

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**Stanley Burnside Community Primary School**

Stanley

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114033

Headteacher: Mr. P. Barker

Reporting inspector: Mr. S. G. Evans  
21217

Dates of inspection: 11.09.00 - 14.09.00

Inspection number: 224549

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 junior with a nursery class

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mendip Terrace  
South Stanley  
Stanley  
County Durham

Postcode: DH9 6QP

Telephone number: 01207 234020

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. E. James

Date of previous inspection: 20.01.1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S. G. Evans (OIN 21217)	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Physical education Under fives Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs J. Moore (OIN 11439)	Lay inspector		Attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs C. Richardson (OIN 22058)	Team inspector	English Art Geography Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How good are curricular and other opportunities? Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr A. Margerison (OIN 21666)	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology History Religious education Special educational needs.	Assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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Alexandra House  
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stanley Burnside is a junior and infant school with a nursery class. There are a total of 202 pupils on roll with 52 part-time nursery children. This is about the same size as other primary schools.

Attainment on entry is well below that expected nationally. Sixty-two pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This is above average in relation to national figures. Three pupils have statements of special educational need (in line with the national average).

A significant number of pupils come from families that are socially and economically disadvantaged. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that gives good value for money. It has many good features and the strengths of the school significantly outweigh the areas requiring improvement. The teaching and learning are good, and the leadership and management of the school are very good.

#### What the school does well

- Pupils, by the time they leave the school, make good progress and therefore achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. They attain well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics in comparison with similar schools.
- There is a very significant amount of good and better teaching across the school. This positively affects standards.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and their attitudes to school and personal development are good.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and it is good for their spiritual development. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and the relationships they form with one another.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and the use of this information to plan pupils' work, are very good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators.

#### What could be improved

- Attainment in English is rising but remains below the national average at the end of both key stages.
- Most pupils have a good attendance record, but there are some pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory. Therefore, the school's overall attendance is below the national average.
- A very small number of parents have a positive impact on the work of the school and on their children's learning at school and at home. However, the overall involvement of parents in the life of the school and in their children's learning is unsatisfactory.

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

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

The improvement since the last inspection is very good. The school is well placed to maintain the improvements and build upon them further. Pupils' standards of attainment are higher. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very much better. The use of the results of pupil assessment -key issue from the last inspection- is much more effective. There is no unsatisfactory teaching now (14 per cent at the time of the last inspection). The amount of very good teaching has doubled to 20 per cent compared with the previous inspection findings. The curriculum provision is also significantly better, another key issue from the last inspection. The role of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators has improved markedly. This was the other weakness identified in the previous inspection report.

## 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	D	E	E	B
Mathematics	C	E	D	B
Science	D	E	B	A

**Key**

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

Inspection evidence indicates that the high standards in science have been maintained and standards in English and mathematics have improved. At the time of the inspection standards of attainment in mathematics are in line with the national average and close to the national average in English. The weakness in English is the low level of pupils' attainment in their speaking skills. Across the school pupils have a very limited range of vocabulary which adversely affects their ability to express themselves.

Standards in all other areas of the curriculum are in line with national expectations. Pupils' achieve well across the school in relation to their prior attainment. Attainment in religious education is in line with standards recommended in the locally agreed syllabus.

The school assembles a range of information on pupils' prior attainment to set appropriate targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and have good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good and they enjoy very good relationships with one another.
Attendance	Most pupils attend school very regularly but attendance is below the national average because a very small minority of pupils are unsatisfactory attenders.

## 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.*

Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. It is excellent in two per cent, very good in 19 per cent, good in 62 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching of pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. The strengths of the teaching are the effective use of an appropriate range of teaching methods, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, lesson planning, the management of pupils' behaviour and teachers' high expectations of what they want pupils to attain.

Pupils' learning is good. They generally work hard, with interest and concentration. A particular strength of pupils' learning at Key Stage 2 is the knowledge of their own learning. Thus, they are closely involved in their own target setting.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the under fives is planned well and covers all areas of learning appropriate to children this age. The school provides a broad range of work that is relevant to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is an appropriate statutory curriculum in place. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, but provision for pupils' multi-cultural development is a weakness. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for well. Members of staff know the pupils well and treat them with understanding and respect. Procedures for child protection are in place. Assessment procedures are very effective in identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses and monitoring their progress. The school promotes and monitors attendance well.

Parents have a very high regard for the school. There are effective links with parents but parental involvement in the work of the school and in their children's learning is underdeveloped.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Subject co-ordinators provide good leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work closely with the staff in their efforts to improve educational provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors monitor very closely and evaluate effectively the school's performance. They take effective action to secure improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are managed well. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The surplus budget is used effectively to maintain a low pupil-teacher ratio across the school.

The school is adequately staffed and the quality of accommodation is good. There are adequate learning resources but the siting of the library is unsatisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school enables their children to make good progress.</li> <li>• Their children behave well at school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school is easy to approach with concerns.</li> <li>• Staff have high expectations for their children.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• Their children's personal development is promoted well by the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents have concerns about the provision of homework.</li> <li>• There are insufficient extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support the parents' positive views. Inspection evidence indicates that the newly introduced procedures for homework are of good quality. They have yet to have the intended positive impact on pupils' progress because they have not been in place long enough. There is a good level of extra-curricular provision in the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged seven the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was broadly average in writing and mathematics and well below average in reading. In the teacher assessment for science, results were average. In comparison with similar schools the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was above average in reading and well above average in writing, mathematics and science. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 the performance of the pupils in reading and writing was well below the national average and below average in mathematics. There is an overall steady improvement. Overall there is not a significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys.
2. Inspection evidence indicates standards are broadly the same in writing, mathematics and science as they were in the 1999 national tests and teacher assessment. Reading standards have improved. This is because guided reading sessions are very well structured to include the teaching of basic reading skills. Also teachers give pupils more opportunities to read to an audience, for example, pupils are pleased to read out their own work in the final session of the lesson. This serves to increase pupils' confidence in their ability to read. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment by the age of seven. Standards are higher now than when the school was last inspected.
3. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged 11 standards were above average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. In comparison with similar schools (based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals) standards of attainment were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 attainment was below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. The trend in standards was broadly in line with the national trend. In the national tests of July 2000, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4<sup>1</sup> or above rose significantly in mathematics and were broadly the same in English and science. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Progress by all pupils by the time they are 11 is good. This is illustrated by the fact that the percentage of pupils who attained Level 4 or above in July 2000 is 20 per cent higher than the prediction based on their performance in the tests for pupils aged seven.
4. Current inspection evidence indicates that by the time pupils are aged 11 standards in science are above average, average in mathematics and close to the national average in English. Standards are higher now than at the time of the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy standards are close to national expectations. The weakness in English is in the development of pupils' speaking skills. The good and very good teaching across the key stage has brought about the improvement in standards in the last couple of years and since the last inspection. There is very thorough monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress so teachers plan work accurately to meet effectively the varying needs of pupils. In relation to their prior attainment pupils achieve very well in science and well in English and mathematics. This represents

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<sup>1</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the age of 11, are expected to reach Level 4. Also, by the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach L2.

good progress. The school meets the needs of higher attaining pupils, although there are no pupils identified specifically as gifted or talented.

5. Across the school the successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the good leadership of the subject co-ordinators positively affect standards in English and mathematics. Standards of literacy and numeracy by the time pupils leave the school at 11 years of age are in line with national expectations. The good leadership of the co-ordinator and the good and very good teaching have significantly contributed to the good progress pupils make in science.
6. The school has made a good start in implementing its literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers are planning and teaching with the strategies clearly guiding the way. In literacy, chosen texts are challenging, usually interesting and used well to support the objectives of the lesson. The school provides plenty of opportunities for literacy skills to be used in a range of subjects. For example, in Year 1 science work, pupils are engaged in recording "patient record sheets" in their role play area dedicated to a hospital as part of their topic "Ourselves". In numeracy lessons, there is a good balance between mental calculation and written work. Numeracy is used well across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 4 design and technology lesson pupils measured accurately when making a purse.
7. Standards in religious education for pupils aged seven and 11 years of age are in line with those recommended in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. By the age of seven and 11 years standards in information technology are in line with national expectations. Standards are significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection. A considerable investment in time and money has included staff training and far better resources. This has contributed significantly to the improvement. The good quality of teaching is another important factor influencing pupils' good progress in information technology. Furthermore, the co-ordinator provides valuable support and expertise and leads the subject well.
8. By the age of seven and 11, pupils attain in line with national expectations in design and technology, history, music and physical education. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils aged seven attain above national expectations in art. In relation to their prior attainment this represent good achievement. In geography by the age of seven pupils achieve well and attain standards in line with national expectations. There was insufficient evidence for pupils aged seven to 11 to make an overall judgement on standards of attainment in art and geography.
9. By the time they reach the age of five at the end of the foundation stage, children will attain in line with expectations for their age in personal, social and emotional development, creative development and physical development. In mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world they attain below expectations. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is well below expected levels. When children start school their attainment is very low in communication, language and literacy and well below that expected in other areas of learning for children of nursery school age. Children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment by the time they are five. The good quality teaching of the under fives positively affects the progress the children make.

10. The school's programme of support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has an effective system for identifying pupils who need additional help in class. The very effective use of skilled support staff enhances pupils' learning. This ensures pupils make good progress in meeting the targets identified in their individual education plans. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have statements of special educational need are effective and ensure they attain well in relation to their prior attainment.
11. The school assembles a wide range of data on pupils' attainment and uses this information to set targets for all pupils. These targets are sufficiently challenging and the school makes good progress towards achieving them.

