

INSPECTION REPORT

HAWTHORN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Elswick, Newcastle

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique reference number: 108460

Headteacher: Mr C Quigley

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 15-18th October 2001

Inspection number: 230323

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Close Elswick Newcastle -upon-Tyne
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Roycroft
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3639	A C Davies	Registered inspector	English Art and Design Design and Technology Foundation Stage of Learning	How high are standards? <i>The School's Results and Pupils' Achievements</i> How well are Pupils Taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19431	J Holmes	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' Attitudes, Values and Personal Development</i> How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16761	M Hemmings	Team inspector	Science Geography History Information and Communication Technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to their pupils?
11472	M Beale	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11-14
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14-16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16-18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18-19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20-23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25-29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30-47
PART E: THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES (ARC)	47-49

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hawthorn is a smaller than average primary school with 130 pupils (75 boys and 55 girls) on roll. It is situated in an area where unemployment is high and has been for many years. There is a special unit located in the school, which caters for up to 6 pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. A very large percentage of pupils (88 per cent) is entitled to school meals free of charge, which is well above the national average. Nearly all pupils are white but 8 pupils, most with Bangladeshi origins, have English as an additional language. There is very large percentage (59 per cent) of pupils at some stage of the special educational needs register with very many needing specialist support. The school has a very high turnover of pupils with up to a third in any class being new to the school in any year. When children start in the reception class they have very low personal and academic skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses. It is a fast improving school due, in no small measure, to the outstanding leadership. Standards are still low but pupils are now making the expected progress in key areas such as, literacy and numeracy. Teaching is good with no unsatisfactory teaching observed. However, this is not yet having a full impact on pupils' learning because of their poor listening and, sometimes, negative attitudes. The school is presently giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides the school with outstanding leadership and works dedicatedly at improving standards.
- The staff know the pupils well and are able to track their progress and set realistic future targets for them.
- There is good provision for information and communication technology and this is helping pupils make good progress in this area.
- All staff are very committed to the school and work effectively as a team to improve the provision for all pupils.
- The specialist skills of the staff in the unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (ARC) are helping these pupils make good progress.

What could be improved

- The pupils' listening skills are poor and this is having a negative impact on their learning.
- The pupils' poor writing and number skills are impeding the quality of work they produce in other subjects.
- The personal and academic skills of pupils currently in Year 4 are poor and they do not make the progress they should.
- Standards in science are very low.
- Use of the specialist skills employed by staff in the ARC to help all teachers deal with pupils in each class who have behavioural and emotional problems.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1998 and it is now making rapid progress after a period when the strong points indicated at the time of the previous inspection were not being maintained. The appointment of the new headteacher has been a significant turning

point and the outstanding leadership provided is helping the school deal with the many issues that have become apparent in the past few years.

The school is still dealing with the issue relating to writing identified at the time of the previous inspection. However, plans that have now been drawn up are helping to improve the situation. The issues relating to the provision for reception-aged children have been dealt with. There is now a far more appropriate range of activities being planned for these children. Teachers do have appropriate expectations of what their pupils can achieve and this is no longer an issue.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E*	D	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E*	E	C	
science	E*	E*	E*	E	

Standards are low and have been for many years. However, the vast majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and are achieving well. There has been significant improvement in English and mathematics over the past few years but this has been at the expense of other subjects. In science, for example, the school's results have been in the lowest 5 per cent nationally for the past four years. One of the main difficulties has been the extent to which pupils are able to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are fast improving and pupils are making good progress in this area. There is also beginning to be effective use of ICT in other subjects.

In literacy their poor speaking and listening skills handicap pupils. In numeracy pupils are slow in responding to oral and mental number work and this is holding back their ability to deal with mathematical problems. In science a combination of poor application of literacy and numeracy skills is inhibiting progress.

When children first start school they have very poor personal and academic skills. They make good progress during their first year but few are meeting the learning goals in key areas such as personal, social and emotional development and communication before they finish their reception year. Children's physical skills are better with more reaching the expected goals for this area by the time they finish in the reception class. In Years 1 and 2 pupils maintain the good progress with most becoming capable readers although their comprehension skills are not secure. They struggle more with their written work because many do not have the width of vocabulary to bring their writing to life. Many of the same problems exist for older pupils aged between 7 and 11, although Year 6 pupils make good progress in most areas. This is in contrast to the present Year 4 pupils who are making very slow progress despite the school's best efforts. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, make good progress on the whole although, in some cases, the negative attitudes of a few are preventing them

learning as well as they could. There is good progress made by more able pupils enabling a few each year to reach the higher levels in the national tests for 11-year-olds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Most are committed to working hard but a few are likely to cause minor disruption in each class at any time.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour around the school is satisfactory. However, too many pupils behave inappropriately in lessons and this is putting undue pressure on staff.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils have a 'buddy' system and 'school council'. These are two examples that are helping pupils take on added responsibility and helping them to become mature.
Attendance	The attendance is unsatisfactory being below the national average.

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 teaching is good and it is beginning to make a real impact on the pupils' learning. The pupils are not always receptive to the teaching and this is putting pressure on the amount of progress they are able to make. Consistent outstanding, or very good, teaching in the unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is helping those pupils settle to school routines and enabling them to make advances in their learning. The exceptional expertise of the staff in the unit is ensuring that pupils are managed sensitively and effectively.

In most classes the pupils are far more settled when they are working in groups rather than when they are being taught as a whole class. When they are sitting on the carpet, usually at the beginning of lessons, too many are easily distracted. In the reception class, the young children are not able to cope with anything beyond a very short period on the carpet before a few start to fiddle or be distracted. However, the good organisation and careful thought given to the activities set out, enable children to move their learning forwards when working in smaller groups. There is also very effective teaching in Year 6 where the teacher balances her friendly approach with a firmness that leaves pupils in no doubt as to what her expectations are. The clarity provided to pupils through the target setting, is also helping

pupils be fully aware of what they need to do next in order to improve. The present Year 4 class is a difficult one to manage and, despite the staff's best efforts, pupils are not learning as much as they should in each lesson because too much time is taken up with dealing with minor disruptions. In each class good attention is given to the individual needs of pupils because the staff have very secure systems in place to help them know about each pupil's level of attainment. This is particularly helpful to aiding pupils who have special educational needs.

The teaching of English is mostly good with staff giving particular attention to helping develop pupils' speaking skills. In mathematics the teaching is also good due to the amount of time devoted to mental and oral number work. However, there is still some way to go before speaking and number work is more secure.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has given additional attention to improving literacy and numeracy skills but this has tended to be at the expense of other subjects. There are now plans to link more of the literacy and numeracy skills to other subjects. The school takes full advantage of any local development to ensure that pupils are involved in their immediate community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The effective support provided for these pupils is helping them make good progress. The new co-ordinator is working at making the individual plans more specific and identifying the small steps needed to help these pupils improve.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good provision for these pupils and effective support, especially for those at early stages of English acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school has worked exceptionally hard at helping pupils understand what is right and wrong and to take responsibility for their actions. The full range of visits provided helps pupils improve their social skills. The school recognises that it needs to do more to help pupils understand about living in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is very effective in tracking the academic progress of the pupils. This helps the staff to know their pupils well. Great efforts are made to help pupils to recognise their responsibilities and to behave appropriately.

Parents have a great deal of faith in the school's ability to look after their children. They are provided with a great deal of information about how their children are getting on. Parents are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and	Outstanding. The headteacher has managed to create a strong

management by the headteacher and other key staff	sense of teamwork where every member of staff is a vital part of the school. His vision is extraordinary and he has identified actions to help him move the school on to where he wants it to be.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very knowledgeable and know their school well. They have been faced with difficult decisions and have not lost sight of where they want to take the school. Their impact on the school is most positive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is an outstanding feature of the school. The ability to analyse test results and set appropriate targets for the future is one of the main reasons why the school is getting better.
The strategic use of resources	The governors and senior staff use money very effectively to help to raise standards. The improvement to the school environment is one example of governors using money effectively to create every opportunity for all staff to help pupils make appropriate progress in their learning.

The school has found it difficult to recruit staff. This is a growing issue which now faces the governors. Staffing levels are good with most classes having less than 20 pupils. The creation of the new information and communication technology suite is a major boost to help raise standards in ICT. The number of computers in the school is now at a good level. The accommodation is helpful with plenty of room in each class to enable the teacher to organise working groups in different ways.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The improvements to the school since the new headteacher took up his post. • The changes that have occurred to the school environment in the recent past. • That the teachers are very caring and committed to their children. • That there is an expectation that children work hard. • What the school tries to offer their children beyond what is normally expected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements.

The parents are understandably pleased with the school. They recognise the many improvements that have occurred recently and know how hard the headteacher and his staff have worked to achieve these changes. They see the school as providing their children with a very special level of care and are grateful for this. Homework arrangements are now well organised. The school has recently developed a new policy and parents are now much happier with the arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Standards have been low for many years. However, there is an improving picture with the national test results for English and mathematics for the past two years showing significant improvement. When taking account of the level of attainment of pupils when they first start school, compared to their attainment at ages 7 and 11, standards are high enough because there is at least satisfactory progress being made. Pupils are achieving well and this is reflected in the gains that they make in their learning throughout the school. The one exception is Year 4 where many pupils are not achieving as well as they could.
- 2 The national test results for 11-year-olds have been exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science for some time until the last two years. In 1997 the school's results were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally for English and mathematics. They were also in the lowest 5 per cent nationally for English in 1999. However, much-improved results in 2000 meant that, for English, standards were well above average compared to similar schools. This good set of results were not been maintained in 2001 but there is, none-the-less, an improved picture overall. In mathematics, the 2000 test results are better but still remain well below the national average. However, they matched the results of similar schools. As with English, the 2001 test results are not as good but there is much improvement overall compared with earlier years. The school has just failed to reach its targets for English and mathematics for the past two years but it is on track to do so this year. The present Year 6 is matching the achievement of the 2000 cohort with a significant number likely to attain beyond the level expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- 3 One of the problems that the school has is that the added attention given to English and mathematics has resulted in work in other subjects not being as good. In science, for example, the national test results for 11-year-olds have been poor for some time, with little signs of much improvement evident. The test results have been in the lowest 5 per cent nationally for the past five years. There are signs of improvement but these are not significant.
- 4 The national test results for 7-year-olds have not been much better although there was a significant improvement in 2001. The test results in reading and writing have frequently been in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. Although the mathematics results have been slightly better they have, none-the-less, been well below average in many years. In 2000 and 2001 the mathematics results for 7-year-olds were much better and above those of similar schools. The teacher assessments for science reveal that pupils are finding it difficult to cope with the level of work expected because their English and mathematics is not good enough to help them record their work appropriately.
- 5 When pupils first start school the vast majority have poorly developed academic, personal and social skills. Many find it difficult to settle to any task for even a brief period and most are not able to sit and listen to the teacher for a prolonged period. They do, however, make good progress in the reception class but most are not able to meet the learning goals for important areas such as, personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics by

the time they finish in the reception class. This results in pupils having to overcome many disadvantages when they start the National Curriculum. The reception-aged pupils are better when it comes to physical development with many more being able to meet the learning goal identified for this area by the time they finish in the reception class. The good progress made by reception-aged pupils is in contrast to the unsatisfactory progress being made by this age group at the time of the previous inspection.

