

INSPECTION REPORT

RIFT HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111640

Headteacher: Ms Julie Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Gosling
22453

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 October 2001

Inspection number: 230335

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Masefield Road Hartlepool
Postcode:	TS25 4JY
Telephone number:	01429 275239
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Hewetson
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2245 3	Brian Gosling	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology History Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
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2403 1	Iris Idle	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage	
0394 2	Keith Sanderson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
0275 9	Derek Sleightholme	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rift House Primary School is bigger than most primary schools. At the time of the inspection there were 229 pupils attending full-time: 112 boys and 117 girls with a further 46 children attending the nursery part time. Although the school is situated in the Park Ward, almost all pupils come from the surrounding Rift House Estate, which is predominantly council-owned housing. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups, refugees or travellers and no pupil has English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is about average and there are no Statements of Special Educational Need. When children start school, their attainment is generally well below average.

The school has seen many changes recently, most significantly to the composition of the teaching staff. Of the 12 teachers at the school, ten have joined since the last inspection. Six teachers, including the headteacher, have joined the school since the national tests in 2000 and four teachers joined the school last year. The headteacher conducted a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and clearly identified the major areas for school improvement. This has benefited pupils' learning and the improved standards they are achieving are evident in their work in lessons.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is an effective school and improving. Pupils start school with attainment that is well below average. Although their attainment in the national tests in 2000 was still well below the national average when they left the school, it was better in Year 2 and there is clear evidence that standards have improved at the end of both key stages. There has been a significant change in the teaching staff, including the headteacher, since the summer in 2000. Very effective leadership and management have evaluated the school's performance and taken effective action to improve both pupils' attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching. Consequently, standards are rising and the school is now giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress from when they enter the nursery and they achieve well by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good, overall, and pupils' attitudes to learning are improving significantly.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- The school now has very effective procedures to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The headteacher is clear-sighted and decisive, and she is ably supported by the assistant headteachers; consequently the school is demonstrating significant improvements.
- The determination to raise standards is shared by all members of staff, who make up a committed team with a strong sense of direction.
- The parents' views of the school are very positive and they support the school strongly.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The recently established and effective school procedures for the use of assessment and to improve behaviour are not always applied consistently by all teachers.
- The role of governors is not fully developed.
- The outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage is underdeveloped.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1998. Considerable improvements have been made since then and particularly since the arrival of the headteacher in September 2000. The school has addressed with commitment the issues for action noted in the last inspection report. The organisation of the school day has been reviewed recently. There is now a suitable balance between the different subjects and the statutory requirements for information and communication technology are now met.

The headteacher has a strong commitment to raising standards and, consequently, she has developed new policies to secure improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the quality of teaching. This is having a significant effect in the classroom and standards are improving, particularly in Key Stage 1. Furthermore, pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the quality of teaching have all improved since the last inspection. Many teachers now use assessment well to plan tasks that match the learning needs of the pupils. The headteacher has established an effective senior leadership team and the role of subject leaders has improved with clear procedures for monitoring their subjects. There have also been recent improvements to the school accommodation: a perimeter fence has improved security, the school has been redecorated internally and there is a new library and a well-equipped computer suite.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	D	E	D	
Science	B	D	E	E	

Standards are not high enough by the time the pupils leave the school. The school's results are well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards are close to the average in English but below the average in mathematics and well below the average in

science. However, there is evidence of improvement. The trend in the school's results is rising above the national trend since 1996 when standards were even lower. The table above shows, though, that this improvement has been erratic. The school set realistic targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in 2000 and 2001 based on pupils' prior attainment but it did not achieve these targets.

Standards are better in Key Stage 1. In 2000, the school's results were close to the national average in mathematics and below the national average in reading and writing. Compared to similar schools, results were above the average in reading and writing and well above the average in mathematics.

There are signs of significant improvements. Following the arrival of the new headteacher, the school evaluated its performance and introduced strategies to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour as well as the quality of teaching. In the national tests in 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining above national expectations improved by 11 per cent in reading, 21 per cent in writing and 40 per cent in mathematics by the age of seven. Pupils achieve better in Key Stage 1 because they have better attitudes to learning and it is taking longer for teachers to improve the attitudes of pupils in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, pupils enter the school with well below average attainment and they generally achieve well by the time they leave the school, particularly in geography, religious education and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are improving significantly and they show positive attitudes on almost all occasions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, overall. Most pupils behave well and the incidents of unacceptable behaviour have been reduced considerably.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils like their teachers and they have confidence in them.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is a little below the national average and is improving.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and more than half of the lessons seen were good or better. Although two lessons in Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory, teaching overall has improved since the last inspection. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively and the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good in Key Stage 1

and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The school generally meets the needs of all pupils well and it is improving its procedures to provide greater challenge for the potentially higher attaining pupils.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 have poorer behaviour and attitudes to learning than in Key Stage 1 and, as such, present greater challenges to teachers. The school's focus on pupils' behaviour and their personal development is having a greater immediate effect on the younger pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to show the poor attitudes to learning and, sometimes, the disruptive behaviour referred to in the last report. In the most effective lessons, the school's behaviour policy is applied clearly and assessments of pupils' earlier learning are used effectively to plan suitably challenging tasks for them. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching occurs when pupils are not managed well and their behaviour and attitudes to the lesson deteriorate with insufficient learning as a result. Teaching is improving as a direct result of the recently reviewed and comprehensive policy for teaching and learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. Statutory requirements are fully met. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that are very popular with the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from well-targeted support.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is a strong focus of its overall educational provision. This is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The school addresses their moral and social development in the very effective procedures it has introduced to improve behaviour.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares well for its pupils. It monitors their personal and academic progress well through regular assessments.

The school works very well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides dynamic and clear-sighted leadership that is achieving significant improvements to the school's educational provision. The assistant headteachers are very capable and they make a strong contribution to school's leadership team.
How well the governors	Satisfactory. Most governors are new to the school and they

fulfil their responsibilities	are beginning to develop their roles well and they ensure that statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has clearly identified the weaknesses in its performance and has rigorously implemented very effective changes.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has made good use of its resources to make improvements to the school environment and the quality of teaching and learning. The school applies the principles of best value well.

Staffing is suitable with a good number of learning support assistants who provide effective support. Improvements have been made to the accommodation and more are planned. Resources to support pupils' learning are often good, although the outdoor play area for the children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress their children make. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The good quality of the teaching. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The school is approachable. • The high achievement of the pupils. • The close links with parents. • The leadership and management of the school. • Their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas of significant concern to parents.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents, although standards could be higher.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school with attainment that is well below average. It is noticeable in the nursery that their language skills and aspects of their personal and social development are well below average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. When they enter Year 1, their attainment and attitudes have improved significantly but many children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals¹, particularly in their development of language and mathematical skills, and their personal and social development.
2. In the national tests in 2000, the school's results² at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. These standards are not high enough. However, these results have improved since the last inspection and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. For example, compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, these standards were close to the average in English and below the average in mathematics but well below the average in science. Furthermore, although standards are low, they are higher than they were and the trend in the school's results for all three subjects, although erratic, is rising above the national trend.
3. Standards have been rising more consistently in Key Stage 1 and in the national tests in 2000, pupils' attainment was close to the national average in mathematics and below the national average in reading and writing. These results compare more favourably with similar schools and were above the average of these schools in reading and writing and well above the average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils who achieved the nationally expected Level 2³ was close to the national average in reading and writing and above the average in mathematics. However, the percentage of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 was close to the average

¹ On Early Learning Goals: QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1 in six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage continues until pupils enter Year 1 when they begin Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

² On school results: an average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in other schools. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the National Curriculum levels of attainment are given a score. For example, in mathematics Level 1=9 points and Level 2=15 points, and so on. The average test score achieved by a school is calculated by adding up all the scores achieved by the pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. These comparisons are the ones used in the figures printed in the summary of the report. When the percentage of pupils attaining a particular level is compared to other schools, this is stated clearly in the text.

³ On Levels: The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels. It is a national expectation that all pupils should reach Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who reach Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected level for their age.

in mathematics but well below the average in reading and no pupil achieved Level 3 in writing. In the teacher assessments in science, all pupils attained Level 2 and a quarter attained the higher Level 3. However, inspection evidence shows that these pupils, who are currently in Year 4, do not continue to demonstrate these high standards.

