

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. AIDAN'S R.C. FIRST SCHOOL

Ashington

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122307

Headteacher: Mr. P. Pell

Reporting inspector: Natalie Moss
22685

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th December, 2000

Inspection number: 224821

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Norham Road Ashington Northumberland
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr. Michael McKenna
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd March, 1997

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Team Members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	Natalie Moss	Registered inspector	English History Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievement Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
9572	Kitty Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
29426	David Grimwood	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
30243	Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
30997	Joy Considine	Team inspector	Art Geography Special educational needs Equality of opportunity	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Aidan's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided First School is an average sized first school, situated in Ashington, near Newcastle-on-Tyne and it is part of the Education Action Zone for the area. The school currently has 151 pupils on roll, between 4 and 9 years of age, and a further 28 who attend the nursery part-time. The school is part of a strong community of family life and worship. Its roll has fallen recently, because of the opening of another school in the area. It serves a mixed and very wide catchment, with many children travelling long distances. The pupils' attainment on entry covers a wide range, but is below average overall. Fifteen per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the national average. Sixteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, a smaller proportion than the national average, and over three per cent have a statement of special educational need, a high proportion. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by the acting headteacher, normally the deputy headteacher, in the long-term absence on sick leave of the headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Aidan's First School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It is an improving school, with several good features. It provides a good start for the youngest children, who make good progress, particularly in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Satisfactory progress is made throughout Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, good standards have been attained in mathematics, and standards are broadly in line with national expectations for reading and science. However, in the writing element of English, pupils' standards are below the national standards for seven and nine-year-olds.

Of the other subjects pupils study, they reach the levels expected nationally of nine-year-olds in all subjects except information and communication technology, which is below national expectation.

Pupils learn well because they are well taught and have very good attitudes to learning. The acting headteacher, staff and governors are clear about much of what needs to be done if the school is to build upon recent improvements, but there is no effective management structure to help the school to develop and improve. The quality of teaching is good overall. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides a secure and enjoyable learning environment in which pupils are happy and confident, within a warm Christian atmosphere.
- Pupils behave well and both attitudes to learning and relationships are very good.
- Overall, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress as a result.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- The school's relationship and involvement with parents are good.

What could be improved

- The standard of pupils' writing, especially in longer pieces of work.
- The quality of leadership and management provided by the governors, and at senior management and middle management levels.
- Ongoing assessment of pupils' work to improve future planning of schemes of work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in 1997, particularly in the last year. It has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which are raising pupils' standards of attainment, particularly in mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved well; it is now good. Standards have improved in English and science and they have improved significantly in mathematics. Standards now meet national expectations in design and technology, though not yet in information and communication technology. Safety risks in the hall have been eliminated. Much work has been done recently on the monitoring of teaching, though there is still room for further development of teachers' provision of work which covers the requirements of the full range of learning needs. New, nationally recognised schemes of work have been introduced to provide a coherent system of medium term planning for the curriculum. Assessment systems are now thorough and effective in targeting individual pupils' progress, but are not yet wholly effective in helping to plan future work to meet the needs of all pupils. The school is moving along the right lines and, given that many improvements are recent, is judged to have a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The table shows that when compared with all schools in the year 2000, pupils' standards at the age of 7 are above average in mathematics, and below average in reading and writing. Teacher assessments in science were also below the national average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results are above average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. However, the number of higher grades achieved in the tests was in line with the national average in mathematics, above it in reading and writing and well above it in science. Over the last four years, the trend in the school's results has shown them to be below the national trend in reading and writing and above the trend in mathematics. The school failed to meet its targets in 2000 in reading and writing, but exceeded them in mathematics. There has been a gradual improvement in reading and a strong improvement in mathematics.

Inspection findings show that the current Year 2 pupils' standards are below national standards in English, particularly in the writing element. These pupils' standards are above national standards in mathematics and below them in science. Pupils' levels of attainment are at the nationally expected levels in history, geography, music, art, design and technology and physical education. In information and communication technology pupils attain below the expected level. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 in mathematics, satisfactory progress in all other subjects, except for English and information and communication technology, where progress is unsatisfactory, particularly in writing.

By the time pupils leave school at the age of 9, they attain standards that are above nationally expected levels in mathematics, in line with national expectations in science, history, geography, music, art, design and technology and physical education, but below them in English and information and communication technology. Progress is good in mathematics and satisfactory in all subjects other than English, particularly in writing, and information and communication technology.

When pupils begin school, their overall attainment is below average. They settle in well to the school and make good progress across the Foundation Stage and so do well to attain the nationally required areas of learning for children at this stage. They are well prepared by their teachers to go on to the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils approach learning positively, with interest and enthusiasm. This contributes significantly to the quality of their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in and out of class. They are courteous, helpful and friendly towards one another, staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils take initiative, care for one another and show a strong sense of responsibility. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good, characterised by their harmonious nature.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is rare. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. In all lessons observed the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. In fifty per cent of those lessons it was good, being very good or excellent in a further fourteen per cent. Teaching was good in all key stages. These are high proportions and important factors in the progress made by pupils. The teaching in good and very good lessons results in good learning gains for pupils. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been introduced into the school and are

being successfully taught, though there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing. In addition, teachers' planning for lessons is good overall and in successful lessons, pupils are involved and interested because of the varied methods used by teachers, behave well and work productively. The contribution of classroom support staff has a positive effect on standards. In most lessons, pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and this motivates them to learn what is intended. The management of pupils is a strength, ensuring good concentration by pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations for most pupils, especially those with special educational needs, though pupils in the middle range of ability are not always fully challenged by the range of work, especially in writing. Teachers' feedback and advice to pupils during lessons is good, though marking of written work does not always give pupils a clear understanding of how they could improve. Homework is used well to support work done in class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The implementation of both the literacy and numeracy strategies is effective. A more cohesive curriculum through the use of nationally recognised schemes of work is beginning to be beneficial. Provision for information and communication technology is a weakness. Much is done to enrich the curriculum through visits and the range and quality of extra curricular activities are good. The school makes good use of the local community in enriching the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants provide detailed plans and give pupils good support. As a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good and a strength in the school. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their values and beliefs, to learn right from wrong and their responsibilities to the school community. Positive and helpful attitudes and hard work are encouraged. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares very well for the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. Pupils feel secure in the warm and trusting environment. The assessment of pupils' academic performance is insufficiently developed.
Partnership with parents and carers	School and home maintain productive and informative links and parents are encouraged to become involved. The school benefits from their good support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory. The acting headteacher has a clear vision of the educational direction of the school and a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She is, however, hampered by the absence of a senior management team and the resultant requirement to fill too many roles. The roles of subject co-ordinators are not yet fully defined and co-ordinators do not yet have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors give of their time willingly, are very supportive and are active in supporting the school practically. They fulfil their statutory duties and are helpful in shaping the direction of the school. Their understanding of the management structure of the school is insufficiently developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is beginning to be more evaluative and to look for and initiate ways in which to raise standards further. Monitoring and evaluating its performance, particularly in teaching and learning, could be improved.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its staffing, accommodation and learning resources. It applies the principles of best value in making financial decisions.
Sufficiency of staffing, accommodation and resources	Satisfactory. There are enough teachers and support staff to promote good learning. There are also sufficient learning materials, except for a shortage of computers. Resources are of a satisfactory quality and range for most subjects, other than information and communication technology. Accommodation is good, though storage space is limited.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children enjoy school. • The progress that pupils make. • The good quality of teaching. • The good standard of behaviour. • The amount of homework set by the school. • The staff are approachable. • The school has high expectations of children. • The help pupils receive to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of information they receive about how their children are getting on. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by parents but, having looked closely at their criticisms, disagree with them. The amount of information sent out to parents is good and the regular meetings for parents provide good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. The school provides a good range of good quality extra-curricular activities, especially in the light of the constraints imposed by the need for pupils to catch buses immediately after school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The previous inspection report found that pupils' attainment at the age of seven was in line with national levels in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, music and physical education. Standards in design and technology and information technology did not meet expectations at this stage. It also found that by the time children leave the school at the age of nine, standards in all subjects, except for design and technology and information technology, met national expectations. However, it found that, by the age of nine, very few pupils were reaching the higher levels of attainment in English, that mathematics was limited in terms of using and applying mathematics in open-ended or problem solving situations and that science was limited in experimental and investigative work. Since that time, teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils have been raised and a number of initiatives have been put into place to improve standards. These include a noticeable improvement in the quality of teaching, detailed analysis of National Curriculum results, target setting and pupil tracking, the revision of many schemes of work and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. All these factors have had a positive impact on pupils' standards in most areas and on the amount of progress they make in their learning. This is most noticeable in mathematics, where pupils are now attaining standards that are above the national standards at the age of seven and by the time they leave the school.

2. The year 2000 national test results for seven year olds show that the proportion of pupils attaining national standards is above the proportion that do so nationally in mathematics, below it in English and well below it in science. The teachers' own assessments largely confirm these findings. Over the last four years, the trend in pupils' results has shown a gradual improvement, apart from a dip in mathematics in 1998, a dip in writing in 1998 and a slight fall in reading in the 2000 results.

3. The 2000 test results, however, show that standards have risen particularly well in mathematics and that the proportion reaching higher grades in the tests was above national averages in reading, writing and science and in line with them in mathematics. It should be borne in mind that this year group had a higher proportion than usual of pupils with special educational needs.

4. When pupils' results at the age of seven are compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they show that pupils' performance in mathematics is above average and in reading and writing they are below average.

5. Since 1999 there is a clear indication that standards have fallen slightly in reading, remained broadly similar in writing and risen sharply in mathematics. Inspection findings show that the current Year 2 are on line to exceed current standards in mathematics, science and reading, but are unlikely to do so in writing. Within this overall picture there are variations, notably in English. While standards in speaking and listening and reading are

broadly similar to national standards, pupils' performance in writing is below average. The need for more writing opportunities has been identified as a major issue. The school hopes that this, together with the growing impact of the National Literacy Strategy, will have a positive and significant effect on pupils' writing standards. The rising standards in mathematics are largely due to improved teaching techniques the setting of high but achievable targets for pupils and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

6. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly below average, shown by tests on entry. During the foundation stage they make satisfactory, and often good, progress in all areas of the curriculum they study except writing. Many, by the end of the reception year, have attained the learning goals outlined nationally for children of that age and are ready for the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 1. Good teaching, together with a good working environment, ensures that these children settle quickly into school life and have a good start to their education.