- 6 One of the main difficulties faced by almost all the pupils throughout the school is that their speaking and listening skills are poor. The vast majority of pupils do not have the necessary width of vocabulary to cope with the more demanding work as they move through the school. They are also not attentive listeners and many find it difficult to settle to tasks for prolonged periods. The poor speaking and listening skills handicap pupils in many other areas of the curriculum. For example, many find it difficult to respond as expected during oral and mental mathematics sessions. Young pupils are not able to sit and listen for prolonged periods. This is having a negative impact on the quality of their work in many subjects. The very youngest group are very poor at settling to any listening when they first start school. The staff have to put much effort into encouraging them to sit still and to give full attention. This is a major feature of the teaching during the first year.
- 7 Pupils' writing is also handicapped by their inability to use a full range of descriptive words. Throughout the school, pupils' stories and imaginative work are therefore at levels that are below those expected for their age. However, as they move through the school there is evidence of good progress being made, although this is not the case for the present Year 4 group. Year 6 pupils are beginning to use far more description in their written work because they have opportunities of exploring a range of more advanced texts and given time to discuss meaning. Pupils learn to read proficiently from early on, although their comprehension skills are not as advanced as they should be. Too many pupils do not have a full range of reading experiences and tend to rely only on the text studied at school for their reading experiences. There is very good progress made by Year 6 pupils in English due to the challenging and rigorous work they are engaged with. This has been the case for some time and has helped to improve the attainment of pupils by the time they sit the national tests for 11-year-olds.
- 8 The overall impact of pupils' impoverished use of literacy is that the quality of written work in other subjects is poor. This is adversely affecting the standards pupils are attaining in science, geography, history and religious education. However, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are fast improving and pupils are making good progress in this area. There is also beginning to be effective use of ICT in other subjects.
- 9 Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the ARC (behavioural and emotional unit), make good progress. The support for these pupils is good and the clarity about what needs to be done to help them make gains in their learning is well-understood by all staff. The quality of support provided for the pupils in the ARC is very good and the expertise of the staff in this unit needs to be shared with other staff in order to help them maximise the effectiveness of teaching and learning within each class. There have been, in the past, a very large number of pupils attaining at well below the expected standards expected for their age when they sit the tests for 7 and 11-year-olds respectively. The school is now working hard on

helping these pupils close the gap and although many are still not attaining the expected level, fewer are now well below the standard expected.

- 10 The few pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress. The ones who are at the very early stages of English acquisition are helped to improve their spoken English and to cope with the work of others in their class. The outside support provided is helping all staff to enable these pupils to improve their use of English in an effective way.
- 11 The more able pupils also make good progress. This is particularly evident amongst Year 6 pupils, many of whom are on course to attain the higher levels in English this year. Although no-one attained the higher levels last year, the challenging work provided is giving pupils every chance to do so.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 Pupils indicate that they enjoy coming to school and in the pre-inspection questionnaires their parents confirm this. Most pupils have a satisfactory attitude to learning although the negative attitude of a few pupils in some classes, particularly Year 4, is taking up too much of the teachers' time. This has an adverse effect on the learning of all pupils. Teachers are able to handle these pupils well but the more inexperienced teachers do need support in doing so. The staff of the ARC have very good levels of expertise in dealing with pupils with the potential to disrupt lessons or the routines in school. This is apparent when they are dealing with the pupils in the unit. However, they have, as yet, only had minimal influence on helping other staff deal with potentially difficult individuals. Most pupils will contribute to discussions and answer questions sensibly and appropriately. However, there are occasions when a few resort to shouting out instead of listening and raising their hands.
- 13 Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. This is because the school manages the behaviour of pupils effectively. There are good systems in place, which are clearly understood, to help all pupils know what is expected of them. However, not all pupils are always receptive to the guidance and need constant reminding of agreed procedures. The behaviour at lunchtime, both in the dining room and on the field, is again satisfactory and this is also the case in most lessons. The small group of pupils who meet at the breakfast club before the school starts behave very well and are helpful when it comes to tidying up. This period is seen as a pleasurable one by those who attend and they enjoy the routine associated with the provision.
- 14 Some pupils unfortunately display an unsatisfactory level of self-discipline within classes and despite the teachers' best efforts, this leads to disruptive behaviour, particularly in Year 4. This has a negative impact on learning. Most pupils settle quickly to tasks that they have to work on individually and their behaviour is good at these times. However, in a few cases, their behaviour is not good when they have to work as a whole class group. The younger pupils find it difficult to listen to their teachers for too long and their behaviour quickly deteriorates in these situations. Too often pupils do not consider the impact that their actions have on others. This is most evident in Year 4 when pupils who are inclined to be disruptive give little regard to the pupils who want to get on with their work. During the inspection there was no oppressive behaviour and pupils said that bullying was not an issue in the school. There have been eleven fixed-term exclusions in the past year involving three pupils.

- 15 Pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory level of trust and respect between staff and pupils. Pupils are generally polite, friendly and well mannered. The pupils in the later years are generally confident communicators although they do not use many descriptive words or phrases when speaking to others. They do, however, communicate easily with adults. Pupils' listening skills are unsatisfactory and pupils tend not to listen when others are speaking. They do not always listen to the teachers, which puts additional pressure on the teachers and wastes too much time when instructions have to be repeated. Some responsibility is given to pupils for their own learning especially in respect of homework assignments. Pupils work together satisfactorily when called to share resources.
- 16 Pupils in Year 6 serve as the 'Buddy Patrol' at playtime to look after younger pupils by ensuring that they are not bullied or left out. Pupils help around school with setting up for assembly and helping at lunchtime in the dining room. The school council, which has representatives from all the classes, meets each half term to suggest ways of improving the school. The pupils discuss the suggestions in their class and bring forward the ideas to the council. In the classes that discussion has taken place the contribution is good and suggestions about ways of improving the school and its environment are positive.
- 17 Attendance, whilst similar to local schools, is below national average and is unsatisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence is above the national average for the last reporting year. Whilst parents generally notify the school of absence, the school only accepts credible reasons for absence and, justifiably adheres to its attendance policy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 The teaching is good overall with no unsatisfactory teaching evident. When compared to the previous inspection, there has been improvement in the amount of satisfactory or better teaching seen. Twelve per cent of the teaching in this inspection was outstanding or very good, 46 per cent was good and the other 42 per cent satisfactory. During the previous inspection 15 per cent teaching was unsatisfactory. This was mainly, but not exclusively, in the reception. The teaching is now good for reception-aged children. The teaching of English and mathematics are good but not, as yet, having a full impact on the use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons..
- 19 The teaching is having a good impact on pupils' learning despite there being a number of pupils who do not make it easy for staff. Teachers have to work hard at overcoming the few pupils who have the potential to be disruptive. In Year 4 there are more pupils with the potential to be disruptive, making it even more difficult for the teacher to engage and stimulate the whole group. However, better information for older pupils about what they need to do in order to improve their learning is having a positive impact overall. This is particularly the case for Year 6 pupils.
- 20 In the foundation stage of learning, the reception-aged children are able to engage in a range of activities, which helps them to be improve their communication skills. The breakfast organisation in the hall best illustrates this. Children sit in small groups and enjoy a breakfast and can talk to their friends. The quality of adult

intervention at this time is very good and ensures that children listen to each other as well as respond to their friends. The system works well and not only ensures that everyone has had something to eat at the beginning of the day but that they learn to develop good manners at the table.

- 21 The children in the reception do not find it easy to sit for a prolonged period. They tend to fidget and reach for anything that is within their grasp. They have to be taught to listen and the staff are quick to recognise that they start with short periods of sitting together and then move on to tasks and activities so that everyone is fully engaged. The staff in the reception organise these tasks extremely well and successfully manage the arrangement so that they are able to give quality time to different groups. The resources used during these sessions effectively hold the children's attention and provide opportunities for them to learn. For example, two girls are captivated for some time as they build a wall using construction materials. The planning is of a good quality and shows that the staff have been able to implement the new requirements associated with the foundation stage of learning. They also use appropriate assessment systems for tracking the progress of these young children towards the learning goals.
- 22 In Years 1 and 2, pupils' learning is aided by the good attention given to assessing the ability of pupils and planning to help them improve. This is evident in lessons like physical education as well as literacy and numeracy. In a literacy lesson with Year 2 pupils the issues identified by the senior management team are used as a basis for the planning. In Year 1, in particular, the teacher is successful in giving attention to the basic skills and therefore helping pupils to make good progress in their literacy and numeracy. There is also good attention to managing pupils' behaviour, with the few pupils likely to cause disruption being well controlled. This results in very little time being lost to 'silly' outbursts or when pupils move from whole class situations to individual tasks at their desks. In most lessons the pupils in both Years 1 and 2 cope better when working at their desks than when they are sitting together on the carpet. This is because many have poor listening skills. Teachers are using effective methods to help pupils develop their speaking skills. In a Year 1 class, for example, pupils are able to take time to describe their environment in a geography lesson. This is despite many struggling to name the materials used in the building of the houses and shops they see around them at the beginning of the lesson. Their written work is not of a good standard but they do make good progress.
- 23 In Years 3 to 6 there is a contrast between the attitudes to learning in Years 5 and 6 and in Year 4. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are happy to deal with complicated scripts and enjoy the challenge that they bring. For example, in Year 6 they study the 'Witches' Poem' from MacBeth, and despite finding the text difficult, they persevere. Similarly, in Year 5 the whole class is working on writing their own script and come out with very interesting phrases, such as, 'the man stressfully puts his head in his hands and moans.' This level of enthusiasm and perseverance is in sharp contrast to Year 4 who are difficult to settle to any work or a prolonged period. The number of teachers they have had in the recent past has not made the situation any easier. These pupils are only just beginning to show that they are ready to learn and the teacher they had during the inspection week had to work hard at gaining their full attention. Too many pupils in this year group are making it difficult for themselves and others to learn.
- 24 Teaching for the 7 to 11 age range is at its best in Year 6 where the teacher's firm but friendly approach works to good effect to stimulate and motivate pupils. She

sets clear expectations both in terms of work produced and behaviour and does not allow pupils to fall below the standards set. There is particularly good attention being given to improving pupils' speaking skills with the teacher using texts that challenge their thinking and understanding. Time is taken to explain unfamiliar words and this works well in engaging the pupils' interest. The clarity provided to pupils, through the target setting, is also helping pupils be fully aware of what they need to do next in order to improve. Each pupil knows what he or she has to do in order to improve and to have frequent opportunities to discuss how they are getting on. By contrast too many pupils in Year 4 are making it difficult for teachers to work with them. Pupils tend not to settle well after any break, morning or afternoon. The teacher has to work hard to gain their full attention and this usually takes quite a few minutes. One or two pupils act as a catalyst for others by starting to cough and then giggle. Even when the teacher attempts to set the mood by using music, they pay little attention and prefer to carry on chatting. This has made it very difficult for the staff because very negative attitudes have already been established. Too many pupils give half-hearted attempts at completing their work and this results in their progress being slow and a great deal of under-achieving happening. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 show that they use ICT well when using a ICT program to present work to pupils in a history and geography lesson.