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

12. This aspect is a strong feature of the school and the high standards observed on the previous inspection have been more than maintained. Parents are happy with the standards of behaviour and report that their children like to come to school.
13. Throughout the school children have positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and are pleased to discuss with visitors what they are doing and share their activities, such as the development of a grid to describe a range of different biscuits in design and technology. Most pupils respond positively in class and take part enthusiastically in the range of activities offered. For example, they are keen to go to computer and football clubs and animatedly discuss what they are doing. In lessons pupils try hard to answer questions. Some have difficulty in waiting to be asked for their answers. There are, however, a number of pupils, particularly amongst the younger ones, who have a more limited vocabulary and lack the confidence to explain their thoughts and ideas. This causes them to be passive for much of the lesson. Teachers are aware of these pupils' difficulties and work hard to encourage all pupils to participate in the lessons. Pupils usually settle to work quickly and get on with the task given to them. They are learning to work independently when the teacher is talking to other groups.
14. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils of all ages clearly understand what is expected of them and this has a very positive effect on their behaviour. They are polite and proud of their school. Entry into assembly is calm and controlled and pupils show a high level of respect during prayers in assembly and for grace at lunchtime. They listen with respect to the speakers and when watching others perform. There is a noticeable respect for property in lessons, where pupils take good care of books and equipment, and around the playground where there is no litter. Pupils play well together in the playground and lunchtimes are pleasant, sociable times. Any unsatisfactory behaviour is quickly, firmly and unobtrusively managed. There was no evidence of bullying and there were no exclusions last year.
15. Relationships between pupils, and adults and pupils, are very good. The quality of relationships is very constructive and has a strong impact on pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are very effectively integrated into the life of the school. Pupils are learning to work well in groups, for example on composition in music and for choral speaking. Pupils show respect for other people's differences and feelings. For example, they are full of wonder and respect for the skills of the blind dancers who visit the school. They understand how others feel when hurt or upset and there is a need to say "sorry."
16. Pupils willingly, sensibly and proudly take on many responsibilities around the school and gain confidence as they grow older. They are involved in daily routines, such as

taking the register, from Year 1. Amongst their tasks, pupils in Year 6 have bells to ring, to ensure everyone walks back sensibly to the classroom after assembly, and to assist in the library. Younger pupils know that they are able to get help from the monitors in the library and value their help.

17. The rate of attendance is improving but is still below the national average. The electronic registers are marked and monitored correctly but not closed until 30 minutes after registration; nevertheless most pupils are prompt and lateness is not an issue. Parents' help is sought to improve attendance and reduce the incidence of lateness. Some excellent work has been done with the educational welfare officer to ensure the attendance of a pupil with special educational needs and the school is justly proud of this. There has been an improvement in attendance since the last inspection.

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

18. The quality of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching having a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons, with 62 per cent good, 18 per cent very good and two per cent excellent.
19. The quality of teaching for the under fives is good and this has a significant effect on children's learning. The teaching is based upon very good planning which identifies clear learning targets in all areas. Groups of children are organised and resourced well and this fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and good behaviour of the children. Children show increasing levels of concentration, initiative and independence for their age because the staff encourage this. There are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress which staff use successfully to plan the next step in children's learning. Support staff are deployed very effectively in lessons and make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
20. For pupils aged five to seven, the quality of teaching is good, ranging from very good to satisfactory (87 per cent good or better). Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art, geography, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in religious education. No lessons were observed in design and technology and history so no judgement is made. For pupils aged seven to eleven, 86 per cent of lessons were good or better with 36 per cent very good or excellent. Teaching is very good in science, good in English, mathematics, design and technology, history and physical education. It is satisfactory in religious education. Too few lessons were observed in information technology, art, geography and music to make an overall judgement.
21. Across the school, teachers work very hard to plan and prepare lessons. The planning clearly shows what is to be taught and learnt. Teachers give pupils opportunities to develop numeracy and literacy skills in different subjects, for example in design and technology by measuring and in science by ensuring pupils record their findings in a variety of different written formats. Information technology is used to research work in history and record evidence in science. An effective use of pupil assessment ensures that activities are matched to pupils' varying needs and prior attainment.
22. A range of appropriate teaching methods is used. These include whole-class teaching, group and individual work, involving practical, investigative and problem solving activities. Time and resources are used efficiently. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively. A strength of the

teaching is the very good relationships between staff and pupils. The use of the additional teacher for pupils aged seven to eleven is very effective. She teaches pupils on a withdrawal basis and alongside class teachers. The balance between the teaching of withdrawal groups and in class team teaching is right. Support staff are deployed very well to support pupils' learning in class. They make a positive contribution to pupils' progress.

23. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. All work is marked and the best marking places an emphasis on what pupils need to do to improve their work further. There are new homework procedures of good quality recently introduced, but they have been in place for too short a time to make a sound judgement as to their effectiveness.
24. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and English. Most pupils on the register of special educational needs have difficulties in this area of learning. Where teachers' planning for the literacy hour matches the national guidelines it takes into account the needs of pupils with learning difficulties by ensuring that independent work matches their ability and effective use is made of whole class sessions to reinforce and consolidate basic skills. However, there are few references in the short term planning for these lessons to the individual plans for specific pupils. Good use is made of classroom support staff to teach pupils with specific literacy difficulties as support in lessons and in withdrawal sessions for pupils aged seven to eleven. In lessons other than those for literacy and numeracy there are few references in teacher's planning to individual pupils although work is frequently appropriately matched to ability within the class. The impact of support upon pupils with special educational needs in the classroom is positive. The support staff have very good relationships with the pupils and use this to encourage and guide the pupils. Appropriate support is obtained from external services for pupils with specific difficulties.
25. The following are examples of how good quality teaching positively affects pupils' learning:
  - In a reception class science lesson about growing beans, the teaching and learning were good. There was good management of the children's behaviour, based on very good relationships and effective rules and routines. The children responded by behaving well, listening carefully and responding promptly to the teacher's instructions. There was effective use of support staff to enhance the children's learning in a small group situation. There was good use of time by ensuring each part of the lesson was of appropriate length so these young children's attention and interest was maintained. This meant the children were able to maintain concentration and learn what they were meant to learn.
  - The teacher taught well in a Year 2 numeracy lesson about the value of digits in a number. The activities within the lesson provided the pupils with work that would ensure they met their learning objectives. The brisk pace of the lesson maintained the pupils' interest and concentration. The teacher had high expectations of what she expected pupils to learn. This meant they had to work hard and think very carefully about their work in order to complete it accurately.
  - A literacy lesson in Year 5 about changing direct speech to reported speech was very well taught. The use of the text from "Babe" motivated pupils, who responded with interest and a desire to learn. The teacher developed the lesson from a secure basis of very good behaviour and attitudes with a series of probing questions to extend pupils' thinking. The teacher made sure to choose lower attaining pupils as often as other pupils and gave lots of praise. This motivated

pupils to become increasingly involved in the lesson, and through this increased interest their knowledge and understanding of what was being taught increased significantly.

- In a Year 6 science lesson on forces the quality of teaching was excellent and the pupils' learning very good. The lesson planning very clearly showed what was to be taught and learnt. This remained the focus of the lesson and ensured pupils learnt what they need to learn. Skilled use of an information technology resource established what the pupils already knew. This will also be used as an assessment tool at the end of the topic. There was excellent subject knowledge that meant there were clear explanations. The pupils responded by listening intently and concentrating very hard. By the end their gain in knowledge was very marked. Very skilled questioning involved all pupils. This meant that the higher attainers were challenged appropriately and the pupils with special educational needs answered questions that extended their knowledge but did not exclude them because they were too hard.

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

26. The school provides a good range of interesting and valuable learning opportunities for all pupils and has particular strengths in its constructive links with other schools and the very well integrated planning and assessment system it has developed. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. This is mainly because there are now detailed schemes of work that make it possible for pupils to build on their skills and knowledge as they move through the school and the long, medium and short-term planning for all subjects is carefully monitored by the co-ordinators and the head teacher.
27. The school provides a broad range of work that is relevant to pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2. The school has rightly placed a relevant, and effective, emphasis on developing the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but there is consistent representation of all of the National Curriculum subjects as required. The curriculum for children under five closely follows national guidance and provides a good foundation stage. The school's curriculum fully meets statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus. There is a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian character.
28. The school plans the curriculum appropriately to meet the wide range of needs in each year group. Pupils benefit from the grouping arrangements in English and mathematics and the additional support they receive. The content and organisation of the curriculum provide equal opportunities for all pupils and good provision is made for health and personal education, especially in Year 6. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught within specific programmes in Year 6, with the involvement of outside agencies, and are included where appropriate in other year groups. Personal, social and health education is not taught on a regular basis in the other classes but is integrated appropriately into other topics and lessons.
29. Generally pupils have equal opportunity and access to the curriculum, although there are a small number of younger pupils for whom the school is currently unable to provide a curriculum appropriate to their specific needs.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is good. The policy for special educational needs is generally reflected in the school provision. Individual education plans, written usually on a termly basis, are in place for all pupils on register of special educational needs. The school uses a

combination of withdrawal lessons and in-class support to help the pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know their pupils well which makes a significant contribution to the good quality of the work planned for them. However, the individual education plans lack clear, short -term targets and criteria for progress to be measured. Better written individual education plans would further enhance the quality of teachers' planning for pupils' special educational needs.

