although some equipment, such as sensors, will need to be acquired as the older pupils skills improve.

MUSIC

120. It was possible to see only three lessons during the inspection. Further evidence was gleaned from discussions with pupils and staff, observing an assembly and a hymn practice, listening to a compact disc produced last year by the school, watching a video of the end of year production of 'Grease' and listening to pupils singing traditional Zulu songs. The evidence indicates that, by the age of seven, pupils attain standards expected for their age. They do not maintain the same progress through the junior stage. In certain areas of the subject, standards are below those normally seen at the age of eleven. However, in one particular area of music, singing, standards are extremely high. This is particularly evident in the whole-school assemblies, when the massed voices give a real sense of communal worship that at times is truly inspirational. In comparison, standards achieved by older pupils in music lessons are not high enough and they have the potential for more demanding and imaginative work.
121. Younger children experience music via 'Music Box' tapes. By Year 2, they sing in tune

and, with appropriately restrained tones, perform a lullaby. Selected pupils accompany the singing sympathetically, using a range of untuned percussion instruments. Pupils are familiar with these instruments and gain obvious enjoyment, both from singing and accompanying the melody. By Year 4, pupils' experiences of instrumental playing have not greatly increased. The names of some instruments remain unfamiliar and children are unsure how to play them to produce a range of sounds. By Year 6, opportunities for playing tunes have been limited. Pupils have had few experiences of composing melodies or accompaniments of their own. The music of other cultures is better taught than at the last inspection. Knowledge of composers is limited, as is the basic musical vocabulary needed for discussions. The new sound-system in the hall does enable high quality sounds to be reproduced that add excitement to pupils' listening opportunities.

122. The quality of teaching is variable between classes but is satisfactory overall. The school is aware of those areas that need to be improved. Courses are planned, for example in musical composition. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers enables some older, more able pupils to make good progress in score-reading and instrumental playing on a range of brass instruments. Recorder playing, outside lesson times, also enables other pupils to develop these skills to a reasonable standard. Recordings on the school CD show the pupils' ability to play in small ensembles. Good teaching enables pupils to contribute to four-part arrangements successfully. Singing in four parts by the school choir, which includes pupils with hearing impairment, displays clearly that teaching pupils the melody lines is matched by inspiring them to sing with real gusto and enjoyment. However, teachers in many classes are over-reliant on commercial tapes to teach basic skills and knowledge, but these are insufficient to challenge and extend pupils' creative abilities.
123. Leadership in the subject is good. Most areas in need of improvement have been identified and steps taken to improve standards. A new scheme is shortly to be introduced and new skills being taught to the teachers will enable them to implement it. With very high standards already in place in singing, the school has a clear benchmark against which other areas of the subject can now be measured. One final gain to the school is the great stimulus which music provides for learning the 'signing' language. The subject, in this and many other ways, has the potential to enrich the lives of all the pupils and staff of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. The last inspection reported that pupils' achievements were satisfactory and this standard has been maintained. By the ages of seven and eleven children are reaching the levels expected in the targets of the National Curriculum. Achievements of a significant minority, particularly in games' skills, is above this expected level.
125. Most of the lessons observed were in Key Stage 2 and, but for one dance lesson, contained mostly games skills and activities. In these children showed appropriate levels of agility and mobility when running and dodging and catching, passing and controlling a ball. There was significant above average achievement in a Year 5 lesson when good co-ordination was observed during a hockey dribbling activity. Children in this key stage are able to sustain vigorous activity, as was shown in a rugby lesson taken by a visiting coach when they were challenged with a series of circuit exercises. In a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson pupils showed a sound understanding of playing in a team, the importance of rules and strategies such as attack and defence. One dance lesson was observed with older children and one with younger children. In both of these children showed they could move expressively in response to words and music of African dances and differing types of weather. Good co-ordination, matching movement to the rhythm and sympathetic mood of the music, was evident.