8. The overall picture of standards in the school is that:

- In English, most pupils in Key Stage 1 listen well and follow instructions, gaining confidence in oral work and in learning to express their thoughts and ideas. This satisfactory progress is built upon in Key Stage 2, so that, by the time pupils are nine, their speaking and listening skills are developed appropriately. They are confident when speaking in class and when asking questions. Progress in reading is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils enjoy books and many, by the age of nine are eager to talk about their favourite authors and characters. They can read with a satisfactory degree of fluency, accuracy and expression. In writing, progress is unsatisfactory at both key stages. Although pupils are given good opportunities to write in different styles and teachers pay good attention to the basic skills of writing, such as the use of punctuation, vocabulary and grammar, standards are below average, as is progress in learning, because writing is unsatisfactory and spelling is weak. Pupils have too little practice in writing at length and with pace and urgency and therefore find it difficult to express their ideas with accuracy or at speed.
- Standards are above average in all areas of numeracy and have improved well since the previous inspection in the use of number, investigative skills and data handling. Pupils make good progress in the number aspect of mathematics because of the high proportion of good teaching they receive. This enables pupils to make good progress and attain above average standards. By the age of nine, pupils are beginning to be confident with decimals and vulgar fractions and know the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They are confident in carrying out mathematical investigations and in the handling and interpretation of data.
- In science, pupils' attainment by the age of seven is close to that expected nationally and, by the time they are nine, their attainment is in line with national standards, with more pupils now working at the higher levels. In both key stages, progress is good in experimental and investigative science as opportunities are provided for pupils to plan their experiments, select appropriate equipment and make decisions for themselves. In both key stages, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of living and non-living things, of forces and the properties of materials. They can discuss confidently concepts such as change, evaporation and condensation.
- In other subjects that pupils study, they make satisfactory progress in their learning right across the school in art and design, history, geography, music, physical education and design and technology, so that by the age of nine, pupils' levels of attainment are similar to those expected nationally at this age. The satisfactory and sometimes good progress make in their learning is directly attributable to the high proportion of good and, on occasion, very good teaching they receive.
- In information and communication technology standards are still unsatisfactory at both key

stages, through lack of teacher training and insufficient computers and other equipment. More opportunities need to be provided to increase the use of information and communication technology in most subject areas in order to assist in the raising of pupils' overall standards.

9. Higher attaining pupils are adequately, and sometimes well, catered for by the school and the amount of progress made by this group is often good, given their prior attainment levels. This is clear from the rising proportion of those who achieve the higher grades in the national tests. The progress these pupils make is directly related to the quality of teaching they receive. In many classes, teachers plan work specifically for this group which relates their prior achievement levels. In a minority of classes, such pupils are expected to complete work that is similar to the rest of the pupils in the class and progress is just satisfactory.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This is largely as a result of the effective and sensitive support they receive from their teachers and support staff, as well as the good provision established by the special needs co-ordinator in order to help these pupils.

11. National test results for the past few years have been well analysed and the school monitors overall attainment and progress. In response to this analysis, targets for improvement have been appropriately set in English, mathematics and science. The school came close to meeting its targets in English in the 2000 national tests and surpassed them in mathematics, standards borne out by observation of pupils' work during the inspection. In reading and mathematics, girls generally reach a slightly higher level of attainment than boys, but boys attain a little better in writing.

12. Ninety-five per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire felt pleased with the progress their children are making. Parents feel that the literacy hour and the new numeracy strategy have improved standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have maintained the very positive attitudes they were found to have at the last inspection. The majority arrive on time and are well turned out in the school uniform. They arrive ready and eager to learn. With the support they receive through well-established routines and the very positive encouragement of the teaching staff, they are developing into confident learners who show enthusiasm for the tasks they are set and the skills they are acquiring. They talk enthusiastically about what they are doing. An example of this was observed when two Year 4 pupils took pleasure and pride in showing a visitor round their classroom and explaining some of the work, which was displayed, on the walls.

14. Pupils' good behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is seen in the way in which they respond well to the consistently high expectations of staff that conduct throughout the day should be thoughtful, sensible and show regard for the needs of everyone in the school. The good behaviour in school is seen in the orderly movement of pupils between classes. Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors, often saying 'Good Morning' and answering questions with enthusiasm. Entry to and exit from assemblies are impressive. Pupils enter the hall in silence with their hands together in prayer. Pupils queue quietly at the end of playtimes and when waiting to collect their meals.

15. Behaviour in most classes is good. In a Year 2 geography lesson, when pupils were learning how to use a grid to map read, they discussed the tasks together and completed their worksheets with enthusiasm, maintaining concentration well. Both behaviour and

attitudes to learning are of a very high standard when the quality of teaching is good. In lessons pupils work in a busy and productive way, with all joining in and most very eager to contribute. However, in a minority of lessons in Key Stage 2, a small number of boys lose concentration easily and behaviour lapses. Where this happens learning time is lost.

16. Behaviour at mealtimes is very good. Pupils sit sociably at table and are encouraged to finish their food. They help each other and are polite and friendly. In the playgrounds, although lively, pupils generally play well together and share the play equipment. Many are involved in playground games and co-operate well with each other. Relationships between the pupils, and with adults, are very good. Considerable emphasis is placed in the school on showing appreciation for what individuals have achieved and on the need for care and consideration for others. As a result, pupils are developing into thoughtful and sensitive young people who are learning to contribute to the well-being both of the school community and to the wider local community.

17. Pupils take great pride in the awards they receive for courtesy and effort. During the inspection a moving assembly was held when children, and even a teacher, were nominated as very special people. They were rewarded by the privilege of hanging a gift tag containing their name on the Christmas tree. Pupils say they like to receive awards; it 'makes you feel really happy'. They understand the school rules and have a clear sense of right and wrong, which helps them to work well and sensibly as part of the school community. Pupils whose behaviour falls below the standard expected are carefully supervised and monitored and parents are involved when necessary. The positive handling of these cases is generally effective. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

18. The last inspection identified a need to provide more opportunities for independent, collaborative and investigative work. The school has addressed this issue well, so that pupils now think for themselves and discuss problems in their work collaboratively. Pupils work well both in groups and on their own. A good example was observed in a lesson where five Year 4 pupils were helping reception pupils to make a bus out of a large construction toy. The Year 4 pupils worked collaboratively, experimenting with different lengths of pipe and encouraging the younger pupils participate. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to select their own resources. Pupils answer teachers' questions with enthusiasm and confidence. They readily listen to others. In a Nursery/ reception joint activity children described what they had been doing whilst the others listened attentively. Another example was seen in the whole school time for reflection, when individual pupils and then each class made a contribution to the session, whilst the others listened with interest. Pupils are very ready to help each other and to consider the effect of their actions on others. Several instances of pupils supporting others who were hurt or helping younger pupils were observed by inspectors.

19. Through the religious education and history topics pupils are encouraged to consider the values and beliefs of others and they do this with interest. They demonstrate an empathy for and understanding of others when, for example, discussing the reasons for the poor behaviour of a school friend.

20. When given the opportunity, pupils willingly take on responsibilities which they carry out with diligence and pride. Key Stage 2 pupils collect the registers from class and take them to the office and all pupils help with tidying up. Two pupils help clean the plates at the end of mealtimes and others sharpen pencils. Year 4 pupils take on some more responsible tasks, such as answering the telephone and holding open the doors to the hall.

21. The pupils with special educational needs display the same good standards of behaviour, attitudes to learning and personal development as other pupils in the school. They

want to succeed, try hard and are pleased with what they are achieving.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. This is reflected in the good quality of learning. Pupils made good progress in the majority of lessons observed.

23. Across the school, the quality of teaching, including that of children in the Foundation Stage, is at least satisfactory. Of lessons observed, the quality of teaching is good in fifty per cent and very good or better in fourteen per cent. There are no noticeable variations across the key stages in this pattern of teaching, thus ensuring a good quality of learning by all age groups. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher and one other teacher were absent through sickness, but the help and support offered to temporary teachers was very good.

24. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. At that time, ninety per cent of lessons observed were satisfactory or better, while just under a third were good. In addition, the proportion of good and very good teaching has also increased throughout the school. This increase in the quality of teaching is largely a result of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in recent years, which has given teachers a good framework for planning and more precise direction in the delivery of lessons. This in turn has had a favourable impact on the amount of progress pupils make in their learning. The teaching of literacy is inconsistent, ranging from satisfactory to very good, and is dependent on the emphasis given to the amount and quality of writing. The National Literacy Strategy has been soundly implemented, but the area of writing requires further development. For example, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the amount of written work which can be accomplished in lessons, nor do they always set pupils longer pieces of work to prepare them to work with sustained concentration. In the best practice, teaching is lively and interesting, with good use being made of texts and Big Books to stimulate pupils and challenge them to think for themselves.

25. The teaching of numeracy is always satisfactory and often good and very good in Key Stage 2. There is an effective focus on the development of mental arithmetic, with brisk introductions to lessons which reinforce pupils' competence in handling numbers and revising past work. Teachers encourage their pupils to suggest methods of calculating solutions to problems, so that they work with interest and concentration. Lessons develop well, with appropriate activities being planned and implemented, though the range of activities does not always challenge the abilities of all pupils. Pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons and are well motivated to achieve. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their learning of mathematical skills and concepts.

26. Throughout the key stages, teaching is generally good and this leads to good learning on the part of the pupils. In terms of the individual subjects, teaching is:

- Good overall in the foundation stage, in English, science and music
- Satisfactory in mathematics and physical education, with some good features.
- Unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, because of lack of teacher expertise.
- In art and design, design and technology, geography, and history there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements, though many good lessons were observed.

27. The high proportion of good and very good teaching is characterised by a variety of factors. Lessons are introduced in a way that catches pupils' imaginations and gives clear

focus to lessons. Questioning is used very effectively by all teachers to challenge pupils' understanding and encourage them to articulate their ideas clearly. Teachers' questions ensure that all pupils are fully involved. In lessons, teachers recognise those pupils who are not participating and target questions specifically at them. Questions are also used to keep the pace of learning brisk.

28. One of the main factors which contributes to the good teaching is teachers' management of pupils, which is a strength of the teaching, ensuring concentration and interest and accelerating learning. Teachers expect and therefore get good behaviour. As a result, pupils respond well to their teachers, understand what they are expected to learn in the course of the lesson, build upon previous knowledge and remain involved in the lesson and engrossed in their work. As a result, they make good progress.

29. Good lessons are also well structured and proceed at a brisk pace. This was particularly noticeable in a reception class in literacy, where the activities planned by the teacher required pupils to respond quickly and to change rapidly from one activity to another of increasing levels of difficulty, with smooth transition and an acceleration of learning. The children worked hard, with enthusiasm and at a good pace, being well motivated by both the tasks and the teacher. The teacher ensured that they remained working briskly by moving the lesson on at appropriate times, setting targets for the children to achieve. As a result of this good teaching, all pupils made good progress in the development of their phonetic and reading skills. An additional feature of good lessons was the good support received by both pupils and teachers from the support assistants. They were seen making effective contributions in many lessons, thus enhancing the quality of pupils' learning.

30. Where teaching is less satisfactory, it is because teachers do not have high enough expectations for all levels of ability, particularly for pupils of average ability. In these lessons, work is sometimes lacking in challenge and the progress made by some pupils is unsatisfactory.

31. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of most subjects they teach, which enables them to explain new ideas clearly and avoid misunderstandings, especially when pupils are struggling with a new concept. This is most noticeable in mathematics, physical education, in some areas of English teaching and in the Foundation Stage. In an English lesson on rhyming words, using different phonemes, the teacher's good knowledge enabled her to explain with clarity and interest, leading to good understanding by the pupils. However, the subject knowledge of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory, because of the lack of training for teachers and insufficient computers. Few teachers have the confidence and personal skills in the subject to enable all pupils to gain knowledge, skills and understanding in their lessons.

32. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment are sound. Most teachers are skilled in using questions to check and challenge pupils' thinking and understanding and they ask good follow-up questions to enlarge on pupils' initial responses. Good use is made of plenary sessions at the ends of many lessons to assess what pupils have learned in the lesson and to reinforce their subject knowledge and understanding. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers' recording of their pupils' attainments and the subsequent use of that information to plan future work for them are very limited and as a result are unsatisfactory. Furthermore, although teachers' comments and advice to pupils in class are of a high standard, the marking of written work is sometimes lacking in comment and fails to give pupils the information they need on how to improve their work and progress.

33. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. Planning is detailed, thorough and relevant to the needs of each individual. Lessons are carefully

structured to meet the needs of pupils, so that pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their studies in all areas of the curriculum. Within the classroom the needs of pupils with special educational needs are met through the provision of activities carefully matched to their needs, through additional support and by different expected outcomes. Teachers use a variety of methods to support pupils and make sure, for example, that they ask a range of different kinds of questions, so that every pupil can respond successfully to some of them. This was particularly evident in Year 3, when all pupils were able to participate successfully in a lesson on paragraphing. When pupils are withdrawn, every effort is made to ensure that they are withdrawn when that particular lesson is taking place. Teachers make careful provision in most subjects for higher attaining pupils, except for writing, where they are often insufficiently challenged. Overall, they progress well as a result of the activities planned for them, as can be seen by the number of higher grades achieved in the national tests.

34. Resources are often effectively used to stimulate learning. Difficult ideas are explained through real and relevant activities, increasingly making more use of information technology, within the constraints imposed on teachers by insufficient training and equipment. The stimulating variety of interesting activities keeps pupils motivated and interested, so that they enjoy their learning.

35. Parents expressed their satisfaction in the questionnaire at the quality of teaching in the school and inspection findings support their positive views. The good quality of teaching contributes well to the pupils' learning and their levels of attainment. Most impressive is the very high level of commitment teachers offer to pupils and their very good relationships with pupils, which make for enthusiasm and a desire to achieve as well as possible.

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

36. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with the exception of information and communication technology. An appropriate amount of time is devoted to literacy and numeracy but other subjects, including the creative arts, the study of the environment and physical education, play an important part in the school's curriculum. To extend the breadth of the curriculum, the school organises a number of focus weeks throughout the year when the work of the whole school is targeted on a particular area, such as healthy living, art or design and technology. A recent music week involved visits from bands and individual musicians.

37. The school's provision for information and communication technology, both as a subject in its own right and as support for other areas of the curriculum is not yet satisfactory. The school is meeting its statutory requirements and the subject is under active review, but its use is not yet fully developed, because there are insufficient computers and the staff have not yet received full training and therefore lack confidence.

38. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage offers a wide range of learning activities and is planned effectively to follow national guidance.

39. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has a good policy which fully meets the Code of Practice. The school identifies the needs of pupils at an early stage and individual education plans contain clear, specific and achievable targets for progress. The governors' active role in developing and monitoring the curriculum, noted at the time of the previous inspection, has been maintained and involves all areas of the

curriculum.

40. Since the previous inspection, the school has fully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has had the more immediate and obvious beneficial effects, with a recent rise in standards in mathematics recorded in the latest national tests. There has also been an improvement in the quantity and quality of opportunities for investigation in mathematics and this has carried through into work in science. Although opportunities for speaking have improved, with a consequent rise in standards, improvements in writing and higher order reading skills, areas noted in the last inspection as being underdeveloped, have not been so marked and the school has decided to revisit aspects of literacy for further staff consultation and training.

41. To meet the new curricular requirements the school has adopted nationally recognised schemes of work in the other subjects in the curriculum and is adapting them so that they have particular relevance to the pupils. The adoption of these schemes has largely corrected shortcomings noted in the previous schemes of work, namely: insufficient guidance on day-to-day planning, teaching methods and resources. Teachers plan thoroughly and clearly, taking into account the needs of the pupils and the importance of equality of access to the whole curriculum for all pupils. When pupils are withdrawn for help in small groups in literacy and numeracy, the withdrawal takes place only when the class is engaged in a similar activity. Wherever possible, withdrawal takes place during the group work stage of the lesson. The school takes trouble to ensure that no pupil is excluded from a school activity for financial reasons.

42. The school makes every endeavour to ensure that all pupils have equal access to everything that happens in school. All curriculum policies carry a statement to that effect and in practice there is to be no discrimination. All pupils are regarded with equal value in terms of access to the curriculum and in teachers' attention. In the social aspects of school life, both boys and girls equally participate in activities such as clearing tables at lunchtime and carrying out other responsibilities. Standardised test data is carefully scrutinised for discrepancies between the respective achievements of boys and girls and any anomalies are addressed.

43. Because of the necessity for school bus arrangements, the school can only practically offer regular extra-curricular activities during the lunch hour. It does this well, offering activities chosen to extend learning in areas of the school curriculum, involving large numbers of pupils or, where restriction of numbers is necessary, choosing pupils with care. Funding made available because the school is part of an Education Action Zone allows for all pupils in Years 1 to 4 to be given tuition in a range of physical and sporting activities, which extends their learning in physical education lessons. The computer club is open to Year 4 pupils who do not have access to a personal computer at home and offers pupils the opportunity of individual tuition in activities such as constructing a website. Recorder and keyboard groups extend learning in music and Education Action Zone funding will provide tuition in French for pupils in Year 4.

44. Provision for personal, social and health education is at present integrated effectively with religious education studies, science lessons and discussion periods. Outside speakers, including representatives of the police, are invited to reinforce the school's teaching about drugs and their possible misuse. Personal, social and health education is not established as a separate subject, except for the youngest pupils. The school rightly recognises this as an area for development and has already purchased further resources.

45. The school makes very good, imaginative, use of the community to promote the learning of its pupils. For example, older pupils visit Blyth Power Station and also a local

college, where they learn basic maintenance skills. The school's 'Book week' is supported by local librarians, while pupils in Year 3 are helped with their weather studies by a visit from the weather forecaster at the local television station and are delighted when he mentions his visit during that evening's broadcast. A local writer assists Year 4 pupils in their local studies by taking them on a conducted bus tour and pupils have performed in one of his plays, written to celebrate the school's centenary. The school's fire drill, in the summer term, is given extra meaning when the fire service attend and stage a mock rescue before the pupils. A local supermarket enlists the help of pupils in market research. Regular visits from organisations such as the R.S.P.C.A. help pupils to learn about safety issues and animal welfare. The school choir takes part in a local music festival and performs in old people's homes and at local stores, giving the opportunity for pupils to develop their skills through public performance and to mix socially in the wider community. The school is used each weeknight for events such as ballroom dancing and beetle drives. Although these activities have no direct bearing on the pupils' learning, the people who attend these events are invited to attend the school's twice termly masses, in which the pupils are actively involved. This all helps to consolidate the school's position in the community.

46. The school is part of the local cluster of Catholic schools and has established constructive links with its partner schools. Transfer procedures to the local middle school are good and involve a whole day visit in each term of the pupils' final year before transfer. Year 5 teachers from the middle school visit each term. This all helps to make the transfer of pupils as seamless as possible. Students from the local upper school do work experience at the school and the school has established good links with the first school with whom it shares a site through football and through social events.

47. The school cultivates pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and provides a happy and positive element in the lives of the pupils. The promotion of sound moral values and acceptable social skills remains a strength and is very good. The mutual respect between all adults and pupils mentioned in the last report continues to be evident in the school.

48. The school's provision for pupil's spiritual development is very good. Assemblies successfully promote Christian values and give pupils good opportunities to pray and to reflect. The pupils are proud of their school and are enabled to celebrate their own and others' achievements within it. During a Key Stage 1 assembly, pupils considered very carefully the variety of tasks they could do to prepare for Christmas. Pupils confidently make personal prayers during assembly and all pupils have an attitude of respect for each other and show reverence during the prayers. Pupils show their spiritual awareness as they listen carefully to music and sing enthusiastically in assemblies.

49. There are very good opportunities for pupils' moral development. The school engenders a very strong sense of right and wrong. All adults provide good role models. The school strongly promotes honesty and a respect for truth. Older pupils are given responsibility for answering the telephone at lunchtime, assisting the smooth running of clearing away after lunch and helping teachers by doing small tasks. Pupils treat each other and the resources around them with respect. Parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.

50. Social development is very well promoted. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the life of the school and to be aware of each other's needs and respond to those needs. This is shown when pupils play well together during break times and when older pupils take responsibility for settling in children who are new to the reception class as they join in whole school activities. Pupils show a real awareness of the needs of people outside the school community, collecting boxes of gifts for Eastern Europe, contributing to various national

charities, raising funds for work in Botswana and distributing harvest goods to parish members. The large Year 2 recorder group confidently demonstrates newly acquired skills to the whole school during a school assembly. Local professional football clubs provide training which includes boys and girls, the choir sings successfully at Wansbeck Music Festival and a variety of well-attended lunchtime activities are funded by the Education Action Zone initiative. All these factors make pupils' social development very good.

51. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. An appreciation of the work of great artists, such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Piet Mondrian is encouraged through a study of their work and styles. Pupils in Key Stage 1 gain an awareness of countries other than their own as they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear and discuss the various ways to travel to France from England. The pupils happily sing Frere Jacques' and share their knowledge of words such as 'Bonjour' and 'un, deux, trois'. The school provides opportunities for pupils to make visits to support their work in history. A Year 3 pupil talked enthusiastically of an earlier visit to St Mary's Lighthouse in Whitley Bay and other pupils recalled enjoyable visits to the theatre.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. This school has improved the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety it was found to have at the last inspection. It has tackled the concern expressed about storage of equipment around the perimeter of the Hall. Only a small amount of moveable physical education equipment is now kept there. Pupils' welfare is now a strength of the school. All staff care for pupils very well and show a great concern for their emotional and physical well-being. However the issue of assessment has not yet been fully addressed. The level of support and guidance the school gives has a positive effect in raising pupils' levels of achievement.

53. The staff, governors, and particularly the site manager, are all safety conscious. They make every effort to ensure that pupils are safe. A sound health and safety policy is in place and security measures have been installed. All visitors must ring a bell to gain entry, but as yet there is no formal system for recording their presence. The grounds, which are shared with the neighbouring school, are fenced, and play areas are surrounded by a high barrier. The site manager is extremely well trained in safety management. He, and the governors, carry out and record risk assessments every three months and all equipment is regularly checked. Fire drills are held each term and logged. Several members of staff are trained in first aid. Comprehensive systems are in place for recording and reporting accidents and there is an effective emergency contact scheme. Established child protection procedures are understood by all staff. The beginnings and ends of days, dinner times and play times are well supervised by dinner ladies or staff. The school enjoys very good relationships with the nurse, who is a regular visitor.