31. The school continues to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities for girls and boys in the course of the school year. There is an annual sports day and school teams compete in a number of local football, cross-country, and cricket and netball tournaments. Year 6, and some Year 5, pupils take part in a residential activity each year at centres which have a different setting and enable pupils to develop their social and personal skills and enhance the curriculum in many ways. Visits to museums and places of local interest provide additional valuable opportunities to enhance pupils' learning.
32. The school has good links with the community, including Beamish Museum, the Green Corridor project and artists who work in the school. There is a good range of visits to places of local interest and the school uses the environment well to enhance learning in for example, geography, art and history. Pupils deliver food to older residents in the area at Harvest Festival and please them with their behaviour when they take the goods to the houses. The pupils raise money for charities such as Comic Relief. Through the Internet and their own website the pupils have made contact with schools and people all over the world and this enhances pupils' knowledge of a broad range of subjects, including other countries, their climate and lifestyles.
33. There are good arrangements for the induction of children into the nursery and on transfer from each year group to the next. Links with the secondary schools through the Bridging Project, and other primary schools in their "Cluster Group", are very good. To ensure that pupils are prepared well for their transfer to secondary education and move on with confidence to the next stage of their education, extensive links have been developed between the schools. Pupils have a Year 7 Buddy and in Year 5 and 6 pupils are using the school planners to help them organise their time and their work. Pupils and staff are benefiting from, and enjoying, the increased contacts between the schools, and opportunities for additional training, all of which have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and reflects the school's aims and values. Assemblies have chosen themes to encourage pupils to consider moral values and pupils have an understanding of the need to show reverence during prayers and grace. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have heard. Teachers plan moments of reflection in some lessons. In an art lesson in Year 2 a pupil looks through the viewfinder on the teacher's camera. His delight in having this opportunity and seeing other children through this provides him with an unforgettable experience. Pupils in Year 1 watch the popping of the balloon in the morning to see who will be the special person for the day, each hoping that it will be their turn but happy for the person who is chosen. Year 6 pupils reflect on the difference between what is said in a biography and an autobiography. One boy develops the discussion and begins to extend this to wonder how you know which is the true version of any event. "Can you trust what you read?" he concludes. Many pupils find it difficult to find the words to explain their feelings or extend descriptions or opinions of how others may feel when something happens to them. The school is

aware that more opportunities and situations in which pupils can develop these skills are required.

35. The school promotes pupils' moral education very well. Pupils understand the need for rules and respect the system of rewards and sanctions within the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and the school works hard to promote right attitudes, good relationships and self-discipline. In stories, religious education lessons and daily conversation teachers build pupils' understanding of the principles that separate right from wrong, truthfulness, fairness and honesty. Very good relationships allow teachers to guide pupils' moral development positively. Friday assemblies are opportunities to celebrate good behaviour and work in class throughout the week.
36. The school develops pupils' social skills very well. There is a strong sense of community in the school and pupils are encouraged to work well together in lessons and share equipment. Many opportunities are given for pupils to work in pairs or small groups and to take on responsibilities. Lunch times are pleasant social occasions and pupils play well together at break and lunch times. The residential trips are valuable opportunities for pupils to extend their physical, social and emotional development when they learn to live with others in a different setting. Computer and football clubs are other valuable opportunities for pupils to work with others and learn skills in taking turns. The competitive games and sporting events with other schools are additional opportunities for physical, social and moral development. There are frequent visitors to the school who come to share their skills and experiences with the pupils and these events greatly enhance pupils' learning and social development. Involvement in the group activities such as the construction of the impressive Millennium Tapestry and the signs for the Green Corridor are particularly valuable.
37. Provision for cultural development is sound. A wide range of activities in and out of school provides pupils with an appreciation of their own cultural traditions. Visits from artists and musicians enhance learning in lessons. In history, art and music pupils learn about the lives of a number of famous inventors, artists and composers and in English they acquire knowledge of a wide range of authors and literature. Pupils' understanding of the cultures of other countries is mainly covered in geography and religious education, with some links with art and music, such as the lesson when pupils made large Rangoli patterns in the courtyard. The school has Internet links with schools in other countries and pupils learn about festivals from other faiths during the year, valuing others' beliefs and customs. However, pupils' understanding of the variety of cultures represented in today's society is less well developed.

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

38. The school takes good care of its pupils. The relationships between staff and pupils, parents and carers are very good. The staff are excellent role models and have high expectations of the pupils and know them well. Good behaviour is promoted very well and the behaviour policy underpins this. The pupils are expected to behave and do so. There is a good 'rewards and sanctions' aspect to the behaviour policy, and certificates and praise are given weekly in the Achievement Assemblies and recorded in the school's Achievement Book, which is on display for visitors to see. Parents are encouraged to attend the assemblies, are welcomed and given refreshments, thus ensuring that they become good social occasions too. The school's policy for dealing with oppressive behaviour is good and working well. No incidents were seen and the

parents have every confidence that the school deals quickly and effectively with any bullying. The school is a place of calm in what can be a chaotic world for some pupils. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance levels, which have improved since the last inspection. The school works well with the educational welfare officer to improve pupils' attendance. The school now has evidence to show the link between good attendance and high attainment. This information is to be used to emphasise to parents the importance of good attendance.

39. There is very good effective support and guidance for pupils to help raise achievement, which bears out the faith that parents place in the school. There is good social support within the school week including lunchtime. Time is allowed for reinforcing good manners, promoting good health, and to allow pupils to develop personally, to make decisions and to grow in confidence. The end of term reports are full and helpful, painting a clear picture of the pupils for parents, as well as highlighting areas for improvement. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good, including the early years. The records of pupils are passed from class to class and then on to the secondary schools. The links with other educational establishments are very good with the school working at many levels to help raise standards. In-class support staff is well trained and used effectively. There are also good links with the local business community for promoting awareness, citizenship and understanding health issues. For example, the local pharmacist has been in to school to talk about drug misuse. Multicultural awareness is however limited.
40. The school's policies are clear and well set out but most are not dated and have no review dates. The health and safety procedures in school are good. The headteacher, caretaker and governors check the building regularly, and most health and safety procedures are carried out properly. There are 'green man' fire exit signs missing from two doors but everyone knows the fire procedure and drills are held every term. All equipment is checked and stored correctly but the risk assessments are not done or not reviewed promptly. The building is well cared for and there is a rolling programme of repairs. School security is good.
41. Child Protection cover is good with training updated regularly, however new staff are not trained early enough and some staff, whilst knowing who to report to do not get training in how to spot potential problems. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that all pupils who need help receive it; for example using speech therapy, dyspraxia exercises, screening for hearing, sight etc.
42. Assessment procedures were judged to be a key issue at the last inspection. The school has developed these procedures very well so that they are now very good and provide the teachers with a very good basis from which to plan lessons and group pupils. Since the last inspection the school has introduced the government devised tests into Years 3,4 and 5 to supplement the statutory assessments for pupils aged seven and eleven. In addition, all pupils are tested annually to check their progress in reading. Pupils' progress in all subjects is evaluated at the end of each topic or unit of work. Teachers use the information from assessments well to plan work matched closely to the varying needs of the pupils.

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

43. The school's links with parents are satisfactory, but a good working partnership with parents to help them support their children's learning is underdeveloped. Some parents help in the school and the parent governors make a very valuable contribution. Parents who do help are very committed but there are not enough of

them and they are spread too thinly throughout the school. For example there are no parent helpers in the nursery. Parents of special educational needs' pupils need do not involve themselves fully in consultations and decisions made about their children, but the provision for such children within the school is good. Parents have a very positive view of the school and this was borne out by the evidence found during the inspection.

44. Parents are made very welcome within the school and there is an effective open door policy. They attend class and achievement assemblies to see plays, musical performances that are based on pupils' work in school. Parents know that they can call upon the school at any time if they need help or have concerns about their children. Parents are sought out if the school needs to talk to them and they feel that their concerns are heard and acted upon. The school uniform was, indeed, the parents' idea. There is generally good quality information going out to parents about the school and the curriculum. The exception to this is that some booklets are very wordy. They could be more friendly and used to better effect. Parental help should be canvassed in a way that clearly explains their role in, and the importance of, good and prompt attendance in raising achievement and standards. Annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are very good. The Annual Governors Parents' Report has one statutory requirement missing on the admission and provision for pupils with disabilities.
45. The extra curricular provision is good and parental worries regarding this are groundless. Activities include sport, computers, music and drama and are well organised and enjoyed by the pupils. Parents are encouraged to come to school for parents' evenings, (which are well attended) and for workshops, and every effort is made to enable parents to understand what is going on in school.
46. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The parents are invited to reviews of those pupils on the register of special educational needs and are informed when the school wants to involve outside specialists. They are involved in discussions about some of the individual education plans

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

47. The school is very well led by the headteacher who provides clear educational direction, and strong, influential and supportive leadership. The deputy headteacher, who together with the headteacher provide a very good senior management team for the school, very ably supports him. The senior management team monitors effectively the quality of teaching in school. There is a shared commitment within the school and the governing body to bring about further improvement. A good team spirit exists throughout the school. The school is well placed to build upon the very good improvements made since the last inspection.
48. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators effectively monitors, evaluates and supports teaching and curriculum development. The school has responded very well to national initiatives. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and information technology provide good leadership in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the recent innovations in information technology. The quality of leadership of other co-ordinators is also good.
49. The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its statutory requirements. There is a good understanding of roles, such as that provided by the governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and information technology. The governing body

provides advice and encouragement to the staff during its meetings. The governors are kept informed by the headteacher about the life of the school and the standards and quality of education pupils receive. The chair of governors works very closely and very effectively with the school. Governors visit school regularly and have first hand experience of how the school runs. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