4. With the arrival of the new headteacher following the national tests in 2000, the school began a rigorous evaluation of its performance. This showed the reason for pupils' lower achievement in Key Stage 2 to be that their attitudes were not good enough and that lessons were not planned with sufficient challenge for the potentially higher attaining pupils. A new behaviour policy and an improved teaching and learning policy were developed and implemented immediately. The six new members of the teaching staff have helped the leadership team to establish these new practices effectively and there are encouraging signs of improvement. The clearest evidence of this improvement is shown in the national tests in 2001 for Key Stage 1. The high proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 has been maintained and the figures for pupils attaining the higher Level 3 have increased from 14 per cent to 21 per cent in reading; from 0 per cent to 21 per cent in writing; and from 21 per cent to 61 per cent in mathematics. One pupil in Year 2 also attained Level 4 in mathematics in 2001. It is clear that higher expectations and the improved attitudes of pupils are taking longer to improve standards in Key Stage 2 where pupils' attitudes are more established and challenging. Nevertheless, the evidence of the inspection is that standards in English, mathematics and science have improved and are, currently, below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 but in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1.
5. The school maintains a suitable focus on inclusion. It is tracking the progress of individual pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning and has identified some gifted and talented pupils. Girls tend to perform better than boys do and lesson observations show that this is linked to the poorer attitudes to learning of boys in Key Stage 2. The school set targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics that were well below the average but based on the pupils' prior attainment. These targets were not met in 2000 and 2001. However, the school is now setting more challenging targets for pupils' attainment with an impressive commitment and a determination to raise standards.
6. Standards have been improving since the national tests in 2000 and, in literacy, standards are satisfactory by the end of Year 2 but unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6. In Key Stage 1, many pupils read with accuracy, expression and understanding. They write in a range of contexts, such as stories, poems and the writing of instructions, with satisfactory punctuation and legible handwriting. In Key Stage 2, however, only the higher attaining pupils recount a story in a logical order and express their views about books confidently. Standards of handwriting and spelling are variable and lack consistency. Some pupils' writing is of limited length and lacks clarity in the way ideas are expressed. The school has identified the improvement of writing skills as a priority.
7. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory at the end of Year 2 but unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6. This is because standards are rising generally throughout the school but it is, understandably, taking longer to raise standards significantly amongst the older pupils. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of the number system. They understand place value well and work with different types of fractions. However, many pupils in Key Stage 2 do not have a quick mental recall of

number and multiplication facts. Some pupils work out calculations mentally but the speed at which they do this, and hence their rate of learning, are restricted.

8. Standards in science are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils study a wide range of topics in Key Stage 1. These include for example, the human body, healthy eating and the effects of heating and cooling both water and chocolate. They also sort various materials and study simple electric circuits. In Key Stage 2, pupils carry out investigations and they understand the importance of a fair test. However, there is insufficient opportunity for them to learn about materials and physical processes.
9. Standards in the non-core subjects are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 in art and design, geography and physical education but unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, design and technology and history. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on religious education and music. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are satisfactory in geography, religious education and physical education but unsatisfactory in all other subjects. These standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and better in religious education. Care should be taken in judging the relative progress of pupils in the two key stages, as there have been significant improvements in standards recently, particularly in Key Stage 1.
10. Pupils' achievements are better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2 but generally good throughout the school. They arrive with attainment that is well below average and achieve well in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are very good in geography, religious education and physical education and good in all other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in terms of the targets set for them. They are encouraged to work hard by both the teachers and the learning support assistants, who work with them well both individually and in small groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Attitudes and behaviour are good overall, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is central to the school's commitment to improving standards. Pupils like coming to school, they enjoy learning, are happy to contribute to lessons and are capable of concentration and perseverance. The school's focus on improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning has had an immediate effect in Key Stage 1 but it is, understandably, taking longer to improve their attitudes in Key Stage 2. However, pupils persevere when faced with a problem. They respond with interest, are keen to answer questions and they take pleasure in their achievements.
12. Parents and the pupils agree that behaviour is generally good. However, there is a disruptive element and some pupils have severe behaviour difficulties, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school's behaviour management arrangements contain the problem well but they are not fully and effectively implemented in all classes. The behaviour of some pupils in Key Stage 2 can be poor and this has a deleterious impact on their attitudes to learning. There is a concern for the other pupils who are affected by this problem. The school is determined to establish acceptable standards of behaviour and, consequently, there were five fixed-term exclusions in the last year.

13. Relationships in the school are satisfactory. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and like them. They co-operate well with each other in lessons and at play and they display sensitivity to the feelings of others. For example, they are generally attentive whilst listening to or watching the contributions made by other pupils in lessons. Although pupils have little direct experience of other cultures and beliefs, they exhibit positive attitudes.
14. Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are confident in dealing with adults and in making presentations in public situations, such as assemblies. They enjoy the responsibility of working for the school council, but there are, otherwise, limited opportunities for them to take responsibility in the school. There are opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and to explore their own and others' feelings. For example, there are interesting discussions in circle time⁴ about such topics as the implications of choosing one person from a group of friends, the effects of bullying and 'special' possessions. Furthermore, throughout the school during the inspection, interest was shown in the idea of friendship, which was the assembly theme for the week.
15. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection. It is still slightly below the national average but the unauthorised absence level is low and attendance is now satisfactory. Pupils were punctual during the inspection but the registers indicate that a number of pupils do arrive late. Registration arrangements are very efficient and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Teaching is good for the children in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, and it is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, where two lessons seen were unsatisfactory. More than three-quarters of the lessons seen in the Foundation Stage were good. In Key Stage 1, two thirds of the lessons seen were good or better and almost a quarter were very good or better with some excellent teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 2, a third of the lessons seen were good or better, but two lessons were unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when ten per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. This may be due to the changes in the teaching staff since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the recently reviewed teaching and learning policy, with its emphasis on using assessment to inform the planning of appropriate tasks and the effective management of pupils' behaviour, is having a dynamic impact on the improvement of teaching.
17. The reason that teaching is better with younger pupils is that pupils in Key Stage 2 have poorer attitudes to learning and behaviour and, as such, present greater challenges to teachers. The school's focus on pupils' behaviour and personal development is having a greater immediate effect on the younger pupils. Pupils' attitudes were good or better in all but one lesson in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, but in less than half the lessons in Key Stage 2. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to show the poor attitudes to learning and, sometimes, the disruptive behaviour referred to in the last report. For effective learning to take place, it is

⁴ On circle time - This is the provision of a discussion period which provides good opportunities for pupils to talk about issues that face them in everyday life.

essential that teachers manage the pupils well and this is being helped by the clear application of the school's behaviour policy. The unsatisfactory teaching observed occurred because the pupils were not managed well. Their behaviour and attitudes to the lesson deteriorated, with a consequently negative effect on their learning. Good teaching ensures that those pupils with special educational needs make suitable gains in their learning compared to their prior attainment.

18. The teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teachers in the nursery and reception classes liaise well in planning appropriate tasks that match the needs of these young children. They are supported very well by the nursery nurses, one of whom moves with the children into the reception to provide continuity for them. Teachers establish good relationships that help the children to feel secure and develop confidence.
19. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and this enables them to teach the basic skills well. They are improving their own skills in information and communication technology and this will allow them to not only teach the subject more effectively but also to incorporate information and communication technology into the teaching of other subjects.
20. Teachers' planning is good. They set very clear learning intentions for each lesson, which they share with the pupils. Consequently, pupils are aware of what they are doing and why. Teachers plan tasks that are carefully matched to the learning needs of the pupils. They are able to do this because they assess pupils' work well, establishing what they have learned and identifying what they need to learn next. Teachers note this clearly when they mark pupils' work and they use the information from these assessments to plan future learning tasks. This ensures that tasks are suitably challenging and that pupils are encouraged to achieve well. However, this good practice has not been developed consistently, particularly in Key Stage 2.
21. Pupils' interest is sustained by the effective methods that teachers use. For example, the networked computers in the computer suite allow all pupils to follow the teachers' demonstrations and instructions on their own monitors, and pupils in Year 5 responded enthusiastically to the challenge of ratios in a stimulating mathematics lesson.
22. Teachers usually manage pupils well and the best lessons employ very effective strategies to promote good attitudes to learning. Some pupils, particularly the older ones in Key Stage 2, present particular challenges to teachers because they have not developed good attitudes to learning. The school has introduced a new behaviour policy that is improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. All pupils are aware of the 'Give me five' strategy that requires them to stop what they are doing and pay full attention to the teacher. This enables teachers to maintain control of the learning situation. When it is not employed effectively, the ensuing situation can lead directly to unsatisfactory learning. In one lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher lost the impact of this strategy because she did not wait for the full attention of the whole class before continuing to work with a group of pupils. Consequently, pupils were confused and unsure what was expected of them and, eventually, ignored these requests as their behaviour deteriorated. In most lessons, however, teachers are sensitive to the social and learning needs of pupils but also set very clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is a significant factor that directly influences the quality of learning in the school.