54. The school provides satisfactory and often good personal support to its pupils. Staff are available to parents at the beginning and end of each day to share information or concerns. Parents feel that their children are well cared for. Pupils are often the second or third generation in the family who have attended this school. As a result, staff know their pupils very well and are extremely sensitive to their differing needs. The school takes pride in its family atmosphere. Informal monitoring of each pupil's personal progress is continuously taking place. However, at present no formal systems are in place for recording pupils' personal development and achievements.

55. A range of responsibilities is given to pupils, particularly in the upper years. These

include taking registers to the office, sharpening pencils and acting as porch monitors. Key Stage 2 pupils are given the responsibility for answering the telephone and holding doors open as a reward for courtesy and effort. However the range of responsibilities could be extended to further develop pupils' initiative and personal responsibility.

56. Provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is good. Pupils who fail to make progress, as well as those pupils who are very able, are placed on the special needs register in order to identify and make provision for their needs. Identification of pupils needing additional support is made and followed by the drawing up of individual education plans is, clearly identifying specific learning targets, which are then implemented in the classroom. Plans are reviewed termly and parents are rightly involved in all stages and are fully supportive of procedures. Relationships with external agencies such as educational psychologists, education welfare officers are good and support provision very effectively. Learning support assistants have received appropriate training and induction and they contribute well to the assessment and monitoring of progress made by pupils.

57. Good support is given to children joining the nursery. Nursery staff are sensitive to each child's needs and adapt accordingly. The majority of nursery children proceed to the reception class and there is regular contact between the two. As a result, the children are familiar with staff and the classroom and their transfer into reception is smooth.

58. Procedures to promote good behaviour are good. School rules are displayed. These encourage pupils to show respect for others, be kind and helpful and help to make the school a safe and tidy place. Good work and attitudes are rewarded with stickers, or table points. Individuals are nominated by their teachers to receive awards at the Friday Assembly and their names are displayed in the Hall. All staff are constantly alert to any signs of poor behaviour, bullying or harassment. When instances do occur, they are quickly identified and handled effectively. Dinner ladies keep a record of both good and poor behaviour in the yard.

59. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Parents are generally good at informing the school if their child is unable to come to school. Registers are monitored and any emerging patterns of poor attendance are followed up. However the roll is not always called and registers, although neat, are still not always filled in at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. This issue was identified in the last inspection. Reasons for absence are marked, but late arrivals are not always recorded.

60. The school has effective systems for formally assessing pupils' attainment but has yet to implement in full the recommendation of the previous report that the school should improve procedures for ongoing assessment and establish links between this and subsequent planning.

61. The school makes very good use of standardised test data, such as baseline assessment and Key Stage 1 Standard Assessment Tests to identify differences in attainment between different groups of pupils and to plan how these differences might be overcome. In addition to statutory testing, the school also makes good use of optional test material to set individual attainment targets in core subjects for all pupils in Years 1 to 4. The school is able to track pupils' progress and address weaknesses or concerns as they become apparent. All standardised test data and targets are shared with staff so that, as pupils move through the school, their progress can be effectively monitored. Additionally, this information is also used to set annual school targets for improvement in the core subjects. This enables the school to evaluate its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

62. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in all subjects are still an area for further development. Since the last report, measures to assess on a day to day basis have been

started, enabling teachers to assess the impact of learning. This is in its early stages and is not yet helping with future planning, but the school has made it a priority for the Spring term. Additionally, the school has set aside an assessment week for subjects other than the core subjects in each half term.

63. The school recognises that assessment procedures need to be more focused, particularly in non-core subjects of the National Curriculum. At the moment, assessment does not figure strongly enough in reviews of progress and in future planning, so that information on pupils' progress is not sufficiently used to concentrate on raising standards of work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. This school has maintained the good links it was found to have with parents at the last inspection. The 'Open Door' policy is effective in encouraging parents to become involved and many play an active part in their children's learning both at school and at home.

65. This school is held in high esteem by its parents. Many children travel some distance in order to attend. The overwhelming majority of parents have extremely positive views about the school. Through the questionnaire, parents meeting and discussions during the inspection they express a high level of satisfaction. They agree that their children like school. The vast majority feel that their children are making good progress and that the school has high expectations. The majority say that they feel comfortable to approach staff with any problems or concerns they may have and that the school encourages their children to behave well, become mature and responsible. However a significant minority of parents feel that the school does not provide a good range of activities outside lessons. The team find that the range of activities is good. Children make visits out of school and a number of clubs such as recorder, computer, football and keyboard are held. However, because of the large number of pupils who travel a long distance, these are all held at lunch times and so parents may not be aware of them.

66. Parental involvement in school is good. Their contributions are greatly valued by the school and have a positive impact on the pupil's learning. Parents are encouraged to come into school and share their expertise. A number help on a regular basis and more are willing to help with out of school visits and school productions. Staff give parent helpers a verbal briefing before the start of the lesson and use them to support activities as well as help with classroom routines.

67. The school consultation with and information for parents is good. It seeks parents' views when making changes over such issues as transport. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully consulted at every stage and at each review. The Parent Teacher Association organises a number of fund-raising and social events throughout the year, which include a Summer Fayre, discos and a Christmas raffle. The money raised is used to enrich pupils' experiences and is used, for instance, to purchase extra resources, such as books. The association produces its own newsletter to keep parents informed of their events. Parents are invited to school Mass twice a term.

68. A few parents feel that the school does not keep them well enough informed about their children's progress. The inspection team do not support this concern. Through the Brochure, curriculum letters and booklets, parents receive good quality information about the work and routines of the school. Parents are invited to a meeting every term to discuss their children's progress. The end of year reports contain details of the subjects studied and often

include targets for each child. However they do not all fully comply with statutory requirements, as some do not contain attendance rates. Parents find the reports helpful. Attendance at the parents meetings is only fifty per cent and only one parent attended the annual meeting. Teachers make every effort to involve parents if they have a specific concern. Parents have access to staff at the beginning and end of each day when informal transfer of information takes place. They know that they can make an appointment if a longer discussion is required.

69. Parents make good contributions to pupils' learning at home. They were consulted in drawing up the Home/School contract. The majority, but not all, have signed it. Most parents help their children with homework and feel that pupils are given the right amount. Parents complete comments in the reading diaries and these provide a valuable link between home and school. The school has organised courses such as the 'Two Steps Ahead' course, which have been effective in encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's learning. Parents receive good advice about how they can help at home through the topic letters and commercially produced booklets.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. The acting headteacher, normally the deputy headteacher, is providing good and purposeful leadership of the school in the absence of the headteacher, who is on sick leave. She has good understanding of a clear educational direction for the school, focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education provided. She has implemented many new procedures which have moved the school forward. The acting headteacher, staff, governors and parents share a common commitment to offering pupils a caring environment in which they can feel secure and the school's work reflects its aims and values well. However, since the senior management team of the school consisted only of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, the acting headteacher now has no senior management with whom to share responsibilities. The school has not appointed an acting deputy headteacher. As a result, the acting headteacher has sole management responsibility, in addition to her own roles as subject co-ordinator for English and co-ordinator for special needs, responsibility for the curriculum and assessment, as well as being temporary co-ordinator for mathematics and physical education, because of the absence of another teacher. This is a role which cannot be maintained over a long period of time. Middle management of the school at present does not show clear understanding of the responsibilities of the roles of subject co-ordinators for monitoring and evaluation of subjects. Subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and raising standards. They have little opportunity to monitor teaching in their subjects. Co-ordinators are generally very knowledgeable about their subjects, but do not have the opportunity to influence teaching and learning effectively. They regularly see teachers' planning in their subjects, to make suggestions for improvement or check that the necessary work is covered across classes, but do not yet look closely at the quality of pupils' learning and of teachers' teaching. Expertise, therefore, is not always well shared. All these factors mean that management overall is unsatisfactory, despite the high level of good leadership offered by the acting headteacher.

71. The school has responded positively to the previous inspection report and over the last year has made good progress in improving the areas of the school that were deemed to have weaknesses. The school has successfully implemented national initiatives, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and has, to some extent, improved the level of work in information and control technology though it is still unsatisfactory overall. This steady development in the school's work has led to a trend of improving standards in many areas in

both key stages. The school is becoming far more evaluative and is using data analysis well, to the benefit of pupils' education. For instance, use of the data analysis has resulted in the introduction of booster classes to raise the level of under-attaining pupils in literacy. Plans for the present academic year are continuing to address these issues. Work has begun on improving the ongoing assessment of pupil's work, in order to improve the provision for work graded for different abilities and to aid future planning, though this is still in its infancy. Higher ability pupils have been given much opportunity to work with a good degree of challenge, and this is becoming evident in the proportion of higher grades achieved in the national tests. The acting headteacher has done much monitoring of teaching, both formally and informally, to ensure good practice.

72. The governors show a high level of interest in, and support for, the school. An effective committee structure deals efficiently with a wide range of practical issues. Governors are supplied with much up-to-date information by the headteacher and this enables them to make well-informed decisions. They are actively involved in formulating the school improvement plan. Governors are appropriately involved in budget and planning processes and are active in contributing to the development of teaching and learning. All statutory requirements are met. Their knowledge, however, of the school is unsatisfactory in the area of school management. There has been no review of the management structure or consideration given to the development of management roles and responsibilities, a situation which has led to the present over-heavy load on the acting headteacher.

73. The school achieves a good match between its stated aims and values and its everyday work. The school administration is efficient and makes good use of technology. Management has recently taken appropriate action to meet the school's targets. There is satisfactory provision for the induction of new staff. There is a strong commitment in the school to improvement and a good capacity to succeed, because of the dedication of the staff and the governors.

74. The management of special educational needs is good. Co-ordination is good and reviews and assessment are diligently undertaken. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is well organised and has very good relationships with outside agencies and fellow teachers. Close working with form teachers at all times ensures that pupils' individual needs are well met and they make good progress. Funds allocated for special educational needs are very well used for that purpose. Planning is detailed and teachers know the pupils very well. Funds are carefully managed and the recent funding generated by the head teacher's sick leave was targeted towards providing more learning assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. Statements and annual reviews are all up to date. The school's own policy for special needs is clear, unambiguous and helpful to teachers and it ensures that the legal requirements of the special needs Code of Practice are fully met.

75. Funds received by the school, especially the specific grant for special educational needs, received are used effectively to promote good learning. The school thinks carefully about how to deal with changing class sizes. It is, at present, well and appropriately staffed with teachers and a good number of support staff, in order to ensure good delivery of the curriculum. The headteacher and governors monitor the school's expenditure closely against the planned budget. The school is careful to ensure that it purchases goods and services at competitive rates and it applies the principles of best value well.

76. At the time of the inspection, due to absence through illness of permanent staff, there were a number of teachers on temporary or supply contracts. Teachers work hard to make sure that there is continuity in lessons if teachers share a class or if there is a supply teacher. Temporary and part-time staff take responsibility for the management of curricular areas but the role of the curriculum co-ordinator is underdeveloped. Appraisal is

appropriately carried out, as is induction of teachers new to the school. There is a need for the training of subject co-ordinators in the monitoring and evaluation of their subjects.

