

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STAMFORDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stamfordham, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122202

Acting-headteacher: Mrs J Niven

Reporting inspector: Mr R Fry  
21073

Dates of inspection: 30 October to 3 November 2000

Inspection number: 224550

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stamfordham Northumberland
Postcode:	NE18 0NA
Telephone number:	01661 886358
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Dennison
Date of previous inspection:	11 February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Roger Fry OIN 21073	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? - The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Jill Moore OIN 11439	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Paula Allison OIN 21420	Team inspector	Under fives English Art Design Technology Music Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stamfordham First is a well below average sized school for boys and girls aged between four and nine years. It has 64 pupils on roll. The school serves the village and surrounding rural area. Children's attainment on entry to the school is slightly below what is typical of children nationally. Five per cent of pupils are known to qualify for free school meals, which is well below the national average. Twenty nine per cent of pupils have special educational needs, an above average figure. Two pupils have West Indian backgrounds. All pupils speak English. The school was inspected in the first term of this school year. The acting-headteacher has held the post for one year.

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

Stamfordham is an effective, happy and caring school. It makes good provision for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs. Standards of pupils' work have steadily improved. The teaching is consistently good and the work that pupils are set is usually demanding. All staff work well together and seek to further improve standards of pupils' work. The cost to educate pupils is well above average but similar to other schools of this size nationally. In this context the school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is good.
- Pupils' experiences of work in local studies (history / geography) are good and music standards are high.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- The acting-headteacher, teachers and governors have managed the school well over the last year.
- Relationships throughout the school are very strong
- The school has very constructive relationships with parents and the local community.

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

- The school does not have a permanent headteacher or a longer-term development plan.
- There is insufficient emphasis on standards of pupils' handwriting.

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

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

Stamfordham was last inspected in February 1997. Since then the school has made good improvements in response to the issues raised. The school has been successful in raising standards in mathematics for pupils at seven years old over the last three years. Pupils' standards of work in design and technology and information technology have also improved and meet the standards expected in the National Curriculum. The school has wisely spent considerable amounts of money to extend the professional knowledge of teachers. The teaching is good, partly as a result of courses taken within a good programme of professional improvement. The teaching commitment of the acting-headteacher has been reduced and she now has one day a week to carry out important management duties. Assessments of pupils' previous work are now used better to help teachers plan lessons. An effective policy for discipline and 'code of conduct' for pupils to follow have been established. The spiritual development of pupils is now good. The school is more punctual than it was and the need for natural light in the classroom for younger pupils has been satisfied.

There have been other important improvements. For example, the teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Pupils' standards of work in aspects of English are better and pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour have also improved.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds at Stamfordham based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Stamfordham compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	C	C	C	D
writing	D	B	B	C
mathematics	B	A	A	B

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                      C

below average            D

well below average      E

\* The group of schools where 8% or less pupils are eligible for free school meals

The table above indicates, for example, that pupils' standards of work in reading are below average when compared with 'similar' schools. Most indicators of the social make-up of the school suggest that pupils should not be compared with the benchmark group of eight per cent or less pupils eligible for free school meals. The variations in pupils' standards of work shown in the table are typical of very small schools, where each year the numbers of pupils who take the National Curriculum tests are very low. Trends in test results therefore need to be treated with caution as the performance of any one pupil makes a significant difference.

The table above shows that pupils' achievements have improved in writing and mathematics between 1998 and 1999. All pupils last school year reached their targets and the standards expected of them nationally (level 2) in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. Boys and girls now achieve similar standards of work by the time they are nine years old, although in the past girls achieved significantly better than boys.

Children enter Stamfordham with levels of knowledge and understanding that are a little below those at many schools nationally. By the time they leave the school, all pupils have made good progress and achieve well. During the inspection the following standards were observed. Pupils' standards of work at seven and nine years old match those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. Mathematics standards have improved considerably in the last four years. In all other subjects pupils achieve appropriate standards of work and high standards in music at the age of seven and nine. Pupils' handwriting standards are satisfactory but pupils do not join letters consistently at an early enough age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils make much of what they are offered at school and they show a keen interest in school life. They have a thirst for knowledge. Higher attainers enjoy extra challenges in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Movement through the school is also good. Pupils are reliable and trustworthy.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very well together, for example, in numeracy lessons and take turns properly when using computers.



Attendance	Very good; attendance is well above the national average. Responses to the questionnaire show that pupils like going to school.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching is consistently good across the school. The teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to excellent. In forty eight per cent of lessons throughout the school the teaching was good, and in twenty per cent it was very good. Twelve per cent of lessons were excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

Teachers have a wide spread of expertise. Teachers organise themselves and support staff well. Lessons are firmly based on the National Curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and work rate. The good level of challenge in literacy and numeracy lessons has led to pupils' improving standards of work. Literacy, numeracy and technical vocabulary are well taught. The strengths of the teaching lead to pupils' good progress, for example, in the content of pupils' writing and their interest in reading. Pupils' capacity to learn is extended effectively. The teaching of music is outstanding. However, not enough emphasis is given to the development of pupils' handwriting.

The teacher's close attention to young children's individual needs in the reception class sets the tone for future years. There is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms; pupils enjoy working hard and receiving praise for what they have done. As a result of careful joint planning, young children under six years old and older pupils are taught progressively more difficult ideas in a logical order. Support staff for pupils with special educational needs are effectively deployed and they have a positive impact on the rate at which pupils learn. Day-to-day assessment is not yet fully established in all subjects and the extent to which pupils' progress is recorded varies between teachers and subjects.

Pupils and young children acquire knowledge, skills and ideas well. They apply themselves and work at a good and sometimes very good pace. They show much interest in their work; their powers of concentration are particularly good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and teachers meet their needs effectively. All pupils, for example, learn to investigate ideas in mathematics and learn to write clearly in English. Pupils learn to transfer skills they have learnt in one subject to another effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All aspects of the National Curriculum are taught. High priority is given to literacy and numeracy, which support pupils' work in other subjects. There is a particularly good emphasis on local studies. Links with the playgroup are very strong and young children benefit from a smooth transition into school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. All pupils are well integrated into lessons. The school works effectively to ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to extra adult time and resources.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Relationships are very good throughout the school and adults are very good role models for pupils. Co-operation is encouraged between pupils and very good moral and social behaviour is expected and reinforced, for example, in assemblies. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in everything the school does.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Teachers know pupils very well. Procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do in English and mathematics are improving. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very successful and those for ensuring the punctuality of all pupils at the start of the day are effective.
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The school's partnership with parents is very good. Parents are kept well informed about what the school does.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school's aims and values are well reflected in its work. The acting-headteacher provides good leadership and direction for the school, assisted by the staff. Many duties are effectively shared. The school has continued to make good improvements in the last year, such as to the policy for recording pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. Governors keep a close check on all the school does. The governing body plans to appoint a permanent headteacher in the near future and governors have identified the need for a longer-term strategic plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school checks its progress against targets in the school development plan effectively, for example, to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors and staff plan ahead very effectively for three years. Any need for changes in provision are known well in advance. The school knows its costs well. Priorities identified in the school development plan are well supported financially. The small under-spend has been appropriately allocated for contingencies. The school applies the principles of 'best value' well.

The school is generously staffed and the accommodation is good. Resources for lessons are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Thirty two per cent of the questionnaires were returned and sixteen parents attended the parents' meeting

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like going to school very much and make good progress with their work.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The right amount and quality of homework is set for children of different ages.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel very comfortable when approaching the school with a question or problem.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of children.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• The school helps children to mature and become responsible.</li> </ul>	Parents had nothing but praise for the school.

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views about the school.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well. Attainment on entry to the school is a little below what is typical of young children nationally and pupils leave the school having reached the expected standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and the highest attainers make good progress towards their targets and achieve well. Key reasons for the standards achieved are the consistently good teaching and the sensitive management over the last year provided by the acting-headteacher. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well implemented and are having a positive effect on standards as well.
2. At the age of five, young children have made good progress overall. They reach standards that are typical of young children nationally in physical, social, emotional and creative development, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Good progress occurs because the curriculum is well organised, there are sufficient adults to give children much individual time and the staff understands the needs of young children. Positive, supportive relationships are a key feature of the Reception and Year 1 class, and they provide the environment for very good progress in children's personal, social and emotional development. Children are interested in all that goes on in the class. They are eager to learn and try out new things. Children gain confidence and are proud of their own achievements.
3. Most describe a toy hidden in a sack by its shape or how it feels clearly. Children enjoy books and know how they are organised. Children are well on course to becoming confident readers by the time they end the reception year. Children are encouraged to become writers. They have a good awareness of what writing is used for and they are not afraid to 'have a go.' Children gain good number skills. Most children count to ten and many count well beyond this. Teachers plan a range of activities to widen children's experiences of the world about them. Children have thought about themselves when younger and have talked about their families. Computers are always available in the classroom. They demonstrate a confidence with using a 'mouse' to control events on screen. Most children run, jump and skip with confidence. They are less controlled in balancing and they are not all aware of others about them. Children attain highly in music, particularly during the weekly music session with a visiting teacher.
4. Results of seven year olds' National Curriculum tests show an improvement in mathematics and were well above average in 2000. In reading pupils results have remained average. In writing they have improved from below average to above average. Pupils' standards of work at seven years old observed during the inspection match what is expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' reading results in 2000 were below average, in writing they were average and in mathematics above average. Most indicators of the social context of the school indicate that the school has been placed in the wrong 'benchmark' group. Trends in results compared with similar schools therefore need to be treated with caution.