23. The best lessons maintain a very good pace with pupils given a limited time in which they are to complete a number of specified tasks throughout the lesson. All lessons maintain a satisfactory pace and this is important in sustaining the interest of pupils, particularly those with poor attitudes to learning. Teachers prepare suitable resources for lessons and they work very well with the learning support assistants who provide very effective support for pupils. The detailed and helpful way that teachers mark pupils' work, reinforcing what they have done well and suggesting what they should try to do next, is often exemplary. For example, the marking of extended writing at Key Stage 2 shows pupils how to improve their stories by making greater use of detail when describing main characters. Teachers set suitable and regular homework, often to reinforce the guidance they give pupils when they mark their work.
24. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good for English, mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education. It is satisfactory for information and communication technology, art and design, geography and history but there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement in music and religious education. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good in religious education and satisfactory in all other subjects except geography, about which it was not possible to make a secure judgement. The quality of teaching is improving as a direct result of the implementation by the new headteacher of comprehensive policies for teaching and learning and for the monitoring of teaching. This is because all teachers have agreed these policies and there is a shared commitment to implementing them effectively.

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

25. When the school was last inspected, the curriculum was satisfactory overall at both key stages, with priority given to literacy and numeracy. However, there was insufficient emphasis on a number of other subjects in the curriculum and statutory requirements for information and communication technology were not being met. There were no policies for personal, social and health education and there was no effective provision for drugs education. Planning was only sufficiently detailed for the core subjects with few opportunities identified where links were possible between subjects.
26. Good progress has been made in addressing these shortcomings, and the school now provides a broad, relevant and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements in all subjects and the provision of religious education. All pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment, have equal access to all subjects. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons, such as for individual assessment of their learning needs or small group tuition, sufficient attention is given to ensure that they maintain an equal opportunity in all subjects. The drawing up of policies for subjects and other aspects of the school's curriculum provision has ensured that there is a much better focus on what is to be taught and how, with an emphasis on raising standards. The value of homework has been promoted well. Homework is set regularly and includes both spelling and number activities. Parents have a clear idea of the expectations of the school regarding homework, which is making a positive contribution to the raising of standards.

27. Sufficient teaching time is provided at both key stages for all subjects. The greatest proportion of time is appropriately allocated to literacy and numeracy. Governors support this in confirming their commitment to the teaching of basic skills. The recent reorganisation of the teaching day to include three sessions each morning has provided the flexibility needed to enhance the teaching of basic skills. Pupils now receive specific teaching of mental mathematics, handwriting, spelling and library skills. All classes now have timetabled lessons for personal, social and health education in 'circle time'. These lessons are used well and they are instrumental in supporting the school's priority of improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
28. Opportunities are taken to provide important links between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their literacy and artistic skills to prepare a multimedia presentation to be created on a computer. Good progress has been made in improving the premises, with curriculum provision in literacy and information and communication technology much better because pupils can now access a good library and computer suite.
29. The headteacher has led the school well in reforming the planning of the curriculum. The teaching of literacy and numeracy follows the national strategies, and schemes of work for other subjects follow the national guidance, with modification at the planning stage to reflect the current attainment of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with the same curriculum as other pupils but it is matched to their levels of attainment.
30. There is a clear programme of topics to be covered during each term. Medium-term planning shows the units of work for each half term and there are detailed plans for individual sessions. These highlight the lesson objectives, key questions that are to be posed, teaching methods and group activities. The important information gained through the assessment of pupils' needs is informing curriculum planning well. Subject leaders are now monitoring teachers' planning to ensure that the improvements made are being sustained.
31. There is a well-established programme for visitors and school visits. This includes the opportunity for pupils in Year 6 to spend a residential week at a field study centre, which provides them with the chance to cover aspects of subjects such as orienteering. Extra-curricular activities are good and include sporting opportunities, a science club, media activities and a homework facility. Community links are developing well. A citizenship club is held on a Saturday morning each month with a police officer, who is also a governor. There are satisfactory transfer arrangements with the local high school and regular links with local churches. A nearby major supermarket supports the school with provisions for the breakfast club.
32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and complies with the Code of Practice for special educational needs⁵. These pupils have full access to all subjects and are helped and guided in their learning by enthusiastic and caring learning support assistants, who are involved in planning the next stage of learning

⁵ On SEN Code Of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

for them. The learning support assistants are well informed and actively involved throughout lessons, working closely with pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they understand and complete the tasks set.

33. The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This provision contributes significantly to their personal development. The moral and social elements are particularly relevant to the current aims of the school because of the emphasis that has been given to issues concerned with behaviour.
34. Spiritual development is satisfactory and there is planned provision for reflective periods. There is a daily act of collective worship that contributes to spiritual awareness partly by providing opportunities for reflection. Circle time is also used well for spiritual development. For example, the reception class considers special possessions, and Year 4 pupils imagine that they are a raindrop that falls on a mountain and flows to the sea. Ideas of friendship and feelings are also explored. Other opportunities exist; for example, in religious education where pupils in Year 6 reflect sensitively on the idea of a special place. Children in the reception class showed a real sense of wonder when they realised that the young girl in photographs they were looking at was their teacher.
35. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and strongly linked. circle time is, again, an important contributor. Pupils consider issues with a moral content such as bullying and a wise choice of friends. Such sessions also require pupils to develop social skills, to listen sensitively and to contribute confidently. The school has several good joint initiatives with a local police officer on the topic of vandalism and the elimination of crime. The school's behaviour management arrangements emphasise the ideas of right and wrong, showing that rules allow effective social interaction. The school council, extra-curricular activities and a residential week are other good provisions for pupils' social development.
36. Cultural development is satisfactory, overall. It is enhanced by the visits to museums and Durham cathedral, as well as by visiting artists and links with the Community Arts Service. The syllabus for religious education includes the study of the major faiths and there are visitors who represent different cultures. However, there is little promotion of the richness and diversity of different cultures to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school is a caring organisation. This is demonstrated by the breakfast club that has been introduced recently to provide food and a secure environment before the start of the school day. There are also arrangements for pupils who have inadequate provisions at home, to do homework. Arrangements to monitor pupils' personal development are effective and include behaviour tracking sheets and the recording of the rewards and sanctions system. The pupils have confidence in their teachers and this enhances these informal arrangements. Personal and academic support is good because of the generous provision of support staff.
38. Arrangements to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory. For example, there is a good relationship with the education social worker, who follows up attendance problems on a regular basis. However, there is no clear strategy to improve attendance or a procedure to record temporary absence during the school

day and the arrangements to deal with absence without a known cause are not consistently understood. Registers meet legal requirements.

39. Arrangements to promote good behaviour are very good. Parents and pupils acknowledge that the recent introduction of the behaviour policy has led to a significant improvement in the standard of behaviour. The arrangements are based on very clear rules that are reinforced by rewards and sanctions. Pupils understand the arrangements, which are well promoted in the school and amongst parents. Parents are involved if their children's behaviour is unsatisfactory, but they are also informed if it is particularly good. The school gives a high priority to establishing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and this contributes to the elimination of oppressive behaviour.
40. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met and there are suitable procedures, which involve governors, to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained. Child protection and lunchtime supervision arrangements are also satisfactory. There is a suitably trained person with responsibility for child protection, and a policy. Lunchtime supervision is well organised and many supervisors have benefited from a course on their roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in the positive relationships they have with the pupils and the clear manner in which they support and reinforce the school culture.
41. Considerable attention has been given to improving the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Procedures are now good, with clear systems that are implemented throughout both key stages. The school uses the optional tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to supplement the national test programme in Years 2 and 6. The purchase of the local education authority's statistical service provides advice on analysis and an educational context for the data that is produced. As a result, the school now has good information that is analysed carefully by both the school leadership team and subject leaders. A detailed programme for scrutinising pupils' work across all year groups in English, mathematics and science supplements test data, and pupils' progress in reading and writing is assessed each half term. Individual targets were set for all pupils in July 2001 before transfer to new classes in September.
42. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, whose needs are assessed regularly. Teachers can request that a specialist teacher carries out a full assessment of an individual pupil's learning needs. This experienced teacher, who is employed by the school for one half-day session per week, fulfils this task well and consults appropriately with parents. The assessment is used to make recommendations to the class teacher and to the co-ordinator for special educational needs, who is currently the headteacher. It has led to referral to and the involvement of outside agencies so that specialist support can be provided. Individual educational plans are up to date, and action points are clear and make reference to the literacy and numeracy approaches to be pursued. Individual education plans are sufficiently detailed to record the targets to be achieved, achievement criteria, strategies, resources and the level of support. There is regular monitoring of individual education plans, and class teachers record progress within four weeks of the start of the academic year.
43. Good use is now made of the information gained through assessment, addressing a shortcoming noted in the previous inspection report. Teachers now use marking to provide pupils' with clear direction on how they can improve their work. Subject