77. Accommodation is good in its provision for the effective delivery of the curriculum. The site manager works very efficiently to create a pleasant and effective working environment that has a positive impact on pupil's learning. The school hopes to secure some building improvement that will solve the present problem of storage. The hall storage room for PE equipment has been remodelled to provide a well-used library area. The hall is very well used, doubling as a dining room as well as being used for regular assemblies, physical education and other whole school events. All staff work very hard to maintain a clean and safe environment for pupils and staff to work in. Displays in the classrooms further enhance the appearance of the school.

78. Although the accommodation in the school is generally good in size and usefulness, though the limitations in size of the playground and the need to share the sports fields make it difficult for teaching and learning in physical education and limit the range and variety of physical activities in which pupils can be involved in their playtime. Although the school has reorganised space within the buildings well and made many improvements since the last inspection, such as the new library and the special needs teaching room, there is no room for a computer suite, a factor that inhibits the teaching of information and communication technology.

79. With the exception of information technology and history, there are sufficient resources to ensure effective teaching of the curriculum. Most resources are of good quality and are easily accessible. The new computers are of good quality, but the older ones are not of sufficient quality to meet pupils' educational needs. The library has insufficient reference books to support pupils' research and wider reading fully.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to build upon the many positive aspects of the school and further improve the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff

should:

- (1) raise pupils' standards in writing by the time they leave the school, as well as increasing the amount of progress they make, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what average ability pupils can achieve in their writing through sharing the best practice seen in the school;
 - ensuring that a greater quantity of work is accomplished in the allocated time in lessons;
 - increasing the amount of writing of longer pieces of work in subjects throughout the curriculum;
 - improving pupils' spelling and phonic skills.(Paragraphs: 5, 8, 25, 30, 33, 40, 92, 93, 94, 96)

- (2) improve the quality of management in the school, by:
 - ensuring the formation of a strong senior management team as a matter of urgency, effectively deployed to cover both key stages and special needs;
 - ensuring that subject co-ordinators have the training and the opportunity to monitor and evaluate their subjects and to share good practice in teaching;
 - governors familiarising themselves more thoroughly with the management and delegation of responsibilities in the school.(Paragraphs: 70, 72, 76, 110, 116, 121, 127, 132, 139)

- (3) develop the systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment for all subjects of the curriculum, by:
 - making accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects and ensuring that they are then used by teachers to help them to plan the next stages of work for their pupils.(Paragraphs: 32, 52, 54, 60, 62, 63, 103, 116, 121, 139)

In addition to the issues above, the following should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- increase the opportunities for the development of information and communication technology skills in all areas of the curriculum.
- (Paragraphs: 8, 26, 31, 37, 71, 97, 133, 134, 137)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	12	50	36	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	151
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	24

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.3	School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	2	21	12	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	20
	Girls	9	9	12
	Total	23	26	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (83)	79 (87)	97 (88)
	National	84 (82)	82 (83)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	15
	Girls	9	10	9
	Total	25	27	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (87)	81 (84)	71 (94)
	National	84 (82)	85 (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	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	121
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9 : 1
Average class size	25.2

Education support staff: YR– Y4

Total number of education support staff	3.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.0 ; 1

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.0 : 1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	302157
Total expenditure	300339
Expenditure per pupil	1650
Balance brought forward from previous year	967
Balance carried forward to next year	2785

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	182
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	38	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	37	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	40	0	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	56	6	0	3
The teaching is good.	55	42	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	48	9	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	29	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	38	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	49	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	41	48	8	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	37	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	39	21	3	13

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

81. Children in the foundation stage are taught in two nursery and two reception classes. On admission to the school they have below average levels of attainment and by the time that they leave the foundation stage, standards are average for children of this age. This shows good progress. Informal assessments are made in the term in which children start in the nursery. These assessments are recorded and form the basis for continued assessment as children progress through the foundation stage. Since the previous inspection, staff have concentrated on improving their planning and checking children's progress more rigorously. In the nursery classes children have their own personal profiles, which give immediate and accurate information about children's development. The portfolios are readily available for staff and parents and show the topics covered and the activities children have experienced in the nursery. A display of photographs in the nursery porch allows parents to see what new skills have been developed during the nursery session. Teaching is always satisfactory, with more than fifteen per cent of lessons seen in the nursery judged as good and over seventy five per cent of the teaching in the reception classes judged to be good or very good. This good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning because children are encouraged to acquire skills systematically and thoroughly, as a result of good, careful planning. The school organises a sensitive transition from nursery to reception with a gradual introduction to full time education.

Personal, social and emotional development

82. Teachers and other staff attach much importance to encouraging children towards independence and in developing their social skills. By the time they leave the reception class, most children attain the early learning goals in this area. This is due to the effective balance between direct teaching and the good opportunities for children to make decisions, choose some of their activities and develop an awareness of each other's needs. This was well illustrated in a physical education lesson, when children were given clear instructions by their teacher to listen and move to 'elephant' music and to experiment in making themselves into elephant shapes. Children used their imaginations and behaved in a controlled and purposeful way. Children in the reception classes enjoy each other's company and willingly share equipment. Nursery and reception children are beginning to work together collaboratively in various role-play situations, such as using sand and malleable materials to make birthday cakes. They learn to take turns and are quite clear about the classroom rules of how many children should work at the sand or water play areas. Children are given responsibility for clearing up in the classrooms and respect property. For example, children in the nursery were very careful as they examined the crib figures used by their teacher used recounting the Christmas story. Adults provide good role models and always treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. The children respond well. Reception children take responsibility for personal hygiene and routinely put on aprons when working with paint and water.

Communication, language and literacy

83. In language and literacy, standards are in line with what is expected nationally for the age group as they enter Year 1. The staff provide good opportunities for children to experiment with writing and encourage good speaking and listening skills through story times and play activities. As reception children listen to 'Laura's Star' being read by their teacher, they talk empathetically about the sad feeling of losing a special friend and discuss with enthusiasm the secret that Laura might share with her own special star. Children in the nursery have an early introduction to reading and writing as they sequence pictures based on the Christmas story and attempt to write their names on birthday invitations. Staff use discussion to good effect, encouraging children to interact with others and to enjoy stories. The children in the nursery are well supported by the nursery nurse, who focuses on creative activities and takes every opportunity to extend and reinforce children's knowledge of words and their ability to speak clearly and confidently. Children know that print carries meaning and as they progress through the foundation stage they learn how to handle books and know the meaning of words such as 'title' and 'cover'. They recognise their names and are able to read from simple texts at an appropriate level. Children can recognise rhymes, and develop their ability to sequence two sentences correctly. They learn to form letters correctly and develop firm pencil grips, so that their writing becomes more legible. Lessons are well planned and teachers of reception children make effective use of areas of the National Literacy Strategy to provide a structure for developing knowledge of letters and sounds.

Mathematical development

84. The teaching of this area of learning is good and children make good progress as a result. By the time they enter Year 1 they have average levels of understanding of number. Teachers' expectations are appropriate and effective use is made of available resources. Children develop mathematical skills through effective use of practical activities, number rhymes, games and songs. The younger children acquire a sense of the size of a number and its position, through number songs such as 'Five Currant Buns' and 'Five Green And Speckled Frogs'. Children can count confidently to ten and many go beyond this. They grow in confidence in using mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more than' and 'less than' and learn to form their numbers correctly. Children explore capacity through sand and water play and in the nursery computers are used appropriately to enhance mathematical skills. Reception children learn about symmetry. As their teacher told a story about Father Christmas having difficulty folding and cutting paper, the children watched carefully as the teacher folded and cut her paper. Children's eyes shone with excitement as she revealed a perfectly symmetrical snowflake. They reinforce their understanding of a symmetrical shape by involving themselves in a variety of matching, creative and experimental activities planned by their teacher to support their learning. Very good relationships between the adults and the children mean that children feel confident and enjoy the opportunities to explore number, shape and measurement.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. By the time they are five, children are generally attaining what is expected for this age group. Photographic evidence shows children exploring the immediate locality and collecting autumn leaves. They make simple percussion instruments and listen attentively to the different sounds, identifying the contents of the shakers. They listen to the sound of the rain outside and watch with interest the increasing size of puddles. When the children use different fabrics in their creative activities, they are encouraged to touch and describe the different textures. They are aware of the changes in the weather. In the nursery, parents support their children's learning by helping them to fill in a weather chart during the holidays. Children have regular opportunities to taste food and state their likes or dislikes. As they progress through the foundation stage they record on charts their preferences for Italian or Chinese food or as in the week of the inspection, a choice of sandwich filling. The children's portfolios show that when they baked currant buns they also worked on their counting skills.

They use the computer with particular skills, as in the nursery they are able to click the mouse to access number games and 'dress the teddy'.

86. Children in the foundation stage play imaginatively with construction equipment, as well as experimenting with sand and water. They can work out that an empty truck is easier to pull than one that is full of sand. They can put together simple jigsaws and make good progress in developing cutting and gluing skills, as well as making choices about colour and materials when they make constructions. Visits to places of interest such as a farm, help them to gain an appreciation of living things. The teachers provide an interesting curriculum to extend children's knowledge of the wider world. Visitors such as the police and a mother bathing her baby add an extra dimension to the curriculum. Topics have learning objectives listed and interesting purposeful activities reflect the early learning goals. Equipment and resources are easily accessible to support and help children achieve independence.

Physical development

87. During the inspection there were few opportunities for outdoor play because of poor weather. The children took part in physical education lessons in the hall and showed good skills in balance and movement. The children have a good awareness of space and avoid collisions as they move around the hall. They move imaginatively to music as they identify the differences between an elephant and a kangaroo and alter their movements in tune to the music as they emulate the contrasting movements of the two animals. In one lesson the children were mirroring each other's actions and the teacher was able to make a direct link to their numeracy work based on symmetry. In the one outdoor lesson that was observed, children made good progress in throwing, rolling and catching balls. Children enjoy physical education and join in the activities with enthusiasm.

Creative development

88. Children make good progress in this aspect of their work and the majority attain at least what is expected by the time they enter Year 1. They recognise and can name the primary colours and in the nursery, children brought in orange objects to display in their classroom. They have daily opportunities to use paint, collage and crayons to explore colour. They are encouraged to express their feelings through exploring, dance, song and imaginative play. During the inspection, the reception children performed their version of 'Goldilocks' in front of the whole school. Their audience was most appreciative and children's confidence increased. Children develop a wide repertoire of nursery rhymes and other songs, which they sing with gusto and enjoy putting in the actions. In one reception class the children examined a model of a spider's web and carefully used glue and spatulas to make their own webs; one pupil independently used a magnifying lens and a reference book so he could discover more about the topic. Children are well motivated and good intervention by staff helps to support and extend children's ideas and understanding.

ENGLISH

89. The majority of pupils enter the school with below average levels of ability in all areas of language and literacy. They achieve at below national average standards in English by the time they are seven. This is reflected in the 2000 standard curriculum tests, where English was below average when compared with schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. Over the last four years, standards in reading have risen to close to the national average in 1999, though there was a slight dip in 2000. In writing, standards have risen slightly in the last two years, in line with the national trend. There was, however, an above average number of pupils who reached the higher grades in both reading and writing in the

2000 tests. Standards in English for pupils at the age of nine are also judged to be below what is expected nationally though good teaching is producing good learning in the subject and standards are improving.

90. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, especially since the level of attainment on entry is low. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. Teachers use good, open-ended questions to promote oral skills and provide opportunities for pupils to engage in class discussions about their work. Pupils are good listeners, with many pupils responding to teachers' questions enthusiastically, though not often in clear, well constructed sentences. Good discipline in lessons ensures that pupils listen politely to what their teachers are saying and are keen to respond to their questions. Pupils listen to and respect the opinions of others, and often try hard to articulate their ideas and opinions. By the age of seven, most pupils can express themselves thoughtfully and by the time they are nine, speaking skills are at a satisfactory level.

91. In reading, teachers spend a high proportion of time on key words and the promotion of phonic skills, though this is a recently developed emphasis. Those pupils with identified reading problems receive good support from teachers and make good progress. Time set aside for guided reading is well used by teachers, with the majority of pupils developing their technical reading skills and levels of understanding. By the time pupils are seven, three-quarters have a reading age in line with their chronological age and some achieve above it. The quality of reading is also being influenced by the good support given by parents through the home-school reading scheme. The large majority of pupils are now making satisfactory progress in their reading skills as they move through the key stage. This is much influenced by the good range of challenging tasks introduced with the National Literacy Strategy. Not only do pupils read a range of fiction books, but they are also introduced to some interesting factual and newspaper and magazine material. Pupils read poetry and are introduced to some good literature. Many pupils display good reading habits and regularly read at home. Pupils have some library skills, and a few are now able to retrieve information from the Internet and other resources. Some older pupils display sophisticated reading skills, and can discuss the characters and issues in the books they read with confidence. Teachers continue to use guided reading activities in an effective manner and provide many opportunities for silent reading. By the ages of both seven and nine, most pupils have reached a standard in line with national expectations.

92. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were satisfactory at the ages of seven and nine. Now, although standards of speaking and listening and reading are satisfactory, standards of writing are below average at both the ages of seven and nine. This accounts for the below average standard in the subject. Standards are below average in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 because Standards are now below average, because writing is unsatisfactory. Pupils have too little practice in writing at length and at a good pace and too little expertise in some technical skills, particularly spelling. Consequently, they lack the ability to express their ideas with accuracy. The previous inspection report commented on the fact that few pupils were reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading and writing; this is no longer the case and higher attainers are now achieving well.

93. Standards of writing in relation to technical skills are below average in both key stages. Pupils write freely, but not often at length, most with an evident desire to communicate their ideas and with sensible or imaginative content. Above all, pupils often work too slowly and with little sense of urgency or desire to finish a piece of writing in the allocated time. Apart from that of a few higher ability pupils, writing is often without accuracy in spelling. These factors prevent pupils from being well prepared for the written component of the national tests, as they have not acquired the ability to express their ideas with precision

and speed. Handwriting and general presentation vary. Some pupils communicate coherently in writing, as seen in a Year 4 class writing their own versions of a winter poem, as if in summer, but often concentration is focused on content alone.

94. By the age of nine, writing covers an appropriate range of styles, but too few pupils write at length and with sustained account or description. Spelling is often random. Pupils' use of extended vocabulary is often inhibited by the difficulties they experience in spelling correctly. Pupils write in a suitable variety of genres, including letters, diaries and playscripts, often using well-chosen literary stimuli from poetry and prose. The school has identified the weakness in writing and has initiated additional literacy lessons for under-achieving pupils, as well as extension work for higher ability pupils. Progress is good for pupils with special educational needs, through the good work of support staff and the graded work provided by classroom teachers.

95. The quality of teaching is good. All teaching is satisfactory or better and in three-quarters of the lessons observed it was good or very good. At its best, it is characterised by a good grasp and understanding of the subject, interest, enthusiasm and sound lesson planning which employs an appropriate variety of activities in the classroom. As a result, pupils are stimulated to learn with interest and enthusiasm, as well as concentration. A strength of some of the teaching is the consistent, skilful and challenging use of question and answer, which assesses the degree of understanding of pupils and allows the teacher to reinforce previous teaching, as well as encouraging pupils to learn by thinking for themselves. This was clearly to be seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were enthusiastically grasping the language used in 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', with the help of the teacher's probing questions. Teachers stress the power of words to convey emotion and pleasure. There is now a high degree of emphasis on reading and comprehension skills through the successful use of the National Literacy Strategy. This is being productively used by teachers to aid work on reading and to study the structures of stories. The pace with which teachers conduct lessons is often good, ensuring that pupils learn at an appropriate rate.

96. Too often, however, teaching is rendered less effective than it should be by a lack of expectation of the amount of written work of which average pupils are capable and too low expectations of the amount of work which pupils could produce in the time allocated. The expectations of teachers are directly related to the way in which pupils progress, especially in the planning of lessons to provide work graded in difficulty to suit the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Good support and attention is given to pupils with special educational needs. Most teachers possess good subject knowledge and focus well on all aspects on English, other than some writing skills. Although teachers give good verbal comment and encouragement to pupils, marking of written work is sometimes lacking in comment and direction to pupils as to how they could improve. Homework is effectively used to reinforce work done in class.

97. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator, who is also the acting headteacher, regularly monitors other teachers' planning and the teaching of the subject. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been well managed and implemented throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy documents are used successfully to form the basis of the scheme of work. Teachers' short-term planning is effective. Clear assessment procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils have recently been put in place, which allow each pupil's progress to be carefully monitored. Support staff are well used in literacy lessons. The use of literacy within other subjects varies. There is a good cross-curricular focus on language in most subjects, such as in a lesson observed in design and technology, not enough attention is given to more extended writing skills in subjects such as history and geography. Resources are good in quality, apart from fact that there are too few computers for pupils to practise the skills of drafting and re-drafting regularly. The library is

attractive and welcoming, encouraging pupils to promote regular habits of reading for pleasure, though there are insufficient reference books.

MATHEMATICS

98. Results in national tests in mathematics in 2000 at the end of Year 2 show that pupils attain standards that are above the national average. When compared with schools with similar intakes, the standards are also above the national average. In the last three years there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils who achieve the higher levels and a decrease in the number of pupils achieving at the lower level and the proportion of those achieving above the national average has risen sharply. This improvement can be attributed to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the variety of teaching strategies developed by teachers. There are no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils make good progress and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average; this is reflected in the 2000 statutory test results.

99. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvement in the provision of mathematics and numeracy. Pupils' good attainment and rates of progress have been maintained and in both key stages, when teaching is good or very good, pupils make good or very good progress.

100. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers and count backwards and forwards in ones and tens with increasing speed and accuracy. They recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes describing their properties accurately. Pupils consolidate the addition and subtraction skills learned in Year 1 and use this knowledge to solve problems involving money and measurement correctly. Pupils see the relationship between one and two digit numbers, for example, that if seven minus two is five, then thirty-seven minus two is thirty-five. They adopt a variety of strategies to make their calculations, including using number lines, cubes and working out answers in their heads without any aids.

101. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 increase their confidence and competence in working with number. They can add and subtract numbers up to a thousand and are developing skills in multiplication and division. Pupils use their knowledge of number to calculate change from a pound and use combinations of the least number of coins to make amounts of money under five pounds. They sort and draw three dimensional shapes, and use their knowledge of metric measurement to draw and measure lines in centimetres. In Year 3, pupils are starting to use recognise halves and quarters and develop their existing knowledge of symmetry by drawing measured symmetrical shapes on squared paper. The knowledge of fractions is increased in Year 4 as pupils identify how many eighths make a whole and are equivalent to a quarter or a half. Pupils' skills in collecting data and using graphs to show statistical information are developed during their science and topic lessons as they collect data about the shadows created by the sun at different times of the day and record the findings for their projects on transport.

102. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory, with some good teaching in Key Stage 1 and very good teaching in Key Stage 2. When teaching is good, the lessons start with a brisk introduction, reinforcing pupils' number awareness and competency in knowing their tables or reviewing earlier knowledge of topics such as shape. The pupils make rapid gains in their learning because the teacher maintains a lively pace during the lesson and pupils have

fun as they are challenged to make calculations or suggest answers to mathematical problems. A good example of this was in Year 3, when the teacher used a line of twelve pupils to demonstrate visually halves and quarters of twelve. In the same lesson this new learning was reinforced by a good use of oranges and a chocolate bar to show parts of a whole. Features of the good teaching observed include good lesson preparation, good use of questioning and clear instructions so that pupils lose no time in starting their activities. These factors ensure that pupils learn with interest and concentration and, in most cases, at a productive rate. In Year 1 a good lesson concluded with the rhyme of Solomon Grundy. This was an enjoyable way of reinforcing the lesson content on the cyclical nature of the days of the week. 97. Pupils show good attitudes to the subject and they respond well to the challenging questions put to them by their teachers. In Year 3, pupils enthusiastically chorused 'Yes' when their teacher introduced the oral activity based on halving. Pupils are well behaved during their lessons and respond well to the lively, practical approach to mathematics which is being developed in the school. Teachers make good use of the opportunities in the mathematics lesson to reinforce literacy skills, for example the silent 'w' in whole and to extend mathematical vocabulary such as 'take away' and 'find the difference'. When support staff are available, good use is made of their skills in assisting pupils who have difficulty with their work. However there are occasionally insufficient planned activities to meet the wide range of pupils' abilities, so that not all pupils are fully challenged throughout the lessons.

103. At the time of the inspection the co-ordinator for mathematics was in hospital and the acting headteacher had taken on the role of co-ordinator on a temporary basis. Within the development plan, the school is aware of the need to update the policy and to monitor teaching and learning in the subject more formally. The issues raised in the last inspection about improving ongoing assessment still need further attention. The school plans to address this during the next term.

SCIENCE

104. Teacher assessments of the abilities of pupils aged seven in science in 2000 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected level was well below the national average and very low when compared to schools of a similar intake. The proportion of pupils working at a higher level, however, was well above the average when compared to schools nationally and to schools with a similar intake. The only discernible trend over the last three years is that levels of achievement have risen in the last two years. On the evidence of the current inspection, standards of the present pupils aged seven are better than last year and are likely to be in line with national expectations. The apparent improvement can be traced to the fact that the 2000 class had a disproportionate number of boys and pupils with special educational needs, thus making practical and investigative work difficult. Standards in science of pupils aged nine at the school are in line with those expected nationally.

105. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted a nationally recognised scheme of work and this has brought about several improvements in the provision for science. Investigative work, the lack of which was commented on in the last inspection, is now firmly integrated within the science programme and good examples, including work on electric circuits by Year 2 pupils and on forces by Year 1 pupils, were seen during the inspection. The new scheme provides a more coherent and consistent approach throughout the school, allowing the systematic development of skills. Expectations of older pupils have risen and the below average achievement of pupils at higher grades has been reversed, with the proportion of seven year old pupils working at higher levels now being well above average.