5. Results typically vary from year to year when the numbers of pupils in years are relatively low and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs changes. The trend now is for improved results, particularly in mathematics and writing, because for example, the school is better organised and the school teaches basic skills well. The targets the school set and achieved this year (2000) for seven year olds were realistic and took account of the capabilities of the year group. All pupils reached the standards expected but few reached a higher standard. Boys and girls now achieve similar standards of work by the time they are nine years old.
6. During the inspection the following standards were observed. At the age of seven and nine, pupils achieve standards of work in English, mathematics and science similar to those expected nationally. In all other subjects pupils achieve appropriate standards of work and above average standards in music. Pupils' standards of work in handwriting are the weakest area but are satisfactory.
7. The *speaking and listening* skills of some children when they enter the school are limited, but good teaching in the Reception class and a secure environment help them to gain confidence. In Year 2, pupils talk about things that interest them. They develop and explain their ideas, using a growing vocabulary. Pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. In Year 4, pupils take part in discussions eagerly. Some pupils do not always listen carefully to what others say, but most respond to others and communicate their own ideas effectively.
8. Pupils achieve well in *reading*. In Year 2, pupils read simple texts accurately and their understanding is good. They read with expression and use several strategies for reading unfamiliar words, such as trying to make the sounds of letters. Higher attaining pupils read a range of texts fluently and they talk about the characters in a story and how they feel. In Year 4, pupils read more challenging texts with a good level of understanding. Non-fiction is popular. This is one of the strategies the school uses to keep boys interested in reading, and it is well promoted by the teacher in Years 3 and 4. Some of the lower attaining pupils are quite hesitant with reading, but they have good extra help for developing their skills.
9. Standards in *writing* have improved recently, helped by a more focused approach on spelling. Year 2 pupils write independently in sequences of sentences, using full stops and capital letters fairly accurately. The writing of the Year 2 pupils is interesting and they think about the words they are using. Most Year 4 pupils confidently write a story. They spell and punctuate accurately. Writing is imaginative, and average and higher attainers are capable of using some quite complex sentences. Lower attainers struggle with writing, sometimes finding it hard even to form letters correctly. Handwriting is weaker but is mostly legible, but few pupils use a fluent joined style.
10. *Literacy* skills are used well across the curriculum. In a geography lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils made lists to help them record the differences between two localities. They were carefully shown how to do this and helped with the spellings they might need. In history lessons, Year 3 and 4 pupils write accounts of life in other times. These are fluent and interesting. Pupils explain themselves mostly clearly and find information successfully. Appropriate use is made of information and communications technology, especially with regard to the presentation of work. Literacy skills are successfully reinforced in most lessons that involve reading and writing.
11. In *mathematics*, average pupils in Year 2 solve simple problems such as, an unknown number plus 7 equals 10. Pupils use various objects to measure the length of things. They accurately identify odd and even numbers and soon see the pattern of answers

when odd numbers are added to even numbers. Higher attainers measure in centimetres and work comfortably with numbers up to 100. They work quickly and accurately. Lower attainers successfully add numbers up to 10 and recognise squares, rectangles and triangles. Average and higher attaining pupils in Year 4 work comfortably with numbers up to 1000, adding and subtracting them mostly accurately. They work out what 9 lots of £0.36 are and find lines of symmetry in shapes successfully. Pupils know the names and some of the properties of shapes, such as pentagons. Lower attainers add and subtract numbers up to 100.

12. The use and application of pupils' *numeracy* skills is an integral part of the school day and few opportunities are missed to include and develop them in real situations and across many subjects. For example, in music pupils count how many beats there are in a bar and they repeat rhythmic patterns. In geography pupils learn about scale drawings and distances represented. Pupils used measurement skills to help them draw 'exploded' diagrams of cubes in design and technology.
13. There has been a considerable improvement generally in pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour since the last inspection. The teaching has improved because teachers expect more of pupils and lessons proceed at a faster pace. Teachers have improved the clarity of targets for lessons and policy statements now give good guidance for all staff in most subjects
14. In *science*, seven year olds' work shows pupils' increasing knowledge and understanding. For example, they have a good knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. They know the names of many body parts. Displays in the classroom show that pupils have studied the effects on images of different kinds of mirrors. Pupils discovered in one lesson that nothing is visible without light. Pupils learn the very important first steps in investigating ideas methodically. Nine year olds have a good knowledge and understanding across all aspects of science. For example, they investigate the properties of liquids and solids and learn five questions that should be asked, such as, 'Can the substance be poured?' Pupils have separated sand, mud and water and have recorded their findings systematically, with clear conclusions. All pupils understand that without light there are no shadows.
15. At seven years old, pupils load, save and retrieve their work successfully in *information and communications technology*. Pupils know how to create simple pictures using a painting program. Pupils also successfully use word-processing skills, such as changing the size and type of letters and rearranging the order of their writing, to enhance their work. Pupils have produced interesting graphs of surveys about their classmates' favourite things. At the age of nine, many pupils know how to use a range of features on the word processor's 'tool-bar.' Pupils use a simple programming language to control a floor robot. Pupils have successfully experimented with making attractive posters by adding images and different kinds of letters to convey messages. Standards have improved because there are better resources and teachers are more confident in their use.
16. Seven year olds in *religious education* have an awareness of the importance of Jesus to Christians. They are also aware that there are other religions, such as Hinduism. They have a good understanding of the idea of celebration; for example they explain the difference between a birthday which belongs to one person and Christmas which belongs to many people. Nine year olds have an appropriate knowledge of Christian communities. For example, they have visited different churches in the locality and appreciate how special they are to Christians. Pupils have a good understanding of the idea of worship. They have knowledge of other faiths; for example they explain the role

of a Guru in Sikhism clearly. The school is reducing the number of other religions studied to a more manageable number.

17. Standards in other subjects match those expected at seven and nine years old nationally. Pupils' standards of work are high in music. The curriculum provided for history, geography and music is particularly good and the special interest that teachers have is reflected in pupils' work. Teachers give an appropriate level of attention to all subjects, which is also reflected in the standards achieved. Year 3 and 4 pupils learn to use line effectively in art. They use the 'design, make and evaluate' method of working in design and technology. Standards have improved in design and technology because the teacher responsible has lifted the quality of work. In history and geography pupils learn much about the local area and understand, for example, how their village has altered since 1860. In physical education, pupils learn to successfully develop a sequence of movements in gymnastics. As a result of the particularly strong teaching, pupils learn to play scales, sing four part songs and to evaluate their work in music.
18. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. They effectively gain skills and develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers usually challenge pupils with work at an appropriate level. Pupils respond well to this and they gain in confidence. Twenty nine per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, some of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is above average, and almost all of these pupils are boys. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets outlined in their individual education plans. Although they sometimes do not achieve as well as their peers, or reach the levels expected of pupils of their age, they achieve well for their capabilities.

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

19. Children's attitudes and behaviour are good. There were many examples of pupils, including the under fives, settling well to lessons, showing good concentration and being very interested in what was going on in class. On rare occasions pupils' exuberance gets the better of them. However, behaviour has improved since the last inspection and this is due to the effective behaviour policy, which the school has developed in consultation with pupils, parents, governors and staff.
20. A code of conduct forms part of this new policy, which is consistently applied throughout the school. Where pupils do have behavioural problems the school staff deal with them in a quiet and efficient manner. The behaviour policy is good, children know the rules and staff know just when to intervene. The atmosphere around the school is friendly and pupils relate very well to each other and to adults. There were no instances of oppressive behaviour seen and parents all agreed in the questionnaire that behaviour is good.
21. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils enjoy answering questions; they are interested and keen to get on. They settle quickly and work hard. They are eager to learn and the school provides a good working atmosphere for this to happen. The teachers' calm manner influences pupils' behaviour and attention to tasks. Pupils are expected to behave well in and out of school and they do so. Pupils make many contributions to the life of the school, for example, by representing their peers at football matches and playing in the 'Pont-Proms' concerts. Most children are sensitive to the needs of others and it is common for older pupils to help younger ones.

22. Attendance is well above the national average and has improved since the last inspection. There were no exclusions or un-authorised absences last year. The school works well with outside agencies, particularly with the local authority's transport co-ordinator, to promote good and prompt attendance. The registers are marked and monitored well and lateness is not an issue, even after the lengthening of the morning session from two to three periods.

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

23. The teaching is good and parents' positive views are justified. All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory; in 48 per cent of lessons the teaching was good; in 22 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good. Twelve per cent of lessons were excellent. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. More effective teamwork, better planning and training have led to more consistency in the quality of teaching through the school. The good quality of teaching has a positive effect on the learning that takes place and has resulted in raising pupils' standards of work.
24. The teaching of young children under six years of age is good and some of it is very good. Support staff and other adults who work voluntarily in the class make a valuable contribution to the quality of the teaching and to the general welfare of children. They work hard to support the class in every way they can, and rarely miss an opportunity to make themselves useful. Teachers know children well and they use this knowledge to help them plan work that matches their needs. However, adults do not regularly record achievements and in this way build up information that they could use to help them plan even more efficiently.
25. In science, music, geography and history the practical approach, use of interesting resources and the enthusiasm and expertise of teachers have a positive effect on pupils' interest and motivation. There has been an improvement in teachers' expertise and confidence in teaching information and communications technology.
26. Teachers throughout the school are good at teaching basic skills in English and mathematics. They have effectively implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and these lessons result in pupils gaining new skills and building on their previous learning well. For example, a demonstration of how to use joining words to make a sequence of sentences involved all pupils, and the Year 2 pupils then proved in their own writing that they had learnt the skills as planned. In a numeracy lesson, the Year 3 and 4 teacher skilfully used questioning to help pupils develop better speed and understanding of number in mental calculations. Attention to the revision of basic skills has made a valuable contribution to raising standards in these subjects. However, not enough attention is given to the teaching of handwriting skills.
27. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and they plan lessons effectively. There are clear learning targets and pupils know what they are learning and understand what they have to do. The school has put in place courses of lessons (schemes of work) that are used well by teachers as a support for their lesson planning. Where there are particular strengths in knowledge and understanding, good quality learning occurs. For example, the specialist music teacher uses his great expertise to best effect. His knowledge has a very significant effect on pupils' learning. In all music lessons pupils made rapid progress and their attainment was above that expected.