leaders read half-termly assessments by class teachers. They then identify objectives to be tackled. Information gained through the analysis of data has often led to specific action. In English, additional provision is made to improve pupils' writing skills. In mathematics, adjustments have been made to the timetable, with sessions for mental mathematics being introduced. In science, the subject leader has analysed pupils' answers in tests, identified where they are having difficulty and made recommendations to overcome these problems.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has given a high priority to the development of links with parents. This has been successful and evidence from various meetings with parents and from the survey shows very strong parental support for the school. Parents value the improved relationship with the staff and the provision of a room for parents, which they were invited to use after a class assembly during the inspection.
45. The information provided for parents is good. For example, there are regular and well-presented newsletters and meetings about topics of interest, such as the behaviour and homework policies. The governors' annual report and the prospectus are clear and informative. There are opportunities to attend consultation evenings and teachers are widely available at other times. The headteacher reserves a specific hour each day for meetings with parents without an appointment and they are very appreciative of the staff's approachability. The pupils' annual reports are satisfactory; they are detailed and meet statutory requirements. However, they tend to emphasise achievement and give little or no indication of what is needed next to bring about improvement.
46. Parents have a good impact on the life of the school. The help provided by them in classrooms is relatively small but there is very good support for school events such as class assemblies and parents' evenings. Parents also have a growing role in the management of the 'Friends of Rift House', which raises funds and organises social events.
47. The school has very good procedures to encourage parents to help their children at home. These include information on the amount and timing of homework and good, comprehensive guidance on help with numeracy and literacy for every year group. Homework diaries have been recently introduced to provide monitoring and a channel of communication. However, the impact of these procedures is limited because they have been introduced only recently. There is considerable scope for parents to make a greater contribution to their children's schooling.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and assistant headteachers are very good. The headteacher provides clear-sighted, dynamic leadership that is already bringing about significant improvements. Her aim is to improve teaching and learning to such a level that the best possible opportunities are provided for children who often come to school with low self-esteem and challenging behaviour. She has established a clear partnership with the governors, and an agreed set of aims and values form the basis for the future development of the school. Interviews with governors, parents and members of staff show how

much they value her support and her commitment to raising standards. She is very well supported by two assistant headteachers. They are very capable and are making a strong contribution to school improvement through their roles as subject leaders in English and mathematics, key stage co-ordinators and end-of-key-stage teachers.

49. Since her appointment in September 2000, the headteacher has made a number of important changes. About half of the school's teaching staff has changed and the new teachers are fully committed to the new aims and ideals of the school. The two assistant headteachers have been appointed from the existing school staff. In their new roles it is possible to see how their influence is being used to enhance learning opportunities in each key stage and improve the quality of education provided. They are now part of an effective and supportive school leadership team. To extend the role of the school leadership team was a key issue at the previous inspection and this has been very well addressed. Other key issues involved the curriculum, and the role of subject leaders. The headteacher has improved the time available for teaching, and all subjects of the curriculum now have appropriate emphasis. A new behaviour policy has been introduced and more consistent behaviour management is leading to improved attitudes, especially at Key Stage 1. As a result of this, learning opportunities are better and many pupils are making good progress. However, these improvements have not yet had sufficient time to make a full impact on standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
50. With the arrival of new teachers, opportunities have been taken to assign new leaders in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and to develop the role of all subject leaders. They now have clear, specific job descriptions that include a remit to look at standards in their subjects. All now monitor planning and pupils' work, regularly identify strengths and areas for development, and adapt subject planning accordingly. Subject leaders in English and mathematics monitor teaching, along with the headteacher, and give feedback to teachers as part of the professional development of both teachers and subject leaders. An analysis of test results is undertaken to identify areas of weakness, and new work is planned to address these weaknesses. There are plans to involve all the subject leaders in assessing standards through the careful monitoring of pupils' work, in monitoring teaching in their subjects and in managing budgets for their subject. These initiatives will further promote school self-evaluation. The headteacher is currently the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She has a good overview of individual education plans, manages the funding for special educational needs and consults regularly with the governor with responsibility for special educational needs. The headteacher is actively involved in supporting the progress of pupils through the Code of Practice for special educational needs.
51. There are a number of new governors on the governing body and all of the governors show a clear commitment to the school and express great confidence in the headteacher and staff. Governors have established an appropriate range of committees to gather information. There are now 'link' governors for each curriculum area, and they plan to visit school on a regular basis to help them better understand the strengths of the school and the areas for development. Subject leaders make presentations about their subjects to the governing body. This exchange of information and ideas is enabling governors to develop a fuller sense of partnership and is a growing factor in the school's improvement. All governors have received training, they fulfil their statutory duties and they are beginning to participate more fully in the job of shaping the direction of the school.

52. The school improvement plan is a concise document and an effective tool for guiding school development. It is a one-year plan that is reviewed before the end of its term by all staff and governors, and this contributes to the next plan. One year ago, staff and governors prioritised issues to be addressed, broke these down into manageable elements and set about addressing them. There are realistic timescales and identified costs and systems in place to enable the school to monitor the effectiveness of its changes. All potential developments in the school improvement plan are seen in the context, stated in the school's mission statement, of 'improving teaching and learning and the raising of standards', an indication of the clear focus the school has.
53. Financial planning is very good. It is based on the needs of the school improvement plan, and budgets are monitored effectively. Substantial funds have been spent on internal decoration, refurbishing the library and providing a new computer suite. The recent provision of perimeter fencing is proving good value for money in the already reduced incidence of vandalism, which was a drain on the school's finances. Although many governors are new to the role, they receive regular financial updates in order to monitor spending. Specific grants are used effectively for their intended purpose. The school's use of best value principles in deciding upon purchases of resources and in the deployment of staffing resources is good. At the end of the last financial year the school had a budget surplus which is higher than that recommended, due to lower staffing costs and unexpected savings on the costs of the new computer suite. This is being reduced as the governing body has appropriate plans for improving the outside play area for the Foundation Stage and for maintaining present staffing levels. Day-to-day finances are managed well by the school clerk, who is efficient and provides a welcoming reception for parents and visitors alike. All the recommendations of the last audit report have been implemented.
54. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The school is well staffed and there are sufficient, appropriately-qualified teachers to teach the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the children in the Foundation Stage. There is a broad range of experience and many teachers are relatively new to the school, which has led to the establishment of a committed and supportive team. A good number of suitably-trained learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the learning and care of the pupils. Accommodation in the school is suitable, and the library and computer suite are noteworthy developments. The site manager, who is also a governor, takes pride in ensuring that the school is bright and clean and she has good relationships with the pupils. The recently-erected security fence has reduced vandalism, the school has been redecorated internally and space is used effectively. For example, the parents' room was developed from a disused shower room. However, the outside play arrangements for the children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory and the external decoration of the buildings is very poor. Classrooms are well equipped. For example, each has a computer and an overhead projector, and the computer suite has a high standard of provision. Learning resources are satisfactory in all subjects and they are good for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The school has carefully reviewed its provision, with a focus on raising standards, and the school improvement plan identifies clearly the priorities for achieving this, including the areas listed below. The inspection team agrees therefore that in order to raise standards, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Further improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 by:
 - (a) ensuring that there is sufficient guidance and support to allow all teachers to consistently apply the school's behaviour policy; (Paragraphs 17, 22, 87, 95, 101, 112, 126, 135)
 - (b) making more consistent use of assessment information to plan tasks that better match individual pupil's learning needs, particularly those of the potentially higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2. (Paragraphs 20, 87, 101, 121, 126)
- (2) Continue to encourage governors to further develop their roles in order to play a full and active role in school improvement. (Paragraphs 51, 53)
- (3) Improve the outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage. (Paragraphs 54, 76, 79)

Minor areas for development

The school might also consider the use of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum (paragraphs 88, 97, 108), improve the monitoring of daily attendance (paragraph 38) the information parents receive in the annual reports of pupils' progress and the contribution of parents to their children's education (paragraph 45, 47).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	30	34	2	0	0
Percentage	1	9	41	47	3	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	229
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	89

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	61

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.03
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	9	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	--	--	--
	Girls	--	--	--
	Total	24	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (78)	86 (78)	96 (85)
	National	82 (83)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	--	--	--
	Girls	--	--	--
	Total	24	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (85)	96 (89)	100 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

The numbers of boys and girls have been omitted from the above table as there were fewer than ten boys who took the tests.

