

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Low Fell

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108329

Headteacher: Mrs C Erskine

Reporting inspector: Mrs Doris Bell
16413

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 October 2001

Inspection number: 230324

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chowdene Bank Low Fell Gateshead Tyne & Wear
Postcode:	NE9 6JH
Telephone number:	0191 487 7506
Fax number:	0191 487 7506
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A J Dixon
Date of previous inspection:	November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1641 3	Mrs D Bell	Registered inspector	Art Music Special Educational Needs Equality of opportunity	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
9649	Mrs J Smith	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3078 1	Mrs W Stenton	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Information and communication technology Geography History Physical Education	
2767 7	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Inspection Services
113 – 115 High Street
Uppermill
Oldham

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
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?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakfield Junior School is in Low Fell, on the outskirts of Gateshead. It is growing in size and currently has 219 girls and boys on its roll. Most of the pupils come from the nearby infant school and the majority enter the school with average levels of attainment for their age. Just over 6% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is below the national average. Two pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English in addition to their mother tongue and for 2.7% of pupils, English is not their home language, although they speak it fluently. The proportion of pupils (21.5%) who are on the register for special educational needs (SEN) is similar to that found in most schools. Most of these pupils have SEN related to speech and language difficulties and a small minority have specific learning difficulties related to physical disabilities. The school has clear priorities: to continue to raise attainment in English (especially writing) and in mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The school also aims to improve pupils' achievements in all other subjects of the curriculum in order to achieve its mission statement that 'Oakfield will be a school of excellence'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective and continually improving school that benefits from high quality leadership and management. The hard work and commitment of all staff are reflected in good quality teaching, which ensures that the majority of pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they are in Year 6. The pupils very much enjoy coming to the school and work very hard when they are there. The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Very effective curricular planning ensures that pupils of all ability levels achieve well and reach the highest standards of which they are capable. The school is firmly committed to equality of opportunity and works hard to ensure that all pupils are included in all activities, both in and outside of the normal school day. This school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- High proportions of pupils attain the expected levels in the National Curriculum tests and an above average proportion reach the higher levels.
- The school fosters very good attitudes and behaviour amongst the pupils and provides very well for their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching is good overall, and in one third of lessons it is very good and sometimes excellent.
- The good quality education provided is very successfully extended beyond school hours by a very good range of well-attended clubs and activities.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and is very well supported by the deputy head, highly committed governors and senior staff in managing the school and planning for the future.
- The school's very effective partnership with parents and its very good links with the community contribute in great measure to the pupils' learning and achievement.

What could be improved

- The effective evaluation of teaching and learning by the English and mathematics co-ordinators is not matched in other subjects.
- There is a lack of agreed whole school systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected, in November 1999, it was found that significant improvement had taken place in both standards and provision since its previous inspection and it no longer required special measures. The very good improvement that has taken place since November 1999 has resulted in further significant improvements in the pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and in very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching has

improved very substantially and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed in this inspection. The teachers now ensure that work is well matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils and that their work is constantly checked to ensure they are achieving as well as they can. Very good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology has successfully raised standards in that subject. The school's clearly stated aims and values pervade all of its work. They are understood and embraced by staff, pupils, parents and governors. The whole school community is committed to helping the school continue to improve further, and it is well placed to do so.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	B	A	B

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

In the Year 2001, the results of the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Year 6, were well above the national average. In mathematics they were well above, and in English and science they were above those found in similar schools. In science, the number of pupils reaching level 4 (the expected level) or above was very high in relation to the national average and the average for similar schools, placing the school in the top 5% in both categories. The proportion reaching the higher levels continued to improve in all three subjects and in 2001, was well above the national average. In English and science it was above, and in mathematics well above the averages found in similar schools. Taken across all three subjects, the trend in the school's results is above the national trend and the school was very proud to have received a curriculum award last year acknowledging its improved test results. The school makes very good use of the test results to set challenging targets for improvement and to plan work that raises attainment further. This contributes in great measure to its continued improvement.

The attainment of the pupils currently in Year 6 is above the nationally expected levels for their age in English, mathematics and science. They achieve well in mathematics and science and very well in English. They also achieve very well in art and design and in information and communication technology. Achievement is good in geography, music and religious education, and satisfactory in history and in physical education. By Year 6, the pupils' attainment is above the national expectation for their age in art and design, geography, and information and communication technology, and above the expectation of the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils' attainment matches the national expectation in history, music and physical education. In design and technology, it was not possible to reach a secure judgement on attainment or achievement because insufficient work was available at this early stage in the school year. The subject is taught alternately with art and design and was not being taught during the inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school. They are very interested and enthusiastic, and work very hard. This contributes in great measure to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very sensibly in and out of school. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. All pupils enjoy taking an active part in the smooth running of the school. Staff and pupils show mutual respect for each other. This contributes very positively to the ethos of the school and to learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average and pupils are almost

	always punctual.
--	------------------

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

There has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Although overall good, there is a substantial amount of very good and excellent teaching that contributes very effectively to the pupils' learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and contributes in great measure to the pupils' learning in those two subjects. Very good and sometimes excellent teaching occurs in art, English, geography, mathematics, music, physical education and religious education. Particular strengths in the teaching are:

- the very effective and highly motivating range of practical activities that hold the attention of the pupils;
- the very effective management of behaviour that ensures the pupils work very hard, concentrate well and contribute to each other's learning;
- the very effective use of time that ensures, in most lessons, that pupils use every second productively;
- the very good assessment that takes place on a day-to-day basis and is used very well to help pupils reach their targets by addressing the areas upon which they need to concentrate in order to make further progress;
- the careful step-by-step instruction when new learning is introduced that draws very effectively on what the pupils already know, requiring them to think hard, and to apply and consolidate their prior knowledge and understanding in new work.

The teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from very high quality focused teaching in small groups and the majority make rapid progress in their learning. Class teachers use support staff very well to assist these pupils when they are in class and make sure that the work they are doing is based on the targets set in their individual education plans.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and evaluated, and statutory requirements are met. The pupils are provided with a wide range of good learning opportunities during school time and there is a very good range of well-attended activities outside of the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; the pupils are well integrated into school life, their learning is well planned and enables them to make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; despite the lack of external support, the school provides well for these pupils and successfully ensures that they are enabled to participate in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; many good opportunities are provided for reflection in lessons and in assemblies. Pupils' moral development is very effectively fostered as are their personal and social skills. The school prepares the pupils well for life beyond school, in a culturally diverse

	Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The very good care provided is based on very good relationships, high and consistent expectations of good behaviour and a range of well thought out and consistently applied policies. However, the effective assessment and recording of pupils' achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not yet in place.

The parents strongly support the school and the very effective partnership between them and the school has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's excellent leadership is very well supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher, the recently re-constituted senior management team and a rapidly developing team of curriculum co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well; the governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and very effectively monitor and evaluate its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; all data is thoroughly analysed and used to raise standards. Teaching and learning are very effectively evaluated and targets set for improvement. The school keeps all aspects of its work under close scrutiny.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; finances are very well managed. Spending follows the school's priorities and is well monitored to ensure its positive effect on standards.

There is a good number of teaching and support staff. This means that the pupils are frequently taught in smaller groups rather than as a whole class, and that they receive a good amount of well focused tuition that helps them to learn more effectively. The well-maintained accommodation is adequate for the present number on roll and is very effectively enhanced by high quality displays of pupils' work, creating a stimulating learning environment for them. There is an appropriate range of good quality resources for most subjects and these are used well to promote learning. The headteacher and governors are very well supported by the administrative staff in ensuring that best value is obtained from all spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school. They make good progress, behave well and are expected to work hard. The school works closely with parents and they in turn feel comfortable approaching it. The school is well led and managed and helps children to become mature. It provides a good range of activities outside of the normal school day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of homework

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. Parents did not clarify whether they thought there was too much or too little homework. The inspection team found that there is a good

range and appropriate amount of homework set that helps to consolidate what pupils are learning in school, and contributes to the good attainment and achievement evident throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2001, for pupils in Year 6, the results of the National Curriculum tests for English, mathematics and science were well above the national average. In mathematics they were well above, and in English and science they were above those found in similar schools. In science, the number of pupils reaching level 4 (the expected level) or above was very high in relation to the national average and the average for similar schools, placing the school in the top 5% in both categories. The proportion reaching the higher levels continued to improve in all three subjects and in 2001, was well above the national average. In English and science it was above, and in mathematics well above the averages for similar schools. The trend in the school's results is above the national trend. There was a very significant increase in the English results in 2000 that has been maintained in 2001. In mathematics, there was a significant improvement in the results in 1998 that has resulted in high standards since that time. In science since 1998, the improvement has risen steadily at a faster rate than science results nationally, towards the very high standards reached in 2001.
2. The school thoroughly analyses all its test and assessment results, including by gender and ethnicity, and uses very effectively what it finds to address weaknesses in learning at individual, class and whole school level. This leads to it setting challenging targets at each level and then working purposefully to reach them. All pupils are aware of their targets and are effectively involved in assessing their progress towards them. This contributes in great measure to the improved results since the last inspection and to the continuing improvement in the school. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls in the tests, and none were noted in the school.
3. The majority of pupils come to the school with average levels of attainment, measured by the outcomes of the National Curriculum tests when they were in Year 2. The school's further testing of the pupils when they start in Year 3 shows that a significant minority have difficulty with phonics and that their spelling is often inaccurate. The school sets up very successful programmes of work to address these weaknesses and provides additional support for the pupils to overcome them. At this early stage in the school year, the attainment of the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 is already above the nationally expected levels for their age in English, mathematics and science. In response to the staff's hard work and dedication, the pupils work very hard. They achieve well in mathematics and science and very well in English, and are currently reaching the highest standards of which they are capable.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets, many reaching the expected standards for their age by the time they are in Year 6. This is because of the very good support they receive both in class and, where appropriate, in small groups withdrawn from lessons to address specific learning needs. The school also caters well for pupils who are gifted and talented, providing them with further challenging work that enables their good progress. This is sometimes taken from the programme of study for an older age group, or is addressed by setting up an after-school club, for example for art, or in the case of music, providing for the pupils to receive instrumental tuition in school. The school has only a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The majority of these pupils speak English fluently and the school provides well for those who do not, so that they are able to participate successfully in all activities both in and out of school. These pupils too make good progress. The good progress made by all groups of pupils is a result of the school's underlying strong commitment to equality of opportunity in all of its work.
5. The pupils achieve very well in English. By Year 6, the majority of pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, speak clearly and confidently and their listening skills are very good. They concentrate well on what others are saying and speak fluently, coherently and with poise in front of a large audience. For example, when they presented an assembly to the whole school, staff, parents and visitors, the pupils in Year 6 were able to