50. School development planning is good. It clearly identifies appropriate priorities and makes the raising of standards the cornerstone of all developments. The school takes very effective action to meet its targets. There is effective long term strategic financial planning. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The day-to-day administration and management of the school is very good. Efficient and friendly administration staff ably supports the headteacher. The very few minor recommendations in the latest auditor's report (albeit 1996) have been implemented. The school ensures it allocates its grant for staff training to support targets in the school development plan and in this way relates them directly to pupils' learning. The system for appraisal is in line with national guidance. The school has good potential as a provider of initial teacher training.
51. The school complies with the Code of Practice<sup>2</sup> and fulfils its statutory requirements as regards pupils with statements of special educational needs. The co-ordinator's day-to-day management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Administrative procedures, files and the maintenance of records are very comprehensive. Reports and information produced for review meetings or referral to external specialists are objective and based on evidence. The policy for special educational needs is good and provides comprehensive guidance for the identification and assessment of pupils. The statement in the Annual Governors' Parents' report complies with statutory requirements.
52. The match of the teachers and the support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a broad range of staff experience across the curriculum and staff have responsibility for appropriate subjects. In-service training of staff has been effectively linked to the development plan and the school's educational priorities. The day-to-day running of the school by the administrative staff is unobtrusive and very efficient, with the school using computer-based systems effectively. The accommodation is good with most classrooms being of an adequate size for the number of pupils. The classroom environment is enhanced by bright and interesting displays, but the library is in the corridor which limits its use for pupils to research information and for the teaching of library skills. There is an outside play area for the youngest children, extensive playing fields and hard playground space. The caretaking and cleaning staff take a genuine pride in the appearance and maintenance of the buildings, which makes a significant contribution to the teaching environment. Resources overall are satisfactory with particular strengths in history, mathematics, design and technology and physical education.

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

53. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. Within this favourable context the inspection team identified areas for improvement. These issues match closely areas for development already identified by the school. The headteacher and staff, in conjunction with the governing body, should:

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<sup>2</sup> This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

- continue to raise standards of attainment in English across the school by building on the good practice in the school and:
  - develop pupils' speaking skills by improving the range and richness of their vocabulary by a greater emphasis on speaking skills at the foundation stage, increase use of drama, role-play, choral speaking and group discussions (such as circle time<sup>3</sup>) across the school; (Paragraphs 4, 10, 61 and 68)
- build on the current good practice to further improve pupils' attendance and thereby raise their standards of attainment; (Paragraphs 17 and 38)
- put in place a strategy for increasing the amount of parental involvement in pupils' learning that includes clarification of the role of how parents can support their children's learning in respect of pupils' individual targets for learning. (Paragraph 43)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	19	62	17	0	0	0

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

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<sup>3</sup> During circle time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

**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)	26	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	111

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	62

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	9	9
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	21	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (72)	83 (83)	86 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	6	8
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	19	20	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (69)	69 (69)	83 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*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	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	12
	Girls	8	6	10
	Total	15	15	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (60)	60 (60)	88 (88)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	14	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (56)	60 (60)	68 (68)
	National	68 (63)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28.1

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999-00
	£
Total income	371312
Total expenditure	376365
Expenditure per pupil	1727
Balance brought forward from previous year	15534
Balance carried forward to next year	10481

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	176
Number of questionnaires returned	93

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	29	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	37	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	49	16	1	3
The teaching is good.	67	30	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	38	5	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	0	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	43	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	44	13	2	10

## **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**

55. All nursery aged children attend either a morning or afternoon session in the nursery before transferring to the reception class to start their full time attendance at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. When the phased admission programme is complete there will be 52 children attending nursery on a part time basis. At the time of the inspection (second week of term) there were eight children in the morning and twelve in the afternoon. There are currently 30 children in the reception class. Most children enter the nursery with very low levels of social and early learning skills. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with the children.
56. The school has maintained the overall good quality teaching and learning identified in the last inspection. By the age of five, when children transfer to Year 1, they achieve well. This includes most children identified as having special educational needs. There are currently two children who do not have their needs met adequately. They make unsatisfactory progress. By the age of five children attain below expectations for their age in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is well below that expected of children this age. Children's speaking skills are particularly underdeveloped. Children attain the early learning goals<sup>4</sup> in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development.
57. The good teaching in nursery and reception classes has a positive effect on children's learning. The good expertise and teamwork of staff underpin this teaching. This is shown in the methods and resources adults use to gain children's interest and motivate them to learn. For example, the teacher sustained children's interest and developed their understanding of the story of "The Gingerbread Man" by baking gingerbread with the children. Staff organise the practical activities of all the groups well and this fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and the good behaviour of the children. Children's learning during group work could be further extended if staff made it clearer what they wanted children to learn from each activity. Staff encourage children to show high levels of concentration, initiative and independence. Most children respond appropriately to this. Adults have high expectations of what children should achieve. For example, in reception children were learning that the beans they were planting need water and food to grow. Many learnt that the food comes from the soil. This level of attainment is expected of pupils in Year 1. The planning of children's work is good. It ensures that children develop their learning in a step by step fashion and that work becomes appropriately harder as they move through the foundation stage. There are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress, which are used successfully to plan the next step in children's learning.

#### Personal, social and emotional development

58. There is good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching and support staff work effectively together as a team and are caring, supportive and encouraging, for instance in praising children's achievements. In the nursery and reception classes adults set a good example for children to follow. They listen with genuine interest to what children have to say and speak with courtesy and consideration. This promotes children's very good behaviour, self-esteem and good

<sup>4</sup> These goals are based on the areas of learning during the Foundation Stage. They also help prepare children for future learning when they enter compulsory education at the age of five. The goals mainly refer to literacy and numeracy skills, and personal, social and emotional development. Most children should reach the early learning goals by the time they are five.

relationships with adults and one another. Children in reception generally have good attitudes to their learning but some clearly have difficulty concentrating. Most children co-operate well with each other in pairs and groups, take care of and share equipment with one another; for instance they work in pairs on the computers. Children are beginning to take responsibility for their own resources and are developing initiative and independence. They make choices about the activities they undertake in group work. In nursery and reception children settle quickly and happily into daily routines, such as registration and milk time. They are developing a good awareness that some actions are right and some wrong. This was very evident in a personal and social development lesson about "Goldilocks and the three bears" in which they discussed the basic rules of politeness.

#### Communication, language and literacy

59. The quality of provision for children's communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. In the nursery and reception classes the children enjoy listening to stories and some children share books with each other and with adults. Some nursery children know that words and pictures carry meaning. In reception children are beginning to recognise the sounds of some letters. Very few children extend their learning beyond the very early stages of reading. They have some knowledge of the key words for the school reading scheme. Standards are well below national expectations.
60. Teachers provide sound opportunities for independent writing. Nursery children develop early writing skills satisfactorily through mark making and the formation of some letters when writing their name. By the time they are five higher attaining children, about 20 per cent of children write a couple of sentences about familiar stories. Other children write their name and copy a sentence with some accuracy.
61. It is in the development of speaking skills that children make least progress. Nursery and reception staff place a strong emphasis on extending children's vocabulary in conversations and questioning children. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating but their success is very limited. Children have very little confidence to express their ideas and experiences in front of others. This is because they have a very limited vocabulary. To improve the quality of teaching further there needs to be a clear whole school policy for the teaching of speaking skills. The quality of the book corners in the foundation stage needs improving. Role-play is used to develop children's speaking skills but its use needs to be extended further. Greater involvement of parents in their children's learning would also be beneficial in raising standards.

#### Mathematical development

62. Children make good progress but do not reach the levels of attainment expected for children five years old. Teachers show a good understanding of how young children learn which includes a wide variety of counting activities and correct subject specific language. In the nursery children count and make sets of numbers up to ten, use more than correctly and recognise two-dimensional shapes such as circle and triangle. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the higher attaining children (20 per cent of the children) count to 20 and secure in calculating "one more than" up to ten. Half the children recognise numbers up to 20. In the nursery there are effective links with other subjects; for instance in building towers children are set the task of building one that is "taller than you are".

#### Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children enter nursery with only a very basic general knowledge. Teachers make good use of resources to build on this knowledge and enhance children's learning by visits into the community, such as to a farm, botanic gardens and a wildfowl trust. Play activities using water develops children's understanding of the difference between sucking and blowing. When baking, nursery children learn about the properties of dough. Reception children plant beans and know the conditions necessary for plants to grow. Their understanding and knowledge of the animal world is successfully developed by educational visits to such places as the "Butterfly World". Nursery children use the mouse with developing accuracy to work computer programs and reception children become familiar with the keyboard to produce basic word-processed work.

#### Creative development

64. The staff in the nursery give children many well thought out opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture when working with the "colour of the week". They use glue and coloured shapes to make collages. They learn to sing nursery rhymes. In the reception class the teacher gives lots of praise and encouragement during music lessons, which promotes children's confidence in singing and playing musical instruments. Children recognise and name instruments, by sight and sound, such as tambourine, maracas and triangle. Children have many opportunities to create their own drawings and paintings. There is a particularly attractive display of collage work in which the children used feathers, pipe cleaners, jewellery and glue.