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
		2000	19	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	14
	Girls	12	9	11
	Total	23	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (41)	57 (71)	68 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	26	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (56)	68 (65)	76 (79)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	211
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	190

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	535,429
Total expenditure	520,425
Expenditure per pupil	1,866
Balance brought forward from previous year	57,579
Balance carried forward to next year	72,583

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	272
Number of questionnaires returned	64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	27	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	19	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	0	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	38	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	78	19	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	22	3	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	16	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	64	33	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	30	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	25	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	34	9	0	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. At the time of the inspection, 46 children were attending the nursery for half-day sessions and there were 18 children, attending full time, in the reception class. Children are admitted to the nursery in the September and January following their third birthday. They are assessed soon after they start nursery and in their first term in the reception class, and careful records are kept of their progress throughout their time in the Foundation Stage. Children move from nursery to reception in September when they are four years old before March, and in January otherwise.
57. When children enter the school, their attainment is well below average, particularly in language skills and aspects of their personal and social development. However, the teaching in both the nursery and the reception class is good and children make good progress.
58. The children in the Foundation Stage enjoy coming to school. They quickly feel happy and secure in the stimulating environment that has been created. They soon settle into the routines of the nursery and respond very well to adults and other children. The nursery nurse makes a good contribution to children's learning and they gain maximum benefit from her skilled interaction. The work in the nursery is also well supported by two nursery nurse students. This enables children to work regularly in small groups with an adult to develop their speaking and listening skills and social skills. Parents are encouraged to come into the nursery when bringing and collecting their children. The children show them their work on the wall and parents are encouraged to share in their children's learning. For example, a child was investigating magnets while waiting for her parent. The parent watched the magnet lifting up the chain and the response from the child was, 'It's magic, isn't it?'
59. There is good continuity between nursery and reception, and the routines established in nursery continue very successfully in the reception class. One nursery nurse moves from the nursery into reception with the children and this ensures that they still feel secure and settle quickly in their new class. She works well in partnership with the teacher and contributes significantly to the teaching and learning in the reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Children enter the nursery with very poorly-developed personal, social and emotional skills but make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage although few are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children are keen to be involved in all the activities offered. Their behaviour is good and they establish good relationships with adults and other children.
61. All the children quickly settle into the well-established routines in the nursery and accept simple social rules. For example, they wait quietly while a child brings the snack round and some say 'Thank you' or 'No thank you' when they are offered food but many still lack the confidence to respond. The older children work well together and are able to make choices when they are not directed. They sit quietly,

listen carefully and watch as others smell their toast and fruit. Many recognise their own name on the 'apple tree' and take their named apple from the tree and put it in the box to show that they are in the nursery. One child arrived in nursery very upset but was very sensitively supported by the nursery nurse. The child was made to feel special by being given the box of toy animals to carry when they all went to the hall for physical education. This settled him sufficiently to take an active part in the lesson. The youngest children are not yet at a stage where they settle long on any one task and they are easily distracted, flitting from one task to another. Their concentration span is short unless an adult is working with them. They are happy to help others to insert the straw in their milk carton. They develop independence by collecting and putting on their own coat for outdoor play. The youngest children are quickly learning the strategies used throughout the school to ensure good behaviour. They respond well when asked by the teacher for their attention. They sit quietly and look at her, ready to listen. They bring their own chairs to the circle for snack time and say "Sorry" if they bump anyone on the way.

62. This progress is maintained throughout the children's time in reception, where relationships are good. The children are polite; they help each other and behave well. They respond quickly to the teacher's requests and they develop the confidence to contribute in discussion and to offer suggestions. The teaching is good and the children respond to this well. They are enthusiastic, show a willingness to work hard and are keen to please the teacher. They confidently show their work to other adults and take pride in what they achieve.

Communication, language and literacy.

63. The majority of children enter the nursery with very poor speaking and listening skills but make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. However, they are still below the level expected when they enter Year 1. They have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in all areas of learning. For example, in the role-play corner children experience life in a hospital and say that 'I've hurt my arm' and 'It needs a pot'. Children talk on a one-to-one basis with their friends as they play with musical instruments and question what sounds the instruments will make, but they do not talk in sentences, often only using one word or a short phrase. They improve their listening skills in small groups and during circle time.
64. Children write and make marks using pencils, crayons, chinks and felt-tip pens. Many of the children form recognisable letters and numbers on paper. All the older children draw a face to describe whether they liked or disliked the smell of toast during snack time. Some show recognisable features, but many do not draw eyes, noses and mouths. Name cards are on the 'mark-making' table and many of the older children make good attempts to write their name, but some are still making marks that have little meaning. Children are encouraged to name their picture or pattern when it has been completed. The higher achievers happily write their name accurately on the teacher's whiteboard using felt-tip pens and they demonstrate their understanding of letter formation by writing letters such as 'k' and 'p'. Message pads are near the telephone for children to record messages in the 'hospital'. Many opportunities are provided in the nursery to encourage early reading skills. Children enjoy sharing books and can identify the front of the book. They explain why the mother would be cross when the child spilt the paint and recognise the primary colours used in the book as well as white and orange. Lists of items in the cleaner's cupboard are displayed in the 'hospital'. Suitable books are near the 'small world'

play area to encourage children to find out more about houses and shops following their walk in the local environment.

65. In the reception class the teaching is good and children make good progress. They are introduced to more formal literacy and numeracy sessions in preparation for their work in Year 1, although these activities are modified to meet the needs of young children.
66. The curriculum in reception builds on the children's previous learning in the nursery and children continue to make good progress. They practise writing the letter 'j', first in the air following the teacher's demonstration, and then in their writing books. Most pupils are able to achieve a page of recognisable examples, but some children are reversing the shape of their letter and find it difficult to keep a consistent size. The majority of children write their own name, using a capital letter correctly, though some need name cards and additional support. In their literacy lesson the children suggest simple sentences to the teacher to start their class book about 'the waves', such as, 'the waves come in they bring in a shell'. All children use small whiteboards to copy carefully the writing of each word demonstrated by the teacher. They are encouraged to give the sound of the letter as well as attempt to write it, but many find it difficult to write a sentence unaided and have difficulty forming recognisable letters. These children are not yet writing simple key words unaided.

Mathematical development

67. Children make good progress in developing their mathematical skills but few reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.
68. At the time of the inspection, the youngest children had only been in the nursery for four weeks and were just beginning to count. They use their story of 'The Three Bears' to help them count to three and to understand 'smaller' and 'larger' when putting the bears onto the right chairs and beds in the 'hospital'. They match the numbers one, two and three on cards to the numbers on the aprons worn by three children. The younger children collect oranges from the shopping bag one at a time and put them into hoops. As they add an orange, they count how many are in the hoop. If they find this difficult, other children willingly help them to count. They count to ten as they put them back into the bag. The children sort bears into colours and make the shape of the number when the clock strikes 'one' in 'Hickory Dickory Dock'.
69. Older children count to ten confidently. Their understanding is reinforced well through activities using numbers, spots and hoops to order and match numbers. Children play the 'Incy Wincy Spider' game using dice to move the spider up the spout. Jigsaws are used well to develop an understanding of numbers to 20. Many children count higher numbers with some accuracy. Children's understanding of number is extended further when they use a computer program to match the correct number with the number of objects. Children develop their understanding of two dimensional shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles and triangles by using different shaped paper when writing and painting and through working with construction materials.
70. The teaching is good and every opportunity is taken to reinforce children's understanding of number. They are encouraged to try when they find counting difficult and are sensitively supported by all the adults in the nursery. However,

there is insufficient opportunity for children to develop an understanding of simple addition and subtraction using number games in small groups.