- 25 In the ARC, which is the unit catering for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is a great deal of very good and outstanding teaching evident. The most impressive feature is the way staff deal with individual pupils. Each of the pupils in the ARC is likely to 'fly off' at any moment and the staff are exceptionally sensitive to this. They remain calm and patient and quietly and expertly talk pupils round if they are feeling anti-social. In one instance during the inspection it took almost the whole of the morning to help one individual to be ready to join the rest of the group. This could only have been done with the careful and supportive way the situation was handled. The staff work hard at ensuring that pupils in the ARC make gains in their learning. For example, targets are set at the beginning of lessons and they are frequently re-visited to check that pupils are on course to meet them. An enormous amount of emphasis is given to pupils' speaking and listening. In a history lesson, for example, the pupils role-play and have to consider the views of others to be able to participate fully. Very good levels of teacher intervention help pupils to remain interested and to participate fully.
- 26 In each class good attention is given to the individual needs of pupils because the staff have very secure systems in place to help them know about each pupil's level of attainment. This is particularly helpful in aiding pupils who have special educational needs and the few who have English as an additional language. The headteacher has introduced systems to help all staff be fully aware of the rate of progress made by each pupil and has worked with them to develop targets that are challenging but achievable.

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

- 27 The curriculum provided for the children in the Foundation Stage of Learning has been greatly improved since the last inspection and is now good. There is a strong emphasis on promoting their personal, social and emotional development, which allows these young children to grow in confidence and settle into everyday routines. This is important, as many children enter the reception class with poor personal and

social skills and low self-esteem. The curriculum for pupils aged 5 to 11 is broad and balanced and meets all the statutory requirements, including the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There has been additional emphasis given to improving literacy and numeracy skills but this has been at the expense of other subjects, especially science in which standards have remained very low over the past few years. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been greatly improved since the last inspection by the creation of an ICT suite with better computers and software for pupils to use. As a result, they are now making much better progress and standards are improving. All pupils are able to attend swimming lessons at the local pool and, by the time that they are 11, most can swim a minimum of 25 metres. There is also an emphasis on developing the pupils' creativity and they are able to take part in exciting experiences in music and art. Pupils have visited art galleries, museums and musical productions in Newcastle, a variety of visitors, including professional musicians, have worked with them to develop a range of skills. The curriculum is also enriched by involvement in national and local initiatives which fund projects such as a breakfast club that is aimed at improving pupils' attendance and attainment, as well as developing their personal and social skills, and a homework club for improving key skills. There is a commitment to social inclusion on all levels, which is highlighted by the school playing host to an Additionally Resourced Centre (ARC) for the Local Education Authority. This is for pupils with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and associated learning difficulties and provides a setting for them to gradually integrate into mainstream classes.

- 28 There is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, with many opportunities for them to relate to others in a variety of situations, in and out of school. This provision is enhanced by a good range of visits, including residential stays for older pupils during which they learn social skills such as working together and caring for others. The pupils are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and learn about how medicines are drugs that can be helpful but are dangerous when misused. The school provides for sex education in a sensitive and supportive manner that emphasises the importance of warm and caring relationships. The pupils are able to take on a variety of responsibilities and this has a positive impact on their personal development. A good example of this is the way that pupils can be elected onto the school council, whose responsibilities include putting over the views as to how school life can be improved. All classes have weekly 'Circletime' activities in which they sit in a circle with their teacher to talk about any worries they might have and issues such as the importance of caring for others. The school is using these sessions as a way of improving the pupils' speaking and listening skills, as was seen to good effect when pupils in Year 1 were telling each other about how they looked after their pets.
- 29 The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. There have been improvements made in the planning procedures since the last inspection so that they take better account of the needs of pupils of different abilities. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics where better planning has resulted in improving standards. The national guidelines for each subject are effectively incorporated into planning and give teachers clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. There are good systems in place to support pupils with special educational needs, which enables most of them to make effective progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. However, the school recognises there could be better use of the specialist skills of

the staff in the ARC to help all teachers deal with pupils in each class who have behavioural and emotional problems.

- 30 The provision for extra curricular activities, including educational visits, is very good. There is a host of sporting opportunities for pupils to take part in and a partnership has recently been made with the Newcastle Eagles basketball team to deliver out of hours coaching. The school gives all pupils opportunity to take part in a wide variety of visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. There is good use made of nearby places of educational interest such as the Centre for Life, museums, art galleries and theatres. There are also residential visits for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 to such places as the National Trust estate at Cragside, in which they develop their personal and social skills. There have been visits from theatre groups, musicians and artists and the pupils are currently working with a nationally renowned sculptor to help develop their artistic skills.
- 31 The school's very good links with the community make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Links with a local bakery has resulted in funding for one of the breakfast clubs, while representatives from Tyne Tees Television support pupils in mathematics throughout the year. These, and other business links, enable them to gain an awareness of the world of work. The community police come in to give 'Stranger Danger' talks and the local fire brigade visits to give advice on fire safety. There are effective links with partner primary schools on a range of aspects, and also with the local Secondary School, that successfully prepare pupils in Year 6 for when they transfer there. There are also close links with Northumbria University, whose students come into school to work with pupils to extend their learning.
- 32 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the moral and social aspects being particular strengths.
- 33 The pupils' spiritual development is fostered through the whole-school assemblies and the curriculum. In assemblies there is effective use of music to heighten the mood of spirituality, and pupils have opportunity for quiet, personal reflection. The development of pupils' creative ability features highly in the curriculum, especially in art and music, and successfully reflects moods such as happiness or sadness. There is good use made of 'Circletime' activities to develop this aspect, as was seen when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were shown a 'special' candle that the teacher lit when times became hard, to act as a focus for quiet thought. They were encouraged to talk about their own hard times, such as when they became frustrated or lost their temper, and then pass the unlit candle around and say something nice about the person next to them.
- 34 Moral and social themes feature in many aspects of the curriculum. The pupils are encouraged to develop positive moral values through the behaviour code and the good examples set by teachers. The staff work hard to promote a sense of fairness among pupils and to encourage them to be tolerant of each other. There are a significant number of pupils in each class who have behavioural and emotional problems that cause difficulties for the teachers and adults who work with them. However, the school's approach to dealing with pupils who do not behave appropriately, or are not attentive in lessons, is enabling most of these to be integrated into class and to learn right from wrong. There is recognition of the need to develop better ways of dealing with the problems caused by a number of pupils in Year 4 who are not making appropriate progress because of their poor attitudes to

work. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together with respect and tolerance. They are provided with good social development opportunities, with the staff providing effective role models. Pupils are encouraged to listen to and respect the opinions of others, as was seen during the introduction and summarising parts of most lessons. Pupils are given opportunity to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, and this plays an important part in developing their social skills. There are, however, lost opportunities to help develop pupils' social skills at lunchtimes. The present arrangements do not encourage pupils to sit together and socialise. There are plans in hand to improve this situation. The very good range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils, including visits and residential stays, also effectively support the development of their personal and social skills.

- 35 The pupils' cultural education is enhanced through the curriculum, especially in art, music and history, as well as by a very good range of extra curricular activities, including visits and visitors. The pupils are given many opportunities to visit places of cultural interest in and around Newcastle. In religious education, there is emphasis placed on learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures. The last inspection indicated that the school was not effectively preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural society and there has been little improvement in this aspect of their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 36 The school makes very good provision for the welfare, health, safety and personal security of its pupils. An atmosphere of care and support pervades all activities. The school is a very caring community and all staff show a high commitment to pupils' welfare and development. Parents report that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school.
- 37 Pupils receive very good support and guidance and the high priority that is placed on pastoral care is one of the major strengths of the school. Teachers know the pupils well and they deal with their worries and concerns in a very caring manner. Pupils value the certificates awarded to them for good work and behaviour and particularly enjoy obtaining stamps for individual merit cards. The school has very good systems in place for recognising pupils who behave well or have made improvements in the way they respond to others.
- 38 The very clear arrangements for child protection are based on the procedures laid down locally. The headteacher is the designated person. He has attended appropriate training and has passed on his knowledge to other adults in the school. This helps ensure that a high level of alertness is maintained. Proper arrangements are in place for the personal security of all pupils.
- 39 The very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, upgraded since the last inspection, have resulted in an improvement in attendance over the past year. The school's high expectations in this regard and the active support of the education welfare officer demonstrate its determination to improve attendance as a way of raising standards. The school works closely with parents to encourage regular attendance. Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time and the headteacher regularly monitors late arrivals. A breakfast service is provided before

school and this encourages parents and pupils to arrive early. Certificates, awards and special prizes are allocated to those with the best attendance record.

- 40 Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are very good and their effectiveness can be seen in many parts of school life. Adults in the school offer incentives to improve behaviour and class behaviour codes are on display in each classroom. The school has developed an effective anti-bullying strategy and pupils are aware of the need to tell staff if either they, or anyone else, are being bullied. Pupils themselves, across the year groups, say there is little or no bullying in school. A very supportive 'buddy' system operates between younger and older pupils. Although poor behaviour still exists at times in one class, it is not for the want of effective procedures being in place to encourage good behaviour.
- 41 Systems in place to promote pupils' health and safety are very good. Senior staff and governors regularly inspect the premises and professional safety checks are also arranged. Pupils are well supervised at lunchtimes and staff involve pupils constructively in playground games and activities.
- 42 The pupils with special educational needs receive highly effective support from staff within the school and from outside agencies. There are good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development. Comprehensive records are kept as they move through the school. Their progress is monitored, recorded and future learning targets are planned and addressed.
- 43 There are excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development and these have the full support of parents. These have been implemented by the new headteacher and supported by all staff. The procedures include the formation of a democratically elected school council. Pupils approach this duty with a great sense of responsibility and maturity. There are very good links with local secondary schools and pupils attend experience days and take part in many sporting events at such venues.
- 44 Arrangements to monitor academic progress and support pupil progress are excellent with the headteacher making an outstanding contribution. Throughout the school the pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is monitored with precision. Results of national tests in English, mathematics and science are very thoroughly analysed by the headteacher, working alongside co-ordinators. This allows teachers to adjust their teaching plans to set realistic targets for pupils. The analysis informs tracking sheets on each pupil and greatly aids the formation of teaching groups and lesson planning. Assessment information is used very effectively to set targets for individuals and for different groups of pupils. This helps to raise expectations and pupils become very involved in learning what they need to do to improve.
- 45 The school has improved upon the high standard of provision highlighted in the previous inspection. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils feel happy, confident and secure.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 46 The school's partnership with parents and carers is good. Ten parents attended the parents meeting. Of the 135 questionnaires sent out, 54 were returned. The majority

of responses indicated that parents felt their children enjoyed school and that the school was helping their children to be mature. Parents felt comfortable about approaching the school and believed the school was well led and managed. The parents indicated they were unhappy with the consistency of homework arrangements. However, since the time they replied to the questionnaire, a policy has been shared with them. All parents who were asked indicated that they were happy with the new arrangements.