present their ideas and opinions fully to show a good understanding of the effect on their area of the coming of the railways. The pupils have a good grasp of an appropriately wide range of reading strategies that enables them successfully to tackle unfamiliar words, and they enjoy reading. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and as they progress from Year 3 to Year 6, talk with increasing understanding about story settings, characters and favourite authors. The majority read fluently and with expression and from an early age learn to use their reading skills very well to research information in English and in other subjects. They make good use of the well-stocked school library, the local library and a range of CD-ROMs to do so. The majority of pupils show good understanding of what they have read and comment perceptively on the text and its meaning, including, by Year 6, extracts from Shakespearean plays, and a range of poetry. The school's successful targeting of writing skills has led to a significant improvement in standards, particularly boys' writing, and to the pupils making rapid progress from their insecure knowledge when they come to the school. The pupils have a good knowledge of how to plan a story or write a play script, and clearly understand the difference between the spoken and the written word. They apply this knowledge and understanding well in their work and as a result, their writing is often coherent, lively and interesting and contains good quality detail and descriptive words. They use paragraphs and accurately observe the rules for punctuation. Pupils present their work well because the teachers always insist on its being laid out correctly and throughout the school they use their literacy skills well in other subjects. They also demonstrate good word processing skills as they use the computer to write stories and plays.

6. The pupils' mathematical achievement is good. They use their number skills very well as they progress through the school from Year 3 to Year 6, becoming increasingly adept at carrying out calculations in different ways, explaining how they arrive at their answers, and accurately applying their number and measurement to solving 'real life' problems. By the time they are in Year 6, the pupils have a good understanding of fractions and decimals. They know their multiplication tables well, and successfully apply their knowledge of multiplication and division by 10, 100 and 1000 to recognise place values in decimals. The pupils use their numeracy skills effectively in other subjects, further consolidating their good knowledge and understanding of the need for accurate calculations and measurement in subjects such as science and design and technology. The pupils also use their information and communication technology skills well in mathematics to create spreadsheets and to prepare graphs and diagrams to handle information and record data. Previous work shows that the pupils cover an appropriate range of work across all aspects of mathematics and achieve well in those.
7. In science, the pupils demonstrate good investigative skills because the teachers place appropriate emphasis on the importance of these in science. By the time they are in Year 6, they have a good understanding of how to carry out a fair test. For example, they have a good understanding of root systems in plants, gained as they work well in groups to develop an experiment to show how roots absorb water and nutrients from the soil. The pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations that they will use the correct scientific terminology in their work and they demonstrate this well in discussions and as they record their findings in a range of appropriate ways. The pupils use their literacy skills well here as they draw accurately labelled diagrams and prepare scientific reports of their experiments.
8. The majority of pupils achieve very well in art and design and in information and communication technology (ICT) and by Year 6, their attainment is above that expected for their age in these two subjects. In art and design, they build well on their early knowledge and understanding. They develop good observational skills and successfully learn to follow a project through from a given starting point to produce imaginative work in a range of media, using the different styles and techniques they have learned through research into the work of famous artists. From a low starting point in Year 3, the pupils quickly and successfully acquire a good range of ICT skills and use these effectively to support their work in other subjects. By Year 6, they competently use ICT for word processing, data handling and research, including via CD ROMs and the Internet. The pupils achieve well in geography and their attainment is above the expectation for their age. They have a good knowledge of their local area and successfully contrast it with different places in Britain and abroad. Their mapping skills are good and they have a well developed geographical vocabulary, which they use effectively when, for example, describing the course of a river. Attainment is above the expectation of

the local agreed syllabus for religious education and the pupils also achieve well in that subject. They have a good knowledge of Christianity and of the major world faiths. Although they are less secure in their understanding of the impact that religions have on the lives of their followers, they successfully apply the Christian principles to everyday life, for example, by caring and sharing and by being kind to others, with a good awareness of the consequence of their actions on other people. The pupils achieve well in music, and satisfactorily in history and physical education. Their attainment matches the national expectation in all three subjects. In history, they have a sound knowledge and understanding of what has happened in the past and how the past influences the future. In music, the pupils sing with a secure sense of pitch and from Year 3, they learn to sing two-part rounds successfully. Their attempts at singing in four parts are less secure. Discussions with pupils and the analysis of teachers' planning and records show that they develop satisfactory skills across listening, appraising, composing and performing. The pupils acquire sound physical education skills and competencies, demonstrating, for example, that between Year 3 and Year 6 both boys and girls can throw and catch a ball with increasing accuracy and use space effectively to dodge, weave and side-step opponents and intercept passes. In design and technology, it was not possible to reach a secure judgement on attainment or achievement because insufficient work was available at this early stage in the school year. The subject is taught alternately with art and design. It was not being taught during the inspection and at this early stage in the school year, there was insufficient evidence of previous work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils really enjoy coming to school and talk about their lessons and the staff they work with in very positive terms. All are attentive, very keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This makes a strong contribution to their good achievement. They take great pride in their work. The good standard of presentation in their books and the quality of displays around the school helps them to realise that their work is valued.
10. Behaviour is very good. Pupils behave very well in the playground, around school and at lunchtimes and they display good levels of self-discipline. Good classroom management, high expectations and a consistent approach to behaviour in all classes ensure pupils' good behaviour in all lessons. There were no incidents of oppressive behaviour seen during the inspection and pupils are confident that this would be dealt with appropriately should it occur. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the past year, for unacceptable behaviour.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. As they move throughout the school pupils take care of their own and other people's property and treat the building and the very good displays within it, with respect. Following the good role models set by adults in the school, pupils are extremely polite, well mannered and respectful of other people's feelings, values and beliefs. Relationships within the school are very good at all levels. Pupils are friendly towards each other and to all adults working in the school and they make visitors feel very welcome. They respond well to the many opportunities given to them to enhance their personal development by willingly taking on additional responsibilities. For example, older pupils support younger ones as they make the transition from the infant school. The "Buddy" system in place at break times and lunchtimes ensures that no pupils are left on their own. Monitors from all classes effectively support the daily routines within the school. Pupils elect representatives from each class to serve on the School Council, its main aim being to make the school a better place. One result of this is the provision of benches for the playground and toys for playtime use. The pupils respond very well to the many opportunities provided for them to become more independent in their learning through, for example, individual and group work, the use of the library, and homework assignments.
12. Attendance throughout the school is very good and well above the national average. Very good levels of punctuality, both at the start of the day and in lessons, contribute positively to pupils' learning and achievement. Parents are very happy with the positive attitudes and values that the school promotes and feel they have a beneficial effect on their children.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is good and very much improved since the last inspection. It is excellent in 9% of lessons, very good in 24%, good in 53% of lessons and satisfactory in 14% of lessons. The teaching contributes in great measure to the pupils' good and often very good learning and to the improved standards throughout the school in all areas of its work. English and mathematics teaching is almost always good or better. The national strategies for these two subjects have been effectively implemented and monitored, and the continuing and consistent development of literacy and numeracy skills is given good attention when other subjects are being taught. These factors, together with the teachers' very good subject knowledge and the targets set to meet the needs of individual pupils, are further major contributors to the pupils' good achievement.
14. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan a very effective and highly motivating range of practical activities in many subjects that require and get intense concentration from the pupils. For example, in an excellent geography lesson, the pupils in one Year 6 class listened and observed with rapt attention as the teacher demonstrated the effect that a river has on its bed and its embankment in the course of its journey from its source to the sea. The pupils made rapid progress in understanding the meanings of the terms 'erosion', 'transport', 'course', 'velocity' and 'materials' in this context. This was very evident in the discussion that followed, in which the pupils used the terms accurately as they interpreted various diagrams and pictures from their text books. The teachers have very high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and work rate, to which the pupils respond very well by taking pride in their work, presenting it well and doing their best to improve. In addition, the majority of teachers set time limits for the different tasks that the pupils are required to do during a lesson, and the majority of pupils work very hard to ensure that they complete their tasks. This enables learning to proceed at a fast pace and results in the pupils having to apply high levels of intellectual and creative thought as they work individually, in groups or as a whole class. Very occasionally, the pupils are kept sitting listening to the teacher for too long and some restlessness creeps in, and in one mathematics lesson, the task was too difficult for the pupils. However, the teachers quickly address these issues through their very good classroom management skills, and the pupils are usually quickly back on task. The teachers also plan well for the pupils to use their information and communication technology skills in all subjects. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equal access to this way of learning, including those who may not have computers at home, by allowing the pupils to use the computers at breaks, lunchtimes and after school.
15. The pupils are very effectively involved in their own learning because the teachers help the pupils to evaluate the quality of their work in relation to the clearly stated learning objectives for the lesson. The very good assessment that takes place on a day-to-day basis is used very well to help the pupils reach their individual targets. The pupils are very effectively involved in assessing how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. They know what their learning targets are, how to measure whether they have been achieved, and at what point to check this with the teacher. Whole class sessions at the ends of lessons are usually used very well used to carry out a further check and to inform the pupils what they will be learning in the next lesson. This, together with a good range and amount of homework, successfully consolidates pupils' learning and gives them good opportunities to prepare for what is to come next.
16. Teachers are very careful to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all lessons. Their probing questions are adapted well and often very effectively targeted towards individual pupils so that all are drawn into a lesson and have the opportunity to contribute their different ideas and opinions. In an excellent art lesson, for example, the teacher posed a range of challenging questions that required the pupils to observe very closely three different paintings by Picasso and to learn about that artist's use of colour, line and shape. The questions varied from simple questions such as asking the pupils to follow the outline in one picture, to more challenging questions about how colour, shape and line had been used differently in the three paintings. The pupils' responses showed clearly that they had listened carefully to the questions and were drawing extensively on previous knowledge and understanding, and on

the responses of other pupils, to offer confident and constructive ideas and opinions in an atmosphere of mutual respect where each individual contribution is equally valued.