28. Teachers are enthusiastic and use a wide range of methods to teach lessons. They challenge pupils and encourage them to work hard. In particular, the practical approach is a strength of the teaching in such subjects as science, geography and art. For example, in a science lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils were offered a wide range of resources to use in a lesson about light and shadow. The enthusiasm of the teacher helped pupils to learn through their own exploration and experimentation.
29. Good use is made of resources. For example, information and communications technology is used effectively to support work in a range of subjects, an improvement from the last inspection. The improvement in teachers' knowledge and confidence in using computers has resulted in it now being taught effectively. For example, the Reception and Year 1 teacher introduced a painting and drawing program. In Year 2, the teacher built on this experience as her class learnt how to shade areas and follow more complex instructions. Teachers use time well. Their careful planning and organisation means that lessons are balanced and pupils achieve what the teachers plan they should. A good pace to lessons keeps pupils involved and challenged.
30. Pupils are managed well and a purposeful working atmosphere is created in which pupils can concentrate and learn. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and are consistent in their approach to inappropriate behaviour. All teachers have created a calm working atmosphere in classrooms and pupils are carefully and consistently controlled to ensure they do not disturb the work of others. In lessons pupils sustain concentration and make clear steps in their learning. On just one occasion in a physical education lesson there was a lack of self-control on the part of a few boys, which was sufficient to affect their progress. Teachers use homework effectively to reinforce ideas learned in school.
31. Sound assessment procedures are now in place and they are used well in English and mathematics. Teachers know their pupils well and they make accurate assessments of their achievements. Careful records are kept and information from assessment is used for the purpose of grouping pupils of similar capabilities. Teachers usually mark pupils' work in a manner that helps pupils. However, day-to-day assessment is not yet fully established in other subjects and the extent to which pupils' progress is recorded varies between teachers and subjects. It is too early for information from the new system to be used to influence planning. This means that in some subjects, although teachers know their pupils well and take their needs into account, work is not as clearly matched to pupils' capabilities as it might be.
32. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers know their pupils very well and take their needs into account when planning lessons. In a literacy lesson in Year 3 and 4 when pupils were set the task of evaluating information books, the teacher had provided a good simple recording sheet and the support assistant had sorted the books carefully so that they were not too difficult. In this way the lower attainers in the class were able to take part in the activity and gained a lot from it.
33. There is plentiful adult support in the school for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and other adults work together to plan and organise activities to ensure all pupils have access to them. All adults are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and they intervene at appropriate moments to keep pupils on task or to help them when they have a problem. The support assistants in Year 3 and 4 work alongside the teacher and ensure that there is an appropriate balance between help and challenge in supporting pupils with special needs. In an art lesson in this class, the teacher and the support assistant worked together to ensure that one boy had enough support, so that he did not

become frustrated with the task, whilst making sure that he still had a similar challenge to the other pupils in the lesson.

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

34. The quality and range of the curriculum offered by the school are very good. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in long term planning and provision for design technology and information and communications technology. Teachers have effectively implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, which has brought about improvements in standards. Music remains a strength of the school. Links with the local community effectively enhance the curriculum.
35. The school offers a wide range of opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve well. Improvements in long-term planning have ensured that all subjects are taught and there is a good development of pupils' skills and knowledge through the school. The curriculum for design and technology now covers all aspects of the subject, and provision for information and communications technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is a major strength in the provision for music, with the investment in expert tuition and teaching bringing about high standards and very good responses from pupils. The curriculum for the foundation stage is carefully planned, it provides a wide range of experiences and ensures that children gain the skills they need.
36. Teachers have worked hard to implement the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. They plan carefully to ensure that all the pupils in their classes learn effectively. The teaching of basic skills is successful and standards are rising in these subjects. The school provides a good quality of personal, social and health education within the school's caring approach and concern for the individual. The topic 'Our bodies' includes aspects of health education, such as sex education and attention to drug misuse, but also gives pupils the opportunity to think about behaviour and feelings.
37. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have access to a wide and useful curriculum. Teachers know their pupils well and provide for their individual needs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support is provided where necessary, but even without this all pupils are involved in all activities. In the singing lessons given by a visiting teacher, all pupils were totally involved. Pupils with special educational needs were given tasks they could cope with and they achieved well alongside their peers. The school gives the provision of equal opportunities and inclusiveness a high priority.
38. The work of one assistant in providing additional literacy support is very effective in developing the literacy skills of some pupils and ensuring that they gain more confidence in reading and writing. The provision is very closely matched to individual needs and pupils' progress is closely monitored. Pupils make good progress in these sessions. In one lesson where the focus was on developing reading skills, two boys were given the task of putting a set of words in order to make a sentence. This was a challenging task but they made a great effort and eventually managed it. They gained confidence in their own abilities as readers and made strides in their learning.
39. Opportunities for pupils to receive extra tuition, whether this is for music or for reading or for additional literacy support, means that they have to be withdrawn from the class for short periods of time. This practice is well established and the school has carefully

considered the implications in terms of what pupils might miss when this happens. In most lessons the teachers ensure that pupils are able to continue with class work, even if this means going over parts of the lesson they have missed. On some rare occasions this does not happen and pupils miss important introductions or developments in lessons.

40. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged sufficiently with the work they are given to do, and the numbers of pupils attaining higher levels in end of key stage tests is rising. There have been indications that boys were not achieving as well as girls, but the school is addressing this issue. A successful strategy to encourage boys to have more interest in reading has been to provide more non-fiction books and the teacher in Year 3 and 4 promotes these books well. There has been a considerable improvement in the responses of boys to reading as a result of this.
41. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including opportunities to take part in sports. The curriculum is enhanced by many visits and visitors, which are effective in extending the experiences of pupils and making their learning more relevant. Links with the local community are very good. The school is keen to maintain its position as central to village life and makes the most of every opportunity to use the local community to enhance the curriculum, for example, in local studies that combine geographical and historical work. As part of their religious education, pupils visited local churches and were visited by local ministers. Pupils were keen to talk about these experiences and had obviously learnt a lot about what faith means to people.
42. The school has good relationships with other schools. It has a particularly strong liaison with the play-group which meets in the school. This has a positive impact on the confidence with which children make the move into school, and is a valuable means of fostering good relationships with parents. The play-group leader also supports pupils in school with additional literacy work and has a very positive working relationship with teachers. The school works with other schools in the area to extend the experiences of pupils. For example, the schools join together for very worthwhile musical events. Links with the Middle School to which most pupils go are positive and pupils are well prepared when it is time for them to move on.
43. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Opportunities for spiritual development are good; for social, moral and cultural they are very good. This is a different picture from the last inspection, when some weaknesses in these areas were identified. The school's emphasis on the individual and the close links with the community make a good context for pupils' personal development.
44. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. In religious education lessons, pupils gain a knowledge and understanding of what religion means to people and they have the opportunity to relate these ideas to their own experiences. In one lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils considered celebrations and what they meant to themselves and to others. Assemblies are special events, with the involvement of a range of people, including those from the local community. Pupils are given opportunities to consider ideas and share their thoughts with others, for example, when thinking about fear of the dark. They have the chance to reflect quietly in the calm atmosphere created by teachers.
45. A responsive attitude is encouraged in the school and pupils feel sufficiently confident to share their fears and delights. Reception children talked eagerly about the lights they had seen in school and had obviously been delighted with seeing reflections in science. The enjoyment in music promoted by the school brings a very good response from

pupils. In every music lesson pupils and adults were totally involved and responded wholeheartedly to sounds and rhythms.

46. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. As a response to the last inspection and to help support a few pupils who display challenging behaviour, the school successfully adopted an 'assertive' behaviour policy, where pupils are consistently given well understood rewards and sanctions. However, even without this the school has a clear moral code and this provides a clear framework within which pupils learn what is acceptable behaviour. Adults have high expectations of pupils and they get a good response from pupils. Care for others and a gentle but firm approach is a consistent element of day to day living in the school. Reception children are taught how to behave responsibly and are expected to think of others in their day to day actions. Year 4 pupils have opportunities to consider how their actions affect others, for example, when thinking how what they do can be helpful or unhelpful to others.
47. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school has a family atmosphere in which the individual matters. Staff set the tone for a caring environment. This is evident in the way all adults try to praise pupils for achievements and for efforts they make. Relationships are very good. Pupils themselves care about others. They listen to what others have to say and are genuinely pleased when others achieve well. They co-operate well and support each other. In a writing lesson in Year 3 and 4, pupils were more than willing to help others with spellings or to help them when they 'got stuck.' Pupils are expected to take on responsibilities in school. The 'reading partnership' sessions provide a good opportunity for older pupils to support younger ones, and they do this positively and responsibly.
48. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The lessons teachers plan ensure that pupils have many and varied experiences. In music, art and other subjects, pupils learn about cultural traditions in their own area and in other countries. The links with the local community provide some good experiences. Visitors share their talents and interests with pupils. During the inspection two parents came into school and very effectively shared their music with pupils. Displays in school and teachers' planning provide evidence of a varied approach to different cultures. In geography, pupils have studied Stamfordham and other localities. In religious education, pupils gain knowledge of other religions,

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

49. The school cares well for its pupils and relationships are a strength of the school. The procedures for child protection are in place and are working well in practice. Training is provided regularly for staff to ensure, for example, that any changes in procedure are dealt with in the correct way. Health and safety procedures in the school are mostly good. A list of minor items was provided for the acting-headteacher. The accident book is kept up to date and there is an evacuation drill every term. The school's equipment is checked annually. The school works well with other agencies, such as the speech therapist and the transport co-ordinator, to ensure pupils' welfare.
50. The school's behaviour policy has clearly set out guidelines with an emphasis on praise for pupils doing the right things. The policy is well linked to the school's aims and full consultations went on with parents before it was adopted. The good behaviour seen around the school is in part due to the uniform implementation of this policy. Children are encouraged to solve their own problems and this helps them to mature and grow. The sex education policy has clear aims and is linked to science lessons at appropriate

points in pupils' lives. There have been no exclusions and no oppressive behaviour amongst pupils was reported or observed. The school's approach to relationships is highly effective.