126. The overall quality of teaching is good. The teaching of safe practice and the reference to how important exercise is for a healthy life style are particularly good features. Lessons are well planned around clear learning objectives, make allowances for the differences in children's physical prowess and contain interesting and stimulating activities. This was shown in the Year 2 dance lesson, which was concluded with a series of team relay races which provided competition, enjoyment and a chance for children to practise team skills. Teachers use resources well, seen in the Year 5 hockey lesson for which charts had been made for children to refer to about particular skills. Teachers have good management skills, which is reflected in the positive attitudes of the children and their good behaviour. The teachers are good at evaluating children's performances, as was evident in the Year 6 dance lesson when pupils were selected to perform for the rest of the class to encourage them to improve.
127. The school has a swimming programme which results in most pupils being able to swim unaided for at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Gymnastics and athletics are also included in the teaching programme, the latter culminating in a Sports Day in the summer term. Opportunities for adventurous pursuits are provided during the residential visit to Derwent Hill and events organised by Sunderland Athletics/Track events committee.
128. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Resources are satisfactory, although the lack of suitable frames restricts climbing activities in gymnastics. There are few extra-curricular sporting clubs and limited opportunities for children to compete against other schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. Standards of work at the end of both key stages meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when attainment throughout the school was below expectations. Most pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths, including Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism or the Sikh faith. Pupils recognise symbols associated with these faiths and can explain them. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, to aspects of their own culture and to an awareness of multi-culturalism. However standards attained by some Year 3 pupils are still below those expected because some of the tasks provided do not help pupils understand the ideas being discussed in some lessons.
130. Pupils in Year 1 learn how human beings have a responsibility to care for the natural world. Following the reading of the story of St. Francis, pupils used mature language to identify ways in which they too could care for living things. They are beginning to understand the idea of special – "it makes your heart happy" was one response. Year 2 pupils display a sound knowledge about Judaism. They know about the Torah and the Shabbat. They begin to understand some of the contents of the Torah and their own completed representations are of good quality. They can explain what "commandments" are and link them to their own school rules. Pupils communicate their feelings satisfactorily and show a depth of understanding about the distinctive features of the Jewish artefacts.
131. Parables such as "The Good Samaritan" are used well in Year 3 to illustrate ideas of forgiveness and neighbourliness. Improvised drama helps to draw out interpretations within their own lives resulting in high levels of pupil interest and an understanding of the moral. A Year 4 class showed an understanding about the lives of monks, linking their responses to previous learning about Mother Teresa. Year 5 pupils have been discovering the Bible through personal research and are able to distinguish between different kinds of writing found in the Bible. The oldest pupils respond very positively to the question "What is worship?". They develop their thinking skills in discussion groups where they respect the views of others while explaining their own feelings. Their previous learning enables them to compare, for example, symbolism in Christianity and

the Sikh faith in considerable detail.

132. The progress that pupils make is due to teachers' knowledge of the agreed syllabus and the way its requirements are planned to motivate and interest the pupils. The planning regularly draws on pupils' personal experiences, and takes account of the need to learn about shared human experiences in different times and places. It is also effective in ensuring progression in learning about major world faiths, sacred writings and religious practices. Pupils often make personal informed choices, especially when considering the impact of beliefs, values and ideals and their practical application in daily life. The co-ordinator is committed to supporting the teachers with their planning and also providing useful schemes of work to ensure progression, especially at Easter and Christmas. Teachers have access to a variety of resources which are used well to support learning.
133. Teaching of religious education is generally good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2, although some is unsatisfactory and some very good. The best lessons are based on sound relationships where pupils are confident to share their opinions, knowing that their views will be respected. Teachers share their expectations of work and behaviour with their pupils, who in turn respond to teachers' probing questions, work hard and learn as much as they can. Most lessons move at a good pace and pupils are interested, motivated and stimulated. When teaching is more mundane and the teacher has few strategies to maintain control, pupils quickly lose interest and concentration, teaching time is lost and progress is impeded. In most lessons teachers make effective links with literacy, reading stories and encouraging discussion and debate. In discussion, skilful intervention by the teacher greatly extends the learning and understanding of pupils.
134. The school has good relationships with local clergy and a church drama group who are regular visitors. Their contributions enhance the quality of pupils' learning.