- 47 The inspection confirmed and agreed with parents that the pupils enjoy school. The school welcomes parents and the headteacher has improved the communications with them. He is available for informal meetings each morning and many parents use this to share any concerns they have. Good general information to parents is provided through a regular newsletter each half-term. Parents help organise and run the breakfast club on a regular basis. This is making a significant contribution to school life.
- 48 Parents have one meeting each term to discuss their child's progress with teachers. This is held during the day and is very well attended. Parents receive an appropriate written report each year which meets statutory requirements. This has been standardised by the use of a report-writing package but still includes individual and pertinent statements. The annual parents' meeting with governors was well attended with and the governors' annual report to parents is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements.
- 49 The school provides a homework bag, which contains the resources needed for the pupils to take work home and share it with parents. Pupils take home reading books and pupils have homework. Parents were consulted about homework and a more consistent approach is being applied across the school. There have been a number of initiatives to involve parents with their child's learning. Literacy, numeracy and computer courses have been run, these have been well received and supported.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 50 The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is the driving force behind the school and, in his relatively short time at the school, has made an outstanding contribution to improving attitudes. He had a difficult time at the school when he first arrived because not all staff, governors and parents universally welcomed his appointment. He has won each group over. Parents believe he is a very special person because he is so well respected by their children and he has time for everyone. This is reflected in the pre-inspection questionnaires where all parents believe that the school is well led. Governors are delighted with the impact he has made in such a short time and the staff are very committed to him and appreciate the strong and clear leadership he provides for them. The staff are therefore fully committed to the school and work exceptionally hard to bring about the improvements that the school needs. There is a strong sense of shared understanding amongst the staff and they work well as a team.
- 51 Although the school was well led at the time of the previous inspection, it had not been able to maintain this high quality. The new headteacher took over a school that was facing great difficulties because standards were falling, behaviour was poor and aspects of teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. The very strong position of the present leadership is due to the determination of the present headteacher to

work on long and short time strategies to improve the position that he found facing him. He is methodical in his management and has been able to take staff on with him because he has systematically involved everyone in the changes that he has put in place. He has had to take difficult decisions, such as terminating short-term contracts of individual teachers who were not coping well enough and whose expectations were not high enough. Despite this, he now has a harmonious and dedicated staff who are very willing to follow his lead and to pay a full part in turning the school round.

- 52 The school's aims and values are still strongly reflected in all aspects of its work. The introduction of a 'mission statement' that has measurable outcomes has helped the school to strengthen the way they ensure the school aims and values are being met. This is especially the case in helping all pupils to achieve their full potential. The system of checking on the progress pupils make and taking action to help them exemplifies this point. The school aims reflect the school's catchment in as much that the personal, social and emotional needs of all pupils are given high priority. This is reflected in the way the school's curriculum puts high priority on personal, social and health issues.
- 53 Since his arrival the headteacher has put in place a strong management structure that takes full account of individual staff's strengths. This has resulted in much improved management of individual subjects, as is evident in literacy and numeracy. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities for the subjects they manage. However, an emphasis on literacy and numeracy has resulted in subject leaders for foundation subjects having little time with the whole staff to talk about developments or to introduce initiatives. This is not to take anything away from the systems that are in place but recognises that the new headteacher has only been in post for a short time and, although he has appropriate plans for foundation subject leaders to have greater involvement with all staff, it is too early for this to have happened as yet. Subject leaders are being provided with appropriate training to strengthen their leadership skills and this is a sensible first step. The management of pupils who have special educational needs also benefits from the strong leadership shown. The new co-ordinator is working at making the individual educational plans much more specific and is using the headteacher's guidance when doing so. She has already successfully identified the small steps needed for these pupils to make improvement and, as a result, they are making good progress. The headteacher is very supported by an excellent clerical support assistant. She ensures that the day-to-day running of the school is smooth because of her organised manner and systems. She also provides the school with a very good first impression when it comes to parents and visitors.
- 54 One of the school's main strengths is the way in which test results and other information about pupils' performance is analysed. This is a particular strength of the new headteacher who has developed unique systems which help him to talk about the progress made, and anticipated, by any individual pupil and at any given time. The documentation that he has developed to support this analysis is very impressive. The analysis is then used to help individual teachers know exactly what it is they need to do in order to effect improvement. The systems take account of pupils' behaviour and there are targets being set for personal development and academic progress.
- 55 The procedures used to check on the quality of teaching give appropriate emphasis on the learning that is taking place in each lesson. These procedures are very

secure and provide staff with valuable feedback and targets for improvement. The staff feel well supported by the structure which link directly to the performance management structure that exists in the school. As a result the staff feel positive about their professional development and are keen to participate in training with a view to improving their own professional standing as well as providing the school with additional support.

- 56 The headteacher has been quick to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses. He has been able to set out a timescale for school improvement which takes account of the amount of time required for individual staff to play a full and effective role. The school improvement plan is therefore very well organised and makes it clear how the school should judge whether anticipated issues have been successfully handled. There is an excellent system in place to check on how effective the actions have been. During the inspection two issues not on the original improvement plan were brought to the headteacher's attention. These were related to the organisation at lunchtime and homework arrangements. In both cases the headteacher was able to produce early documented thoughts about improving both aspects of the school's work. Indeed, the issue related to homework is already at an advanced stage of consideration.
- 57 There are plans in place for sharing the specific skills of the staff who work within the ARC unit with the rest of the staff. The headteacher has recognised the expertise that these staff have and knows that they can provide other staff with valuable support. The unit has only been set up relatively recently and the governors, staff and headteacher consider that it was more important that the unit was established in the first place before looking at sharing good practice. However, there are plans in hand to do this. Whilst the headteacher recognises that most teachers have a good range of strategies for dealing with pupils who can be disruptive, there are a few pupils who need 'expert' handling. In this respect it is envisaged that sharing the good practice that occurs in the ARC will benefit all staff.
- 57 The governors are very effective in the way they carry out their role and responsibilities. The Chair of Governors is very knowledgeable and works very well with the headteacher. He recognises that the school had slipped from the very good position that was described at the time of the previous inspection. He is therefore determined that the governors now have a better overview of the school's performance.
- 58 The governors are provided with good quality information about the school's performance and are able to add to this knowledge because of their frequent visits. This puts them in a good position to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are fully aware of the systems that the headteacher has in place to check on the progress of individuals and appreciate that areas requiring attention have been recognised and are being worked on. The Chair of Governors, in particular, meets very regularly with the headteacher and during these sessions, they discuss all aspects relating to the school's performance. Governors are very involved in financial matters and have an active finance committee that has procedures in place to check on how effective their spending decisions have been.
- 59 The governors and senior staff have worked hard to ensure that money allocated to different parts of the budget is helping to raise standards. In this respect the allocation of money to refurbish internal areas of the accommodation has been successful. The hall floor has been re-laid and new furniture has been bought. This

has resulted in much improved morale amongst not just the pupils and staff, but also the parents, Many were quick to point out that they now felt proud of the school and what wonderful opportunities were being provided for their children. In some respect many parents felt that too frequently their children were always the ones that missed out, but they feel differently now. This has led to greater amount of support coming from parents and resulted in closer working relationships between school and home.

- 60 The school benefits from additional grants from its involvement with national and local initiatives. The 'New Deal for Communities' grant is well used to help the school work in partnership with other agencies to improve attendance and to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school is also involved in a successful business partnership which helps to fund the breakfast club. It is also about to start a pilot scheme for providing additional literacy support for Year 5 pupils. Each of these initiatives has been carefully planned so that the overall impact is on improving standards and provision. In this respect the school uses its budget well. There is a small and acceptable amount of money carried over to the next financial year and, although the school's expenditure per pupil is very high, it still provides satisfactory value for money.
- 61 The school is more than adequately staffed which results in pupils being taught in small groups; usually no more than 25. However, the school is finding it difficult to recruit staff and this limits its choice when it comes to replacing teachers. The contribution of support staff is important in helping the school to focus on raising standards. There is an good level of learning resources available to the staff and this has been enhanced by the recent creation of a computer suite. There is an adequate amount of books, both fiction and non-fiction, to enable the school to encourage pupils to read and enjoy literature. The accommodation has recently benefited from much improvement. The hall looks new and most of the classrooms have two levels enabling class teachers to consider different organisational methods.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62 As the school continues to attempt to raise standards it must maintain the momentum for improvement that it is generated in the past few terms. The governors, headteacher and staff need to consider the following main and less pressing issues as future actions are taken:

- **Improve the pupils' listening skills so that they are more receptive to learning. (Paragraphs 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 21, 22, 65, 72, 92, 95 and 98)**
- **Ensure that pupils' writing and number skills are improved and better use is made of these skills in other subjects. (Paragraphs 2, 4, 7, 8, 27, 53, 100, 105, 116 and 130)**
- **Give serious consideration to the unsettled group presently in Year 4 with a view to improving their attitude to learning and their standards of work. (Paragraphs 12, 14, 19, 23, 24, 34, 40, 101 and 104)**
- **Seek ways of improving the standards being attained in science throughout the school. (Paragraphs 3, and 117-122)**
- **Use the specialist skills employed by staff in the ARC to help all teachers deal with pupils in each class who have behavioural and emotional problems. (Paragraphs 25, 29 and 57)**

63 In addition to the main issues outlined above, the school also needs to consider the following less pressing issues as it seeks to improve still further:

- Continue to seek ways of improving attendance; (Paragraphs 17 and 39)
- Widen the provision for pupils' multi-cultural experiences; (Paragraph 35)
- Implement the plans for better lunchtime organisation. (Paragraphs 34 and 56)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	24	22	0	0	0
Percentage	2	10	46	42	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		130
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		114

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		77

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	6	11
	Girls	6	8	11
	Total	15	14	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (64)	52 (68)	81 (76)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	11	9
	Girls	8	11	7
	Total	16	22	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (68)	81 (76)	59 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	10	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (43)	75 (57)	75 (50)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (43)	75 (61)	75 (50)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	
White	108
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	11	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.4
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	453,644
Total expenditure	531,700
Expenditure per pupil	4,090
Balance brought forward from previous year	108,056
Balance carried forward to next year	30,000

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	nil
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	135
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20			
My child is making good progress in school.	72	24	2		2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	38	4		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	19	22	9	7
The teaching is good.	70	30			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	26	7		2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	11			
The school works closely with parents.	74	24	2		
The school is well led and managed.	78	22			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	26			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	24	2		9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 64 The foundation stage of learning has one reception class which has 19 children attending, full-time for a full year. Three of these children have English as an additional language. The school has no nursery but does liaise closely with the Nursery School that is situated next to it. They draw almost all their children from this Nursery School and the reception class makes weekly visits to use the facilities in the Nursery. A full-time teacher and nursery nurse manage the reception class and they have additional support from a specialist teacher to help the three children with English as an additional language. However, there has not been a full-time nursery nurse employed for this age group until this year.
- 65 The children start school with very low personal and academic skill levels. Many are identified with special educational needs and the staff are very aware of the need to identify these earlier rather than later. The children's communication skills are especially weak as is their personal, social and emotional skills. The school finds it difficult to use the Local Education Authority's baseline assessment to help them in focusing on progress because many children do not score anything on the assessments made when they first start.
- 66 The previous inspection report indicated that there were many weaknesses in the provision for children in the reception class. However, there is now a new teacher in place and the whole organisation has undergone a rethink with much more emphasis now being given to practical activities and less time devoted to children sitting at tables. This has been an effective move because the vast majority of children in this reception class are not ready for prolonged periods of sitting at tables. They find it difficult to settle to any listening for a short time and need practical, 'first-hand', experiences to stimulate them.
- 67 The adults working with these children are fully aware of the children's difficulties and have worked hard to address these issues in their planning. They work hard at involving parents directly in the children's learning experiences but, despite their best efforts, do not have many parents working in the classroom with them.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 68 This is a high priority for the adults in the reception class because children's skills are so very poor when they start in the reception. They do, however, make good progress in this area during their first year at school but only a few are meeting the learning goal anticipated by the time they finish their reception year.
- 69 One of the best features of this area of work is the arrangement for breakfast. All reception aged children start the day in a designated area where there are tables set for breakfast. Each child sits on a table with up to three others. A 'café' type atmosphere is created which sees children choosing what they want for breakfast and having a conversation with their friends. It is an excellent opportunity for the adults to re-inforce aspects related to good manners and give a little individual time to each child first thing in the morning. During these sessions there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere created and parents are quick to recognise its value. This

has resulted in few children arriving late for school and has even encouraged better attendance. The arrangements are funded through the 'New Deal' initiative.