106. The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory by the age of nine. They conduct investigations into the solubility of different substances and higher attaining pupils are able to use various approaches to separate substances, using terms such as filtering, sieving and evaporating, working at levels expected of eleven year olds. Pupils learn about light and develop their mathematics skills by measuring and recording, in graph form, the length of shadows at various times of the day. Year 3 pupils conduct investigations into what are the flexible materials and absorbency. They look at changes and decide which are reversible and which are not. Year 2 pupils cover work on food, identifying different groups. They visit the kitchens and look at what constitutes a healthy meal. Their work shows links with personal, social and health education, with physical education, studying the effects of exercise on the body and with numeracy, by using tally charts and recording in graphical form. Pupils carry out a thorough investigation of electricity, looking at safety aspects and develop their artistic skills designing posters. They discover what constitutes an electric circuit and high attaining pupils are able to construct circuits using a minimum of equipment. Year 1 pupils conduct exciting investigations into forces, by riding bicycles under various conditions and seeing the effects of braking on baby passengers.

107. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress in science. A good level of classroom support means that pupils receive individual help in lessons. Teachers give considerable thought to the grouping of pupils for investigative work, often putting pupils with special educational needs with high attaining pupils, allowing work to progress and pupils to learn from the ideas of others.

108. The quality of teaching is good overall. A particular feature of good lessons is the use of questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply about the problem with which they are faced. In response to a question by a pupil, teachers, instead of answering directly, through questioning, remind the pupils of what they know and suggest how this knowledge might be used to promote further learning. Teachers plan and prepare well for lessons and manage the pupils well. This means that teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and that pupils have suitable materials to make discoveries, sustain concentration and are productive in the lessons. Teachers' investigative approach to work done in class ensures that pupils learn to think for themselves and make valid deductions. Classroom support staff are not always used effectively. Sometimes, particularly during periods when the teacher is talking to the class, they are left with nothing to do. Occasionally, when helping groups of pupils, especially those with special educational needs, they do not challenge pupils sufficiently, allowing errors to pass uncorrected. Teachers mark work and often write encouraging remarks, but few offer suggestions for improvement or further study. Teachers are beginning to use information and communication technology to help their teaching, but this is mostly concentrated on downloading teaching material. Its use by pupils to help their learning and research in science is an area for development.

109. Because the quality of teaching is good, pupils' attitudes to science are very positive. Pupils help their learning and that of others by co-operating well and being tolerant and receptive to the ideas and difficulties of others. A good example occurred when a pupil, noticing the difficulty of another in completing his electric circuit, suggested that he might try using her bulb. He was delighted with the effect of the new bulb, but did not forget to thank his helper. These good attitudes are particularly helpful to pupils with special educational needs, helping to build confidence and self-esteem. Further evidence of the good attitudes of pupils is provided by the careful way that many present their work.

110. The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped. Some staff development is planned but there is little monitoring of teaching or pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are not fully developed and, apart from the obligatory teacher assessments made at the end of Year 2, there is no record of pupils' learning or progress throughout the school. The co-ordinator

has been able to help learning by providing a good supply of high quality and accessible resources.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Because of timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe one lesson in Key Stage 1 and none in Key Stage 2. Evidence was drawn from other sources, such as documentation, displays, discussions with teachers and analysis of pupils' work. Attainment in art is good at the age of seven and nine and satisfactory at the age of nine, including that of those pupils with special educational needs,

112. At Key Stage 1 pupils have experience of working with a wide range of different materials and techniques, with the emphasis on developing skills such as co-ordination, manipulation of materials and the use of a range of stimuli to develop their work. Pupils had investigated pattern through symmetry, made observational drawings of their favourite toys, mixed paint to discover new colours and had painted portraits based on photographs. They had also been involved in a sequence of lessons in which they had been exploring different techniques of weaving, including simple paper weaving, dying and tying fabric and using wool to weave. All activities showed good development of skills and application and pupils clearly had a very positive attitude towards art.

113. At Key Stage 2 there was evidence that pupils had experience of working with a range of materials and techniques. Some work, for example portraits, was developed from observing the work of Picasso and three-dimensional skills, including pottery based on that of the Ancient Greeks, had been undertaken. Much of the focus was on the development of skills such as observing, manipulating materials, drawing and collage. The development of these skills was generally satisfactory, although in one class observation of work indicated that skills of painting could be developed further.

114. The teaching observed at Key Stage 1 was good and was characterised by good subject knowledge and the ability to demonstrate the techniques of weaving effectively. Pupils were encouraged to solve problems by thinking them through, but the teacher was readily available to support and help pupils as required. Most pupils were able to handle weaving techniques with reasonable co-ordination. An examination of pupils' completed work showed that pupils make progress in their learning of skills as a direct result of careful teaching.

115. Information and communication technology programs are used well in the teaching of art. In the nursery, pupils can use 'Dazzle' effectively and older pupils use programs to design their own pictures in the style of Mondrian.

116. There is an effective policy for art and the school has adapted nationally recognised schemes of work to ensure that the art curriculum shows continuity. There is a new subject co-ordinator who is keen and available to support colleagues. These factors are helping to raise achievement in the subject. Assessment procedures are yet to be developed, as are monitoring procedures. Currently, the art co-ordinator monitors informally through observation of pupils' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Levels of attainment in design and technology are broadly in line with those expected of pupils aged seven and nine. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection and can be traced to the introduction of a nationally recognised scheme of work, which has led to a more systematic, sequential development of skills. It has also meant an increase in teachers' confidence and this, aided by improved resources, has meant increased coverage of the curriculum and improved pupil performance. Following observations in the last inspection, resources, including a good selection of construction kits, have been improved in quality and are stored in a mobile trolley, allowing convenient access. The school did not have a functioning cooker at the time of the inspection, although one is on order, and this does limit work in food technology. Coverage of design and technology is boosted by design and technology weeks when teachers plan together, giving each other support as they arrange a series of activities to consolidate and extend pupils' skills learnt during the year.

118. Design and technology is well used to support learning in other areas like science, numeracy and literacy. Seven year olds engaged on developing a vehicle to transport Santa Claus, first conduct a traffic survey, using their numeracy skills to complete tally charts. They label parts of the vehicle, learning words like chassis. They develop their literacy and communication skills by discussing possible designs for their vehicles, and make prototype designs using construction kits. They develop numeracy skills by measuring the dimensions of axles before turning their designs into actual models, using a variety of materials. Because Santa travels at night, each vehicle needs a light; constructing the wiring of this allows pupils to consolidate and develop their learning of electric circuits, which is their current science topic. Nine year old pupils design and make shadow puppets. This supports their work on light in science. They develop their literacy skills by writing a play for their shadow puppets and perform this for younger pupils. They also support their studies of the local environment by designing, making and evaluating their own houses in a shoebox. Many of these are quite detailed responses to a complex problem and show good attention to layout and proportion. Younger pupils, in Year 1, as part of their topic on homes, study the structure of walls. Using construction kit materials and incorporating their work on mathematical shapes, they look at the design and making of homes. Pupils in Year 3 following the new scheme of work design and make photograph frames, showing individual styles of satisfactory quality.

119. Because of the timing of the inspection, it was not possible to see many lessons of design and technology, but the quality of teaching in those lessons observed was good. It was, because of one teacher's attendance on an in-service course, possible to see a lesson continued on another day by a different teacher. This was successfully done because the second teacher was fully aware of the previous work and continuity was good. Teachers help learning and ensure good pace and productivity by organising lessons well, making sure resources are available, that instructions are clear and by giving prior thought to the composition of groups of pupils. They ensure that no pupils are disadvantaged. Teachers are making good use of the new scheme of work to set challenging but achievable tasks for pupils. They allow time and opportunity for pupils to discuss their work as a group and to explain what they have done to the rest of the class. In this way they develop their speaking skills and think clearly about what they have done and why they have done it.

120. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good and this is important in a subject, which requires co-operative work in groups and sensible and considerate behaviour when using potentially dangerous equipment.

121. The leadership of design and technology is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator has improved resources and has been involved in the introduction of the new scheme of work, both measures that have brought about an improvement in standards in the subject, but she

is not in a position to be able to do the monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning that will secure this improvement. Assessment procedures are not yet established, so that future planning is not firmly based on prior progress.

GEOGRAPHY

122. Because of timetabling arrangements, lesson observation of geography was restricted and most of the evidence was drawn from sources such as documentation, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with teachers and the co-ordinator. From the evidence available, attainment in geography is satisfactory or better at both the ages of seven and nine. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving standards at least in line with expectations for their age.

123. In Key Stage 1, the main geographical focus is based on the nationally recognised scheme of work, "Where in the World is Barnaby Bear?" and involves pupils following the travels of a fictitious bear as he travels to places around the world. Through this medium, pupils find out about the locations of countries, weather patterns, settlements and different modes of travel. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have planned the units of work to ensure continuity between years and to ensure that all pupils have access to a curriculum, which develops their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.

124. Teaching observed in a Year 3/4 lesson was good. It was characterised by the teacher setting clear learning objectives, based on careful planning and well organised activities. The teacher's subject knowledge was good and this, together with good explanations and exposition, ensured that all pupils understood the purpose of the lesson and were able to make good progress. Very effective questioning skills were used by the teacher to develop understanding further and to assess learning. Pupils were applying their knowledge of plans, routes and directions to begin to learn about grids and grid references on maps. Previous work indicated that they were able to make diagrams and plan their routes to school, using compass directions. They had also compared places in Britain and were able to identify the difference between physical and human features on a landscape.

125. Pupils had also undertaken a local study in which they had been investigating the different buildings in the area and looking at how the local area had changed. Sources of evidence used by pupils included field work, photographs and books. A display, set up as a quiz, was planned to invite other pupils in the school to find out about the area by answering questions about the different buildings.

126. Because the quality of teaching is good, pupils clearly enjoy geography and were keen to discuss the different features of the local environment and many were able to evaluate their own learning. Their attitudes to the subject are very positive and they are making good progress. There is some variation in the recording of procedures and in some cases there is an over-reliance on published worksheets, which inhibits the development of recording skills.

127. The current policy and scheme of work ensure continuity and give teachers good guidance and support. However, there is insufficient regular monitoring and support by the subject co-ordinator, which would provide greater consistency of standards between year groups and lead to higher standards of achievement.

HISTORY

128. Standards in history are satisfactory by the ages of both seven and nine and have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Planning is generally good and uses an effective variety of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning and practical activities. This is an improvement on the time of the last inspection, when pupils were judged to have too little opportunity to ask questions and were unaware of different ways of interpreting the past. The purpose of learning is made clear to pupils and planning is beginning to ensure a steady progression of skills as pupils move through the school.

129. Pupils successfully develop a sense of chronology. They identify and date features in the past, evaluate evidence and begin to examine source material effectively. Key Stage 1 pupils study famous people and events from the past, such as the Great Fire of London, Remembrance Day and Florence Nightingale. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study the Ancient Greeks, the Vikings and the Tudors with interest and enthusiasm, as observed in displays and accounts in classrooms. Pupils write absorbed accounts of experience of characters in these historical periods. Throughout the school, pupils are able to absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period under study and people associated with it. This was shown in topic books written by Year 4 pupils, where pupils had used research techniques to examine Tudor times and compare them with their own experiences. There is evidence of independent research skills being promoted, using a range of sources.