17. Teachers plan well to meet the targets set in the individual education plans of pupils who have special educational needs. The pupils' work is clearly identified at the planning stage. Support staff are very effectively briefed and well deployed to assist them. During whole class sessions, for example, the support staff provide further explanations for the pupils and help them to answer questions and participate fully in class discussions. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons for specific support, the learning support teacher's highly effective teaching moves their learning on apace through well-focused activities that further reinforce letter sounds and spelling patterns. The very good partnership between the learning support teacher and the class teacher ensures that pupils' learning is continuous, wherever they are being taught. Good support is given to those pupils for whom English is an additional language, and who do not yet have a good grasp of English. They, too, are effectively included in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson, the teacher successfully cajoled and encouraged one of these pupils, who was reluctant to write, to put pen to paper. The pupil subsequently made a good attempt at recording what he had learned. Good attention is also given to the learning needs of those pupils who are identified as gifted or talented. The work planned for these pupils provides additional challenge and enables them to make good progress. For example, in a Year 5 music lesson, the learning of pupils who receive instrumental tuition was very effectively extended by the teacher's appropriately high expectation that they improvise on their instruments to add texture and timbre to the class composition.

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

18. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well planned to take account of what the pupils need to learn and to do in order to achieve well throughout the school. There has been a marked improvement since the previous inspection. The school has effectively mapped out its curriculum to give appropriate emphasis to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The long, medium and short term planning for English and mathematics is securely based on the well-implemented National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, both of which are used well to ensure that pupils' learning is continuous from the time they come to the school to the time they leave. For most other subjects, it is securely based either on the national guidance now available or has been checked to ensure that it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study for each year group or stage in the pupils' learning. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) that promotes very good behaviour, effective learning and good citizenship. The programme incorporates sensibly timed sex education and includes teaching pupils about the dangers of misusing drugs and other substances.
19. The curriculum is effectively enhanced by the school's participation in a number of local initiatives such as the inter-schools sporting competitions, in which the pupils experience numerous successes, the Millennium Bridge Project, music workshops with a regional orchestra and the school's involvement in a 'Young Composers' project. These projects have contributed in great measure to the pupils' achievement and attainment in sport and in the arts, as well as to their personal development. A good number of visitors into school and visits out of school to places of interest enrich the curriculum and further enhance the pupils' personal and social skills. There is a very good range of activities that take place outside of normal school hours. Large numbers of pupils attend the numerous clubs set up to extend their learning through, for example, booster classes and additional access to teacher time or ICT facilities, or so that they can pursue interests such as art, music and drama. The very popular homework club provides a suitable venue for pupils to do their homework undisturbed, to help each other if appropriate, and to use the school library and other facilities for research. The school sees equality of opportunity for, and the full inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of school life as one of its major aims. To this end, all clubs and all activities are open to all pupils, all teachers are involved in some way in ensuring their success, and the school makes good provision to ensure that those in hardship are enabled to take full advantage of all that is on offer.

20. The provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good. The pupils are well integrated into school life and where they are withdrawn from lessons for specialist help, the school ensures that they do not miss the same lesson, or part of a lesson each week. This again reflects the school's commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils in all areas of learning. Statutory requirements are met and the school has due regard for the nationally recommended Code of Practice for SEN. Very good provision is made for pupils with health problems or specific learning difficulties and they, too, are fully integrated into all aspects of the school's curriculum. The register is kept up-to-date and the stages of SEN are clearly stated. The pupils' particular learning needs are carefully recorded and good individual education plans (IEPs) are set up with clear, measurable targets that help all of the pupils, including those with statements of SEN, to make very good progress. This means that a significant minority of pupils with SEN successfully overcome their learning difficulties and by Year 6, reach the nationally expected levels for their age.
21. Despite the lack of external support at the present time, the school makes good provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that any new language being used is clearly explained and that the pupils are taught to use it accurately and consistently. The school has a significant minority of pupils on its gifted and talented pupils register and also makes good provision for their learning needs. The success of this is seen in the higher than average proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests, and who make good use of their flair for, for example, art or music in lessons, in after school clubs and during instrumental tuition sessions.
22. The school has very good links with the community that successfully enhance the pupils' learning and their personal and social development. Representatives from the local church communities lead assemblies at regular intervals, and foster a sense of belonging to a community as well as providing first hand information and experience of a range of beliefs that has a positive impact on the pupils' learning in religious education. The laying of a poppy wreath at the local war memorial on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of the community helps the pupils gain an understanding of what happened in the past and provides a very effective focus in school for reflection on the sacrifices and achievements of the men and women involved. The pupils' personal safety and their knowledge of what to do in emergencies benefit from visits from the fire, police and ambulance services. In addition, all pupils receive road safety training as part of the school's travel plan and all of last year's Year 6 pupils successfully gained their first aid certificates when the Red Cross ambulance visited the school to train them, further enhancing their personal development. The pupils' involvement in dance, drama and music festivals and workshops in the community gives them a wider perspective on the importance of the arts and contributes to their learning in these subjects. The school is involved in a project with a national telecom company that results in representatives of the company working alongside pupils on a regular basis, adding a new dimension to their learning, particularly in relation to the world of work and their preparation for life beyond school. The school has begun to take students on initial teacher training courses and has good relationships with the higher education institutions in the area. It also has good relationships with the infant school from which it receives most of its pupils, and with the secondary schools to which they transfer after Year 6. It prepares its pupils very well for the next stage of their education and for life beyond school.
23. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This provision is embedded in the school's work and is another major contributory factor to the pupils' very good behaviour and effective learning. Here again, there has been some significant improvements since the last inspection.
24. Spiritual development is very effectively fostered in assemblies. These are very spiritual occasions in which the pupils are very successfully encouraged to think and reflect on a wide range of issues that affect them and others around the world. For example, in one assembly, the pupils were asked to reflect on the journey through life as the headteacher shared her favourite prayer with them asking God to keep them safe in the palm of His hand. This was very sensitively likened to the fact that the bombing had begun in Afghanistan and a prayer to keep people safe. The theme was further extended in an excellent religious education lesson where the pupils discussed with their teacher that there were rough and smooth times in life and wrote prayers to help people through sad times, for example, the current war. Spiritual development is also very well addressed in subjects such as art and music, where

the pupils learn how artists and musicians tried to express their thoughts and feelings through their work. Further opportunities are provided through science, where the pupils are encouraged to reflect on the wonders of nature, and through the range of literature chosen for their work in English.

25. Moral development is very strongly promoted throughout the school. Pupils are very successfully taught the difference between right and wrong, and about the impact their actions have on other people. The school expects all those involved with it to follow its very clear code of conduct and the staff provide very good role models for the pupils. The school very effectively promotes an ethos that fosters very good behaviour, good citizenship and very good relationships between all staff, between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. Care and respect for property and for people's different beliefs and values is embedded in the school's way of life and ensures that a harmonious community exists at all times. This helps to promote a very effective learning environment in which pupils can work and play free from any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. It also has a very positive effect on the pupils' behaviour in lessons, reflected in the teachers' very high expectations of the pupils, and the pupils' very positive responses to these.
26. Pupils' social development is also very effectively fostered. There are many very good opportunities presented to them during lessons to work together, to be independent and to take increasing responsibility for themselves, for their learning and for others as they move through the school. The comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is particularly effective in promoting this area of the school's work. During the Friday PSHE lesson, each class sets a target for the following week, usually related to social development. This is then evaluated at the end of each day so that the pupils can see how well they are doing or not. For example, in a Year 3 class, the target was to work quietly, take turns and learn to be patient. When reviewing this, the pupils offered what they had done that day towards achieving the target. This resulted in a sensitive, reflective discussion during which they were successfully encouraged to try even harder the next day. This very effectively meets the school's aim to raise pupils' self esteem by teaching them how to value themselves and others by reflecting each day on what they have done to 'make themselves feel proud'. Parents are very pleased with the school's very effective work in this area. They particularly praise the way in which it teaches the pupils what is good, acceptable behaviour on social occasions such as visits to the theatre, or on visits out of school related to the curriculum. The pupils' annual residential visit to an outdoor activity centre had to be cancelled this year because of the foot-and-mouth epidemic, but the school compensated for this by arranging an activity week that further promoted the pupils' physical, social and geographical skills and enhanced their learning in these areas.
27. Cultural development is effectively promoted in many areas of the school's life. Visitors to school and visits out of school successfully introduce pupils to their British heritage and extend their learning across a range of subjects, for example, art, music, physical education, history, geography and religious education. Pupils also learn about the richness and diversity of the cultures that exist in Britain today through, for example, the study of the major world faiths and the effects they have on the lives of the people who follow them. This is enhanced by visits to different places of worship and by a visit from a Muslim parent who explained what being a Muslim meant in practice. The pupils are also introduced to art and music from other cultures. In art and design, for example, they learn about Japanese art, make 'God's eyes' and learn about the symbolism associated with them in Africa, and explore Islamic patterns. In music, there are planned opportunities in the scheme of work for pupils to listen to an appropriate range of music from other cultures. They have benefited, for example, from a visit from a Steel Band, explored the American influence on black African music and were awaiting a Paraguayan workshop, due to take place just after the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. A strength of the school is the way in which all staff care for pupils and work together to provide a secure and happy learning environment. Parents agree that this is a school where each child is valued and respected as an individual. This is the basis for the very good care provided. Daily links between teachers and parents ensure that any problems that arise are quickly identified and ways of resolving them are promptly set in motion. Exchange visits help to ease the transition between infant and junior schools, and new pupils are assigned friends amongst older pupils to help them settle in. Pupils who join the school in the upper years said

how welcome they were made to feel and how easily they settled in. There are good pastoral arrangements to assist the transition of Year 6 pupils to secondary school.