51. Pupils are integrated well into the school and the school works well with parents and carers to inform them about the curriculum and the progress of their children. The progress reports are clear and have room for parents' comments. Teachers have three meetings a year to talk to parents about pupils' progress and these are planned each term at the most suitable time. The school has very good relationships with parents and other agencies, who all work together for pupils' benefit.
52. Pupils are encouraged and helped to learn about other cultures and values and the school's links with the local community, and the charity work undertaken help to foster citizenship skills. There are good extra curricular activities and a regular out of school hours club. There are effective procedures to monitor and promote good and prompt attendance, which has improved since the last inspection. All the school's policies on behaviour and relationships are effective and working well.
53. Assessment procedures in school are satisfactory. For English and mathematics they are good, and for other subjects they are developing satisfactorily. Teachers keep careful records of reading and monitor progress in spelling well. Writing assessments are good. Information from these assessments is used to help teachers form groups according to pupils' capabilities. This is apparent in literacy and numeracy lessons, where careful planning and appropriate matching of tasks is a key feature and helps pupils make good progress. The school has begun to explore the process of setting higher targets for pupils, assessing their progress closely and then shaping the curriculum to meet those targets in the time available.
54. In other subjects assessment procedures are developing satisfactorily. The school has decided to use the assessment outlines suggested in National Curriculum (QCA) guidelines. These are used satisfactorily, if sometimes inconsistently, but it is too early for information from the new system to be used to influence planning. This means that in some subjects, although teachers know their pupils well and take their needs into account, work is not as clearly matched to pupils' capabilities as it might be.
55. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and the school works hard to ensure that they receive the support they need to enable them to make good progress. Their needs are reviewed regularly and their achievements are recorded well. Procedures for dealing with pupils on the register for special educational needs are good. Statements are obtained for those in most need, although this process can take a long time and the paperwork involved is a huge burden for a small school. Statements of special educational need are fully implemented. Individual education plans are written by class teachers. Some objectives are too general, making it difficult to assess when they have been achieved. However, they are usually translated into clear strategies that can be followed successfully by teachers and other adults working with the pupils concerned.
56. The school has a lot of good information about end of Year 2 and other test results. A start has been made in analysing results and using this information to make changes to the curriculum. A good example is the weakness that was found in spelling. This was successfully tackled by changes in approaches to the teaching of spelling. Pupils' performance data is now used to track progress through the school and to set targets for individual pupils. There is a good commitment to target-setting as a means of

improving standards, supported by governors. This work needs further consolidation. Targets are not shared with pupils or parents, though the school intends to do this.

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

57. Relationships with parents are a strength of the school, and have improved since the last inspection. Parents' very positive views of the school were fully supported by the inspectors. Parental involvement in school is effective and supports pupils' learning. Several parents were seen in school helping with information and communications technology lessons, art, reading and teaching pupils to sing in assembly. There is an 'open-door' policy and parents feel valued and welcomed whenever they have concerns about their children. The staff is fully aware that small worries can easily get out of proportion if not dealt with swiftly. Overall, parents have a very positive impact on the work of the school.
58. The Friends Association raises much needed funds for the school and runs good social events as well. The Friends recommend how the money might be spent and this has led to their good understanding about the work of the school. Parents believe, rightly, that the school has changed for the better and developed well since the last inspection. The full consultation on school policies, such as the behaviour policy, is a very good example of this partnership working in practice. Parents value the children's growing awareness of each other and the good interaction between older and younger pupils. School policies towards parents are clear and effective.
59. The quality of information for parents from the school is good and they are well informed about the National Curriculum. Parents have been consulted about how the school spends its money. Letters home are informal, clear and informative. There is a file kept in the foyer that parents can consult if they mislay letters at home, and there is a friendly and community feel to all correspondence from the school. School reports contain all that parents want to know. Parents help their children effectively at home with short tasks. They are pleased that their children have homework. Parents are generally aware of school procedures and fill in holiday forms if they wish to have permission for their children to take time off in school time. However, these are not always filled in as early as they should. Parents are always informed if their children are hurt at school and they are happy that the school knows and cares for their children well.
60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved at an early stage and are kept informed about the progress their children are making. They are invited to reviews, particularly if outside agencies are involved, but their contribution in these is not recorded.

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

61. When the school was last inspected, Stamfordham provided satisfactory value for money. Since then it has improved in many areas of its work and in particular in the quality of teaching and the consequent improvement in pupils' standards of work in, for example, mathematics. Virtually all of the points for action from the last inspection have been tackled effectively, and the areas remaining are well identified in the school development planning.
62. The governing body makes a very good contribution to the smooth and effective running of the school. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities. The chair of governors has a clear

view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the many influences on the school. He provides good support and direction for the school and knows it well. Many other governors provide very good support, for example, in the area of financial planning. The policy to guide governors in their monitoring role is excellent. It has been carefully thought through and is most helpful to governors and staff. The headteacher receives good support in areas such as health and safety and seeking 'best value' when making financial decisions. The contents of the school's prospectus and annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. The governing body is up to date with its preparations for implementing the school's 'performance management' policy.

63. The school is well led by the committed acting-headteacher, who with the staff has provided the drive, vision and good ideas to improve the school during a difficult period. The acting headteacher promotes a highly supportive working atmosphere that has allowed the improvements in school performance to occur, based on good relationships, close team-work amongst staff and clear expectations of what needs to be done. Very good communications between staff, parents and governors are a feature of the school. The school is keen to improve further and the staff shares the vision for the school. The acting-headteacher has carried out a number of lesson observations and given valuable reports to staff to help them improve. The school's aims are well reflected in its work. Some responsibilities are delegated to individual teachers and they carry out these diligently. Teachers responsible for subjects develop their colleagues expertise well. For example, literacy and numeracy lessons have been well implemented. Many duties and decisions are shared effectively between the staff. New staff are effectively inducted.
64. Strengths and weaknesses in the school's results and in teachers' assessments are carefully evaluated and effective plans are put in place to further improve standards. For example, spelling standards have benefited from the extra attention given to this aspect of English, as a result of the school's understanding of test results. The school has set targets for each pupil and it monitors their progress regularly. Teachers have begun to adapt the curriculum to ensure that targets have the best chance of being met in the future.
65. The special needs co-ordinator is currently the acting-headteacher. She has many other roles and has worked with great commitment in all matters, including applying for statements and support for individual pupils' needs. There is a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs and it is well deployed. Some of this support is provided by the school, some comes through statements of special educational need and some from other funding. It is all effectively and efficiently used. However, when there is a pupil who has behaviour difficulties, this support is sometimes used for the one pupil at the expense of other pupils who have needs. All supporting adults make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching in the school. They have a good understanding of their roles and are committed to the school and its pupils. They work alongside teachers and ensure that they take the same approaches to particular pupils.
66. The school has a clear view about what it needs to do to improve further in the next twelve months. The school development plan is good. It takes the form of a series of targets, which include who is responsible for what, costs for the year and how the school will know when it has achieved particular goals. Targets in the plan are regularly reviewed and progress is clearly evident. There are many good examples of clear thinking in the school's documents. For example, all the key issues from the previous report have received positive attention. The acting-headteacher, staff and governors have worked well together and the school has moved forward. Parents confirm that good changes have been made. The next stage is for the governors to appoint a

permanent headteacher and create a longer-term plan for three and more years ahead. Presently the school is not a provider of initial teacher training, but it is certainly suitable. The school is generously staffed.

67. Educational priorities are very well supported through the school's financial planning. The governing body keeps a close watch on all spending and is fully aware of the consequences for the budget of varying numbers of pupils in the school. The school has a small under-spend for contingencies and all funds are appropriately allocated to ensure that the school maintains its good provision. The school is fully aware of its likely future costs and any implications that might require action. The strategic use of resources, including money for school improvement, is effective. Funds for staff training are well used and this work has had a positive effect on the teaching. The school follows the principles of 'best value' well. Members of staff, for example, check the value for money that contracts for services provide. Pupils benefit from the care and attention given to financial efficiency. The school office is efficiently administered by the two secretaries, who work well together. Proper use is made of new technology to save time and increase efficiency.
68. The accommodation is good. There is good provision for outdoor physical education with a grass pitch and a flat playground. There is sufficient classroom space and the Reception classroom has had more windows added since the last inspection to improve the amount of natural light. However, young children do not have an adequate safe outdoor play area to develop independent play activities. The area of the hall available for the oldest children to use for physical education is too small because of the encroachment of the library and other resources around the sides of the hall. There are well established environmental areas for pupils to find insects and see plants grow. The school shares a site with a very well re-furnished village hall that the school uses regularly. Resources are satisfactory overall and the school effectively shares some resources with other schools in the area. Small physical education resources, such as bats and balls, are about to receive an urgently needed boost in numbers.
69. The school conducts its business with a good level of effectiveness. Taking into account the cost of educating each pupil in a very small school context, it provides good value for money.