130. The curriculum, lately drawn up under the new curriculum plans for the Year 2000, is good. It ensures a good and wide coverage of topics and learning goals and provides a stimulating variety of activities to support the teaching. Emphasis is firmly laid on helping pupils to think for themselves and on the use of first-hand and secondary source material to aid this process. Work is often planned to ensure that more able pupils can extend their skills and knowledge by undertaking personal research and that pupils with special educational needs are always involved and progress at a satisfactory rate.

131. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. Much evidence was gleaned from analysis of pupils' written work, discussion with the subject co-ordinator and discussion with pupils. It is evident that teachers explain the purpose of lessons well and that question and answer methods are used effectively, both to stretch pupils to their full potential and to help them to understand people and period with ease and interest. It was clear that teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and that pupils learn from their teachers. Cross-curricular skills are also well developed and planned, in geography and in art.

132. The subject is managed by a new co-ordinator who has little opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in the subject. Pupils' personal development is well extended, as they study the ways of life of other cultures and learn to understand how the past has affected the present. Visits to sites of historical interest help to enhance the curriculum. Resources in the form of historical artefacts are few, but are well used and well supplemented by visits to sites of historical interest and by visitors to the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Levels of attainment in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory

for pupils aged seven and nine. Individual pupils with their own computers show good knowledge, but the general level of achievement is not yet high enough. This was also the situation at the last inspection. The two main reasons for this are lack of teacher knowledge and confidence and a shortage of good quality machines and resources such as CD-ROMs. The co-ordinator, a teacher with some confidence and ability with computers, teaches only in the mornings and, although she does, on occasions, stay unpaid for some part of the afternoon and runs a lunchtime computer club, this does limit her opportunities to influence standards in the subject. Although the situation appears unchanged since the last inspection, the school is making some progress. Using funding available from the school's inclusion in an Education Action Zone, all the teaching staff are engaged in substantial training and this has meant an increase in staff confidence, but it is too soon for its impact on standards to be seen.

134. The school has some good quality machines, but not sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils fully. There are few CD-ROMs or programs to support research by pupils or to have an impact on learning in other areas of the curriculum, with the exception of art, which is well supported by information and communication technology. The school has Internet access, and has set up its own website, but has found access for pupils difficult and this is an area for further development. There are insufficient resources for pupils to be able successfully to cover the modelling or control aspects of the curriculum. Progress is often limited by unreliable equipment. Computer use was planned into a lesson on symmetry for younger pupils, but this did not materialise because the computer was not working. The school has adopted a nationally recognised scheme of work and, although this is not yet fully in operation, it is beginning to correct the lack of coverage of the National Curriculum noted at the time of the previous inspection.

135. Pupils in Year 2, the co-ordinator's class, are beginning to achieve satisfactorily. They are able to change running text to line text, using the caps lock and return keys, although they have yet to draft written work in literacy lessons. They are being introduced to saving work onto their own disks. Higher attaining pupils are able to use line and flood facilities to make designs for Christmas cards, working independently.

136. Pupils aged nine are able to talk about computers and can give some examples of how they influence our lives. They are able to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of e-mail compared with postal deliveries, although only about a quarter of them had ever sent an e-mail or knew how to send one. Pupils are not sure about how to save or retrieve material and only about a quarter, who have learnt to do it at home, know how to save on to disks. Pupils do not have the opportunity to draft or redraft written work. Pupils, particularly those who are members of the computer club, are confident with use of the scanner and are beginning to understand how to build a web page. They develop their skills well in performing tasks to support their work in art. They produce pictures in the style of Georges Seurat and draw frames, copy, paste and resize their own pictures of fish. They also produce repeating patterns to reproduce wrapping paper designs. Year 2 pupils produce eye-catching pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock and Piet Mondrian and children in the nursery, some of whom show impressive mouse control, use the 'Dazzle' program to produce colourful pictures. Pupils in the Year 4 computer club know how to use the school's digital camera, although they are not able to load or download it. Lack of sufficient, conveniently placed, good quality machines limits progress.

137. Teachers are aware of their lack of knowledge in the subject and adopt strategies to compensate for it. Older pupils demonstrate to the class how to access a web page and the teacher prompts learning by careful questioning of the pupils and recording the processes clearly for the benefit of the class. Pupils learn in direct relationship with the knowledge and expertise of their teachers. There is a universal determination to improve amongst the staff,

and, with the ongoing in-service training already beginning to increase confidence and knowledge, the school is placed to improve in its provision for Information and Communication Technology.

138. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and this helps their learning. Older pupils listen intently to their fellows as they explain their work on the website. They discuss matters thoughtfully and sensibly. Younger pupils work unsupervised at the computer. Pupils' enthusiastic attendance at the computer club is another indication of the good attitudes of pupils.

139. The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped and made difficult because the present co-ordinator works only in the mornings. There is little monitoring of teaching or pupils' learning and, at the moment, no formal arrangements to assess pupils' learning and this has a clear effect on pupils' levels of achievement. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has a clear understanding of what must be done to improve attainment in the subject and has both short and long term plans for the its development.

MUSIC

140. At the time of the previous inspection standards were in line with national expectations. The school has maintained this standard of attainment in music and it is now satisfactory at the ages of both seven and nine, with some good features, particularly in singing and performance, largely because of the improvement in the quality of teaching throughout the school.

141. Pupils are acquiring good listening skills through songs and listening activities, where they demonstrate an understanding of rhythm, pitch and pulse and many can read and use musical notation. Pupils have a good musical vocabulary and are able to describe sounds that their instruments make and recognise different groups of instruments by their main features. They enjoy their music making and respond enthusiastically, both when playing and when composing their own music in groups.

142. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, particularly when they join together in the hall for their twice termly music 'Circle Time' assembly. They learn to pitch their voices accurately and sing tunefully and with expression, accompanied or unaccompanied. They sing harmoniously and with great pleasure. Inspectors were impressed by the speed and accuracy with which pupils learned new songs, when introduced to them by the specialist teacher. They make great effort and are well supported by the teachers. Pupils listen carefully and attentively to music played on entry and exit in assembly, think about its character and mood and discuss the use of instruments or vocal sound knowledgeably. During the week of the inspection, they were able to examine music sung by other year groups with response, interest and perceptive comment.

143. Teaching in the subject is good overall. Teachers ensure that pupils are involved in the activities, that they enjoy music-making and that they learn secure skills. Management is very good, so that concentrated work is done in all lessons. Lessons are well planned and conducted at a brisk pace, which ensures good learning. Behaviour is good, with pupils remaining focused and wanting to achieve well and better their performance work. Most pupils are motivated by their teachers to learn and respond and are given the opportunity to develop musical talent, understanding and a good spirit of co-operation. Pupils with special educational needs learn particularly well and are able to participate fully in lessons, with

enthusiasm and motivation.

144. The school uses a nationally recognised scheme of work to support staff and to ensure that pupils have a suitable breadth of experience across the school. Teachers make effective use of this and the supporting resources.

145. There is a successful recorder club, as well as keyboard lessons held at lunchtimes for older pupils, and a popular choir. The school takes part in community activities such as singing at the local church and the two choirs sing at the Wansbeck Festival. Visits are also made by an oboe and cornet group and bands such as 'Black Friday'. Pupils add to their performance skills while taking part in school concerts and productions.

146. The new music co-ordinator is committed and enthusiastic and inspires a love of and an understanding of music in pupils, which gives them a good basis on which to develop their skills in the subject. She has done a great deal to develop pupils' skills in composing and appraising. The co-ordinator's expertise and the new nationally recognised curriculum put the school in a position to make good progress in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with those expected nationally of pupils aged seven and nine. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily but do particularly well in swimming. Here, standards of pupils aged nine at the school are well above those expected nationally.

148. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and changes made since then have put the school in a position to make improvements. The school has been using a commercial scheme of work and has improved this by retaining it for gymnastics, but using material from the new, nationally recognised, scheme of work to strengthen areas such as dance and games. Increased funding because of the school's inclusion in an Education Action Zone has meant that it is possible to offer lunch time physical education sessions for all pupils in Years 1 to 4 and this is benefiting the skills and, in some cases, the confidence of pupils. The 'Top Sport' material, and training in its use, has brought more variety to games activities and further increased the confidence of staff. A subtle change in the provision for swimming means that pupils still get three consecutive terms of swimming, but these are now in the summer term for Year 3 pupils and in the first two terms of the academic year for Year 4 pupils. This allows Year 4 pupils to have a wider range of sports activities. More efficient storage of equipment has increased the floor space in the hall available for physical activity and removed health and safety worries. The timetable for physical education is well organised, allowing each class to have several weekly sessions of varying lengths, to suit the age of the pupils. Younger pupils benefit from shorter, highly active sessions, which suit their levels of concentration and stamina.

149. All pupils in Year 4, benefiting from the excellent facilities, including a large separate learners' pool and good quality tuition in small groups from well qualified coaches, make very good progress in swimming. All pupils, including the small groups of non-swimmers, are confident in the water and the higher attaining pupils are strong swimmers, demonstrating good breathing and stroke technique in a variety of styles.

150. Year 3 pupils practise traditional dances like 'Circassian Circle'. Some Year 2 pupils show good quality movements in building up dance sequences. Year 1 pupils show very expressive movements in following taped instructions as they go on a 'Bear Hunt'. Younger

pupils show good enthusiasm and energy and many are able to hold good body positions in balancing exercises.

151. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are generally satisfactory and this helps their learning. Year 4 pupils were particularly quick and efficient in preparing for swimming, allowing them to maximise their time in the pool. Year 3 pupils were happy to take partners for dance routines and boys who had to partner boys because of an excess of numbers, were unconcerned by this. However, a significant minority of pupils in Years 2 and 3, nearly all boys, do not always respond sensibly in lessons and this affects the pace of lessons and the quality of movement. This is frustrating, because it is the only reason why standards in physical education are not above average in most aspects of the subject, where there is much good teaching.

152. Teachers are generally confident with physical education. Most take care to start their lessons with imaginative warm up sessions. Good examples were when Year 2 pupils were asked to move like various types of beans: runner, jumping, chilli, jelly and baked and Year 3 pupils were asked to move to music. They also use good warm down routines to help the body and also ensure that pupils leave the lesson in a controlled manner and are ready for the next. Teachers plan using a wide range of activities, so that pupils remain interested and challenged throughout lessons. Management of pupils is good, ensuring concentration and giving clear opportunity for pupils to improve the standard of their work. Teachers stress the effects of exercise on the body. They challenge pupils to seek quality in their movement, encouraging pupils who achieve it and use demonstration by these pupils to illustrate good quality to others. Occasionally teachers do this too often and the pace of lessons slows and the time for exercise and practice is reduced.

153. The school takes care to ensure opportunities for all. All pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities, school teams are composed of boys and girls and arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils do not miss lessons because of a lack of kit. The programme for physical education is enriched by visits from outside agencies. Sunderland Football Club representatives offer good quality tuition over a period of several weeks and Ashington Cricket Club give coaching and arrange small sided games.

154. Resources, which include an extensive field, mobile goals and a good supply of high quality small and large apparatus, support learning satisfactorily.