- 70 Within lessons, many children find it difficult to share, or to work alongside others. The staff have to be very vigilant in recognising what is happening in each area even though they may be pre-dominantly engaged with another group. During one session, for example, a girl proudly goes to tell her teacher that she has written her own name on the chalkboard. However, when she is away another child quickly rubs out her name showing little understanding that he has hurt her feelings. One boy spends a long time just rolling on the floor and is not wishing to contribute to what is happening elsewhere. The adults have to deal with these situations on a lesson-by-lesson basis and show a great deal of patience and understanding whilst doing so.
- 71 There is much attention given to children's self-esteem and decision-making. A scheme known as DANNSI (Drugs Action in Newcastle Nursery Schools Initiative) has provided resources to help the adults work with these young children. Puppets are involved and the children are encouraged to talk about experiences they may have in a supportive and positive way. Amongst many other activities that help children's personal, social and emotional development are the self-registration system and awards of star for the day. Both of these are regular features in the children's daily life and they are aware of what part they play in the activities. A 'target-board' also exists with children attempting to get three arrows a day for a short period of time based mainly on their personal skills. The staff have thought very carefully about how many of the activities can be underpinned by promoting personal, social and emotional development. They are successful in helping children make good progress in this area and therefore the teaching is good for this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

- 72 This is a very difficult area for the children because the vast majority start school with very poor communication skills. Their listening is particularly poor as are their speaking skills. Many children find it very difficult to listen to an instruction and to carry out what is asked of them. During their time in the reception there is good progress made but very few are likely to meet the learning goal for this area of learning by the time they finish in the reception. The teaching is good for communication, language and literacy.
- 73 There are some children who start school with very little speech. They lack confidence and cannot contribute anything to group, or whole class, situations. Most children have a very limited range of vocabulary and find it difficult to be understood. It is in the area of speaking and listening that much of the staff's energies are directed. They set up daily 'circle times' when children learn to say things to others when they have the 'pebble' in their hands. This is an important time for promoting good speaking but, too frequently, children are not able to settle for a long enough period to get the most from it. The problems related to their listening are very evident at this time. The staff put much effort into trying to improve the listening skills of children but recognise that it is a long-term process. The setting up of listening areas, which includes a puppet theatre, is helpful but only partially successful in improving their listening.
- 74 Many informal arrangements are in place to help develop children's communication skills. For example, the breakfast setting provides opportunities for children to talk to

one another and to listen to each other. The play environment also helps in this respect. The children play together and the staff work hard, through their carefully timed intervention, to engage the children in conversation or to move on the learning by making suggestions. For those children who have English as an additional language, there is good provision and staff benefit from the suggestions made by the support teacher who visits weekly.

- 75 The children have daily opportunities to share in reading a big book together. However, too frequently this is difficult to manage because too many children cannot settle as they should. A range of storybooks is available to the children each day and some are beginning to get to know the stories by using the pictures as a stimulus. However, many others are not able to handle books correctly and, as a result, are not making the progress they should in this aspect of the area of learning. Similarly, many are still at very early stages of writing. Only four children could write their names at the time of the inspection. Many others were not able to form any letters and are still at the stage of early 'mark' making. The planning, on a long-term, indicates the aim is to get most children to read 45 words by the time they finish the reception class. There has already been considerable progress made by the children since they started the reception class. A programme of 'progression in phonics' is in place and the staff use appropriate resources to help children with developments in this area.

Mathematics

- 76 As with the two previous areas, children start school with poor skills in this area of learning. Very few have knowledge of number rhymes and few can count beyond ten when they start in the reception. They make good progress in this area. However, by the time they finish the reception, only a few children are reaching the learning goal anticipated this area.
- 77 During lessons there is much emphasis placed on mathematical language. The children have, for example, made tails of different sizes on mice and the more able children are able to cope with terms, such as, longest and shortest. There is also a focus on patterns with children printing shapes in pattern as part of their creative activities. Number rhymes play a predominant role in the teaching of mathematics. The children learn to add and take away one at a time as they chant the rhymes, 'five ducks in a pond' and 'ten in a bed'.
- 78 The teaching is good with good attention being given to daily counting and recognising basic shapes. There is a daily mental and oral session to support this. There is some attempt made to involve children in problem solving activities as is seen when the children engage in making the tails of the mice and in role play. There is a good attempt made to link mathematics to creative activities as mentioned in the printing of shape patterns. As with literacy, children have mathematics targets which are sent home to parents. This helps the parents work on everyday events at home and provides them with some guidance as to what children should be achieving.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 79 Many children come to school with limited experience of the world beyond the immediate area in which they live. They have little knowledge of the seaside, for example, despite living quite close to the sea. Very few are on course to meet the

learning goal expected for this area of learning. However, every effort is made to improve their knowledge and they do make good progress during the year.

- 80 The staff concentrate on the immediate environment and there are regular visits organised to the library. Even the visit to the neighbouring Nursery School is quite an event for many children. There is a planned visit to the seaside but they have not yet experienced this at the time of the inspection. A great deal of the work focuses on their senses. During one lesson, the children are encouraged to put their hands into a 'feely' box to help them work out what it contains. The children are also expected to talk about the items they see. However, during these sessions children's learning is hampered by their inability to settle sensibly for a short period.
- 81 In history, the adults have provided a full range of old and new toys. Children are encouraged to talk about the toys and to think about things that have been around for a long time. Many children find this difficult as they have little understanding of new and old and cannot easily focus on issues related to the time when their parents were young. The teaching is good despite the organisational difficulties that staff encounter when trying to talk to the whole group

Physical Development

- 82 There is a slightly better picture for this area of learning although many children have poorly developed fine motor skills. This inhibits their ability to cut, glue and stick items. In relation to their gross motor skills, many are much more confident and show this when running, climbing or riding wheeled vehicles. Boys are generally more confident when it comes to handling construction materials and build towers quite quickly.
- 83 The class has access to two periods in the hall each week and children also swim once a fortnight in the local swimming pool. During these times children begin to appreciate the space about them with many showing good skills in running and jumping. However, this is not the case for everyone. Many children are not able to cope with the space too well and they lack control of their bodies when carrying out simple movements. Many remain unaware of personal space and tend to run flaying their arms. During the times in the hall the teacher finds it difficult to keep control and only manages it after a lengthy period. The second half of such sessions is usually much calmer than the first half.
- 84 There is no direct access to the outdoor. The play facility is limited but the children do get to use the play facilities at the neighbouring Nursery School each week. There are plans in hand to improve the provision for outdoor play but, at present, the limited access is inhibiting the way the adults have to plan because of the supervision involved. Staff think carefully about the resources that are required to help to improve children's physical skills and they are soon to use a parachute to help them with various hall activities. Teaching is satisfactory for this area of learning.

Creative Development

- 85 The children have very poorly developed creative skills when they first start school. Very few have had opportunities to paint, model-make or use music in any way at home. Very few children are likely to meet the learning goal for this area by the time they finish their reception year.

- 86 The adults working with the children try to get a balance of teacher directed and free choice activities to help develop the children's skills. The children have daily opportunities to work with paint in some form. This is helping the children make good progress in their painting as is seen by looking at what they were producing at the beginning of term compared with what they are producing now. Children have regular access to musical instruments and they do experiment with different sounds but few are able to move beyond this point.
- 87 Children have regular opportunities to engage in role-play activities. However, their own inhibitions prevents them from moving into spontaneous play in the way expected. The adults have to rely on their own intervention skills to stimulate spontaneous play. Very few children show that they can move naturally into this area without the intervention.
- 88 The staff work hard at providing a range of appropriate activities to promote creative skills and there is good use made of resources to achieve this. The teaching is good for this are with the planning showing how opportunities are considered and taken to help children gain as much experience as is possible.

Teaching and Curriculum

- 89 The teaching is good with particular strengths noted in the way the adults have developed relationships with the children. They know each child well and this has helped to focus on the special educational needs that many children have. Good early intervention is aiding the process of meeting the individual needs of these children.
- 90 The staff have taken account of the new guidance for this age group and are starting to develop appropriate tracking systems to help staff to predict whether children are on-course to meet the learning goals for each area of learning. The planning is strong as is the use of assessments to aid future planning.
- 91 The limitations for access to outdoor play is inhibiting development in physical and creative development. However, this is something that the school is aware of and there are plans to improve this facility.

ENGLISH

- 92 Standards are low in English and have been for some time. However, there is improvement evident, as is noted by the national test results for 11-year-olds in 2000 and 2001. The school's national test results for 11-year-olds for English in 1999 were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. However, a significant improvement was noted in 2000. The level of improvement was not maintained in 2001 but the 2001 results are still much better than the 1999 results. One of the main problems facing the school is that the pupils' speaking and listening is so poor. This is not helping pupils to acquire skills in reading and writing at the rate expected. The present Year 6 is keeping up the momentum of improvement with the teacher being confident that they will exceed the target set by as much as 10 per cent.
- 93 The national tests for 11-year-olds show that up until 2000 very few pupils were attaining the higher levels and far too many pupils were at least three years behind the levels expected for their age. In 2000 there was significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining the higher level. Indeed the percentage attaining the higher level (level 5) matched the national average. There still remained a large number at very low levels. In 2001, the results were not as good because fewer attained the higher levels. The school did not meet the target set for the 2001 year but this is a result of significant changes, which saw five new pupils with learning difficulties joining the group since the targets had been set. Girls are performing better than boys by more than that seen nationally. However, the overall position is that boys are closing the gap.
- 94 The national tests for reading and writing for 7-year-olds show that up until 2001 results were very low. Indeed, the school's results were in the lowest 5 per cent for both reading and writing for 1999 and 2000. In 2001 however, there was a marked improvement with far more pupils attaining the higher level (level 3) and far fewer being well below the level expected for their age in reading. The position is mirrored for writing. The present Year 2 are on line to continue this improvement and the early indications are that Year 1 pupils are showing considerable improvement compared with pupils of a similar age about 2 or 3 years ago. The overall picture for pupils age 5 to 7 is therefore one of good progress with pupils now achieving well. There is every reason to suggest, therefore, that the school's action plan for improving test results is beginning to work.
- 95 When pupils start Year 1 they have poor speaking and listening skills. This was not a major weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Their listening skills are still the main problem. There is every indication that there is good improvement in speaking but not as much in listening. As teachers work with the children in the 5 to 7 year range, it is apparent that they give much emphasis to widening the pupils' vocabulary. In this respect the use of circle time is helpful because it provides the staff with opportunities of introducing new words and to listen to how individuals are improving. Pupils with special educational needs get a great deal of valued support from different adults and this results in them being able to work in small groups and having many opportunities to provide suggestions and to discuss issues. This is helping these young pupils gain in confidence. However, in relation to listening, the picture is not as bright. Too many pupils in the whole class situation are too fond of calling out and not paying attention to what others are saying. The teachers are using appropriate strategies to address this issue but they are not having the impact they should.