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

**In conjunction with plans already in place, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:**

- develop the leadership of the school by appointing a permanent headteacher and establish a longer term school development plan; (Paragraph 66)
- improve standards in English by ensuring that all pupils develop a fluent and legible handwriting style. (Paragraphs 95, 96)

**The school should consider the following lesser issues for inclusion in the action plan:**



- improve the policies for geography and history by bringing them up to date with the school's current good practice; (Paragraph 132)
- improve the provision for young children's physical development by creating a safe outdoor area in which children can play independently; (Paragraph 84)
- continue to implement the new assessment procedures so that pupils' progress is closely recorded in all subjects. (Paragraphs 53, 54, 72)

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

Number of lessons observed

25
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

19
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### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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12	20	48	20	0	0	0
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The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll	64
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	10	4	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils	School	100 (79)	100 (86)	100 (79)

at NC level 2 or above	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)
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Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (79)	100 (79)	100 (79)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

*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	2

***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
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	62
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.6
Average class size	21.3

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48

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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999 / 2000
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	£
Total income	145230
Total expenditure	144939
Expenditure per pupil	2457
Balance brought forward from previous year	7365
Balance carried forward to next year	7656

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	64
Number of questionnaires returned	21

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	24	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	38	14	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	43	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	71	24	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	38	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	5	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	24	5	0	14
The school works closely with parents.	62	33	0	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	19	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	33	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	38	10	0	4

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents were very positive and raised no issues.

## **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**

70. Provision for the youngest children in the last inspection was satisfactory. There have been national developments since then, and both teachers who work in Class 1 have effectively taken on the new curriculum for the foundation stage, which lasts until children enter Year 1.
71. Teaching is good and some is very good. Support staff and other adults who work voluntarily in the class make a valuable contribution to the quality of the teaching and to the general welfare of the children. They work hard to support the class in every way they can, and rarely miss an opportunity to make themselves useful. The classroom assistant in particular works very well in support of the Year 1 pupils, and with pupils with special educational needs. Because of the quality of the work she does, the teacher is often able to effectively focus her attention on a small group of children in another part of the room.
72. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, except physical development, which is satisfactory. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. There is a strong and positive liaison with the play-group that meets in school, and a very good partnership with parents. Teachers know the children well and they use this knowledge to help them plan work that matches their needs. However, adults do not regularly record achievements and in this way build up information that they could use to help them plan even more efficiently.
73. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they will be five. Almost all have attended the play-group that meets in the school, and because of the very close links between the play-group and the youngest class, children confidently make the transition into school. Assessments made as children enter the school indicate that their attainment on entry is slightly below what might be expected for children of this age. However, there is a wide range of attainment. A significant number of children have quite limited communication skills and a few have difficulties with personal and social development. Progress is good and most children, when they are ready to start in Year 1, are on course to achieve the expected standards in all areas of learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

74. Positive, supportive relationships are a key feature of the Reception and Year 1 class, and they provide the environment for very good progress in children's personal, social and emotional development. The teachers have high expectations of children. From the beginning they are expected to behave sensibly and take responsibility for their own actions. They are reminded of the class rules at all times. 'Stop, look, listen,' is a phrase everyone knows. Calm but firm control in the class ensures that all children learn to work and play together and to sit quietly and listen when appropriate.
75. Children are interested in all that goes on in the class. They are eager to learn and try out new things. Children gain confidence and are proud of their own achievements. They learn to be independent, and there are usually sufficient opportunities for them to select their own activities, find their own resources and become involved with tasks they have set themselves. They gain knowledge of other cultures, for example, when finding out about Diwali, and they learn to respect other people.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

76. In the secure environment of the youngest class, children gain the confidence to speak to others. Some are willing to share their news with the rest of the class. Most describe a toy hidden in a sack by its shape or how it feels well. They take part in role-play, for example, serving or taking orders over the telephone in the 'restaurant.' Adults encourage children to talk by engaging them in conversation whilst they play.
77. Children enjoy books and know how they are organised. Teachers and other adults share books with children and encourage them to respond. In one lesson, all the children were involved with looking at 'Spot's Birthday Party.' They tried to guess what would happen next and helped to lift the flaps on each page to find out what was hiding there. There is good involvement by parents in their children's reading; books are taken home and words are practised. Higher attaining children are already reading familiar words and most children are beginning to hear sounds and are linking them with the letters they see. Children are well on course to becoming confident readers by the time they end the reception year.
78. Children are encouraged to become 'writers.' They have a good awareness of what writing is used for and they are not afraid to 'have a go,' even when they have not yet learnt all the skills they need. In a lesson children wrote invitations to their friends and the teacher 'read' them to the class. This gave them a lot of encouragement. Most children write some letters, and a few make a good attempt at spelling some words for themselves. However, the formation of letters is weak and not enough time is spent on this.

## **Mathematical development**

79. Children gain good number skills, and most are on course to reach the expected standards in this area by the time they start in Year 1. They are well taught by adults, who ensure that opportunities for mathematical learning are not missed. For example, in the restaurant role play area one adult encouraged children to match plates, knives and forks, and to count the number of straws they needed.
80. Reception children share a numeracy session with some Year 1 pupils, but the teachers make sure that the youngest children can take part. In one lesson, children were asked to estimate the number of objects on a card and match it with the numeral they thought was the correct one. Because all the children had a set of numerals of their own, they were able to have a go, even if they were not very confident. Most children count to ten and many count well beyond this. Many children say whether a given number is 'more' or 'less' than another number. Some begin to make number sentences, such as 'six is two more than four.'

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

81. Teaching in this area is particularly good. Teachers plan a range of activities to widen children's experiences of the world about them. In a lesson, the teacher took children on a walk round the school to look for sources of light. This was a valuable learning experience and all the children came back with a better understanding of light in the world. They were able to describe places where they had seen light, many could talk about where the light came from, and some could explain about reflected light.
82. Children have thought about themselves when younger, have talked about their families and about parts of the human body. They have looked at buildings in the village and

have designed and made a model room of their own. Computers are always available in the classroom and are used to their full potential. The teacher showed the class how to use a drawing program and later individuals were observed trying out what they had been shown. Good learning had taken place. They demonstrated a confidence with using a 'mouse' to control events on screen.

83. Construction toys and sand and water play are all available for children's own exploration. When they do get the opportunity, children play co-operatively or independently, and often quite imaginatively.

### **Physical development**

84. Provision for physical development is satisfactory. There are several organised physical education sessions in the hall and these are used well to improve children's range of movement, for example, in the many ways they can use their feet, or for free movement to music. Adults make sure that children have some periods of active outdoor play, by using the school playground or the village playground, both of which provide children with the chance to climb and balance on large apparatus. However, there is no safe outdoor play area to which children can have regular access and have the opportunity to independently explore a range of equipment.
85. Most children run, jump and skip with confidence. They are less controlled in balancing and they are not all aware of others about them. For example, some children do not look before they make their way down a slide and can easily bump into someone else. They learn to use scissors and other equipment effectively.

### **Creative development**

86. Teachers provide children with opportunities to explore and experiment with a range of tools, materials and techniques. Children enjoy working creatively and become absorbed in what they are doing. One girl spent a long time on a painting, making sure all the colours were as she wanted them. Some other children were excited about working with shiny paper. They chose the ones they liked the best and cut out shapes and stuck them down on another piece of paper. As they worked they talked about how some were shinier than others and how the light was reflected in them. Children were eager to have a go when they had been shown how to make a 'diva' from plasticene or how to choose bright colours for 'Mendhi' patterns.
87. Children attain highly in music, particularly during the weekly music session with a visiting teacher. During this session children recognise how sounds can be made and they play musical instruments confidently. They sing songs from memory and copy rhythms. They enjoy these sessions and also the singing that they do with their teacher.

## **ENGLISH**

88. The standards achieved by seven year olds are broadly in line with those expected nationally. The small size of the year groups makes it difficult to compare the test



results of one year with another, as there can be quite considerable fluctuations. However, standards have been rising over the last few years, and are better now than they were at the last inspection. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses such as spelling and boys' reading standards, and this has contributed to better standards overall. Both 1999 results and 2000 results show that there are few pupils achieving at higher than expected levels, particularly in writing, but the school's targets reflect the fact that this is likely to change for the better this year. The standards achieved by nine year old pupils in the school are as might be expected for pupils of this age, although more pupils achieve at higher levels than they did when they were younger.

89. A significant number of children have limited communication skills on entry to the school. Pupils achieve well in the school. They gain confidence in speaking and listening and they develop skills of reading and writing at a rapid rate. This is mainly as a result of the good teaching. Teachers ensure that work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment, pupils make a lot of effort in lessons, and they move on in their learning.
90. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are identified at an early stage and they have carefully designed programmes of work that help them gain the skills in reading and writing that they need. The range and quality of support for these pupils helps them to make good progress in lessons, but many are also withdrawn on a regular basis to receive effective extra help. This provision effectively boosts their learning. That virtually all pupils achieve expected levels in reading and writing by the age of seven, is a tribute to the good work being done in helping lower attaining pupils.
91. The speaking and listening skills of some children when they enter the school are limited, but good teaching in the youngest class and a secure environment help them to gain confidence. In Year 2, pupils talk about things that interest them. They begin to develop and explain their ideas, using a growing vocabulary. These skills are used well across the curriculum. For example, in a religious education lesson pupils talked about celebrations, and in a science lesson they described what they could see in a darkened box. Pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. In Year 4, pupils have gained more confidence and they take part in discussions eagerly. Some pupils do not always listen carefully to what others say, but most respond to others and communicate their own ideas effectively. In a 'circle time' whole-class discussion there were some thoughtful interchanges about how our actions can be helpful or unhelpful to others.
92. Pupils achieve well in reading. They effectively gain skills and their responses to what they are reading are very good. Parental involvement in reading, particularly up to seven years old, has a positive impact on progress as pupils are more motivated and want to do well. The system of 'reading partnerships,' where older pupils read with younger pupils, is working very well. It builds confidence in all pupils and creates an environment where reading is enjoyed by all.
93. In Year 2, pupils read simple texts accurately and their understanding is good. They read with expression and use several strategies for reading unfamiliar words, such as trying to make the sounds of letters. Higher attaining pupils read a range of texts fluently and they talk about the characters in a story and how they feel. The response to reading is very good. Pupils are interested and easily get involved with stories. In a literacy lesson, pupils appreciated the humour in a story they were reading together, and predicted what might happen next.