29. The school has very good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of its pupils. In lessons, for example physical exercise lessons, teachers are careful to remind pupils about the importance of health and safety. Governors with health and safety expertise together with the headteacher and the school's health and safety representative carry out an annual risk assessment of the premises. The school's concern about pupils' safety on the busy roads that surround it is indicated by its participation in the School Travel Plan. This is a useful initiative in which small groups of Year 4 and 5 pupils are given training on how to walk safely to school and are alerted to potential dangers en route.
30. The school teaches pupils about the importance of healthy eating and has twice received the Healthy Schools Award. The recent introduction of bottled water containers in classrooms encourages pupils to drink healthily. Lunchtime organisers provide good care for pupils in the playground and there are good procedures for recording playground accidents and for informing parents when these occur. The school has good links with external agencies. For example, staff have received training on how to cope with conditions such as diabetes and anaphylactic shock. Links with local fire and police services are used well to teach pupils about personal safety. The school has very effective child protection procedures and all members of staff are fully aware of child protection issues.
31. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school's very good behaviour policy places a strong emphasis on positive expectations. The pupils' very good behaviour is a consequence of the clear and consistent expectations of good behaviour upheld by all staff. The teachers' generous use of praise and the good system of rewards motivate pupils very effectively. In a 'Good Book' assembly the headteacher's exceptionally good knowledge of the pupils shone through her praise for each individual who had been entered in the book. Her praise helped to motivate all pupils. The strong ethos of caring and sharing that exists in the school and the friendliness of pupils helps to prevent bullying. However there are very good procedures in place to deal with any bullying which might occur.
32. The school monitors attendance very effectively and attendance and punctuality are very good. The short registration period at the beginning of the school day is used very efficiently on homework administration and as an opportunity for pupils to work on spellings and other tasks, making sure that no learning time is wasted.
33. There is a comprehensive policy in place for assessment and the recording of pupils' achievements. The procedures for assessing pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy are very effective and the outcomes are used very well to plan further learning. Class, group and individual targets are all in place. The pupils have their individual targets in their books and are very clear about how effective those targets are in promoting good learning because they help to evaluate their progress towards them. Assessment procedures are good in science. National Curriculum and commercially produced tests are used to assess pupils' learning and progress and the results are thoroughly analysed to identify and address any weaknesses. There are satisfactory computer systems in place for assessing the pupils' acquisition of information and communication technology skills. In the remaining subjects, that is, in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education, there are no agreed whole school procedures for assessing pupils' learning. However, the teachers' assessment of the pupils' work in lessons is good and the outcomes are used well to plan further learning in the short term. The school is keenly aware of the absence of a whole school approach and good plans are already well in hand to improve assessment procedures in all subjects through a computerised system of checking on learning and progress that covers all subjects. The learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs is very well recorded and very effectively used to plan the next stage of their learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The school's very effective partnership with parents makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. Parents and carers strongly support the school. The parents' questionnaire reveals parents' confidence in all aspects of the school's work. Parents are particularly pleased by the way in which the school is strongly led and managed and by the way in which the school expects their children to work hard. They feel comfortable approaching the school if they have any problems and agree that their children like school. A minority of parents who replied to the questionnaire expressed concerns about the provision of homework, though they did not say whether they felt there was too much or too little. The use of homework is judged to be good. It is of appropriate quality and amount and it is well organised. Parents are given a homework timetable, and the use of homework diaries and reading records enables them to keep an eye on their children's work. Parents and children value the optional homework club where pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 are able to work on computers and receive extra support.
35. Communication between home and school is very good. The informative prospectus, regular newsletters and information sheets about the curriculum keep parents up to date with what is happening in school. Parents are given a very helpful induction booklet when their children join the school. Annual meetings on the numeracy and literacy strategies are well attended by parents new to the school and give parents a good understanding of what their children learn and how they can support this learning. The school also holds meetings for parents about the national tests. Termly parents' evenings are well attended and give parents the opportunity, to talk to teachers, to look at their child's record of achievement, and to see the work on display in the classroom. Parents enjoy coming to the regular class assemblies such as the informative and entertaining assembly given by a Year 6 class on Victorian transport. They also value the informal opportunity to visit their child's classroom afterwards and to look at the work going on there. Annual reports on pupils' progress provide parents with good information on their children's progress in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses in these subjects are clearly outlined and useful suggestions for improvement are provided. The reporting on progress in other subjects is satisfactory.
36. The help that many parents provide in the classroom and in other ways has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and is highly valued by the school. Parents and other adult helpers are always given clear guidance notes that enable them to support pupils effectively in the classroom. About twelve parents have done a classroom assistants training course and some parents have received training in additional literacy support. Pupils clearly benefit greatly from the help which these trained parents and other adult helpers provide. Several parents have undertaken training so that they can instruct groups of pupils on road safety as part of the school's participation in the School Travel Plan. Other parents help in the library, with visits and in other ways. There is a thriving Parent Teacher and Friends Association that organises many social and fund raising events and has helped to resource the development of the information and communication technology suite. It also assists in school concerts and productions. The good support that parents provide for their children's work at home has a positive impact on their progress. A number of parents and grandparents have done a ten week numeracy course provided by Gateshead College and this is an indication of parents' interest in their children's work. The progress which children with special educational needs make is greatly helped by the way in which the learning support teacher communicates daily with parents about their work. Parents are involved at the earliest stages of concern about any aspect of learning. They are invited to all reviews of their children's targets and their views are highly valued and acted upon.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The leadership and management of the school have improved very considerably since the last inspection, at which time the current head was very new. The headteacher's excellent leadership of the school provides a very clear educational direction and purpose for all of its work. The deputy headteacher very effectively supports the headteacher. She shares her vision and has been instrumental in helping to bring about the very good improvement seen in the school in the last two years while she was a senior teacher. An enthusiastic and supportive senior teacher, who now has specific responsibilities relating to managing special educational needs and raising achievement throughout the school, has recently joined the

head and deputy to form a very strong senior management team. The strong teamwork fostered throughout the school has been a major contributor to the school's very good improvement in the last two years. All staff are highly committed to raising standards further and the school is very well placed to realise this commitment.

38. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles and responsibilities at least satisfactorily. All co-ordinators have some non-contact time to manage their subjects. The support and development activities that they are expected to carry out during that time are clearly laid down in the school improvement plan, and are successfully carried out. Apart from the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, however, the teachers are less secure in evaluating teaching. Whole school in-service training has taken place to build this confidence and has resulted in a better understanding of what constitutes effective teaching from several different viewpoints, including those of parents. Some of this work has been hindered by staff changes but there is a clear commitment at senior management level to extending the roles further. At whole school level, the headteacher, the deputy and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators very effectively evaluate teaching and learning. Verbal and written feedback is provided for staff, and targets are discussed and agreed as a result of the evaluation. The effective action taken to improve teaching includes, for example, demonstration lessons, stronger staff working alongside less confident staff, visits to other classrooms and where appropriate, to other schools to see good practice in action.
39. The management of special education needs (SEN) is very good. The current special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) took on the role in September of this year and has successfully carried on the good systems and procedures started by the previous SENCO, now the deputy headteacher. The school uses the funding made available to it very efficiently and effectively. It has improved the range and quality of resources available for SEN, and has increased the involvement of the highly effective learning support teacher through purchasing more of her teaching time to improve pupils' learning. The very effective partnership between the SENCO, the learning support teacher and the class teacher contributes in great measure to the pupils' very good progress. All required provision is in place to meet the needs of pupils with SEN, including those with statements. Statutory requirements are met, the special educational needs register is kept up to date and pupils' learning and progress is very well recorded. The school has very good links with the external agencies involved in supporting SEN pupils and ensures that they are used well to help pupils address specific weaknesses in their learning. The SENCO also has responsibility for pupils for whom English is an additional language and manages this area well. Two pupils are in the early stages of learning English and during the inspection received a visit from an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant teacher to assess their learning needs, with a view to providing external support.
40. The school has a very clear statement of aims and objectives that were drawn up with an external provider as part of an in-service training day. The school's aims permeate all of its work and are very effectively promoted in all lessons. Parents are very supportive of the aims and values set by the school and the maturity that their children show by the time they leave. The governing body keeps the aims under constant review. Governors have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and describe the partnership they have with the headteacher as 'a very strong bond'. There is no hint of complacency following the successes of recent years. All governors have responsibility for checking on a subject and/or aspect of the school's work, and all are involved in agreeing the priorities in the school improvement plan and setting the targets for improvement. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities very well and carry them out very effectively through their good involvement in the pupils' learning. For example, the literacy governor worked in school with the literacy co-ordinator and prepared a report on what was seen for both staff and governors. Another governor visited the school to answer the Year 6 pupils' questions on a history topic. The pupils wrote to him afterwards with further questions and he responded with an individual written reply to each one of them that showed clearly he had undertaken some research himself to find some of the answers. The chair of governors meets frequently with the headteacher to discuss a wide range of issues and to evaluate how well the school is doing in relation to its stated priorities. The governors fulfil their statutory duties very well.