- 96 As pupils move into Year 3 and beyond, many of the same issues still remain. For example, pupils still find it difficult to settle when working as a whole group. This is most evident after a break, particularly the lunchtime break. However, there are examples of pupils' contributions showing good evidence of improvement. In Year 5, for example, the pupils were prepared to provide a full range of suggestions when working at developing a piece of script writing together. They show good levels of maturity and humour when dealing with the task. One pupil suggests that the next comment made by one of the characters in their play should be, 'I know its not your day – it's everyone's.' The same quality of work is evident in Year 6 where pupils are quick to offer views about the difficult text that they are working with. In this class, as with others, however, the pupils make mistakes in their Standard English often using the word 'what' for 'that' and frequently punctuating their sentences with 'miss' or 'like'. The big problem for this age group is the inconsistency in progress. The present Year 4 is a difficult class and their listening is particularly poor. Too many show a lack of interest in what they do and this is directly inhibiting the opportunities that are provided for them to improve their speaking and listening skills.
- 97 The vast majority of pupils make good progress in their reading. Throughout the school pupils are able to use a range of skills to break down unknown words but they are not strong in their comprehension skills. The school now has successful procedures to help young pupils in the 5 to 7 age range to become proficient readers. Most are able to tackle more complex texts as they reach the end of Year 2. This is confirmed by the improvement in test results for 7-year-olds. Too many pupils have little reading experience outside the school. The school has tried to introduce pupils to the local library by arranging visits for them but many are not able to go on a regular basis especially if they need an adult to accompany them. The pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school although not enough opportunities exists for them to read non-fiction for the purpose of research. The more able Year 6 pupils are fluent and confident readers and successfully extract information from text. This is seen at its best when pupils were working on the 'Witch's poem' from MacBeth. They are beginning to use more deduction and inference in their reading but many still lack expression. Average ability readers in Year 6 are also confident but are not as good at presenting information from text in different ways. Their reading is too narrow and this tends to stifle their ability to move on to more difficult texts. There is in each age group a group of pupils who are reluctant readers. However, most pupils can talk about the books they have read and give time to describing the different characters they have met.
- 98 Pupils make good progress in their writing despite being handicapped by the width of their vocabulary. At the time of the previous inspection the progress was only satisfactory. They start Year 1 from a very low level and during Years 1 and 2 make significant improvement in the way they write for a range of purposes and in their spelling and handwriting. More able Year 2 pupils can communicate meaning with very little assistance from an adult; for example, 'On the way I saw a clown. He was very tall. He had a red nose. He had a painted face.' However, they are not yet able to link the sentences and are not yet consistent in their use of capital letters or other punctuation. The average ability pupils are only just beginning to communicate meaning without adult help. They tend to write in short phrases but can get across what they want to say. Low ability pupils are still requiring much support. Most write phrases that can be read because their words follow phonetically accurate systems. They rarely use capital letters or full stops.

- 99 Older pupils show much more inconsistency in the development of their writing. This is mainly because Year 4 pupils have very poor presentation skills. Year 4's work is often of an unsatisfactory quality with handwriting and presentation being particularly poor. There is little difference between the pupils of different ability. There is little creativity evident and they are finding it difficult to put thoughts down in a systematic way. By contrast, the Year 6 pupils are well ahead. The more able Year 6 pupils can, for example, use description well to enliven their writing. Examples, such as, 'I answered briefly,' or, words like 'greeted' are common-place. They still tend not to use capital letters for proper nouns and are only just beginning to use speech marks correctly. Spelling is still an issue, with most average and lower ability pupils with words like, 'dipped' being spelt 'dipt'. Punctuation is also inconsistent but they do try to write descriptively and with meaning.
- 100 One of the main problems associated with standards in English is that improved literacy skills are not having an impact in other subjects. This is particularly the case in science, geography, history and religious education. The lack of description or appropriate application of literacy skills is therefore holding back progress in these other subjects. In contrast to this there is evidence of good use of information and communication technology to help with writing. Pupils are very familiar with using word processing skills and are now experimenting much more with presentation. They use their skills to help in editing and drafting their work and are familiar enough with the procedures to feel confident about doing so.
- 101 Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall but there is a marked difference between classes. The attitudes are at their best in Years 1, 5 and 6 but poor in Year 4. Most pupils enjoy reading and can recall favourite chapters from the books they have read. There is also a sense of pride in presentation in most cases. This is seen at its best in Year 6 where pupils are keen to show off their final presentations to visitors. In Year 5 pupils are able to work as a whole group to develop a script. They are mature enough to decide whose suggestion is best and do not just support their friends. In Year 4, however, too many pupils are prepared to shout out or to start behaving in such a way as to set others around them off. This, too frequently, results in a lack of attention from many pupils in the group.
- 102 The teaching is good throughout the school, which an improved picture compared with the previous inspection. One of the strongest features of the teaching is the way in which each teacher sets targets for individuals that are pertinent, relevant and challenging. The use of these targets is helping pupils to be aware of what they need to do next in order to improve. Throughout the school, the teachers' marking is focused on the pupils' targets and therefore supports their learning.
- 103 The teachers set high expectations, as is seen in Year 1 when much emphasis is placed on key words and presentation skills that are challenging. There is also effective use of questioning in this class with the teacher showing that she has good knowledge of each individual. As a result she directs questions to individuals accordingly. In Year 5 the teacher works with the whole class to develop a playscript. There is much enthusiasm shown and the pupils know that their contributions are valued. The teacher moves the story on by providing pupils with opportunities to write the next comment made by one of the main characters. In this way she keeps interest levels high as pupils recognise that their idea might be the one chosen for the play that is being created. In Year 6, the pupils handle a very difficult text well because the teacher has helped them to gain enough understanding. During the initial discussion pupils show that they understand

terminology such as imperative verbs. Pupils are able to explain time connectives such as 'secondly' or 'before'. Again, the teacher uses questioning to engage all pupils. There is very quickly a purposeful working environment established because the teacher's firm, but friendly, approach helps pupils to know what is expected of them.

- 104 There are pupils in each class who are difficult to manage. In most cases the teachers are able to handle them well and their learning is not hindered. Very little time is lost to 'silly' outbursts although they do occur from time to time. Teachers have a good range of strategies for dealing with pupils who tend to call out or are prone to distract others. However, in Year 4 the teacher, who has only had the group for a short time, is finding it more difficult despite her best efforts because there are many pupils in the group who have antisocial attitudes. The management of this group needs urgent attention.
- 105 The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy successfully but there remains work to be done on using pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. This is something that has been recognised and the school is drawing up plans to deal with the issue. All staff have received appropriate training and are appropriately using the national guidelines to plan. Assessment arrangements are now strong. This is because the headteacher has made all staff aware of the progress being made by individuals and what they should expect. There is therefore good attention being given to raising standards. The circletime arrangements provide opportunities for pupils to speak about aspects relating to moral, social and cultural issues. This is seen in Year 1 when the focus is on looking after pets properly and in Year 4 when the focus is on dealing with something that is not pleasant.
- 106 There is good leadership for the subject. The subject leader is involved in analysing data and in passing on relevant information to other staff about progress, achievement and attainment. She has a very comprehensive plan for future action, which includes greater emphasis on speaking and listening. She is able to look at the work of all pupils through the school and to provide feedback to staff. She also has had the opportunity to observe her colleagues at work and works closely with the headteacher to provide constructive feedback. She has been involved in helping to create the school's link with the 'Better Reading Partnership' which is about to start in the school. Five adults who are to work in the school have undergone training and the subject leader is managing the process.

MATHEMATICS

- 107 Although the pupils aged 5 to 7 make good progress, their attainment is well below the national average according to the national test results for 7-year-olds. Pupils aged 7 to 11 make good progress overall, including some very good progress in Year 6, but attainment is below average at the age of 11. Pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of support and this enables them to make good progress towards their targets. Very good use is made of assessment information to set improvement targets for all pupils.
- 108 The school places appropriate emphasis on preparation for the Year 6 national tests and this had particularly good effect in 2000 when a more able group of pupils was being tested. During this year the results were average when compared to schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Results fell slightly in 2001 and the school

did not reach its target figure. However, this is due to some more able pupils leaving the school after the target was set. Major contributory factors limiting the schools ability to raise standards still further are the low percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) and a large number of pupils being well below the level expected for their age. Girls reach higher standards than boys. The school recognises these factors and is using clear target setting procedures to address them.

- 109 The curriculum is broad, although the use of mathematics in other subjects could be developed further. This is particularly so in information technology where the regular use of computers to support the pupils' mathematical development is inconsistent across the classes, although some good examples are evident.
- 110 Nearly all the pupils enter Year 1 with attainment well below average. Building on the good foundations laid in the reception class, they make generally good progress in Years 1 and 2. When they start Year 1 a majority of pupils have difficulty counting to 10 or in finding one less than a small number. However, some pupils are able to add numbers to 15 by combining two groups of objects. In Year 2 many pupils can recognise numbers to 20 and recall at least some number facts to 10. Some are able to double numbers from 1 to 9 and are using add and subtract symbols appropriately in their calculations. Contributory factors to the good progress include the good quality of teaching they receive, very good planning and assessment procedures and an approach that makes learning very active. Pupils develop their mathematical vocabulary by playing games involving number and shape.
- 111 The pupils aged 7 to 11 continue to make good progress with faster progress taking place in Year 6. By the age of 11 many pupils can add decimals to two places, multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100 and have a reasonable recall of multiplication facts. About a quarter of the pupils have a good working knowledge of fractions and some can calculate the percentage of various quantities.
- 112 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. A common strength is the way in which teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to talk about and explain how they have arrived at their answers. This is boosting pupils' confidence and sharpening their mathematical reasoning. For example, by encouraging Year 5 pupils to explain how they knew the answers when doubling and halving numbers, the teacher helped them to realise how they might decide the most efficient way to gain a quick and accurate result. All teachers use questions effectively to assess and extend the pupils' understanding and to help them remember what they have learnt in previous lessons. They make very effective use of practical items such as number lines and hundred squares to focus the pupils' attention on number relationships. The school has very good mathematical resources.
- 113 Very good and excellent teaching was observed in the class for pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties where the teacher ensured learning was carried out at a brisk pace and used constant challenge and probing questions to ensure good progress. She was able to support confidently each pupil as they advanced to both academic and social targets.
- 114 In the best lessons, teachers establish the pupils' current understanding and use astute questioning to build on this. The effective use of sets of small whiteboards in many classes enables pupils to be actively involved in the introduction to a lesson and promotes some rapid learning. In one Year 2 lesson, the enthusiastic approach

of the teacher, combined with challenging activities, allowed pupils to explore the properties of a large number of plane shapes in an interested and excited way. A demanding plenary session at the end of the lesson was well used to reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge as they tried to draw octagons. In Year 5, the National Numeracy Strategy is appropriately applied to include a brisk quick-fire mental arithmetic session, followed by group work at a challenging level. Pupils interpret data from a number of sources such as graphs and 'Carroll' or 'Venn' diagrams and conclude the lesson with a class session to sort out any problems and consolidate and assess the progress made.