94. In Year 4, pupils read more challenging texts with a good level of understanding. Responses to reading are positive, and they keep good records of the books they have read. Non-fiction is popular. This is one of the strategies the school uses to keep boys interested in reading, and it is well promoted by the teacher in Years 3 and 4. Some pupils evaluate non-fiction books and decide how useful they are in providing information. Some of the lower attaining pupils are quite hesitant with reading, but they have good extra help in developing their skills.
95. Standards in writing have improved recently, with a more focused approach on spelling. The interest pupils have in reading has a good impact on the quality of their writing. However, handwriting skills are weaker. Year 2 pupils write independently in sequences of sentences, using full stops and capital letters fairly accurately. Lower attaining pupils need some support, but all pupils make a good effort and are confident in their skills as writers. This is as a result of the positive approach in the youngest class, where all children are encouraged to 'write' and regard themselves as 'writers' even before they have many skills. The writing of the Year 2 pupils is interesting and they think about the words they are using. In a literacy lesson, the teacher showed pupils how to use different time words as alternatives to 'then'. This they did successfully. Writing is legible but not yet joined.
96. Most Year 4 pupils confidently write a story. They spell and punctuate accurately. Writing is imaginative, and average and higher attainers are capable of using some quite complex sentence structures. Lower attainers struggle with writing, sometimes finding it hard even to form letters correctly. Handwriting is weak but is mostly legible. Few pupils use a fluent joined style.
97. Literacy skills are used well across the curriculum. In a geography lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils made lists to help them record the differences between two localities. They were carefully shown how to do this and helped with the spellings they might need. In history lessons, Year 3 and 4 pupils write accounts of life in other times. These are fluent and interesting.
98. Teaching is good and can be very good. Teachers are competent in teaching basic literacy skills. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented and teachers plan well for the mixed age classes. Through careful planning and good organisation, teachers ensure that pupils gain skills and their learning builds on what has gone on before. In the Year 1 and 2 class, a lesson focused on re-telling a story. The demonstration of how to use joining words to make a sequence of sentences involved all pupils, and the Year 2 pupils then proved in their own writing that they had learnt the skills as the teacher had planned. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, the class was looking at information books. The use of different recording sheets and support from other adults meant that all pupils could carry out the task at their own level.
99. The calm approach all teachers have ensures that all classrooms are good working environments. This enables pupils to work hard with concentration on given tasks. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and achievement and pupils respond well to this; they behave sensibly and get on with the tasks they have been given to do. The amount of effort they put into their work is reflected in the quality of the finished product. The range and quality of support staff and other adults working in classrooms ensure that all pupils are given an appropriate amount of support. All adults are very sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers know their pupils well, but they do not always make sufficient use of day to day assessment in order to help them in their planning.

100. Teachers have an interest in books, which they pass onto pupils through their choice of good quality books and their enthusiasm in sharing them with their pupils. Similarly they encourage pupils to enjoy writing and this gives them confidence. The approach to spelling focuses on expecting pupils to 'have a go' with words rather than waiting to be told how to spell the words they do not know. At the same time pupils are taught spelling patterns and shown how to use dictionaries. These strategies have had a positive impact on standards in spelling through the school. There is however a weakness in the teaching of handwriting. There is not sufficient focus on the correct formation of letters, nor is enough time spent on teaching pupils a joined handwriting style.
101. The subject is well managed by the acting-headteacher, who has also many other roles. The school is well aware of standards in English and has analysed results of tests and assessments in order to address weaknesses and improve attainment. This has been successful. However, individual targets are not shared with pupils or with parents, nor are they referred to in pupils' marked work. The school has begun to explore the process of setting higher targets for pupils and then shaping the curriculum to meet those targets in the time available. The recent spending on new books for older pupils has had a positive impact on motivation, especially amongst the boys. The library, although well used, is not in a position to make it a quiet area for individual study, nor does the shelving or furnishing make it an attractive place to spend time reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. Standards in mathematics have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Although the pattern of results between 1996 and 2000 has fluctuated, there has nevertheless been an upward trend. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well. Good leadership and intensive staff training have had a positive effect on teaching and learning. Pupils make good progress across the school. There have been several other improvements. Pupils now make consistently good progress in number work. Pupils are managed better and they have better attitudes to work. Lessons proceed at a better pace and the main teaching points are well reinforced at the end of lessons.
103. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests in mathematics for seven year olds (Year 2), pupils' attainment was well above average nationally and above average when compared with pupils' attainment in similar schools. The school has sustained the improvement of the previous year. During the inspection, which was early in the school year, Year 4 pupils were achieving the standards expected of them nationally. In very small schools, standards frequently vary considerably from year to year because such small numbers take the tests. These differences in standards from year to year are the result of the strengths and weaknesses of the different year groups and are not a reflection on, for example, the teaching or pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The current Year 3 achieve standards above those expected, as they did last year.
104. Inspection evidence indicates that most pupils aged seven and nine years are on course to achieve the expected standards for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards their own individual targets. The school sets realistic individual and yearly group attainment targets, which are achievable. Last year all Year 2 pupils achieved their targets.
105. Average pupils currently in Year 2 were observed solving simple problems, such as an unknown number plus 7 equals 10. Pupils use various objects to measure the length of things. They accurately identify odd and even numbers and soon see the pattern of

answers when odd numbers are added to even numbers. Higher attainers measure in centimetres and work comfortably with numbers up to 100. They work quickly and accurately. Lower attainers successfully add numbers up to 10 and recognise squares, rectangles and triangles. Higher attaining Year 1 pupils work successfully at the same activities as average Year 2 pupils. Most Year 1 pupils count accurately, for example, in twos using sets of objects.

106. Average and higher attaining pupils currently in Year 4 work comfortably with numbers up to 1000, adding and subtracting them mostly accurately. They work out what 9 lots of £0.36 are and find lines of symmetry in shapes successfully. Pupils know the names and some of the properties of shapes, such as pentagons. Lower attainers add and subtract numbers up to 100. Pupils in Year 3 work competently with numbers to 100 and beyond. All pupils were observed revising basic addition and multiplication sums to improve their speed of calculation and to reinforce the relationships between numbers.
107. Pupils enjoy mathematics and work quickly and efficiently, especially when involved in mental arithmetic work. Teaching is very good across the school. Teachers' planning indicates that the mathematics curriculum covers all that it should. They employ strategies that effectively capture attention. For example, in Year 1, teaching and learning was enhanced as pupils enthusiastically added domino dots to see if there was a pattern in the answers. Pupils enjoyed being 'maths detectives.' In Years 3 and 4, very clear explanations and a well-paced lesson ensured pupils' full concentration. Good learning also occurs because teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well prepared. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and capabilities. The number 'washing line' used in Year 1 and 2 helps pupils learn because they can see the numbers easily, move the numbers and see relationships. Pupils also have their heights measured and marked on the wall. This activity encourages learning about measurement in centimetres and is another very good example of practical mathematics.
108. Much use is made of pupils' speaking (and listening) skills to explain ideas in front of the class. They listen particularly effectively to each other. Pupils persevere well with all tasks. Pupils work at a good pace because they enjoy the work they are given and pupils wish to please teachers. For example, pupils effectively learned about the relationship between addition and multiplication as the teacher in Year 3 and 4 made the connections in a wide variety of ways with pupils' help. All staff adopt a quiet and firm style of teaching that is very successful in motivating pupils. Support staff are an integral part of lessons and they help pupils to learn by, for example, breaking down what needs to be learned into smaller steps for lower attainers.
109. The use and application of pupils' mathematical skills are integral parts of the school day and few opportunities are missed to include and develop them in real situations and across many subjects. For example, in music pupils count how many beats there are in a bar and they repeat rhythmic patterns. In geography pupils learn about scale drawings and distances represented. Pupils used measurement skills to help them draw 'exploded' diagrams of cubes in design and technology.
110. Since the previous inspection the school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and this has improved teachers' planning. These improvements, in part, together with more refined assessment of pupils' attainment are producing better results. Teachers have undergone intensive training, which has ensured that the new guidance on the teaching of mathematics has been implemented successfully. Pupils make good progress and their work is well tracked. The school has begun to explore the process of setting higher targets for pupils and then shaping the curriculum to meet those targets in the time available.