41. The school improvement plan is now a very useful tool for further development. It confirms the head's long term vision for the school by outlining areas for further development through to 2005, taking account of a projected further rise in pupil numbers. There is a clear analysis of the progress towards the key issues from the previous Ofsted action plan, and an effective evaluation of what are new priorities and what priorities, for example, in information and communication technology, need further development.
42. The school employs a good number of teaching and support staff to promote pupils' learning. All are appropriately trained to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. They are deployed well and when supply teachers are needed, the school uses staff with proven teaching ability, many of whom are familiar with the school and its pupils. All of this makes a major contribution to the pupils' good achievement because it enables them to continue to be taught in single age classes, and often in smaller groups so that they can receive more individualised attention. The effective use of specialist teaching in music is successfully raising pupils' achievement in that subject and the shared planning that takes place between teachers of parallel classes ensures equality of learning experiences for all pupils. The school has very effective systems to support teachers new to the school, including those who are newly qualified. Their named mentors help them to settle into school routines and provide very effective guidance and advice on a wide range of issues. The school improvement plan shows that performance management procedures are firmly in place and that the objectives arising from these meet both the school's stated priorities and the professional development needs of the staff. Staff development days are clearly timetabled and the subjects covered in them relate to the school's overall priorities. There is a high commitment to staff development and the school is currently involved in a number of initiatives aimed at improving further the quality of teaching and learning, for example, an 'Accelerated Learning' project and a 'Transforming learning through teaching' project. The satisfactory accommodation is very effectively used and maintained to promote learning. Classrooms are of adequate size and resources are kept to hand to ensure the maximum use of learning time. Very attractive displays greatly enhance the classrooms and corridors. They provide a very effective and stimulating learning environment, show that pupils' work is highly valued, and are further testimony to the respect that the pupils show for each other's work. The caretaker and cleaning staff contribute very well to this by keeping the school clean and safe for the pupils. The well stocked library is set separately from the main school building and is used effectively to promote reading and research skills. Resources are good overall. Recent purchases of new books and equipment have greatly improved teaching and learning throughout the school. In music, however, there remains a limited range of tuned instruments, confined to glockenspiels and chime bars. This impedes the quality of the pupils' compositions and performances, which lack tone colour as a result.
43. Finance very effectively follows the priorities laid down in the school improvement plan. Careful financial planning and management, consultations with parents and pupils, comparisons with other schools and challenging targets show that the headteacher and governors have a very good understanding of how to obtain best value from all of its spending. The school accrued a large surplus in 2000 as a result of extra pupils, additional government money throughout the year and changes in staffing. It has used the surplus well to employ extra teaching and support staff, and to replace many out-of-date, poor quality resources. This has had the desired positive impact on teaching and learning and has contributed to the good results in the National Curriculum tests. Prudent management means that the school still holds a reasonable surplus, which is earmarked for further improvements to school security and for essential repairs to the fabric of the building. The administrative assistant supports the headteacher well in managing and monitoring the budget. She carries out regular checks on spending and on the budget statements received from the Local Education Authority. She is effectively supported by a recently employed school clerk and together they contribute to the smooth running of the school and its established daily routines. The latest audit report had very few minor recommendations, all of which have been successfully addressed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to raise attainment and achievement across all subjects, the headteacher and governors should:

- Realise their clearly stated intention to provide opportunities for all co-ordinators to observe and evaluate teaching and learning at first hand through classroom observations.
(Paragraphs: 38,58,61,64,68,72,76,80,84,88)
- Bring together the teachers' good day-to-day assessment practices into effective and manageable whole school assessment and recording procedures for art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education.
(Paragraphs: 33,58,61,64,68,72,76,80,83,88)

The above key issues are already clearly stated priorities in the school improvement plan and the school has already started to address them.

In addition to the above key issues, the governors should consider including the following minor issues in their action plan:

- Improving the range of tuned instruments for music *(Paragraphs: 42,80)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	13	29	8	0	0	0
Percentage	9	24	53	14	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	219
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	26	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	22	23
	Girls	25	23	26
	Total	43	45	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (96)	92 (86)	100 (98)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	19	23
	Girls	23	23	26
	Total	37	42	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (66)	86 (78)	100 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	387503
Total expenditure	384742
Expenditure per pupil	1954
Balance brought forward from previous year	46925
Balance carried forward to next year	49686

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 59.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	206
Number of questionnaires returned	123

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	44	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	54	5	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	50	11	1	8
The teaching is good.	37	52	2	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	54	4	1	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	39	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	41	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	54	4	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	0	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	46	2	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	54	7	1	0

Other issues raised by parents

The majority of parents who responded by ticking column five also noted that they had done so because their children had not been in school long enough for them to respond accurately.

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

ENGLISH

45. Pupils' attainment is very much improved since the last inspection. By Year 6, the majority of pupils, including one for whom English is an additional language, speak clearly and confidently. The pupils' listening skills are very good throughout the school and they concentrate well on what others are saying. When pupils in Year 6 held a class assembly on the coming of the railway in the Victorian era, they spoke very clearly and expressively, with great poise, confidence and conviction to the large audience of pupils, teachers and parents. They varied their voices and expressions to match their different roles, for example, as a First Class or a Third class passenger, and when reading out letters supporting or opposing the opening of the railway in Low Fell. In class they readily answer questions fully and offer convincing ideas and opinions on subjects such as the witches' poem from Macbeth. Pupils in Year 4 suggested appropriate alterations to 'The Headmasters poem' and recited the new text together, using their voices well.
46. Throughout the school, the pupils treat the views and opinions of others with respect and often applaud what is being said. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language who are not fully fluent in English are well supported by assistants who help and prompt them to give answers. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in all activities and meets the school's aim with regard to equality of opportunity. The opportunities that the school gives the pupils to answer questions, discuss and debate ideas in many subjects, is a strength of the school and contributes greatly to the pupils' learning and achievement.
47. Pupils achieve well in reading. By Year 6, they have a good grasp of an appropriately wide range of reading strategies that enables them to tackle unfamiliar words. Above average readers are fluent and read with appropriate expression. They understand what they have read and make perceptive comments about the text and its meaning, for example, an extract from a Shakespearean play. The pupils are adept at finding information from different sources, including the library and CD-ROMs, and the majority are competent readers of fiction and poetry. The reading skills of the above average and average pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to read a good variety of texts. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and have a good understanding of story settings and characters and they talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors, confidently expressing their likes and dislikes. Pupils borrow books from the well-stocked school library and the local library and higher attaining pupils bring their own books to school to read. This further enhances their range of reading and the teachers check that the pupils are reading appropriately challenging texts. In every class, the pupils have suggested poems for 'National Poetry Day' and have helped to compile a class reader that demonstrates effectively their well developed understanding of poetry. Classrooms also have helpful and attractive displays with questions that encourage the pupils to read and find the answers, further promoting their reading and research skills. The enjoyment of reading is successfully fostered throughout the school.
48. Pupils achieve well in writing and by Year 6, the majority are working above the nationally expected levels for their age. The school's successful targeting of writing skills has led to a significant improvement in standards, particularly in boys' writing. Above average pupils in Year 6 write good stories that capture the reader's interest. Pupils have a good understanding of how to set about planning a story or writing a play script, and are familiar with the correct terms, for example, 'narrator', 'stage directions', 'dialogue' and 'script'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use good quality detail and descriptive words and phrases such as 'too excited for words', 'he wished to recap his memories'. They understand the difference between the spoken and the written word in, for example, play scripts, and their writing is coherent, lively and interesting. They write in paragraphs, accurately observing punctuation rules. Presentation and handwriting are good, which is a very good improvement on the last inspection. Pupils are systematically taught letter formation and teachers expect and receive a good standard of written work. Rules for presentation are displayed in classrooms and reminders given to rule

off previous work and carefully date new work. Pupils are expected to do their corrections and good quality marking encourages further improvement. Throughout the school pupils are given good opportunities to write and therefore develop their skills further through their work in other subjects, for example, in history. When they come to the school, the pupils' knowledge of phonics is insecure and this affects their ability to spell correctly. The school plans carefully to address this weakness. Pupils progress rapidly through daily practice, weekly tests and their involvement of work that includes the systematic teaching of spelling skills, and their consistent application in all subjects. As a result standards in spelling have improved and by the age of 11 the majority of pupils are of an average standard, a significant minority do even better.