#### Physical development

65. Children are provided with a good range of opportunities, indoors and outdoors, to develop physically. Good use is made of the outdoor play area in nursery. Indoors they have access to a small trampette to exercise. In a reception lesson children ran, hopped, skipped and jumped with a good awareness of others. They followed instructions closely to perform a simple set of actions involving stop, start and skip. Teachers teach well the skills such as holding a pencil, cutting with a scissors and threading. This ensures children increase their control and co-ordination when using a range of tools, such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. Children's finer movements are developed well.

## **ENGLISH**

66. The attainment of pupils by the age of seven in reading and writing is slightly below national averages and close to the national average by the age of eleven. Results in 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds were well below the national average in reading and average in writing. The results in English for eleven-year-olds were well below the national average overall. However, compared with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results for the seven-year-olds were broadly in line in reading and above the average in writing. The results among the eleven year-olds were above those of pupils in similar schools. The results in 2000 national tests indicate that attainment is likely to be close to, but slightly below the national average at eleven.

67. The school has set in place many strategies to improve pupils' standards.

- Meticulous analysis of all test data through the year and the tracking of pupils' progress
- Good teaching of the literacy strategy
- Very good use of staff to target groups for additional support
- The use of assessment to place pupils in learning groups according to their levels of attainment
- Improved resources, texts, books of fiction and non-fiction for use in the Literacy Hour

All of these factors are having a positive impact upon attainment and progress.

68. Standards in speaking and listening are below what is expected nationally for pupils across the school. A large number of children enter the school with significantly delayed and underdeveloped language skills. On occasions they are unable to think of the names of objects and pictures in books and are hesitant to reply. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to respond to questions appropriately. They structure questions carefully but frequently younger pupils repeat the question rather than answer it. Many of the pupils are not confident speakers but the very good relationships and supportive atmosphere within the classroom enable them to make good progress in lessons and develop their confidence. Teachers involve pupils well and give them an opportunity to contribute ideas. Most pupils answer in complete sentences by the end of the key stage but frequently find it difficult to extend their answers by using a more interesting vocabulary. Others, however, say a polite "excuse me" and ask relevant questions of a visitor or describe their work. Pupils enjoy learning new words and retain much of the technical vocabulary they are taught in other subjects.
69. Teachers of pupils aged seven to eleven build on the progress pupils have made in the development of language skills. Skilful questions produce some relevant and correct deductions and inferences about the texts they are reading. They use technical and subject specific language confidently and when they learn a new word, such as "carbohydrates" they enjoy adding this word to their vocabulary. Teachers prompt pupils to contribute to discussions and extend their answers well to increase their vocabulary. They are aware that pupils need support to think through their answers and express themselves clearly. The very good emphasis on extending pupils' language and their ability to explain their ideas and feelings clearly continues in Year 5 and 6. Choral speaking is rehearsed and pupils enjoy opportunities to perform activities, which build up self-confidence. They are encouraged to add colour to their speaking by use of quiet, loud, fast and slow speaking. Regular experience of drama in history, religious education, assemblies and productions has a positive impact on pupils' ability to speak confidently in front of an audience.
70. Attainment in reading is broadly in line with the national average throughout the school. Pupils aged five to seven make good progress with reading skills. Most pupils enjoy reading and tackle unfamiliar words systematically because they have been taught well to break down words and link the sounds of the letters. They have a secure knowledge of initial sounds and understand terms such as "text" and "contents." Pupils enjoy sharing the big books and texts. They join in with the expressive reading of the teacher, even when they find it difficult, and are very aware of the purpose of punctuation. Guided reading sessions are very well structured and pupils are pleased to read out their own work in the final session of the lesson. Lessons are planned carefully to include a good balance of reading and writing activities as well as opportunities for verbal contributions. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 complete thorough and interesting reviews of books they have read. They express their opinion of the book and describe their favourite pages to add to their views. Pupils have a good attitude to reading and are pleased to take home books to read and share with their family.
71. In writing, standards are slightly below average at seven and are close to what is expected nationally at 11 years. Standards across the school are improving. The late development of language skills for some pupils is reflected in the narrow range of vocabulary in their writing. However, from Year 2 onwards many pupils are now

looking for more interesting words and examples in their writing. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes. Most of the youngest pupils use capital letters and full stops appropriately and pupils with higher attainment progress quickly to confident use of other forms of punctuation, including speech and questions marks. Pupils know the rules for setting out their work the teachers of pupils aged seven to eleven reinforce these expectations in their marking. There are frequent comments as to how pupils may improve their work and the targets they are set refer to specific areas, for example punctuation and presentation.

72. Joined writing is introduced in Year 2 and teachers plan regular handwriting lessons so that by the time they are in Year 6 many pupils have developed a clear, legible style of handwriting. Pupils have regular opportunities to draft work, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils learn grammar rules and additional vocabulary through consistent and thoughtful teaching, although the limited vocabulary of some pupils is evident in their extended writing. The good teaching and provision of work matched well to their abilities ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school.
73. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development in English are good. They take care over the presentation of their work and concentrate on their individual reading and writing tasks well. Pupils progress from simple reading tasks to reading selectively and with good understanding of what they have read. They work hard in their groups and are interested in what others have done. As they grow older they begin to make an honest appraisal of their efforts and how they may improve.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in almost half the lessons and good in all others. Pupils make gains in learning in all lessons and good progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of the additional support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of children's literature and this ensures that pupils learn to select books that are at an appropriate reading and interest level. Teachers make good use of the guidelines for the literacy strategy and their planning is very thorough. They make sure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn in the lesson and this helps pupils to learn to assess their own learning and how well they have done.
75. The school has effectively implemented the literacy strategy and the teaching is having a clear impact on learning. Care is taken to ensure that literacy is extended well into other subjects. For example, reading and writing skills are used well in science, history and geography. Information technology is used well to support learning in English. Year 2 in science extended their literacy skills whilst recording the outcomes of their experiments on forces. In history in Year 4 pupils enhanced their literacy skills through reading clearly and with understanding a text about Romans. They then recorded in their own words the relevant facts from the text. In a geography lesson on climate, Year 3 pupils had their literacy skills extended by effective use of dictionaries to look up definitions of climate. Pupils record these accurately. Information and communication skills are used well to support pupils learning spellings. Pupils use the Internet to research topics and then make notes from the information they find. They use word processing to draft and edit their extended writing. Neat copies of work are typed up for displayed work. They use their word processing skills to write short stories in a book form.

76. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school analyses and evaluates test results to identify priorities for action accurately and improve performance. There are very good procedures for the formal assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do. The library is used and valued by pupils but because it is in a corridor it is difficult for it to be used for quiet working and individual or group research. Pupils are enthusiastic about the reading corners and amount of books in their rooms.

## MATHEMATICS

77. Inspection evidence and recent tests shows that by the age of 11 standards in mathematics are close to the national average. This is an improvement from the national test results in 1999 in which standards were below average, although they did compare favourably with schools from similar contexts being above the average. At that time 60 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or above with 12 per cent achieving level 5.
78. Attainment in the 1999 test for seven year olds was one percentage point below the national average with 86 per cent of pupils attaining the expected level 2 or above. Compared to similar schools the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above and level 3 was well above the national average. The evidence from the recent 2000 tests indicates that these levels of achievement have not been sustained, and the proportion of pupils achieving level 2 or above fell. However, that particular cohort has a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the attainment of girls was significantly below that of the boys. Significant beneficial changes have been made to the way the school uses assessment data to plan work to meet the varying needs of pupils. This results in pupils' learning becoming more relevant and challenging. Teaching strategies and curriculum planning are more effective following the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of achievement of the current Year 2 pupils are close to those expected for their age. This means that standards are improving for pupils aged five to seven and that the standards at the age of 11 maintain the rising trend over the last four years to be well above those at the time of the last inspection.
79. Across the school the quality of teaching is good with 25 per cent of teaching of seven to eleven year old pupils being very good. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. The lessons are well planned and clearly show what is to be taught and learnt. The teaching reflects teachers' good subject knowledge and clear understanding of their pupils' learning needs. Consequently, the pace of learning is good with pupils acquiring new knowledge and understanding at a good rate, but also consistently showing good levels of concentration, enthusiasm and interest. Throughout the school the pupils are particularly animated during the mental or oral activities encouraged by brisk questioning and infectious enthusiasm from the teachers. Questioning of pupils is particularly well used in the very good lessons for pupils aged seven to eleven. This gives pupils good opportunities to use and apply knowledge from previous lessons as well as giving the teacher an opportunity to assess what pupils have remembered.
80. The marking of work is satisfactory, but limited use is made of evaluative and useful comments to help pupils know how they can improve their work. However, teachers' have high expectations of pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6 , in terms of pupils' behaviour, effort and the quality of presentation of work. These expectations contribute to pupils' positive attitude to the subject, the pride they have in their work and their behaviour in lessons. The very effective management and the organisation of the lessons and pupils are consistent strengths of the teaching. They are

reinforced by strong, supportive relationships between adults and pupils, which help create a positive learning atmosphere in every classroom. Written activities are well matched to the pupils' prior attainment, particularly the lower attainers. Resources provided are well matched to what the activities pupils are to carry out. Teachers use support staff effectively. The support staff have a clear role within each lesson. The last part of the lesson is generally used well to give pupils opportunities to demonstrate what they have learnt and to explain their ideas.