## SCIENCE

111. Pupils at seven and nine years reach the standards expected of them nationally. They make good progress, particularly in investigative work. Teachers' assessments in 1999 and 2000 showed that seven year olds achieved the standards expected of this age. Last year all pupils achieved the expected standard, an indication that standards are improving.
112. There has been a considerable improvement in pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour since the last inspection. The teaching has improved because teachers expect more of pupils and lessons proceed at a faster pace. Teachers have improved the clarity of targets for lessons and the policy statement now gives good guidance for all staff. Seven year olds' work shows pupils' increasing knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. For example, they have a good knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. They know the names of body parts and what they need to eat to be healthy. Pupils successfully identify dangers in the kitchen and show that they have learned that hot water and electricity are dangerous at times. Displays in the classroom show that pupils have studied the effects on images of different kinds of mirrors. Pupils discovered in one lesson that nothing is visible without light. Pupils learn the very important first steps in investigating ideas methodically.
113. Eight and nine year olds have a good knowledge and understanding across all aspects of science. For example, they investigate the properties of liquids and solids and learn five questions that should be asked, such as, 'Can the substance be poured?' Pupils have separated sand, mud and water and have recorded their findings systematically, with clear conclusions. They know how the seasons and day and night occur. Pupils study how shadows are formed. One pupil discovers, 'That you have to put something in front of the light...' All pupils understand that without light there are no shadows.
114. The teaching throughout the school is good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils benefit from the practical approach to work, which allows them to participate fully. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently well challenged by the work they are given. Teachers plan carefully and have clear targets which pupils understand. Teachers successfully build on the work of previous years. For example, in Years 3 and 4 the teacher planned work that effectively developed pupils' understanding of light. Teachers provide good support for all pupils and ask them thought provoking questions at appropriate times and pupils learn more. Pupils record the results of each scientific topic in well prepared booklets and pupils take extra pride in their work because they see a finished product in a short period. The booklets successfully develop pupils' scientific thinking because they contain headings that pupils must complete in the order given.
115. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are put to good use. They record investigations in words, learn new technical terms such as 'translucent' and learn to count and measure accurately. Local studies successfully combine scientific work with geography and history. When pupils studied houses in the village they looked closely at types of materials used to build them. Pupils learned, for example, that some materials such as foam bend more than others and are only suitable for non load-bearing purposes.
116. To support their planning, teachers effectively use a wide range of resources. The outside environment is used well in the summer. The conservation area has been developed over the years and it is now a valuable resource for work in science and

other subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to observe living things in a practical way, and this provision has a considerable positive impact on pupils' interest and motivation. The school has good resources for some areas of science. For example, pupils have a wide range of coloured objects, lenses and torches for exploring light and pupils' fascination for science is enhanced. Teachers keep suitable records of pupils' progress. The school has a good range of pupils' work that has been assessed against the standards in the National Curriculum. Teachers use this information to make sure that their current assessments are correct.

## **ART**

117. Standards in art and design are in line with what is expected for pupils of this age, and are similar to those achieved at the last inspection. The quality of learning is good, as pupils gain confidence in a range of media. In the secure ethos of the school pupils are willing to try tasks they are given to do. They work hard and take a pride in their work. Pupils' work is displayed well around the school, demonstrating the way in which individual achievement is recognised and valued.
118. Pupils in Year 2 have drawn self-portraits. They show a good level of skill in different media, good attention to detail and developing powers of observation. They mix paint carefully and use clay skilfully when making models. The oldest pupils look at the work of illustrators and compare styles. They use this knowledge and understanding to try their own illustrations. They sketch buildings in the locality and demonstrate a good level of observation. Attitudes of pupils to work are good. They are prepared to try and persevere, even with a task they find difficult.
119. The quality of teaching is good. A range of work is planned and teachers encourage pupils to achieve well. In a lesson on illustration, the Year 3 and 4 teacher was sensitive to the needs of individuals. The other adults working in the class supported pupils and even the most reluctant surmounted difficulties and gained confidence. The Year 1 teacher effectively used information technology to support art work as she introduced pupils to a drawing program.
120. The curriculum for art and design is broad. It covers all aspects of the subject and provides opportunities for pupils to explore different media, styles and traditions. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils have studied the work of European artists and used some of these ideas in their own work. The procedure for assessment is beginning to be used, but has not been in use long enough for it to have an impact on planning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121. Standards are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. They are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection. The issues of weaknesses in the curriculum and teacher knowledge have been addressed, and pupils now make satisfactory progress. The temporary teacher in Year 3 and 4 has brought a good level of expertise into the school. He has raised the profile of the subject and had a positive impact on standards. The part-time teacher in the Reception and Year 1 class has a particular interest in the subject and has also had a positive impact on the quality of work taking place.
122. Year 1 pupils have designed and are in the process of making houses. They have looked at houses in the locality and have learnt about structures. They have been

motivated by the visit of a designer and helped by adults to carry out their ideas. They demonstrate an understanding of some processes, such as how hinges work. Year 2 pupils have also designed and made their own houses. Their skills are developing satisfactorily, for example, they measure, cut out and fit wallpaper to the walls. But there is still a weakness in designing and evaluating. Designs are little more than drawings of what they want to do and take no account of materials and problems they might encounter. They have had limited experience of evaluating their work and cannot suggest what they could have done differently.

123. In Years 3 and 4, designing and evaluating activities are more secure. Pupils spent time investigating packaging, looking at the suitability of materials and designs used. They then made their own boxes, using plans of flattened boxes. They marked out, cut and assembled the boxes and were able to evaluate the finished product, suggesting where there could have been improvements. The attitudes of these pupils are good. They enjoy the work in design and technology and are proud of what they have done.
124. The teaching and learning seen were satisfactory, although a scrutiny of work suggests that there is good teaching. Teacher knowledge has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is now a good policy to support teachers' planning and a scheme of work (series of plans for lessons) has been adopted which ensures all aspects of the subject are covered. In the lesson seen, Year 2 pupils were provided with a range of materials and there was some discussion about making choices for wallpaper and other furnishings for the houses they had made.
125. Provision for design and technology has been much improved and the subject now has a higher profile in the school than before. Standards have improved and pupils are showing an interest in what they do. The temporary co-ordinator has had a positive impact on getting the subject to this stage, but he now needs to be looking at the progression of skills through the school. The new assessment system is being used effectively and it will help teachers in the future to know how much progress pupils have made in their skills and to plan more carefully to meet individual needs.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

126. One **geography** lesson was observed. Judgements are based on this lesson, displays on walls, other evidence of pupils' past work and discussions with teachers and pupils. The standards pupils achieve in geography and history at the age of seven and nine years old match what is expected of pupils of these ages in the National Curriculum. As result of good teaching and a curriculum that offers a wide range of experiences, the quality of all pupils' learning and progress is good throughout the school. Provision for the subjects has improved since the last inspection. Improvement is the result of better planning and continued emphasis on using the school site and local environment. Pupils' attitudes to work and teachers' record keeping have improved also.
127. Seven year olds know about places and they make comparisons about features of Stamfordham and Tocuaro in Mexico. Most pupils listed many similarities and differences successfully, such as that there are fewer cars in Tocuaro. Pupils learned to look for key features to compare, for example, roads, churches and wildlife. Year 1 pupils successfully used pictures to communicate their thoughts. There are very good pictures of the Mexican villages for pupils to see and good links are made with art. Some of the works of Degas are displayed for pupils to appreciate. The display on the back wall of the Year 3 and 4 classroom provides very good evidence of a local study. Pupils have learned to classify the land-use on base maps using a colour 'key.' There

are good oblique aerial photographs for pupils to look at of the local area. The study included visits to local churches and pupils wrote letters of thanks after the visits.

128. The teaching in the one lesson observed was good. The teacher demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding of geography and planned well to develop pupils' learning. All teachers make good use of the local environment, both in the vicinity of the school and further afield. These experiences have a positive impact on pupils' interest and motivation. Pupils enjoy the subject and show an interest in finding out about places.
129. No history lessons were observed. The standards pupils achieve in **history** at the ages of seven and nine match those expected of pupils of these ages. All pupils gain an appropriate amount of knowledge and develop enquiry skills well. The curriculum is good, and pupils make good progress throughout the school in several areas of history. Planning for history is better than it was in the last inspection and the school has responded positively to the recent national guidance provided by the government. Good use is made of the local environment to support pupils' learning about previous times and now.
130. Seven year olds know about life in the recent past. They study photographs of their families over three generations and learn that a family tree is a good way of organising information. Year 3 and 4 pupils know about life at the time of the Egyptians and they make accurate comparisons between different ways of life and beliefs, then and now. Pupils learn to translate hieroglyphs, learn how a 'shaduf' raises water for the irrigation of land and how Egyptian kings were buried with objects to help them in the after-life. There are good links between subjects. Pupils designed and made shadufs in design and technology. Pupils put their reading and writing skills to good use in geography and history to communicate ideas and to find information. Pupils have studied types of houses and how they were built from historical, geographical and scientific points of view. They have learned about their ages, location and the materials used to build them.
131. Good use is made of the local environment, both in the vicinity of the school and further afield. These experiences have a very positive impact on pupils' interest and motivation. Pupils enjoy the subject and show an interest in finding out about different times. For example, every two years pupils go to nearby Aydon Castle and experience a very good whole day of medieval activities. They learn to spin thread, weave, listen to medieval instruments and to dance and eat as they did in the past. Pupils wrote good accounts of what they did, which supported the development of their literacy skills. Year 3 and 4 pupils have compared the Stamfordham village plan of 1860 with now and learned how much the village has grown yet has retained a similar shape. Pupils noticed that the school was not present in 1860.
132. The policies for geography and history are not up to date and do not reflect the full range of what the school achieves. The recently adopted system for recording pupils' progress is effective.

## **INFORMATION and COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

133. Standards of pupils' work meet the expectations of the National Curriculum at seven and nine years old. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Judgements are based on the observation of two lessons in Years 1 and 2, a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and discussions with small groups of pupils. There have been good improvements since the last



inspection as a result of better organisation of the subject. The school has more and better computers, programs and other equipment. Improvements in the teaching have led to faster pupils' progress. Pupils are better behaved. The school has wisely adopted the latest national guidance for information and communications technology as its overall plan for what is taught. The curriculum includes all that it should and good links are made to other subjects. Teachers' expertise has also improved.