71. The children in reception continue to make good progress as they begin to develop a wider mathematical vocabulary. They confidently count up to ten and back, and many count to 30. They are beginning to develop an understanding of 'one more than' and 'two more than' when counting. The children experience difficulty writing numbers. The quality of teaching is good. The tasks set match the needs of individual children, although some are insufficiently extended in their understanding of a wider range of mathematical experiences. Those who are hesitant are supported effectively and all children sustain concentration to work well throughout lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world develop through a range of activities that encourage them to pay attention and show an interest in what is happening around them. In this area of learning, many children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.
73. Children use a magnet to lift clips, pins and a chain and they link the tool kit they play with to the television programme about Bob the Builder. Children learn about life in a hospital in their home corner where they answer the telephone, put bandages on 'broken' arms and legs and learn about the people who work in a hospital. Children go for a walk to look at the shops, the church, the pelican crossing, the post box and the telephone box. They make good use of information and communication technology to support their learning and learn to control the mouse well. They print their pictures, with support, and tell others about it. The children learn how to prepare food for snack time and begin to develop an understanding of the importance of clean hands when they work in the new nursery kitchen.
74. In the reception class, children begin to understand growth and change by looking at different photographs of themselves, first as babies and then as they are now. They find this difficult to understand initially but sort them, as a group, into 'then and now'. The children look at a series of pictures of a person from a baby to the age of about eleven. They are amazed to find that the pictures are of their teacher. One child suggests that the reason for this is that 'You got bigger because you ate all the food'. Children begin to understand that not all things change as they grow older. Their eyes and hair colour stay the same but their hair grows. They learn about harvest time and look at celebrations in their own lives when they talk about birthdays and weddings.

Physical development

75. Children make good progress in their physical development and many are likely to attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. On entry to the nursery, the majority of children find cutting difficult but the art areas provide opportunities for them to practise these skills and they make steady progress. They improve their handling skills by using pencils, felt-tip pens and brushes, and they practise with the mouse when using the computer. They have only just started to use the hall and are not confident in a large space. At the time of the inspection, a lesson was linked to their story 'Farmer Duck' where they have to rake the soil, go to

sleep, bounce out of bed and chase farmer duck out of the farm. They watch carefully as the teacher shows them the movements and all become involved, but they do not show any previous experience of using their arms, jumping or pulling an object. Other adults sensitively support any children who are hesitant.

76. There is a secure outdoor play area, but equipment has to be taken outside each time the children use it, which limits teaching opportunities. The younger children are developing their climbing and balancing skills. They climb vertical ladders to stand on a platform at the top and go back down safely. They enjoy climbing up the steps onto wooden blocks and jumping from the top, and they climb through holes in the blocks wriggling out at the opposite side. Children enjoy using the cars, bicycles and other wheeled toys. They play well together when two push the wooden trolley to give another child a ride.

Creative development

77. The creative development of most children is good and they are on target to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children are provided with a good range of materials for them to use to build towers, identifying colour and shape. They are given opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture. For example, children always have the opportunity to work with paint and they recognise red, blue and yellow when using these to paint a picture. They mix red and yellow to make orange and use this to paint oranges. As they are painting, they discuss their pictures, for example, 'I could eat these...They look good', 'No you can't 'cause it's only paint'. Children take chalks outside and practise drawing shapes on the paving stones. They develop their cutting and sticking skills by cutting old Christmas cards to create a collage, guided by a parent helper. There is a good selection of untuned musical instruments in the nursery. The children are curious to find out the sounds that are made by the instruments, holding them properly as they play them. The nursery teacher checks their understanding of the sounds made by each instrument by playing them behind a screen. The children have to recognise which instrument makes the sound they hear. Children learn a range of songs and rhymes, singing them from memory, and they add actions.
78. The children in reception create pictures using paint, chalk, crayons, pencils and collage techniques. For example, they mix paint to create a sunshine picture and develop their sticking techniques when they make a picture frame of card. They have opportunities to investigate a range of untuned instruments and play these to the song 'I am the music man'. Children know how to hold and play the instruments correctly. They select the correct instrument when the teacher names it. The teacher encourages the children to listen carefully when they sing the song 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. They are asked to think of an instrument with a suitable sound to play while they sing the song. They suggest the triangle, finger cymbals and the bells. They select the drums to accompany their singing of 'Humpty Dumpty'.
79. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The nursery and reception teachers plan their work together to ensure that children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals and all children have equal access to all the areas of learning. This planning is detailed and shows clearly the knowledge, understanding and skills young children need to acquire. The nursery resources have improved since the last inspection. A new kitchen is in place with work surfaces at an appropriate height for young children. New storage and small equipment have been purchased. Two new computers are in place to enable

children to regularly practise their skills in controlling the mouse. However, the outdoor play area is underdeveloped.

ENGLISH

80. In the national tests in 2000, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below the national average in reading and writing. However, it was above the average of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment was well below the national average but close to the average of similar schools. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in Key Stage 1, but girls do better than boys in Key Stage 2.
81. However, the school's results have been rising above the national trend and there are further signs of improvement. Significantly, seven of the 12 teachers are new to the school since the national tests in 2000. Two senior members of staff are deployed teaching at the end of each key stage and are well placed to monitor standards. The school has introduced an improved programme of behaviour management that is resulting in more positive pupils' attitudes to their work and to the relationships they form. School timetables have been revised, with English now being allocated specific lessons for extended writing, handwriting and spelling in addition to the daily literacy session. However, the clearest evidence of improvement is provided by early indications from the national test results for 2001 in Key Stage 1. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 in 2000 was 14 per cent in reading whilst no pupil attained this level in writing. In 2001, the proportion attaining Level 3 had increased to 25 per cent in reading, and 21 per cent in writing.
82. Consequently, inspection judgements are that standards in reading and writing are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 but standards are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, standards in spelling are not as high as might be expected and standards in handwriting are variable. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in terms of the targets set for them.
83. In Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 2 listen carefully to their teacher and assimilate the instructions they need to play a literacy game. When presenting answers on their whiteboards, they respond promptly to their teacher's request. Most pupils are improving the clarity of their speech because they try to imitate the clear way teachers in which speak to them. They learn how to combine the sounds that make up words such as in the transition from 'hay' to 'stray'. Pupils respond well to the praise they receive for their efforts. At Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are variable and some pupils are not always sufficiently attentive. The management of these pupils is a crucial factor in the quality of teaching and, when successful, there are some worthwhile discussions between pupils and teachers. Sometimes, such as in a music lesson where they offered opinions on the melody they heard, pupils express their views clearly. However, pupils often make much more limited responses, using one or two words, to questions they are asked and they do not develop their ideas. Pupils are often reluctant to make a verbal contribution to class discussions.

84. Standards in reading are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Higher attaining pupils read with accuracy, expression and understanding. They confidently identify the main characters in a story and relate some of the main events. They use this information well to make predictions about what is likely to happen next. Other pupils use a number of reading strategies to help them overcome their difficulties, such as clues in the illustrations or by building up words using phonic skills. Some pupils lack confidence and are more reluctant to read, but they respond well to encouragement and praise. Standards in reading are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Some higher attaining pupils recall the plot of a story logically and are confident in giving their views about how the story could unfold. Some pupils give reasons for their selection of favourite characters. They confidently use the contents and index pages in reference material to find factual information for their work in other subjects. One pupil in Year 6 spoke confidently about the sections of a daily newspaper and showed a clear understanding of pages to access for news and sections to browse through, such as the classified advertisements. However, this level of confidence, understanding and knowledge in reading is exceptional. Standards in reading are rising but it will take some time for this to have an impact through all years in Key Stage 2.
85. Standards in writing meet national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. However, presentation and spelling are variable. By the end of Year 2, most pupils cover an appropriate range of writing experiences, including writing the beginning of stories, producing lists, writing instructions and composing poetry. Punctuation is taught regularly and most pupils make satisfactory use of capital letters and full stops, although some are more confident than others in using speech marks. Most of the pupils' writing is printed, although some pupils become sufficiently confident to join letters and produce a legible, joined script. Pupils make satisfactory use of description when writing about their feelings. Although presentation is sometimes marred with untidy corrections, most pupils are improving the quality of presentation. Their writing books show that they are regularly taught handwriting with attention given to achieving consistency in letter formation, but pupils make mistakes in spelling simple words.
86. Standards in writing are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Handwriting and spelling are variable. By Year 6, some higher attaining pupils construct a story and a synopsis. They use punctuation regularly including speech marks, brackets, commas and apostrophes. These pupils regularly use descriptive language, usually spell accurately and present their work satisfactorily. Their stories have good beginnings, a satisfactory structure that incorporates the development of characters and ideas and suitable endings. These higher attaining pupils make better use of vocabulary including words such as 'disturbing' and 'disgraceful'. However, these pupils are only achieving standards typical of most 11 year olds. Other pupils cover the same broad programme of writing experiences. However, their work is not as detailed in terms of description, and elements are often missing. For example, when setting down and constructing a letter, some omit to draw the letter to a close with a greeting and signature. A Year 6 pupil, writing instructions on how to plant winter bulbs, lacked the necessary precision when writing the directions for storing the plant pot in a dark place. The presentation of these pupils' work is variable and often lacks consistency. Most do not spell as accurately as might be expected for their age. Teachers are aware of shortcomings in standards of writing, handwriting and spelling and are addressing improvements in teaching and learning as a priority. This was clarified in a discussion with Year 6 pupils about their plans for writing where they clearly understood what was expected of them. Pupils are

beginning to speak confidently about making changes to their writing so that it becomes 'more powerful and more interesting'. The writing of pupils with special educational needs often lacks detail and makes less use of punctuation. The writing they produce is often short and they continue to print letters. Some of these pupils are beginning to join letters, but presentation often suffers as a result.

87. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and at times outstanding, and in Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. The planning of work is good. It closely mirrors the National Literacy Strategy, with teachers making accurate assessments of pupils' progress and using this valuable information to plan the next stage of learning. Consequently, teachers set tasks that are matched successfully to the pupils' earlier learning. The marking system has been improved recently. At both key stages, teachers provide detailed guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work or extend it. A scrutiny of pupils' work over the last year shows that the quality of marking has improved and this has influenced improvements in the standards of pupils' writing. Homework is sometimes used as a means for pupils to follow up the advice that teachers give in their marking. Spellings are regularly set as homework. Teachers generally manage pupils well, but differences in the quality of pupils' learning are often the result of inconsistencies in applying the school's behaviour policy. When pupils are managed well and tasks set match pupils' learning needs, teaching and learning are very successful. For example, in a lesson for Year 2 pupils, where the teaching was outstanding, the very detailed planning ensured that the lesson built effectively on the skills of previous lessons by addressing the next stage of learning for each group of pupils. The lesson was taken at a brisk pace and the good, gentle relationships helped the pupils to feel both secure and motivated. The teacher had very high expectations of behaviour and work. She monitored pupils' efforts conscientiously and the pupils responded with great effort and sustained concentration.
88. The subject leader, who has been instrumental in raising standards, provides good leadership and has worked steadily to monitor and evaluate the progress that is being made. A senior member of staff has observed all teachers teaching a literacy session. The regular internal monitoring of English that covers teachers' planning, pupils' work, test data and teaching and learning has provided the subject leader with valuable information. As a result, she arranged training in phonics for teachers in Key Stage 2 to address a weakness in teaching. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented in all classes and statutory requirements are met. The use of information and communication technology is, however, underdeveloped. Resources for learning are good. An attractive and well-designed library has been established in the last year. It is spacious and incorporates a reading area, work tables for group activities and individual work bays for private study. Pupils make regular visits to the library often to access books for work in other subjects. Considerable funding has been allocated to purchase new books for the library and a new reading scheme to support pupils at both key stages. A small room has been set up as a base for small group work with object boxes to promote speaking and listening skills and phonics.

MATHEMATICS

89. The school's results in the national tests in 2000 showed that standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were close to the national average but well below the average at the end of Key Stage 2. When compared with similar schools,

results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average but results at the end of Key Stage 2 were below average.

90. There are, however, positive signs of improvement. The trend of the school's results has been improving above the national trend in both key stages. Early indications of the national tests in 2001 show that this is continuing. For example, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 improved from 21 per cent in 2000 to 61 per cent in 2001 with one pupil attaining Level 4. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now good overall due to new measures introduced by the school. Teachers are beginning to concentrate on providing a wider range of challenging tasks and these factors are leading to higher attainment. However, these factors have not yet had sufficient time to make a significant impact at the end of Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, inspectors' judgements at the time of the inspection are that standards are close to the average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2.
91. There are further factors in the school's improving performance. Teachers use informal observations and mental tests to assess pupils' understanding and learning. The school has introduced a timetable of assessment for key objectives in numeracy. Detailed analysis of national test results by the subject leader has led to the drawing up of an action plan to address identified weaknesses in understanding units of time and mathematical symbols. The school gathers and uses assessment information well. The subject leader is very effective in supporting colleagues and managing resources. She takes an active role in monitoring teaching and planning and uses her findings to identify ways in which to improve teaching and learning further. Strategies to raise pupils' attainments in mathematics are clearly identified in the school improvement plan.
92. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make sound progress. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in lessons and they plan carefully with learning support assistants to provide appropriate activities.
93. By the age of seven many pupils know place value to 100. They count backwards and forwards in fives and tens, some know 'double' and 'halve' and calculate in multiples of five. They identify simple two and three-dimensional shapes and are becoming more confident in describing their characteristics. A number of pupils show good skills in estimating both when using standard units of measures such as centimetres, and when using non-standard units such as a pencil or a cube. However, they have limited experience of analysing data although they do collect and analyse information about members of the class such as hair colour, eye colour and shoe size.
94. By the age of 11 pupils develop their measuring skills by using a protractor to measure angles, for example. Some pupils use their understanding of the value of numbers well to help them work out calculations mentally. However, others are not secure in their quick recall of number and multiplication facts from memory and this slows the rate at which they learn. Some pupils develop a good understanding of different types of fractions but others are unsure of the links between unit, decimal and percentage fractions. Pupils are not set activities that involve 'real life' problems regularly and so they sometimes lack confidence when having to apply their knowledge in a different context, such as when a problem may be written using words or different mathematical symbols. Many pupils create diagrams, graphs and

charts from given data, but they are less skilled in analysing the data and saying what they can learn from it.

95. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 respond well to the high expectations teachers have of them and they clearly understand what they are learning in lessons and why. Teachers share the learning objectives of the lesson with the pupils and these objectives are used during the concluding parts of lessons to assess and demonstrate learning. Relationships are very good and this enables teachers to manage pupils in a pleasant and purposeful learning environment. In a lesson in Year 2, where the teacher has established the kind of ethos where hard work and concentrated effort are established as the norm, pupils were learning to solve problems involving money. The tasks set by the teacher challenged the pupils and learning was good because everybody's energies were aimed at the challenges, without distractions. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers work hard to present lessons in a variety of ways to capture pupils' interest. In the better lessons, they encourage pupils to solve problems in their own way as well as to describe and explain their thinking processes to each other. In one very good lesson with Year 5 pupils, the teacher challenged the class to extend their work on looking at fractions to involve ratios and the 'buzz' around the class as they grappled with this problem was gratifying. However, whilst the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 are generally well managed, there are a small number of pupils whose behaviour and attitudes in lessons cause interruptions, which in turn, cause the pace of learning to slow.
96. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully adopted and teachers apply it effectively. Planning is good. Teachers clearly identify what is to be learned and share this with pupils. Oral and mental introductory sessions are lively and capture the pupils' interest. Good use is made of whiteboards and number fans to ensure the active involvement of all pupils and to assess the understanding of the whole class. The main teaching activities involve pupils practising their skills and, when teachers ensure suitable challenge, the pace of learning quickens. Activities based on worksheets, which require the pupils to further practise what they already know rather than extending their thinking, are sometimes too easy, especially for potentially higher attaining pupils.
97. Pupils use mathematics to help learning in other subjects. The school has a new computer suite. The teachers have had training in the use of information and communication technology in mathematics, and this work is developing. Teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and this results in pupils being able to explain their work using the correct terminology, which also enhances their literacy skills.

SCIENCE

98. Standards in science are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. However, there are significant signs of improvement. For example, many teachers have changed in the school since the national tests in 2000 when pupils' attainment was well below the national average and the average of similar schools. The time allocated for the teaching of science has increased. A new subject leader is in place and planning is much improved. Teaching and

learning have improved as a result of the effects of the new behaviour policy on pupils' attitudes.