49. Teaching is good and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching in this subject. The quality of teaching has improved very considerably since the previous inspections. All time in the literacy hour is used very effectively and leads to high rates of productivity on the part of the pupils. The organisation of the pupils into two ability groups enables the teachers to focus more closely on the pupils' learning needs. The teachers plan very effectively together to ensure that all pupils receive the same learning experiences, albeit at different levels, and this enables the pupils to make good progress at their own level. The teaching is often lively and exciting and requires prompt and meaningful responses from the pupils. As a result, the pupils remain interested and motivated to do well. New topics are effectively introduced, and what pupils are expected to learn is clearly illustrated and carefully stepped so that skills are progressively grasped. The teachers foster very good relationships with the pupils. These come out in the best teaching when the teachers inject humour and a sense of fun into the lessons, enabling the pupils to enjoy their learning and to take pride in how well they are achieving. Teachers throughout the school use a very good range of well-prepared materials to promote the pupils' learning. Classroom support assistants are well briefed. They share the teacher's planning, including the targets for pupils with special educational needs, and make a good contribution to learning. The pupils respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of their work rate and behaviour, and because their work is thoroughly planned and well matched to their different learning needs, they are motivated to work hard and achieve well. Teachers expect pupils to use the technical vocabulary of the subject and this results in, for example, Year 4 pupils understanding, using accurately and responding to terms such as 'alliteration', 'adverb', 'adjective' and 'rhyming form'. Teachers talk with pupils and question them constantly matching the difficulties of the questions to the ability of the pupil, helping them to think deeper and explain their answers more fully. For example, pupils in Year 6 confidently responded to the challenge to explain the meaning of 'Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed' from Macbeth. Good use is made of information and communication technology to promote effective links to literacy through art, music, geography, history and religious education, to foster word processing skills and to draft and refine writing. An appropriate amount of homework is set that successfully consolidates what pupils are learning in class.
50. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' work in English. All test and assessment results are thoroughly analysed, strengths and weaknesses are identified and effective action is taken to improve pupils' learning. This includes grouping pupils by prior attainment, setting targets for improvement, and involving the pupils in evaluating how well they are progressing towards their targets. All teachers open their lessons by telling pupils what they are going to learn. The objectives are then written on the blackboard and many teachers remind the pupils of these during the lesson so that they remain focused on what they have to do. The teachers also help the pupils at the end of the lesson to identify how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. The marking of pupils' work is thorough. All mistakes are picked up and there are constructive commentaries to help pupils to improve. There is a clear expectation that corrections will be done and evidence that the pupils respond well to this. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress towards their individual targets because teachers plan their learning very well in small steps. Boys and girls make equally good progress.
51. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and a further example of the very good improvement since the last inspection. The coordinator has excellent subject

knowledge. She is enthusiastic, energetic and fully committed to maintaining the high standards now reached. She is provided with time to manage the subject and uses this well to evaluate lesson plans, undertake classroom observations, look at pupils' exercise books and check on reading standards throughout the school. This effective leadership has ensured that all staff are well trained in how to implement successfully the National Literacy Strategy. As a result, all teachers do so confidently and competently. Plentiful resources of 'big books, group readers, non-fiction and fiction texts are to be found in all areas of the school. The link governor with responsibility for literacy is well informed and takes an active part in supporting the school. The teaching of English makes a good contribution to the personal and social development of all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

52. The attainment of the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 is above the nationally expected levels. All pupils achieve well. They are organised into ability groups for mathematics teaching and this enables them to make good progress at their own level. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well and teachers make good use of it to plan what pupils are to learn. Their planning is detailed and lessons have clear learning objectives that teachers share with and explain to pupils, writing them on the board, referring to them during lessons and involving the pupils in evaluating how well they have been achieved at the end of the lesson. This effectively involves the pupils in their learning and motivates them to work hard. The good, clear explanations given as teachers work through examples with the whole class, enable pupils to build successfully on their prior learning. For example, in one Year 3 class, the pupils successfully extended their knowledge of number patterns by carrying out calculations in different ways and by accurately solving length problems involving "real life" situations. Pupils in Year 4 used these skills well as they focused successfully on the need to identify specific information to solve problems, work with larger numbers and include more operations within the problem. In Year 5, the pupils build on their secure knowledge of fractions as they tackle new work on percentages. By the time they are in Year 6, they have a good knowledge of number. They know their tables well and understand factors and multiples. They effectively use their good understanding of multiplication and division by 10, 100 and 1000 as they accurately recognise place values in decimals, and convert decimals into fractions and fractions into decimals. The pupils successfully apply their knowledge of number to a wide range of problem solving activities and have a sound understanding of how to calculate the perimeter and area of simple shapes. They quickly and accurately find simple percentages of whole number quantities and have good knowledge and understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes.
53. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to plan a good range of activities that meet the needs of all pupils. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs receive good support from classroom support assistants. This enables them to make good progress in this subject. The teachers' good planning and preparation ensures that little time is lost when pupils move between whole class, group and individual activities. This results in good pace and productivity in learning. The pupils particularly enjoy the highly motivating mental calculation activities and the practical, investigative work that is prepared for them. These have a significantly positive impact on the pupils' progress in numeracy skills because they learn increasingly to think for themselves, to use effectively a variety of methods to solve mathematical problems, and to provide clear and convincing explanations as to how they have arrived at their answers. Because they are constantly reminded of the importance of setting their work out accurately, the pupils learn to take pride in it, and the standard of presentation is consistently good across the school. Relationships are very good. The pupils respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. They readily share materials and equipment and help each other to succeed. They know that their teachers value their contributions and this has a very positive impact on their learning. A good range and amount of homework is set to enhance pupils' numeracy skills, for example, requiring them to learn their tables, to become more familiar with basic number facts and patterns and to consolidate the work being done in class. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects, for example, when measuring or when recording data in science and design and technology. The use of information and

communication technology is effectively used to enhance mathematical work as pupils use spreadsheets, graphs and diagrams to handle information and record data.

54. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator effectively evaluates teaching and learning by checking teachers' planning and pupils' work and by providing constructive feedback to teachers. Assessment procedures are good. The teachers effectively assess the pupils' day-to-day work, provide constructive comments as to how the work could be improved, and successfully adapt their planning to address identified areas of weakness. In addition to the statutory tests and assessments the school uses a range of other commercial tests to assess attainment in mathematics. All results are thoroughly analysed to identify and address any weaknesses and set key curricular targets. Teachers effectively assess lessons on a daily basis and these evaluations are used to inform the next stages in pupils' learning. All pupils have individual targets, which they regularly review with their teachers. Resources are good and are effectively used in all classes.

SCIENCE

55. The attainment of the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 is above the national expectation. The quality of teaching is good and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in their learning and to achieve well.
56. By the time they are in Year 6, the pupils demonstrate good investigative skills. They worked well in groups to develop an experiment to show how roots absorb water and nutrients from the soil and this led to a good understanding of root systems in plants. Carefully planned, step-by-step activities enable the pupils to explain their results well and to demonstrate that they have a good understanding of how to carry out a fair test. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' correct use of scientific language and pupils respond well by using the correct vocabulary when discussing or recording their findings. In all classes, pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding by being involved in practical, investigative activities. Pupils in Year 3, for example, made close observations of the effect of plaque acid on teeth, and followed up their investigations to show the effects of different liquids on eggshells. They explained their results clearly and confidently. Pupils are managed very well. They respond very effectively to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour by applying themselves very well to their work, demonstrating good levels of curiosity, working well together and treating with respect the good range of scientific resources made available for them. These attitudes have a positive effect on their learning, which they clearly enjoy and enable them to produce good, well presented work.
57. The teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan challenging activities that meet the different learning needs of all pupils. They successfully teach the pupils the skills of investigating and experimenting, and this prompts the pupils to think through problems to find possible solutions for themselves. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs receive good support from well briefed classroom support assistants and make good progress in science. Resources are used well and the very effective use of time ensures pupils work as hard as they can. In all age groups teachers ensure that pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills well as they record their work in writing and pictures, using clearly labelled diagrams and learn the importance of accurate measurement when carrying out their scientific investigations. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to research information and record, interpret and present data.
58. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a clear policy and scheme of work, which teachers use well in their planning. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has ensured the successful implementation of a commercially produced science scheme. She effectively monitors pupils' learning by examining teachers' planning and pupils' work, but to date has not checked the quality of teaching in the classroom. Assessment procedures are good. The teachers effectively assess pupils' work on a day-to-day basis and adapt their planning to address identified weaknesses in learning. National Curriculum and commercially produced tests are used effectively to assess pupils' learning and the results are thoroughly analysed to identify and address any weaknesses. The outcomes of assessment are used effectively to set targets and to record how well the pupils

are achieving as they move through the school. Raising standards further for the higher attaining pupils, monitoring teaching and making more use of the school grounds are identified as key features in the current school improvement plan and provide an effective way forward for further improvement in this subject.

ART AND DESIGN

59. Pupils in Year 6 are working above the national expectations for their age. Their observational skills are very good because the importance of close observation is very well taught from an early age and the pupils use their sketchbooks effectively to practise recording accurately what they see. The pupils have a good understanding of colour because, provided with only the three primary colours plus black and white, they successfully learn from an early age to mix colours to match those they see, and to create a wide range of different shades and tones that they then use creatively in their subsequent work. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the pupils achieve well. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection.
60. The very good teaching considerably extends the pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design, successfully enabling them to realise how artists in different times and cultures used different techniques and materials, and giving them the confidence to try out a range of those techniques in their own work. Because their lessons are very well planned, the pupils know what they are doing and how each step in a project fits into another. The teaching inspires the pupils to concentrate on their work over a period of time, and results in high levels of productivity and pace as they move from close observational work in their sketchbooks through experimentation in an appropriately wide range of media and techniques before producing a final piece of work. Good examples of this were seen in the Year 6 work, which was influenced by that of William Morris, and in the Year 5 work, which was influenced by the work of Constable and Turner. In both year groups, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of art was considerably extended as they learned about, for example, Morris's approach to pattern work and how Constable and Turner used colour in their paintings to show light and dark and to create depth and perspective. Probing questioning, inspiring and very creative teaching in an excellent Year 4 lesson required and got a very high degree of concentration and observation from the pupils. It resulted in their being able to recognise effectively the similarities and differences in how Picasso used line, shape and colour in three pieces of art, one each from different periods in his life. In their planning, the teachers are very aware of the pupils who may need extra help, or those who may be talented at art and design, and appropriate support or additional challenge is provided where necessary, for example, in the Year 6 lesson observed. Because they know what is expected of them, how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, the pupils readily offer their own ideas and opinions, evaluating their own work and that of others in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Very effective classroom management and organisation is evident throughout the school. This was especially noted in a Year 5 lesson where the pupils prepared the room for art and design, worked hard throughout the lesson and tidied away at the end. Art and design makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by allowing time for reflection and providing good opportunities to explore the different purposes for which art is created in different times and places. Pupils' literacy skills are also very effectively fostered through art as they read about, research, discuss and make notes on their own, and other works of art. Numeracy skills are also effectively fostered as the pupils learn to use shape and space effectively, sometimes in symmetrical form and to observe different forms in nature.
61. The subject is very well led and managed. The headteacher is at present the temporary co-ordinator and very effectively evaluates teaching and learning. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that all pupils experience a good range of high quality and progressively demanding art and design learning opportunities that also cater for those who show particular flair in the subject. A programme of continued professional development for teachers in conjunction with the National Gallery, has had a very positive impact on teaching and learning by raising teachers' expectations of the pupils, and by increasing the teachers' own knowledge and understanding of, for example, what to look for in pictures and how to communicate this to the pupils. The curriculum is further extended and enriched by an extra-curricular art club,

and by the school's participation in local art and design initiatives such as the Millennium Bridge project and the Angel of the North project, that successfully introduce them to art in the environment. Additionally, artists in school and visits to art galleries and museums contribute in great measure to pupils' learning and attainment. Through discussions with individuals, the teachers very effectively assess the pupils' work and are skilled at offering ideas and demonstrations while leaving room for the pupils' own creative thought. However, these very good assessments have not yet been drawn together into effective whole school procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievement and attainment over time. This is an area already identified for development in both the school improvement plan and the subject action plan and the co-ordinator is very clear as to how to take it forward.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