134. At seven years old, pupils load, save and retrieve their work successfully. Pupils know how to create pictures using a painting program. Pupils successfully draw an outline and learn to shade the spaces above and below the line. Pupils also successfully use word-processing skills to enhance their work, such as changing the size and type of letters and rearranging the order of their writing. Pupils have produced interesting graphs of surveys about their classmates' favourite things.
135. At the age of nine, pupils have further refined their information handling and word processing skills. Many pupils know how to use a range of features on the word processor's 'tool bar.' Pupils learn to write using a more extensive vocabulary by choosing words the teacher has put into the computer for them to use. Pupils know how to use a simple programming language to control a floor robot. Pupils have successfully experimented with making attractive posters by adding images and different kinds of letters to convey messages.
136. The use of computers in other subjects for supporting work in information and communications technology is good and pupils' progress is enhanced in them. Pupils often use information and communications technology in English, for instance when they draft and edit work, using some of the many features of word processing programs. They have access to a range of programs, such as simulation games, that require pupils to make decisions and skill practices for understanding number in mathematics.
137. The teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have good attitudes to work and enjoy their studies. Their attitudes to work have encouraged a good rate of progress in many aspects of their work. Teachers and support staff explain things well and give pupils time to understand what they have heard. This leads to good learning. For example, the Year 2 teacher demonstrated how to draw a line on the screen using different thickness' of lines. She then explained how to shade areas of the screen in colours. Pupils with some adult help were able to carry out the activity successfully and showed clearly what they had learned. Year 1 pupils were also effectively taught to use a painting program. Pupils learned to use the 'brush,' rub out mistakes and how to start a new page.
138. The staff has the skills to teach information and communication technology well and the subject is well organised. The acting-headteacher has made the development of information and communications technology a priority for spending. A considerable amount of money has been spent effectively to improve standards in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

139. Standards in music are well above those expected in the National Curriculum for seven and nine year olds. Throughout the school pupils reach levels higher than those normally seen and their responses to the subject are very good. The school has a strong commitment to music and invests in extra tuition and teaching to enhance the subject. Standards have risen since the last inspection and parents recognise music as a strength of the school.

140. Children in the Reception and Year 1 class achieve very good standards, even before the end of their first year in school. They recognise how sounds can be made. For example, they were keen to try out musical instruments such as tambourines and maracas, and listen to the sounds they made. They play chime bars confidently, and usually quite accurately. They understand how music can be loud or soft. They repeat a simple rhythm by clapping. Pupils are very attentive and obey signals such as 'start' or 'stop.'
141. Seven year olds make good progress, building on the skills already established. They perform simple patterns as an accompaniment, for example, by using three chime bars. They sing in tune and with a sense of melody and enjoyment. Pupils confidently play non-pitched percussion instruments and choose sounds for particular effects. For example, they had good ideas about which instruments to use to make appropriate sounds for a song about noises in a house.
142. Year 4 pupils develop their skills further and begin to have a very good understanding of the different elements of music. They have a good sense of rhythm and recognise how different patterns of rhythm can be used. They accurately play up and down a scale on chime bars using two beaters, and use this to accompany a song. They explore ways in which sounds can be used and are aware of how the different parts fit together, for example, when involved in a four-part song.
143. The responses of pupils to music are very good. Everyone is totally involved throughout the lessons. They behave sensibly, take turns and listen to what others do. Pupils are attentive and become absorbed in the work. But most of all, they enjoy what they are doing. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the lessons and respond well to their practical nature. Even those who can find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time take part responsibly with the others.
144. The quality of teaching is excellent and ensures a high quality of learning. Most lessons are taken by a music specialist who visits once a week, although lessons are also followed up by the class teachers themselves during the week. Lessons are well planned and the work is matched to the pupils' capabilities in the different classes. Skills are gradually built up and pupils become confident in using them. The teacher provides an extremely good level of knowledge and understanding of the subject. He has high expectations of pupils, and challenges them to work hard and achieve well. He uses technical language and encourages pupils to do the same; the youngest children eagerly began to use 'magic words' when talking about musical instruments. He teaches pupils carefully, for example, when showing one girl how to play Indian bells correctly, and pupils learn much from this approach.
145. However, the teacher's best quality is his enthusiasm for music, apparent in every lesson. Pupils respond very well to this. They enjoy lessons and are highly motivated by them. Even the pupils who might be reluctant find themselves taking part and achieving well. All other members of staff are fully involved with the lessons and they become social events, with humour and laughter being key elements.
146. Good standards found in the last inspection have been developed further, and now the younger pupils as well as the older ones make very good progress and achieve well above average standards. The investment in specialist teaching pays off in high standards and quality of response to the subject. There is also a positive impact on staff development. The work started in the weekly lessons is often continued in class during the week. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils developed the work on rhythms with poetry.

147. The acting-headteacher has an enthusiasm for music, which has a positive effect on the working atmosphere of the school. Every opportunity to provide further experiences is used. For example, the musical parents of one pupil enthusiastically and effectively played in assembly. Instrumental tuition is a regular part of the week and many pupils benefit from this. These sessions are well planned and sensitively taught. Pupils gain a very good level of musical knowledge from them. All of the older pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, and so most pupils leave the school able to read some music. The school takes part in many outside musical events and parents testify to the quality of school productions given by the pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

148. Two lessons were observed. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across the school. Seven and nine year olds achieve standards that are typical of pupils nationally and standards of pupils' work are similar to the previous inspection. Teachers now manage pupils much better and pupils' responses are usually good. Although physical education is not a priority, the good features of the provision reported previously have been maintained. The arrangements for swimming are good. At nine years old, virtually all pupils swim 25 metres. Pupils' standards in swimming are above those typical nationally.
149. Year 2 pupils refine curling, stretching, rolling and stepping movements. They successfully cross mats in a variety of ways in crouched and long shapes. Higher attaining pupils find a wider range of interesting ways to move over the floor, including forward and backward rolls. They link their short sequences of movements efficiently and are pleased with their efforts. Lower attaining pupils achieve appropriately but some are not fully aware that there are others in the room and they sometimes roll into others. They struggle to complete a forward roll. Most pupils in Year 1 achieve a similar standard of work. Pupils return equipment safely to its proper place.
150. Year 4 pupils put a sequence of hops and jumps together efficiently into one long sequence. Pupils experimented successfully with hopping from, for example, one foot to the other and two feet to one foot in quick succession. Higher attaining pupils imaginatively linked the jumps together to form one smooth sequence. Lower attaining pupils tended to copy rather than to develop their own ideas but were able to hop from one foot to the other and maintain their balance.
151. The teaching is satisfactory across the school. The school provides a good curriculum and all the elements of the National Curriculum for physical education are present. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should do were good and the two lessons observed were well planned. Teachers' levels of expertise in teaching the necessary skills were satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 1 and 2.
152. Pupils of all ages are interested in what they do and they make good attempts to carry out teachers' instructions. For example, in the Year 1 and 2 class pupils made satisfactory progress with rolling movements that some found difficult to do. But, too little time was spent teaching pupils important skills, such as the correct support of their weight during a forward roll. Teachers place good emphasis on the use of space and good use is made of pupils' self-evaluations of their work. All learn well from one another. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate the required movements well and they inspire other pupils. Good demonstrations have a positive impact on the effort pupils

make, the learning and quality of work. Teachers also make good use of praise to motivate pupils.

153. The teacher responsible for the subject has a good knowledge of physical education. The school's programme of extra-curricular activities is good. It includes football, cricket and outdoor and adventurous activities, which raise the standards of pupils' work. The school's accommodation is good. The hall and playground allow pupils sufficient room in which to work and the school uses these spaces to mostly good effect. However, older pupils need all the space the hall offers. Some corners of the hall are used for other important activities, such as the library and this limits the space available. The school uses a good planning document that contains well sequenced ideas for lessons for all ages of pupils. Resources such as bats and balls are very limited but the school is just about to make a significant investment in new small equipment.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress through the school, developing their knowledge and understanding well. Learning is enhanced by the school's use of visitors and visits, especially those linked to the local community. Teaching is sensitive and the whole atmosphere of the school encourages a positive response from pupils.
155. Seven year olds have an awareness of the importance of Jesus to Christians. They are also aware that there are other religions, such as Hinduism. They have a good understanding of the idea of celebration; for example they explain the difference between a birthday which belongs to one person and Christmas which belongs to many people. Nine year olds have an appropriate knowledge of Christian communities. For example, they have visited different churches in the locality and appreciate how special they are to Christians. Pupils have a good understanding of the idea of worship. They have knowledge of other faiths; for example they explain the role of a Guru in Sikhism clearly.
156. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Lessons are carefully planned and the work builds on pupils' prior knowledge. For example, the Year 3 and 4 teacher reminded pupils about Bible stories they knew, before helping them to gain an understanding that other faiths have their own stories. The Year 1 and 2 teacher in particular has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. When introducing the festival of Diwali, she effectively used artefacts and illustrations to explain different aspects of it, and related Diwali to the pupils' own experiences of celebrations. Teaching is sensitive to pupils' own beliefs and experiences, and the school's emphasis on caring for the individual has a positive effect on pupils' responses. For example, 'circle time' whole-class discussions are a valuable opportunity for pupils to think about their own behaviour towards others.
157. The curriculum for religious education is effectively planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. However, the school looks at too many world faiths and this can lead to some confusion in pupils' minds, especially when they are younger. The curriculum is enhanced by visitors, such as those made by local ministers, and by visits, such as those recently made to local churches.