- 115 Weaknesses in the teaching in some lessons result in the pace of lessons being too slow at times. Sometimes the pace of the mental arithmetic start to lessons is much too slow and, in some classes, too few pupils are drawn into answering questions. In these classes this leads to some of the pupils losing interest and becoming restless. Occasionally this leads to a level of disruption that severely limits progress. Books are marked conscientiously but the comments on pupils' workbooks do not frequently help pupils to improve. Marking in Year 6 is good.
- 116 The mathematics subject leader is involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning and in the scrutiny of planning. This has helped to produce a useful action plan to guide the development of the subject but it does not yet include the identification of opportunities to develop the use of mathematics across other subjects. The regular testing and assessment of pupils is successfully used to monitor their progress through the school and to set realistic targets for them to achieve on a year-by-year basis.

SCIENCE

- 117 Over the past four years, the standards achieved in the National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds have been in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. Over the same period, the teacher assessment results for 7-year-olds indicate that attainment in science has been well below the national average. In comparison with schools with pupils from a similar background, the school's performance has also been poor. The standards of work seen in the school are poor. One of the main difficulties is the very limited extent to which pupils are able to use their literacy and numeracy skills to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject. The girls are performing much better than boys and the school is seeking ways of addressing this issue.
- 118 The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with teachers being well prepared for lessons and showing secure subject knowledge that allows them to ask relevant questions to develop pupils' thinking. The quality of planning is good and the learning objectives are shared with pupils, so that they are clear about what they are to learn. In Years 1 and 2 the teachers make sure that pupils have opportunity to be involved in practical activities in which they learn how to handle simple scientific equipment carefully and safely, and to take part in discussions about scientific topics. This was evident in a lesson for Year 2 pupils on talking about how medicines are drugs and can be dangerous. However, most pupils have only a limited vocabulary and this hinders their ability to develop the skills of being able to communicate their ideas and findings in an appropriate manner. There is not enough emphasis given to teaching the basic skills of carrying out an investigation, or to the different methods in which pupils can record what they have discovered. The teachers do not give

pupils sufficient opportunities to work collaboratively, in groups or in pairs, to investigate and find out for themselves. As a result, by the time that they are 7, they do not show appropriate skills in carrying out a simple fair test or in recording their findings in a variety of ways.

- 119 Pupils aged 7 to 11 are given the opportunity to learn how to handle a wider variety of scientific equipment and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding. This was seen in the work of pupils in Year 5 when testing different liquids to find out which would evaporate first. As for younger children, there are opportunities to be involved in practical work but the activities are not sufficiently structured to effectively develop their investigative skills and, as a result, they find difficulty in interpreting information and identifying trends. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities that develop the investigative skills of making evaluations and conclusions based on prior scientific knowledge. Consequently, by the time that they are 11, most pupils do not show an appropriate ability to identify the need for a fair test or to be able to plan and carry one out independently of the teacher, as was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 on finding out how materials change when they are mixed. There is a growing use of pupils' skills of using information technology to enhance their work in science and this is an area that the school is keen to develop.
- 120 The attitudes of pupils to their learning are satisfactory overall but there is a significant number of pupils with behavioural and emotional problems who show negative attitudes. This is especially the case in the Year 4 class which is difficult to manage and, despite the staff's best efforts, pupils are not learning as much as they should because too much time is taken up dealing with minor disruptions. The pupils in most classes are far more settled when working practically in groups, rather than when being taught as a whole class. Within practical activities the pupils are appropriately behaved, show enjoyment and interest and are keen to take an active role.
- 121 The curriculum is satisfactory, being broad but in need of better balance so that there are more opportunities for pupils to be involved in appropriately structured investigative activities. There is satisfactory leadership, with the co-ordinator having a clear view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses which has enabled her to draw up an action plan to improve provision. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, as a result of the support that they are given. The pupils are very limited in their ability to use their literacy and numeracy skills to enhance their work. The planning procedures incorporate the national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught.
- 122 The assessment procedures have been improved since the last inspection but do not yet effectively track the progress that pupils make and, consequently, there is not enough reliable information to enable the school to set manageable targets for improvement for individual pupils. More resources have recently been purchased but are still in need of improvement to enable an appropriate range of practical activities to be carried out. There is satisfactory use made of the school grounds to find out about life processes and living things. Good use is made of educational visits to extend learning, as is evident in pupils' work on micro-organisms during a visit to the Centre for Life.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 123 It was only possible to observe one lesson for each of these subjects during the inspection. The amount of work available to look at this relatively early stage of the academic year was limited and it is therefore not possible to reach an overall judgement about standards, teaching and learning.
- 124 At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in both subjects matched that expected for their age and progress was satisfactory. Teaching was good for design and technology but satisfactory for art. It is difficult to make an overall assessment of how things have moved on since that time but there is now far more attention being given to the visual arts in the school and to involving pupils working with resident artists.
- 125 In art and design Year 6 pupils have been involved in the work of the artist commissioned to create a sculpture of Cardinal Hume, which is to be placed in the centre of Newcastle. He visited the class to talk about his work and as a result the pupils have made plasticine busts. They used these as a basis for creating the same work in clay at a later stage. A small group from the class will travel to London to see the artist's final process in his studio. This experience is helping to broaden pupils' experience and giving them an opportunity to appreciate how much work is involved in a project such as creating a sculpture (which is likely to be a tourist attraction in the future).
- 126 The only art lesson that was observed was with the Year 4 class. They had already taken photographs around the school and spent time talking about their photographs before moving outside again to create sketches of the same scenes. The quality of the sketches varied greatly but some pupils showed that they could incorporate detail in their pencil work. Overall, the standard of work created as part of this lesson matched that expected for their age. There was not enough completed art work on view to make judgements about other work.
- 127 There is an enthusiastic subject leader for art who has developed a detailed action plan for the subject. There is a priority to be given to widen pupils' creative art experiences. In order to do this many visits to local places of interest are planned. This is to help pupils see for themselves the impact the work of famous artists has on our society. There is work planned on helping pupils acquire basic art skills in a much more progressive way than has been the case in the recent past. There is good attention to pupils' cultural development through art because of the work planned to involve artists from different cultures and backgrounds with the activities undertaken by pupils in the classroom.
- 128 There is very little evidence of work available for design and technology. In the one lesson observed with Year 2, pupils did not have the necessary skills expected for their age. The pupils' very low skill level when they started in the reception class is mainly responsible for this. The Year 2 class did not have the cutting, gluing or joining skills necessary to make their models work efficiently. There is little evidence of pupils using their numeracy skills to measure as part of the limited amount of work seen.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 129 By the time that they are 11, most pupils attain standards below those expected for their age in history, mainly because of difficulties caused by their low-level literacy skills. There was not enough evidence on which to base a secure judgement on the standards attained, or the quality of teaching in geography.
- 130 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in history, with most teachers being able to organise and manage their classes so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress. There is satisfactory use of time and resources and effective use of questioning to find out what pupils know and understand. Secure subject knowledge enables teachers to clearly explain to pupils what they are to learn. Younger pupils are helped to develop their understanding of time by listening to stories about the past and of famous people. Previous learning is consolidated by the use of books, photographs and historical artefacts. They learn how to recognise similarities and differences through the years, as was seen when pupils in a Year 2 lesson compared homes in the past and now. As they pass through the school, they learn how to use evidence to find out about the past and how things change over a period of time. There is appropriate emphasis placed on the significance of historical artefacts and the need to study them in order to find out about the past. In a very good lesson in the ARC, there was effective use of role-play to develop pupils' understanding of how British society was affected by the Roman Invasion. The use of dressing up clothes added much to the lesson, and the questioning and involvement of staff had a positive impact on the contribution of pupils. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6 the teacher made an effective ICT visual presentation to develop their understanding of working conditions in Victorian Times. Pupils are taught that sources of information are not always reliable and how to appreciate the difference between fact and opinion. The poor literacy skills of pupils hinder their progress and they lack an appropriate subject related vocabulary to communicate their ideas in an effective manner. They can use the Internet to research information but lack the ability to evaluate what they have found in order to reject what is not needed.
- 131 The attitudes to learning of most pupils are satisfactory but a significant number have poor listening skills and short concentration spans that restrict the progress that they make. Most pupils are keen to ask and answer questions and are willing to listen to and appreciate the views of others.
- 132 There is satisfactory curricular provision in both subjects, so that all pupils are able to enjoy to a range of relevant and interesting experiences. A notable feature of this is the way the school uses visits and visitors to provide further significant learning opportunities. In history they have visited Beamish to learn about life in Victorian Britain, while in geography there is good use of the local environment to develop their knowledge and understanding in the subject. There is a residential stay for pupils in Years 5 and 6 at Ainmouth, a small village on the north east coast, in which they are encouraged to use primary historical sources of information to increase their understanding of facts learned in school. There is effective leadership of both subjects and satisfactory planning arrangements, based on national guidelines. Resource provision is adequate and the accommodation good for both subjects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 133 The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been greatly improved since the last inspection, by the recent creation of an ICT suite with better

computers and software for pupils to use. Though standards are below those expected by age 11, they are fast improving and pupils of all abilities are now making good progress through the school. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used much more effectively in other subjects although this is not yet the case for mathematics.

- 134 The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with teachers planning their lessons well and showing secure subject knowledge that enables them to ask relevant questions and to support pupils when they face difficulties. They ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn and practise the basic skills of the subject. While they are in Year 1, they are taught that computers can be used to make words and pictures and to assemble text. This was evident in a lesson in the ICT suite, when pupils used a computer programme to make a sign. They designed these, using letters and pictures, and then were able to print them. As they pass through Year 2, pupils learn how to change the type, size and colour of text and to retrieve, process and display information. This was seen when pupils were word processing their thoughts about their friends. The progress in learning for older pupils continues to be satisfactory, as a result of them receiving direct teaching of basic skills in the subject. Teachers are able to effectively demonstrate how to use the various computer programmes, as was seen in a good quality lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, taken by the headteacher, on using cut and paste techniques to edit text. There is good use made of ICT by teachers to grab the pupils' interest, as was evident in a Year 6 lesson on Francis Drake's voyage around the world. In the introduction to this lesson, the teacher effectively used a visual ICT presentation to help pupils have better information about the journey. In a literacy lesson in Year 5, in which pupils were acting out short plays they had scripted about the 'Phantom Sausage Stealer', the teacher used a video camera to capture their performances so that they could better evaluate them later. The pupils make good use of the school's digital camera and the photographs that they have taken feature largely in the attractive displays to be found around the school. By the time that they are 11, pupils are able to use ICT to enhance their work in subjects such as English, science, history and geography. In these activities, they are able to use a variety of devices, including cameras, tape recorders and computers, to organise and present their ideas. The school is keen to further the use of ICT in all subjects so that it becomes an integral part of classroom activity.
- 135 Most pupils show positive attitudes when involved in ICT activities and they treat the equipment carefully. When working in pairs on the computer, they collaborate well and show interest and enjoyment in what they are doing.
- 136 There is effective management of the subject by a co-ordinator whose efforts are supporting an improvement in standards throughout the school. The curriculum is satisfactory but there is recognition of the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to experience activities involving data handling and control. Pupils have access to the Internet to research information and will soon be able to use e-mail facilities. Assessment procedures are being further developed so that they better track the attainment and progress of individual pupils. There is good resource provision in terms of computers but there is a need to purchase a wider range of software to support work in other subjects. The accommodation provided by the ICT suite is good.