62. Design and technology, which is taught alternatively with art and design, was not being taught during the inspection. As there was insufficient work available at this early stage in the school year, it was not possible to reach a secure judgement on attainment, achievement or on the quality of teaching.
63. A scrutiny of teachers' planning from last year and discussions with the co-ordinator and with pupils show that the school now meets the statutory requirements for this subject, and that the pupils experience a suitably broad range of design and technology work that is closely linked to their work in mathematics, literacy, science and information and communication technology. Pupils use planning sheets to design, modify, construct and evaluate their designs. They also work with a wide range of materials, including food, and tools with good emphasis being placed on safety and hygiene. This sound provision is an improvement on the previous inspection.
64. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school uses the nationally produced scheme of work successfully to plan a suitable range of work for all pupils. However there are no systems in place to assess or record their progress in knowledge, skills and understanding to ensure that they are making continuous progress throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

65. Since the previous inspection, there has been very good improvement in pupils' achievement in geography. Pupils' attainment is now above the national expectation by the time they are in Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. The improvement is the result of a well-planned curriculum, good teaching and improved subject knowledge.
66. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils in Year 3 are successfully taught the importance of accurate mapping skills as they record what they have observed on a walk around their local area. They demonstrate good local knowledge of key features, readily using and explaining terms such as 'residential', 'leisure' and 'industrial' in relation to the different locations they have seen. The majority have a good knowledge of the meanings of simple mapping symbols and the importance of a map key. By the time they are in Year 5, the pupils accurately locate countries on the world map by using globes and atlases and find out about them by using the Internet. They have a sound knowledge of life in India and competently compare the social conditions there with their own. The teachers use their subject knowledge very effectively to plan highly motivating activities that ensure pupils' learning is consolidated well. The pupils are closely involved in evaluating their own learning through the teachers' constant reminders of the lesson objectives, which are first shared at the start of lessons and further reviewed at the end to check pupils' gains in knowledge and their understanding of what they have been taught. The teachers of pupils in Year 6 are encouraging pupils to build up a glossary of geographical terms and this is further improving their subject knowledge. Through their studies of rivers, the majority of Year 6 pupils acquire a good understanding of the meaning of 'erosion', 'current', 'deposit', 'source', 'meander' and other associated geographical terms. The pupils accurately relate terms such as 'estuary' to the river Tyne and 'delta' to the river

Nile, and make good use of their information and communication technology skills to research information on those two rivers. In an excellent lesson, high quality practical demonstrations on how rivers erode the land enabled pupils in Year 6 to learn very successfully from what they saw and experienced at first hand. The teacher questioned the pupils very effectively and very successfully led them to the correct answers, repeating the demonstrations so that they could see and hear stones scraping on a 'river bed' made of drainpipe with water running through at different speeds.

67. The pupils have a good understanding of the water cycle and draw neatly labelled maps and diagrams explaining evaporation and condensation in relation to weather. Literacy skills are consolidated well through writing reports and diaries of different places and lifestyles. The pupils also use graphics on the computer to create imaginative plans to redesign seating and playground areas. Through studying noise pollution and litter, the pupils develop a good understanding of man's effect on the local environment and begin to explore and express clearly their own feelings and opinions in relation to this.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator has led the subject since the start of term but has not yet had sufficient opportunity to build on the successful work done by her predecessor by setting precise priorities for further development. Pupils' work and teachers' planning have been checked but there has been no evaluation of teaching and learning. The scheme of work used is based on national guidelines and there are sufficient books, materials and displays to support learning. Pupils' work is assessed appropriately in lessons but there are no agreed whole school procedures yet in place.

HISTORY

69. Pupils reach the nationally expected levels for their age by the time they are in Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvement since that time is satisfactory.
70. By Year 6 pupils have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of key periods in the past that include the Greeks, the Tudors, and the Victorians and could place them in the correct chronological order. They competently compare past and present and know the key features that characterised the Victorian age, for example, major inventions such as the telephone, light bulb and steam train, and the dates of Queen Victoria's reign. They successfully use and consolidate their literacy skills as, for example, they write letters using persuasive text praising or opposing the coming of the railway to Low Fell. In a presentation to the whole school, they showed good levels of empathy with employees or businessmen of the time, using strong language such as 'my business is going down the drain' or 'the appalling noise of trains disturbs my family' in their writing. The pupils use their information and communication technology skills well to research information about, for example, those who lived in a street in Low Fell in 1841 from that year's census, and about the Tudors and the Greeks.
71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and promotes sound learning. The good teaching involves well-phrased questions that elicit enthusiastic responses from pupils and encourage them to think more deeply. Teachers use their secure knowledge of the period being studied to encourage the pupils to think about what it must have felt like to live through key events in history. For example, pupils in Year 5 demonstrated a good ability to empathise with people in the past as they wrote newspaper articles about the 'Battle of Marathon' as seen from the viewpoint of opposing armies. Appropriately challenging work ensures that the pupils concentrate well and remain focused on the task set for them. This is an improvement since the last inspection. An effective balance between the time the teachers spend giving knowledge-based information to pupils and the time spent on tasks leads to good productivity and pace in lessons. Occasionally, the pupils become restless because they are kept sitting for too long while the teacher imparts information. However the teachers' good ability to encourage the pupils to reflect on what they have learned is successful in re-focussing their attention. Planning is sound and good use is made of the Internet and the school library to find out further information.

72. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has been leading the subject for only five weeks and has therefore had insufficient time to develop her leadership. She has drafted an action plan of appropriate priorities that will enable her to lead the subject more effectively. The scheme of work, based on national guidance, is appropriately adapted to suit the needs of the school and ensures coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. There is an appropriate collection of books materials and displays to focus pupils' attention. Pupils' work and teachers' planning were effectively monitored by the previous co-ordinator, but as yet the present leader has had insufficient time to carry out any monitoring of teaching and learning. Pupils' learning is appropriately assessed in lessons but there are no agreed whole school assessment procedures in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

73. Until two years ago, there had been very little development in information and communication technology (ICT) but since then, very good improvements have taken place. The school has worked very hard and to good effect to develop the subject. The acquisition of a new computer suite and access to modern personal computers in each classroom allows pupils much improved access to ICT. There is a well-planned curriculum to support the systematic teaching of skills. A significant minority of pupils are at a very low level of attainment when they come to the school in Year 3. Many are unable to use the mouse correctly, double click, delete or edit, and are unsure how to close a program. Given their low levels of attainment, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English as an additional language achieve very well in this subject by the time they leave the school.
74. Pupils in Year 6 are working at levels above those expected nationally for their age. The majority successfully input data onto a spreadsheet, very competently highlighting cells, columns and rows and using auto sum. They have a good understanding of how to edit, delete and alter information on a spreadsheet, of how to alter font size and the colour of text, and of how to create repeating patterns using a graphics program, including selecting areas and resizing. The majority of pupils very competently use the Internet for research in history and geography work, and demonstrate very good word processing skills. Year 6 pupils who have a 'trusted pupil card' use the suite at lunchtime to access the Gateshead learning network, where they are engaged on a variety of tasks, including looking at music programs, and undertaking research on rivers and on Victorian Low Fell. Previous Year 6 pupils produced a multimedia presentation using sound, music and advertising pages for Oakfield School for presentation to pupils about to join the school in Year 3.
75. Of the three lessons observed, one had to be abandoned due to continuing problems with ICT equipment in the suite. Of the other two, one lesson was satisfactory, the other good. In the good lesson, the teacher's secure subject knowledge was used effectively to present the pupils with appropriately challenging tasks and work from the previous lesson was successfully consolidated, thereby enhancing pupils' learning. Staff are now confident in the teaching of ICT and are still undergoing nationally funded training to improve their subject expertise further. The pupils enjoy their time in the ICT suite and concentrate well on their work. Teachers manage the move from classroom to the suite with minimum fuss and no wasted time. The pupils' very good behaviour in a relatively crowded space is a testimony to the teachers' good management and organisational skills. The pupils are very successfully encouraged to co-operate and they work very effectively together in groups of two and three, supporting each other in the acquisition of ICT skills. However, where a lesson took place around one computer, teaching and learning were far less effective because the Year 3 pupils involved had little opportunity to address the significant weaknesses they showed in a previous lesson. The pupils take good care of the software and hardware available to them. Those who attend homework club and the pupils who use the suite at lunchtimes can be trusted to work independently.
76. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has been in place for a year but the subject has been very well supported for the past two years by the senior management team who have formed and are continuing to implement a comprehensive improvement plan for the subject. Under their direction the whole staff is working hard and their commitment to high attainment has successfully improved standards despite the

frequent failure of the equipment. There is a system in place to assess the pupils' acquisition of computer skills but as yet there are no agreed whole school procedures for assessing their learning across all aspects of this subject. The school has taken necessary and appropriate steps to prevent pupils having access to unauthorised Internet sites and provides a good range of other ICT resources such as a video camera, a digital camera, music centres, keyboards and calculators. Resources are satisfactory and there is some good cross-curricular ICT work in history, geography, art, literacy and numeracy