81. Throughout the school the Numeracy Strategy is well established and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Pupils aged five to seven's knowledge and understanding of number are developed through discussion, games and practical activities. By the age of seven many recognise patterns in their work and are familiar with two and three-dimensional shapes. They describe the differences using the appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils add up and subtract up to 20 accurately, and higher attaining pupils are confident with numbers up to 100. Pupils are developing an understanding of simple division and multiplication and the relationships between numbers. Pupils are beginning to learn about the properties of shapes such as symmetry and to record their investigations on graphs and tables.
82. The progress is maintained as pupils aged seven to eleven build upon their learning. Pupils, aged seven to eleven, of all abilities develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across the four strands of the National Curriculum programmes of study as planned in the National Numeracy Strategy. By the age of eleven the vast majority have a sound knowledge of the four rules of number. Higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of the relationships between decimals and fractions. Through using information and communication technology, many pupils use block, line and pie charts appropriately and recognise the fundamentals of line symmetry and rotation of shapes. Pupils know how to measure and calculate the perimeter and area of shapes by using simple formulae. Pupils collect and use information accurately in various forms and enter it into a database.
83. Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and behave very well in lessons. They obviously enjoy the many practical activities and are responsive in oral work. When they have to use the numeracy skills in other subjects such as science, design and technology or history they do so with confidence. The mathematics policy and scheme of work based upon the National Numeracy Strategy are well in place. The school responded positively to issues identified for improvement in the last inspection report by implementing a strategy for mathematics that has enabled them to implement the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. This has been linked to developing the role of the co-ordinator so that the subject has a clear direction. Lessons have been observed to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning and teachers' planning is collected in and checked on a half termly basis by the subject co-ordinator and on a weekly basis by the headteacher. In addition, the school has implemented a good range of assessment procedures, the results of which are analysed by the co-ordinator and class teachers. The information is used to plan future teaching. The school has a good range of resources for mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

84. In the teacher assessments of seven year olds in 1999 the proportion of pupils attaining the national expectation was in line with the national average. Attainment at the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. The attainment of 11 year old

pupils in the 1999 national tests was above the national average, and well above when compared with pupils from similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was close to the national average.

85. Inspection findings confirm these very significant improvements in standards since the time of the last inspection. The good quality of teaching and more efficient use of assessment information are the main contributory factors that have brought about this discernible improvement in standards when compared to those reported on in the last report. At the time of the current inspection, pupils aged seven attain in line with the national average and pupils aged eleven attain above the national average. Standards of attainment are consistent across all the different aspects of the subject. The proportion of pupils attaining above national expectations is broadly average by the age of eleven, but well below average by the age of seven. By the time pupils leave the school at 11 years of age they make very good progress. This includes pupils identified as having special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs make the good progress because work is planned to meet their specific needs. Also, the good quality of the questions teachers pose during introductions ensures all pupils are fully involved.
86. The teaching of pupils aged seven to eleven is very good and good for pupils aged five to seven. It is very good overall. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. For pupils aged seven to eleven, a real strength of the teaching is the high expectations of what pupils are to learn. Pupils' learning was considerably enhanced in a Year 6 lesson when they learnt about and developed very well their understanding of gravity as a force and that weight is the result of the pull of gravity. They also knew by the end of the lesson that forces are measured in Newtons. The excellent level of subject knowledge resulted in a clear explanation of twisting, compression, tension, bending and shearing forces. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher made very good use of assessment of work pupils completed in the previous lesson. This ensured pupils used their knowledge of their learning to good effect. They improved their work significantly when they reviewed their predictions from the previous lesson regarding which materials light passes through. The teacher made very good use of co-operative work during the review stage. This positively affected pupils' personal development. There were effective links with literacy, for instance in the use of words such as transparent and opaque. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher made very good use of a visiting expert for a lesson on dental care. This provided a stimulus for pupils' learning and they responded with interest and listened intently. Pupils' answers to skilled questioning established they had by the end of the lesson a very good knowledge of types of teeth and their use and how to keep teeth healthy.
87. For pupils aged five to seven, the good teaching positively impacted on pupils' learning. In Year 1 there is effective use of the hospital role-play area to enhance pupils' learning during the "Ourselves" topic. This resource provides a stimulus for pupils to want to learn more and also helps to develop their literacy skills. There were lots of written instructions to follow and "patient record sheets to complete". The teacher focused well on what she wanted pupils to learn. This meant that their gain in knowledge was good. They all knew the names of the main body parts. The higher attainers label accurately on a diagram the main body parts. In Year 2 the brisk pace in lessons ensures pupils complete a lot of work and there is no time wasted. There is a good balance between investigative and written work. The investigative work gives pupils opportunity to consolidate their understanding of the topic. They recognise that objects move by pushing and/or pulling. They are developing an understanding that pushes and pulls are examples of forces. The weakness in the

teaching of five to seven year old pupils is that expectations of what higher attaining pupils are to learn are not high enough. Most pupils complete the same work. Better use can be made of the teacher knowledge of pupils' prior attainment to plan more appropriate work for the higher attainers.

88. The good quality of teachers' long term planning is a strength of the subject across the school. This means that pupils' work becomes appropriately harder as they move through the school and skills are developed in an effective step by step approach. Another strength across the school is the very caring and supportive relationships teachers have with pupils. This results in very good behaviour and minimal disruption to the flow of lessons. This has a very positive impact on pupils' learning because it helps pupils develop good attitudes to learning. They pay attention, work co-operatively and collaboratively and take a keen interest in their work.
89. The subject's co-ordinator provides very good leadership and promotes high standards across the school. Teaching and pupils' progress within the subject are monitored, evaluated and supported. The subject is well resourced and there is effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. For example, in Year 6, laptop computers were used to very good effect to test what pupils know and understand about forces.

## **ART**

90. During the inspection only one art lesson was observable for pupils aged seven to eleven, but from this and the lessons seen for pupils aged five to seven, achievement in art is above what is expected for pupils at seven and in line at eleven. There are particular strengths in pupils' observational drawings and the confidence with which pupils use a range of media. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and there is a range of good work throughout the school. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they build on skills taught to pupils aged five to seven and refine their work as they get older.
91. By the time they are seven, pupils acquire a good range of skills to produce attractive work in two and three dimensions. They are confident in applying new ideas and techniques. Teachers plan well to make activities exciting and explain that they are learning very grown up words, such as "landscape" and "portrait", so that pupils repeat these words with relish. Pupils are thrilled to have the opportunity to look through the viewfinder on the teacher's camera and discover for themselves the image that can be seen. This encourages them to go proudly and purposefully around the room to find something to focus on through their own card viewfinder. Pupils make carefully observed drawings, for example of a sun on a poem or the toy hanging on the board. The teacher helps pupils to improve their skills in looking through the viewfinder and recording what they see so that they improve their drawings and are able to say at the end of the lesson whether their drawing is in landscape or portrait form.
92. In their first art lesson Year 1 pupils look carefully at an interesting collection of portraits painted by different artists. Their interest is caught immediately because there are many portraits of children and they nod eagerly when the teacher says, "Let's all be artists this afternoon." The teacher encourages pupils to look at the poses in the paintings and many get friends to pose for them when they start to draw. The poses are depicted well in the drawings. Year 1 pupils worked on designs for clay houses individually and then moved on to this as a group project. The quality of the tiles produced and range of techniques used to add detail are of a very high standard for pupils of this age.

93. Teachers make good use of resources, such as photographs and the work of famous artists. This gains pupils' interest and has a positive effect on their learning and concentration. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher uses a range of images and asked pupils about the relationships of people seen. Momentum gathers as pupils see more and more pictures. Pupils are introduced to the terms *background* and *foreground* and regular repetition promotes pupils' understanding of these terms. They are encouraged to discuss the clothes and people they see and this improves their observational and descriptive skills. Pupils' behaviour is good because the teachers have firm but friendly management of their groups and this is based on the good relationships teachers have with pupils. As well as appreciating other artists' work, pupils appreciate the skills of other members of the group and remark upon work they have done well. Pupils have a rich introduction to art and design and have many opportunities to use a wide range of tools and materials. Teachers allow pupils to use their imagination and produce work of an individual nature. Good use is made of sketchbooks for pupils to rehearse and practise techniques.
94. The subject is well co-ordinated and samples of work and photographs are kept as a record of pupils' progress. There are stimulating and attractive displays of pupils' work around the school that show pupils that their work is valued and appreciated. A highlight of last year was when all pupils were involved in the creation of the striking Millennium Tapestry. Visits and visiting artists make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and art makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. Design and technology lessons for pupils aged seven to eleven only were observed during the inspection, but the evidence from teachers' plans, photographs and the pupils' work displayed indicates that pupils make good progress throughout the school in developing the full range of skills and understanding of design and technology. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the development of the curriculum, planning guidance and the development of the role of the co-ordinator. Most pupils with special educational needs make similar progress. From the lesson observed it is clear that the oldest pupils have a clear understanding of the design and making process.
96. Pupils aged five to seven build effectively on the range of experiences to design moving toys. Pupils cut, join and manipulate a range of materials. Pupils in Year 2 understand the structure of a wheeled vehicle and draw a pictorial diagram and label constituent parts of the vehicle, such as the wheels and chassis.
97. By the age of 11, pupils of all abilities make good progress in all of the aspects of design and technology, including food technology, textiles and the scientific aspects of the subject, such as the forces involved in structures; for example, bridges, and the importance of fair testing. They understand how the shape of materials and the type of joining affect the strength of the structures they make. Pupils use their numeracy skills to accurately measure materials such as card, fabric and wood and can cut, shape and join them accurately. Many of the activities have links to other subjects such as in the science topic of forces, in food technology and in history and geography topics. The activities contribute to the pupils' social development, as they have to work together to discuss their ideas; and their cultural development as they explore the food of India. Higher attaining pupils are able to apply ideas from other

subjects to solve effectively problems in design and technology lessons. Through topics on bridges and the Millennium Dome they are aware how the design and technology process is used in the wider world.