MUSIC

- 137 At the time of the last inspection attainment in music was below the national expectation at the ages of 7 and 11. Since the last inspection the school has improved provision for music and resources are better but standards remain below average.
- 138 It was not possible to observe any music lessons in Years 1 and 2 but, from teachers' planning and examination of school policy documents, it is clear that the pupils rehearse and present a good range of songs. Their singing in assembly is enthusiastic and tuneful. They use their voices to create accurate sound effects and develop an awareness of phrasing, singing sentences based on the 'minor third.' However, opportunities in some aspects of music are more restricted. Pupils' knowledge of music from different cultures or traditions is very limited.
- 139 Some pupils in the 7 to 11 age range develop their listening skills and are able to discuss images evoked by different types of music. However, some pupils find such appreciation too demanding and do not concentrate on the recordings being played to them. This is because listening skills are generally poor. Many pupils in Year 4 are unable to make a sensible appraisal and a large number of Year 3-6 pupils have poor listening skills. Year 5 pupils listen to cyclic patterns in classical, rock and African compositions. They have some knowledge of duration, timbre and dynamics. Some pupils are able to reproduce rhythms they have investigated using different percussion instruments. Pupils in Year 6 are given greater opportunities to perform and compose music using a wider range of instruments. They use keyboards well to change the mood of the songs they are rehearsing. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to sing a range of songs to support daily assemblies. Most pupils sing with joy and enthusiasm but a significant minority do not join in. Pupils listen to a variety of music including some from different cultures.
- 140 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but shows some weaknesses over the school year. Currently music has too low a profile in the school's curriculum. In both lessons observed with older pupils, the pace and challenge of the lesson was hindered because some pupils lacked the necessary level of maturity and concentration. Some pupils have a rather frivolous attitude to music lessons and this limits the progress they make. Teachers' work hard to overcome these difficulties and lessons are planned in a structured and active way. However, at the current time too much teaching time is lost because teachers have to keep reminding pupils of the rules for music lessons.
- 141 The headteacher is currently acting as music co-ordinator but this task has a low profile amongst his many other demanding roles. Staff make good use of the policy document and scheme of work but some lack subject knowledge and the limited access to expertise leads to slower progress than that found in many schools. The school is reasonably well resourced with a suitable range of percussion and tuned instruments. There are no opportunities for pupils to learn to play instruments on an individual basis.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 142 Pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum that includes dance, gymnastics, games and outdoor and adventurous activities. In addition, all pupils

have swimming lessons every other week. By the time they leave, most Year 6 pupils are confident swimmers who can swim at least 25 metres.

- 143 From the evidence of lesson observations, most pupils are making satisfactory progress and by the time they are 7 or 11, they are likely to be achieving the national expectations. Pupils enter the school with very poor physical skills; many can not use space well and often collide with others or overbalance. They make very good progress to achieve national expectations by age seven. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection although standards observed in a Year 4 class, where pupils found following instructions difficult, are low.
- 144 In the one lesson observed in Year1, the pupils learned how to throw underarm and by the end of the lesson most could throw a beanbag fairly accurately over a distance of about 8 metres. Year 3 pupils showed a great deal of enthusiasm and a good skill level as they interpreted various tempos of music and used contrasting movements to represent different types of dreams. Many pupils moved with great freedom and expression using their whole body to emphasise the changes of mood. Year 6 pupils have developed a good understanding of sequences and can confidently add new movements to those learned previously. They demonstrate good skills involving take-off, jumping and landing.
- 145 The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. This is a clear improvement from the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory teaching. Throughout the school there are examples of good teaching. In these lessons teachers are enthusiastic and well organised, expectations are high and both teacher and pupil demonstration are used well to highlight points and to increase the level of challenge. A Year 1 teacher kept the lesson fast moving and her clear explanations and points to improve ensured the pupils made noticeable progress in performing a sequence of accurate throws. Pupils and the teacher were surprised and delighted by the results.
- 146 All teachers use effective warm-up and cool-down exercises and talk about the reasons for them. Games lessons are brisk, well planned and have a clear focus on activity and improvement in performance. However, in one gymnastics lesson observed, pupils did not co-operate with their teacher and accordingly too much time was spent repeating instructions and practising simple routines. This did not allow sufficient time for pupils to develop new techniques or to practise skills. Progress in this lesson was unsatisfactory.
- 147 Lunchtime play leaders show a good ability to enthuse pupils, praising and encouraging their efforts when they use balls, bats and ropes. Such activities are making a significant contribution to pupils' good skill level.
- 148 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and well informed about recent developments in the subject. A clear framework has been developed to indicate how each aspect is to be covered during the year and the co-ordinator has a detailed subject development plan. Extra curricular clubs are provided in a range of sporting activities and very good links are maintained with the local high school. The co-ordinator seizes every opportunity to obtain extra coaching sessions for the pupils in many different sports including rugby, netball, basketball and golf. Resources are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 149 The pupils' attainment is close to the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus and the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school build on their knowledge of the world's major faiths and in discussion display a satisfactory understanding of the differences and similarities associated with them.
- 150 At the age of 7 pupils have an appropriate knowledge of major Christian events such as Christmas. They recall elements of the parables told by Jesus and some can identify the special message behind the story of The Lost Sheep.
- 151 By the end of Year 6 pupils have a clear appreciation that all faiths provide rules for living. They are familiar with a range of stories from the Old and New Testaments and can recall some of the events from the life of Moses. Some can link ideas from these stories to symbolism in daily life.
- 152 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons the teachers encourage the pupils to think deeply and to relate their studies to life outside school. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils explored the use of the description 'a god' when applied to sports stars and compared the qualities of such characters to the own ideas of the Christian God. The class teacher was well organised and successfully created an atmosphere where pupils were willing to share their own ideas comfortably with others.
- 153 Particular emphasis is placed on world issues and teaching and discussion does much to encourage pupils to think deeply about these. Many classes have taken time in recent lessons to reflect on a changing world and to discuss the tragic events that occurred in New York. The use of planned, silent moments in religious education lessons is well used to develop such reflective skills. More time now needs to be provided for the pupils to record their own thoughts.
- 154 The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and the planning reflects the guidelines of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject forms a basis for some other work in school and often provides a foundation for the very good social integration that permeates the school.

PART E: THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES (ADDITIONALLY RESOURCED CENTRE (ARC))

Context

- 155 The ARC was established at Hawthorn Primary just over two years ago. It is designed to cater for the needs of up to 6 pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are not expected to stay at the unit for more than 18 to 24 months with a view to re-integrate them back into mainstream schools. Pupils can be accepted up to the age of 9. Review meetings take place each term but are arranged sooner, if the need dictates. There is a full-time teacher who is known as the senior support teacher and a learning support assistant who has special skills with dealing with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 156 For much of the day the unit has the designated pupils working with the two members of staff. However, there is a programme of integration which sees all pupils having physical education lessons with a whole class. Two pupils are integrated into whole class lessons for literacy and numeracy or for just numeracy. In these cases, the classroom support assistant is present. Pupils from the mainstream school join the pupils in the ARC at various times during the week. These are for literacy and numeracy sessions. This process is helping pupils who find it difficult to settle to work in whole class situations. The senior support teacher is also the school's special educational needs co-ordinator and she has dedicated times each week to work on special educational needs issues.

Standards

- 157 The pupils in the ARC are mostly at about the same level of attainment. They are performing at levels that are well below those expected for their age. None of the pupils are independent readers or writers and activities are designed to improve their expression and receptive language as well as help their self-esteem. Much of the work is designed to help their sight vocabulary for reading and to extend their spelling. Some of the pupils also have specific speech difficulties and this is an area that is being addressed within the ARC. The pupils make very good progress during their time in the ARC with confidence levels being boosted, as is their self-esteem. In addition, the careful planning, which takes account of pupils' academic abilities, is helping them to make gains in their learning.

Attitudes and Behaviour

- 158 Despite the pupils being admitted to the ARC for emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is little evidence of this during most lessons. However, there are occasions when one or more pupils have emotional outbursts. It does not take a great deal to start this and, during the inspection week, there were one or two reminders as to why the pupils needed specific help in this area. One morning one pupil entered in a very negative mood. He took time to settle and the staff had to be very careful not to set up a confrontational situation. The expert handling of the staff did eventually help the pupil to settle but it took much of the day. However, for much of the time each of the pupils is calm, well-mannered and respectful of others.

Teaching and Learning

- 159 There are many examples of outstanding and very good teaching evident in the ARC. One of the most prominent features is the specialist expertise that the staff possess. They handle potential confrontational situations with calm and patience and know just what to say and equally importantly when not to say anything at all. This results in the ARC coming across as a calm and purposeful place where pupils clearly enjoy spending time.
- 160 The staff have organised the unit so that each day starts with pupils organising their own breakfast. This provides pupils with opportunities to talk about a whole range of issues before the day begins. This sets the scene for the day. Pupils know the routines and adhere to them. In this way they are being helped with their learning because little time is lost to unnecessary outbursts or negative attitudes. It also provides pupils with opportunities to talk to each other as well as to the adults around them. Resources for the breakfast are particularly well-organised allowing pupils to make choices about their preferred meals.
- 161 Pupils are reminded of targets at the beginning of each lesson. They are not just used at this time because as the lesson proceeds they are reminded of the targets and asked how they doing in meeting them. The staff know the pupils very well and this is further aiding pupils' learning. During a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher is able to set the challenge at just the right level to help pupils gain deeper understanding of the number work they are doing. The teacher also uses problem solving as a major part of each lesson so that pupils get used to dealing with mathematical language.
- 162 During a history lesson, where the pupils are considering the effects of the Roman invasion on the British people, pupils dress up in appropriate costumes as they participate in a role-play activity. They do this after working out what different parties might have to say to one another. Speech bubbles are used in the initial part of the lesson so as to help pupils be more confident in thinking through what to say during the second half. During the role-play the adults intervene just at the right time if they feel the pupils are running out of ideas. This works well to keep the role-play live and to deepen the pupils' thinking. The huge emphasis on pupils' spoken language adds to the relevance of the lesson.
- 163 The teaching is of a high quality with both adults working extremely well together to get the most from the pupils. The use of resources is particularly effective as is the interesting and stimulating ideas that are presented to the pupils. The pupils, in turn, are very keen and motivated. They can relate about lessons that have happened in the past and show with great pride their recipe book which has been developed alongside their regular food technology lessons.

Curriculum

- 164 Pupils are provided with a full and relevant curriculum. The National Curriculum is adhered to. However, wherever possible practical tasks are organised so as to widen opportunities for speaking and listening. Pupils integrate with other classes when it is felt appropriate and the level of integration differs for each pupil and at different times of the year. The staff organise as many visits as is reasonable for the pupils so as to give them more shared experiences to talk about. There is a high emphasis given to moral development because pupils are encouraged to talk about their actions in terms of its impact on others.

Leadership and Management

- 165 The senior support teacher is the person who organises the unit and plans for the activities. She is very clear about the way she sees pupils making progress, both academically and personally. She provides the unit with very clear direction and has an appropriate action plan to take the unit further forward. The plans for future development are appropriate and include greater use of the unit by other pupils in the mainstream school. The sharing with colleagues of the specialist expertise that she and her classroom support assistant have is another area that should be included in a development plan.