MUSIC

77. Because of the school's timetabling, it was not possible to see any music teaching in Year 6. However, discussions with the pupils and the analysis of the teachers' planning and records, show that they reach the national expectation for their age. The quality of teaching is now very good and all pupils achieve well. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection and is a direct result of some specialist teaching in Year 3 that is giving the pupils a good start in this subject. The quality of singing has improved. Pitch is now secure and good attention is paid to diction, posture and breathing. By the time they leave the school, the pupils sing in two-part rounds, successfully holding their own melodies. In the whole school singing practice, however, the extension of this into four-part rounds was less successful.
78. The teachers are now secure about what they are teaching. They plan very effectively from the recently introduced scheme of work and, mindful also of the national guidance, they use their subject knowledge well to build on and extend what pupils already know. In all year groups, the pupils steadily acquire a satisfactory range of listening, composing, appraising and performing skills because these are successfully incorporated into each musical project. They are effectively involved in assessing their own work, through the teachers' probing questioning, advice and demonstrations that show them how they might improve their music making. This provides good challenges to the pupils' creative thinking and, because activities usually have set time limits, successfully encourages them to concentrate well, work hard and collaborate with each other when working in groups or when playing the part of the audience. The pupils enjoy music and behave very well. Pupils' listening skills are especially well developed through hearing appropriately short extracts of music that introduce them very effectively to music from different times and places. Very effective guidance focuses their listening well and results in a high degree of concentration and the confidence to offer opinions and ideas. This helps pupils of all levels of musical ability increasingly to recognise how composers used different combinations of instruments, sound qualities and musical elements such as rhythm, dynamics and tempo for different purposes, for example, to communicate different moods and feelings or to create atmosphere. A good example of this was seen in a Year 4 lesson related to the history topic (Tudors), where the pupils showed good knowledge of dance forms and songs from that period. It was also evident in composition work related to art (Constable and Turner storms) in Year 5, and to geography in Year 3 (rivers). The teachers' very creative and effective use of such resources provides very good inspiration for the pupils and enables them to see the links between different subjects as they learn how to represent in sound the different river movements, or the different stages in a storm. In the Year 3 lesson, the taping of the compositions for evaluation in the next lesson was carried out in an atmosphere of great sensitivity as the pupils listened very carefully to each group's live performance, their minds having been very firmly focused on how to make further improvements.
79. The teachers' planning makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, for pupils for whom English is an additional language, and for pupils who are talented in music. The first two groups are assisted by individual support. For the third group, additional challenge is added through instrumental tuition and the effective use of the pupils' instruments in class. For example, in the Year 5 lesson observed, the teacher, mindful that several pupils played musical instruments, successfully incorporated this knowledge into the lesson plans by requiring the pupils to add to the class composition by improvising on their recorders, flutes and clarinets. This enabled them to use their expertise to the full. Music makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by allowing time for reflection, sharing instruments, working in groups of different sizes, and listening to music from different cultures. This very effectively reflects the school's overall aims.

80. Pupils' attainment and achievement is improving from year to year because of the very focused teaching they are now receiving and the good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator, who has just started his third year in teaching, has been in charge of the subject for just over a year. As well as teaching his own class, he teaches each of the Year 3 classes in turn for blocks of time. This is giving the pupils a very good grounding in music, which is evident in the good quality of the composition work seen in Year 3 during the inspection, and is further developing the skills of the Year 3 teachers. The co-ordinator also provides effective advice and guidance for the other teachers but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in other year groups. He has already received some feedback from the staff on the commercial scheme being used and has begun to adapt it accordingly to meet the needs of the pupils better, for example, by incorporating a range of songs with a more appropriate range of pitch, and checking the scheme against the national guidance for music. Although the scheme gives opportunities for assessment at the end of each project, these are not yet being used at whole school level to check pupils' progress. As in most other subjects, this is an identified area for development both at whole school level and in the subject action plan. The co-ordinator is very clear about what needs to be done to raise the profile of the subject throughout the school and as a result, the school is well set to make further improvements in this subject. The quality of the resources is satisfactory but there remains a limited range of tuned percussion instruments that inhibits the pupils' ability to work creatively with a wide range of tone sources.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

81. The standards attained in physical education are at the level expected for pupils in Year 6, although a small minority of pupils show above average skills in games and gymnastics. As they progress from year to year, both boys and girls learn to throw and catch a rugby ball with increasing accuracy. By the time they are in Year 6, they know how to dodge quickly to avoid an opponent because they have successfully practised the rugby skills of dodging, weaving, side-stepping and passing. Pupils in Year 5 acquire sound football and netball skills, such as throwing, dodging and intercepting high passes. Pupils with more advanced body control play well in five-a-side football games, using the space effectively and keeping control of the ball. Less competent pupils crowd the ball and use some unrelated tackling. Standards in physical education are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
82. The quality of teaching is good and is enabling the pupils to achieve satisfactorily. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan lessons that require a good degree of physical activity from the pupils. They ensure that the pupils know and understand the need to warm up their bodies before starting physical activities, and the pupils understand that they have warmed up properly if their hearts are beating fast. The teachers constantly reinforce the need for pupils to work safely during physical education lessons and particularly good attention was given to this in a Year 5 lesson where a small minority of pupils were behaving inappropriately. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the pupils almost always respond accordingly. Fair play is emphasised and the pupils are appropriately reminded of why the school achieved a 'Fair Play Award'. The teachers set high standards for the pupils by dressing appropriately for outdoor games lessons, and the pupils follow their example. Pupils are successfully encouraged to practise skills and to evaluate their own performance and that of others. Those who perform well are invited to demonstrate their skills to other members of the class to emphasise teaching points, and they do so confidently. All pupils are included in lessons and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
83. The overall provision for physical education is good. A well-equipped hall and level playing field provide good facilities but the sloping playground limits hard surface games. The curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of the programme of study. Swimming, athletics, gymnastics and games are taught at relevant times throughout the year, and there are some limited opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils are able to swim safely for at least 25 metres, as required by the National Curriculum programme of study. There is a large number of extra curricular opportunities with clubs for gymnastics, dance, netball and football. The school also participates in a wide range of community sporting links that include local dance and athletics

festivals. Pupils' learning benefits considerably from coaching by local rugby, basketball and cricket teams. The gymnastic club is preparing for a forthcoming display at a local festival and demonstrate very good skills in gymnastics linking handstands, back springs, cartwheels and forward rolls with sequenced movements to twirl ribbon streamers. These pupils show imagination, sensitivity and very good gymnastic skills as they rehearse their set piece to music. They work with concentration and enjoyment. The much improved provision is beginning to have a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and achievement in this subject. There are, however, no agreed whole school assessment procedures in place to ascertain the pupils' progress over time, although the assessments carried out in lessons are good and are used effectively to plan further learning.

84. The co-ordinator is a newly qualified teacher who has been in the school for only five weeks. However, he has a strong background in sport through personal hobbies and previous employment as an outdoor education instructor. In a very short time he has established very good links with other schools and is helping to organise events aimed at improving sporting provision. During the inspection, pupils took part in the first local football tournament of the season. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm for the subject and his commitment to the school's aim of gaining the Sports Council 'Action Mark' award show enormous potential for the leadership of this subject, which is at present satisfactory. Understandably, he has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate physical education teaching in the rest of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

85. Pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels above those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. This represents good improvement on the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is good and enables the pupils to learn well in lessons and achieve well over time.
86. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan challenging and often highly motivating activities that require the pupils to think hard about, for example, the eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life in Year 3 and the appropriate use of different 'uniforms' at different times in the Christian church's calendar. In Year 3, the effective use of short Bible extracts enhances this learning. By the time they are in Year 6, the pupils use their literacy skills very well as they identify the different styles of writing within a range of books in the Bible. They have a good knowledge of Bible stories and can apply Christian principles to everyday life, for example, in caring for and being kind to others. However, although they have a good knowledge of the main facts in the major world faiths, they are less knowledgeable about how these affect their followers' ways of life.
87. The pupils are very well managed and are effectively involved in their learning. The teachers share the clear learning objectives with them at the beginning of lessons so that they know what they are expected to learn. The objectives are re-visited from time to time during lessons and further evaluated with the pupils at the end, so that both they and their teachers know how well they have done and what they need to do to next. As a result the pupils work hard, concentrate well and contribute effectively to each other's learning. They are successfully taught the importance of good recording skills. They take pride in their work and present it well. Pupils are given many opportunities both in lessons and in assemblies to reflect and explore their feelings. For example, the teacher's sensitive and challenging questioning encouraged pupils in Year 4 to express their feelings and emotions as they write prayers, relating some of the discussion to the current world situation. Daily acts of collective worship help pupils to develop an identity within the whole school community and provide further good opportunities for them to reflect on the many spiritual, moral and social issues which affect themselves and others. Religious education makes a very good contribution to this area of their development. Lessons move at a brisk pace as teachers use question and answer techniques effectively to challenge pupils to think and learn for themselves.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and, in line with school priorities, has recently attended training to assess levels of attainment. At present, however, there are no systems in place for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. Teaching and learning are evaluated through the effective monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and the co-ordinator offers advice

and guidance where necessary. Resources are adequate and include artefacts to link with teaching of four main religions. Visits to the local Church and to Bede's World, talks by the local vicar, a Muslim parent and representatives of Christian Fellowship further enhance pupils' learning by providing different insights into different faiths.