98. All of the lessons seen during the inspection were taught to pupils aged seven to eleven. Seventy-five per cent of these lessons were good and 25 per cent being very good. Insufficient evidence was available to form a judgement about the strengths of teaching for pupils aged five to seven, but the progress the pupils make indicates that, overall, it is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They use the scheme of work carefully throughout the school to plan well. What is to be taught and learnt is planned for clearly. Appropriate activities are used to develop design and technology skills and extend pupils' learning. Although the objectives of the lesson are not always shared with the class, questioning of pupils is skilfully used to challenge pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think carefully about the subject. This was particularly the case in the very good lesson where the introduction was very well presented to encourage pupils to consider the previous lesson. Very good management and organisation of the class is a consistent strength of the teaching and characterises the very positive relationships between the adults and pupils. Consequently, pupil behaviour is very good and they respond well to any support that is offered. Instructions given are clear and unambiguous. This enables and encourages pupils to settle quickly to their task. During group discussions teachers circulate effectively to guide and stimulate ideas. Resources are appropriate to the task and time is used well so that the lessons have a brisk and business-like pace. Support staff are used well to work with pupils who experience difficulties or those who have special educational needs. This helps all the pupils to concentrate and encourages them to apply themselves well to the task even when they find it difficult. Time at the end of the lesson is used effectively to recapitulate upon the lesson and what has been learnt.
99. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has made good progress in developing the scheme of work to incorporate elements of the National Curriculum guidelines. The scheme is currently being reviewed again in the light of Curriculum 2000, but the structure of the scheme allows all aspects of the programmes of study to be developed progressively and in appropriate depth. Subject specific planning sheets have been introduced and the co-ordinator checks the medium term planning, providing advice and support for colleagues where required. Currently, teachers assess the pupils' achievement at the end of each topic, but the co-ordinator plans to develop this further by using key objectives for each year as the starting point. Visits to places such as the Newcastle to look at the bridges over the River Tyne are used well to give the pupils opportunities to observe technology first hand. Specialist voluntary help is also used to supplement the school staffing resources. Generally, resources available are good and used well.

## GEOGRAPHY

100. During the inspection only two geography lesson were observed so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, standards attained by 7 and 11 year olds in the school are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection in that the subject is now taught throughout the year and there are good guidelines for teachers.
101. Younger pupils' interest and enthusiasm are developed well by following the journey of Ralph Bear. Pupils find places around the world, from Barbados to Corsica, and discuss the journey from Durham to these exciting countries. They learn about the

climate there and work out why Corsica is hotter than Stanley. They have a good understanding of north, south, east and west and this is helped by the rhymes they learn from the teacher. The teacher's skilled questioning and praise for attempts to work out reasons why it should be hotter nearer the equator and colder at the poles help pupils to formulate their own questions and answers. From Year 1, pupils are interested in knowing where people come from and where to find that place on the map. They differentiate between maps of Britain and world maps, asking if towns are in England or another country, so they make good gains in learning about the capital cities of the world. Pupils work out the different ways of travelling from one place to another and, because the teachers reinforce these well, they improve their use of correct geographical terms.

102. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 make contrasts between the different localities they study. The field-study centres they visit are chosen well by staff to offer good opportunities to learn about coastal and inland areas. The staff are confident in their own use of information technology so pupils have learned how to use the Internet to follow the polar expedition and contact schools all over the world to exchange information about the climate and the areas in which pupils live. They have a good knowledge of ordnance survey maps, estimating and working out distances to six figure co-ordinates, interpret symbols on maps and measure distances between two points. Pupils use a formula to assess the speed of a river and show concern for the local environment when they consider turning wasteland into a housing estate and the problems of rubbish in the community. Year 3 pupils extend their knowledge of the world by working in topic groups with flags of different European countries and extending their understanding of weather in other zones of the world. As they move into Year 4 they acquire a good knowledge of the water cycle and rock formations, which is reinforced well by teachers' thoughtful use of the local area. They begin to understand the religion and customs of people in India, consider their caste system, and compare life there and in Britain. A number of pupils are involved in the exciting Green Corridor Project, looking after and improving the environment. This gives them the opportunity to study different types of trees and the ages of trees in the area, as well as making signs for the route.
103. Pupils present their written work well and show great enjoyment in the activities in and out of school. There is very good use of literacy through writing of reports, the use of specific terms and the use of reading skills for further research. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their own ideas and to use geographical skills in other subjects, for example in history they look at maps of Stanley over several years and in mathematics they estimate, calculate scale and angles and use co-ordinates. Visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' learning in geography further.

## HISTORY

104. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, all taught to pupils aged seven to eleven, but from looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning it is clear that as pupils move through the key stages they make good gains in their understanding, skills and knowledge of historical periods and characters. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their prior attainment. This reflects the position at the time of the last inspection.
105. Pupils aged five to seven develop an understanding of chronology and of the fact that peoples' lives change over time. This includes family history and domestic life. They begin to develop observational skills so that they use artefacts and identify key features that indicate age such as scratches, wear and damage. They learn about particular characters from history such Grace Darling and Christopher Columbus and

the contribution they made to the modern world. As they move through the key stage they make good gains in the skills of the subject and knowledge and understanding of the topics studied.

106. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on this good grounding and develop an understanding of particular periods and cultures in history such as Vikings, Romans and the Tudor period of British history. Through a topic on the coal mining industry and the development of Stanley they gain an insight into the history of their own community and its legacy. They gain a sense of the past and understand that over time lifestyles change and that changes in the past affect the way we live today. Through a series of topics from Settlers and Invaders to Ancient Egypt they extend their knowledge and understanding of civilisations and societies in the past. They learn about the legacy the Romans and Vikings have left on Britain today through language, laws and place names. They develop empathy for the lives of people in different periods, such the Tudors and contrast this with their own lives. Pupils develop the ability to use a range of sources – books, information sheets and the Internet, to research particular topics and record their findings. For example, pupils in Year 5 researched the lives and fate of the six wives of Henry VIII using a range of sources and recorded their findings on a work sheet. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs require some support with some tasks, but most pupils are able to complete the tasks asked of them.
107. Insufficient evidence is available to form a judgement regarding the specific strengths of teaching for pupils aged five to seven, but from the pupils' work, what they learn and the quality of the planning, it is good. Three good lessons were observed being taught to pupils aged seven to eleven. The teachers have good subject knowledge, although the teacher's subject knowledge in Year 6 lesson on the development of the coal industry and Stanley as a community was very good. They use this subject knowledge and the scheme of work effectively to plan lessons that provide pupils with a range of interesting opportunities to develop their historical knowledge and to use their literacy and information technology skills to research historical information. The emphasis on individual and group research followed by discussions, where pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas with each other and the rest of the class, rather than purely complete written exercises is a strength of the teachers' approach to the subject. This approach also makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Consequently, pupils are all fully involved in the lessons which has a positive impact upon the pace of their learning. Supported by consistently good, effective classroom management and organisation the pupils complete tasks, concentrate well and are enthusiastic and interested. Resources provided are good, well matched to the objectives and the tasks. Support staff are used effectively to support particular groups or individuals, but where there is no support teachers circulate well, guiding and encouraging pupils.
108. The co-ordinator has been in post a short time, but has begun a full review of the scheme of work and the subject policy to incorporate the guidance from Curriculum 2000. This has resulted in some changes being made to the topics covered so that all the objectives are covered. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The role of the co-ordinator is consistent with the school pattern where they check the medium term planning and provide advice and support for colleagues. The school has satisfactory resources to teach the planned curriculum, but good use is made of visitors and visits to places such as Beamish Museum to supplement the in-school curriculum provision,

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven. Progress by the time pupils leave school is good. This includes pupils identified who have special educational needs. Standards in information technology are rising throughout the school and are better than at the time of the last inspection. The higher standards result from a number of factors. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning ensures work becomes harder as pupils move through the school and develop the skills they learn in an appropriate order. Teachers plan and organise the use of information technology in lessons very well. This ensures pupils have increased access to computers on a regular basis. A considerable investment in time and money has included significant staff training that has improved confidence and competence among staff. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well, and has clear plans for the subject's continued development, together with the ability, support and commitment to implement them.
110. Pupils aged five to seven use simple word processing programs to type and with help they save and print their work. They combine illustrations and text whilst choosing font size and colour. They investigate colour, shape and pattern well using an art package. Pupils design puppets using a specialist program. In Year 1 pupils develop their ability to use information technology simulations to investigate options whilst exploring an adventure game. This was ably demonstrated in a lesson using a program about "Noddy". Year 2 pupils make competent use of e-mail. Their work in this field is linked closely to their geography work. They e-mail someone living in France who then e-mails information back.
111. Pupils aged seven to eleven gain confidence and competence working with computers. Year 3 pupils use data handling correctly to support their learning in science. Year 4 pupils use their good word processing skills to produce poems in the form of a calligram. They highlight text to change it. They manipulate text very well, changing font size and type very quickly and with a high degree of accuracy. In Years 5 and 6 pupils customise a calendar and import Haiku poems to illustrate each month of the year. Pupils produce a yearbook by using their word processing skills and digital camera. Good use of the digital camera is in evidence in the science work "all about me". Across the key stage pupils show an increasing capability in the use of the Internet and e-mail. Pupils confidently and accurately access programs to enter and save data to form a database. They use spreadsheets very effectively to develop their numeracy skills.
112. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are very good. They work with sustained concentration and interest. This ensures no time is wasted and few mistakes are made. They work well co-operatively and collaboratively and this has a positive impact on their personal development. Pupils work at a brisk pace so they use the time in the lesson effectively to practise and develop their information technology skills. Their behaviour is very good, as are their relationships with one another and their teacher.
113. The quality of information technology teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge as in Year 4 when calligrams, using computers, were taught. The teacher demonstrated very clearly the advantages of using a computer as opposed to pencil and paper. Teachers' planning is very good and shows clearly what is to be taught and learnt. In a Year 2 lesson the sequence of the skills taught ensured pupils built on their previous learning effectively. Pace of lessons is brisk and purposeful and the choice of topic interests pupils. They are then motivated to want to find out more and develop their computer skills. The enthusiasm with which information technology is taught "fires up" pupils for their learning. As a result, the

learning of pupils is enjoyable as well as effective. Pupils working on computers individually or in pairs augment whole-class lessons effectively. Teachers give clear explanations at the start of lessons so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. There is no time wasted through needless questions from pupils. This was ably demonstrated in the Year 2 lesson when the use of space bar, shift key and backspace was taught effectively. There is good, firm, yet friendly management of pupils' behaviour; resulting in very good behaviour and no interruption in the pupils' learning. What pupils know, understand and can do is assessed effectively. This information is used well to plan pupils' work. The introduction of a personal folder on the hard disk for each pupil makes assessment of pupils' work even more effective. Pupils' information technology skills are enhanced a great deal by the very successful computer club.

## MUSIC

114. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was possible to observe only two music lessons and some individual violin tuition during the inspection. Discussions with the co-ordinator and other evidence indicate that standards are those expected for pupils of primary school age and are similar to those at the previous inspection. Pupils are developing particular skills in listening to and composing music. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
115. Pupils sing a wide range of songs well because they have been taught good singing techniques. They sing tunefully and they learn words and melodies quickly, learning correct breathing and sitting techniques in lessons and hymn practice. The older pupils make a good contribution to the singing and this helps younger pupils in the school to learn more quickly.
116. The youngest pupils listen very carefully to a very well chosen and prepared selection of sounds on a tape, all poised to answer when the music stops. Heads nod in time with the music so that they are quick to say whether it was fast or slow. They match their actions to the train song rhythm well, following the teacher's clear movements with good concentration. In response to the teacher's carefully worded questions pupils try to explain why they like one sound and do not like another one. They are aware that "I don't like it" is not an acceptable answer and try hard to give reasons.
117. Older pupils confidently record music composed to demonstrate a slow tempo. Their playing of the instruments is precise and appropriate. When they play a faster tempo pupils select some different instruments and play their composition with similar care and precision. When learning the new skill of making rhythmic patterns pupils follow the teacher well, with very good concentration on the beat she is clapping. They clap a different rhythm to make a good pattern after a very short period of practice. They work well in their groups on their own patterns, adding an instrument to them, and the teacher sustains interest by moving from group to group to help and listen. Pupils are building very well on the skills taught previously and are learning to work thoughtfully together whilst their understanding of composition improves.
118. Pupils enjoy music and appreciate the musical skills of their teachers or any visitors. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating musical experiences so that pupils learn that music is to be shared and enjoyed. Pupils learn how to listen to the music and improve their skills in identifying the instruments they hear. The selection of music with an "instrument of the week" at the beginning of assemblies is very helpful in providing pupils with opportunities to listen and reflect upon the music they hear in school. The teacher's questions help them to focus on the music played.

Pupils who learn to play an instrument with one of the skilled visiting teachers are pleased to share their skills with pupils in assemblies and in performances. Visits by musicians and groups are much enjoyed and enhance learning in music further.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. By the age of seven standards are in line with national expectations in educational gymnastics and in games skills by the age of eleven. The school has maintained the standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Judgements are based on games lessons in Years 3, 5 and 6 and a gymnastics lesson in Year 2. Standards attained in these lessons were in line with those achieved by pupils of similar age in other schools. The planning for the subject ensures there is good attention to all areas of the curriculum throughout the year.
120. By the age of seven, pupils move with increasing control. They plan and perform movements safely using the floor. They practise and improve their own performance, repeating previously performed series of movements with increasing imagination and control. They appraise their own and others' movements and try to make necessary improvements. Pupils conclude by successfully stringing together some movements into a sequence.
121. By the age of eleven, pupils demonstrate a more sophisticated approach to team games. Younger pupils learn to co-operate as a member of a team through activities involving working in pairs. Older pupils understand the need for tactics and positional play in invasion games such as netball and football. They develop accurate passing and receiving skills and learn the importance of following rules in competitive sports. Most have a good hand-eye co-ordination. Most are competent swimmers by the time they are aged 11.
122. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. They focus well and they listen to directions. Pupils of all abilities collaborate well in pairs and groups. For example, pupils in a Year 3 lesson worked co-operatively in pairs during a throwing and catching routine. Pupils sustain effort and concentration well. They are keen to do their best and appreciate each other's achievements. Their good attitudes and behaviour ensures pupils work as hard as possible with no wasted time. This makes a significant contribution to their good progress.
123. The quality of teaching is good. Careful planning and timing keep pupils working throughout the session. There are planned gains in skills during the lesson and times for demonstration and appraisal of movements. Teachers and pupils are dressed appropriately for physical education lessons. There is due regard for safety. Teachers begin lessons with an appropriate warm-up session and take opportunities to discuss with pupils the benefits of physical exercise. Teachers use praise effectively, are quick to recognise good performers and use these to set high standards for others to follow. The subject is well led by the subject co-ordinator and she has a positive impact on standards. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. This is achieved through the commitment of staff to providing a range of sporting extra-curricular activities and the use of visiting specialist coaches from a local professional football team.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school in learning about religious education so that by the ages of seven and eleven their attainment is in line with the level of expectation as described by the agreed syllabus for County Durham. The pupils learn about the religious beliefs that are practised in the United Kingdom today, but most of the study accords with the principle that it should be, like assemblies, mainly Christian in content.
125. Pupils aged seven become aware of important characters and stories in the Old and New Testaments. Particular events in the Christian calendar such as Christmas, harvest and Easter are celebrated and the pupils develop an understanding of the basic principles underpinning these periods. Although most of the learning at this stage is through stories they learn that other people have different religious beliefs through a study of Buddhism and the Jewish Festival of Light.
126. Pupils aged eleven's knowledge of Bible stories has increased, as has their knowledge of other world religions, significant leaders and teachers. In Year 3 they learn about elements of Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism which establishes a good basic knowledge from which pupils can build. In Year 4, pupils' understanding of aspects of these religions is developed, but deeper ideas such as how Jesus has the power to change people's lives are explored by looking at the lives of people such as Mother Theresa. Pupils' ability to explore and understand meanings through stories and writing is developed in Year 5 through studies of Christian parables. The oldest pupils have an appropriately developed understanding of religious beliefs and discuss a range of issues that are derived from religious ideals drawn from all the major world religions. This is well supported by the assemblies that have a range of themes across the year that link with elements of the Christian and non-Christian calendars.
127. The number of religious education lessons seen during the inspection was limited, but the quality of teaching in those seen was satisfactory overall. Some very good teaching was seen. From the lessons and the scrutiny of planning it is clear that teachers' subject knowledge is adequate to teach the curriculum. Their work is planned to the agreed syllabus and this ensures that the pupils learn the basic facts. The management of pupils' and organisation of lessons is a consistent strength of the teaching. Consequently, pupils are fully involved in the lessons and lessons have a good pace. Pupils try hard to complete tasks set for them whether they are written or discussion based. Good resources help ensure that pupils of all abilities work and learn at their own pace and level and where classroom support staff are present they have a clear role within the lesson. Written tasks are matched to the discussions with some appropriate variation to help pupils record their ideas. During lessons, particularly the very good lesson, teachers take opportunities as they arise to reinforce basic skills of literacy such as the use of dictionaries and spelling. However, generally the quality and detail of the marking of work is limited giving little help to pupils as to how they could improve or develop their work.
128. The role of the co-ordinator for religious education has been significantly developed since the last inspection so that she now provides a good lead to the subject. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and areas that need further development such as the use of information technology as a presentational and research tool and the incorporation of focused assessment into the teaching. There is a systematic approach to checking the quality of the teaching through monitoring planning so the curriculum is well organised and all teachers take part in the teaching being provided with advice and support as needed. The planned curriculum is well supported by the assembly themes and special events such as

Easter and Christmas so the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Throughout the year, satisfactory use is made of the resources including the local churches for visits and the local clergy as visiting speakers. The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of world religions. However, the diversity of contemporary society is not reflected in the immediate locality and, although there are occasional visitors or visits to centres for other religions from, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils' experience of the dignity and relevance of other faiths.