99. Pupils in Year 1 collect data about themselves, identifying the colour of their eyes and hair and an adult records this and produces a graph on a computer. Year 2 pupils make bar graphs showing their favourite foods. They identify accurately foods that are good for the body. They learn to carry out investigations at an appropriate level when studying the changes when water turns to ice and record their findings. Some pupils predict accurately the changes that occur when bread is toasted, the best place to put chocolate in order for it to melt and what happens to melted butter when it is left overnight. They sort materials into groups and know how a simple electric circuits works.
100. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of the importance of a fair test and plan, carry out and record their investigations. They have a good knowledge and understanding of living things but the opportunity to learn about materials and physical processes is not extensive enough, nor is it of sufficient depth to achieve the standards expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to rectify this weakness. Pupils' limited literacy skills affect the way they record their work in science and pupils do not use computers regularly to support the presentation of their results. Pupils are developing a good range of scientific language and the older pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to use this well in their discussions.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory, overall, in Key Stage 2. Teaching is good when teachers plan lessons carefully and provide interesting activities that hold pupils' interest. For example, in Year 2 pupils discuss what babies can and cannot do, and one pupil commented that 'A baby can't hold a cup...It needs a bottle'. Pupils respond well to good teaching and lessons where the pace is good. In Year 5, they are keen to answer questions, showing good knowledge when comparing the heart beat of girls with that of boys. They show interest, concentration and involvement when they learn about the food chain in Year 6. Teachers' good questioning makes pupils think and helps them to develop their understanding. They make sensible and considered contributions in discussions and give good explanations to show clear understanding of predators and prey, and consumers and producers when describing parts of the food chain. Pupils are interested in science and behave well in most lessons. Teaching is less successful in lessons where it is not sufficiently based on pupils' previous learning and the disruptive behaviour of a small number of pupils is not managed well.
102. The subject leader is keen to improve standards in science and a number of methods are employed to stimulate interest in science. A science day for the whole school stimulates additional interest. 'Booster' classes for science, held after school, help to raise standards and there is now a weekly science club. Many parents and children were involved in a science evening last term that was very successful. Teachers' medium-term plans are monitored and good resources are available to support life and living processes.

ART AND DESIGN

103. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is in line with what would be expected for the pupils' age. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are below those usually found. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection.
104. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use a range of materials to produce both two and three-dimensional work. Pupils in Year 1 make sculptures using natural materials such as sand, shells, rocks and stone. In Year 2, pupils use fabrics to reproduce the colour shape and tone of fruit such as bananas. They make observational drawings of flowers with an appropriate level of detail and attention to proportion. The quality of this work confirms that, in most cases, they achieve well and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.
105. By the end of Year 6, pupils make observational drawings of flowers, but the drawings of most pupils lack the greater detail and refinement normally seen from pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 attempt landscape pictures but some experience difficulty when incorporating three-dimensional perspectives of buildings. They also work in pencil and charcoal to develop ideas of shade and tone to capture the images of artefacts such as a teapot or a training shoe. Some pupils are successful in achieving satisfactory results but the work of many pupils is elementary and they do not achieve the standard expected for pupils of this age.
106. However, there are now clear indications that the pupils who achieve a satisfactory start in Key Stage 1 are maintaining their rate of progress in Key Stage 2, which means that standards are improving. Most pupils show satisfactory attitudes to art and some are very enthusiastic when working in practical sessions. Pupils have begun to plan their work in art, identifying the materials they intend to use. Some annotate their plans to show how they intend to develop their artistic ideas. There are clear signs that the direct teaching of artistic skills is now having an impact on raising standards in art. For example, in finished portraits displayed in Year 3, pupils achieve better results because the teacher has spent considerable time teaching the composition skills of portraits. Pupils are taught how to secure better proportions by using horizontal and vertical lines as markers. Most pupils produce work of appropriate quality with improved proportion and a level of detail which were not evident in pupils' work of a year ago. In Year 5 and Year 6, teachers are working hard to raise standards through improving pupils' artistic skills and techniques. Year 5 pupils are asked to carefully note the shading on plant leaves in the school inner garden before drawing in charcoal with a focus on shade and tone. Year 6 pupils discuss converging lines in historical photographs of street scenes to understand how to introduce perspective into their drawings.
107. Teaching at both key stages is now satisfactory. Teachers approach art confidently at both the planning and the delivery stages with clear objectives and key points identified for instruction and demonstration. In a lesson for Year 2 pupils, the teacher set clear expectations for how pupils are to 'do their best using the whole page' and in the work that followed, where pupils' concentration was good and attitudes were positive, most reached the intended outcome by the end of the lesson. Through this work, one pupil with special educational needs was able to work towards achieving the target for improving concentration, which was identified on the individual educational plan. Helpful subject links are promoted in both key stages. In Year 2, the teacher promotes the use of literacy in art when key words such as 'tint', 'image', 'detail' and 'shape' are highlighted on the flip chart around the edge of the art she produces. In Year 6, pupils combine artistic and literacy skills to

produce plans for a multimedia presentation that they transfer to a computer using information and communication technology skills.

108. The subject leader is involved in monitoring teaching and learning through a regular scrutiny of planning and samples of pupils' work. This has led the subject leader to identify additional teaching skills to be improved through in-service training and the view that the contribution of information and communication technology to art could be increased. This regular monitoring also provides the subject leader with evidence to make recommendations for the purchase of better-quality brushes and paint from an alternative supplier. Resources for learning are satisfactory. There is good access to practical areas for art throughout the school and resources are appropriately distributed from a central store.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Pupils' attainment is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they have good adult help in most lessons. However, standards are improving because the subject is now timetabled more suitably for all classes, training has improved teachers' understanding of the design process and a wider range of resources are available.
110. In Year 1, pupils develop their skills by making simple push and pull mechanisms using levers. They extend their understanding by making a moving display of events taken from fairy stories. They sketch their ideas and show, by drawing an arrow, how a slide or lever is going to move. Pupils make a card slide to show Jack climbing the beanstalk and use a flap to cover the head of the fox who is lying in bed waiting for Red Riding Hood. Year 2 pupils practise their cutting skills by cutting out card templates of puppets and using these as their pattern when cutting out the shape in fabric. Although many pupils find both using the pins and cutting fabric difficult, they try very hard to do them. They design the face of their clown puppet on paper and write a list of possible materials to use for the clown's eyes, mouth and hair. The teacher ensures that pupils understand clearly the health and safety implications when they use scissors and pins.
111. In Key Stage 2 pupils further develop their designing and making skills through making a container to hold biscuits. They use their information and communication technology skills well to design the text to be used on the container. Pupils look at pop-up books before making their own book using folded paper to make part of the picture in the book move as it is opened. In Year 5, pupils begin to develop their understanding of cams and how rotary motion can be changed to linear. They use cams to make moving toys after looking at a wooden Victorian toy and observing the cam working inside. Pupils develop their practical skills by using hacksaws, bench hooks, clamps and hand drills to help them make their toys and they remember the safety rules they have been taught. For example, they move to the hand drill, which is was not carried round the room. They also have opportunities to make bread and biscuits in food technology. Year 6 pupils look at structures and how to make strong shapes using rolled newspaper, straw and masking tape. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop an understanding of the use of simple tools and materials such as wood. They learn about electricity and circuits in science but this understanding is not used to extend their work in design and technology.

112. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The good teaching and good support from learning support assistants are greatly improving pupils' learning. Good teaching supports pupils' learning well. Pupils enjoy their practical sessions and they work hard. Many work well in groups, demonstrating consideration for others and they happily share ideas and materials. Teachers place correct emphasis on encouraging pupils to think carefully and to sketch their ideas before starting their models. The work in sketchbooks is carefully marked and includes very specific questions to extend pupils' thinking about their ideas such as, 'Are you going to strengthen the joins?' Good use is made of adult support staff to encourage and help those pupils who have difficulties. However, a small number of pupils find it difficult to stay on task and can quickly disrupt the good teaching and learning which are taking place.
113. Medium-term planning is monitored and the subject leader has a good overview of the standards being achieved through assessing pupils' work at the end of each term.

GEOGRAPHY

114. By the end of both key stages, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in geography are broadly in line with national expectations. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of local places. This is due to effective teaching that emphasises fieldwork. Pupils go on local walks and are encouraged to look at the range of buildings and types of housing such as bungalows, detached and terraced housing and how the land is used. They are encouraged to pose simple questions about the data they gather from a survey of how they get to school. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 are encouraged to compare their locality with a contrasting environment, such as Seaton Carew or Hartlepool, noting similarities, differences, advantages and disadvantages.
116. In Key Stage 2, pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of local places. They study the historic quay in Hartlepool and good cross-curricular links are developed with history. These activities, linked with well-chosen resources at school provide pupils with good experiences. The oldest pupils widen their knowledge of areas much further away from the locality. They study mountain environments around the world and consider the positive and negative effects of tourism on mountain ranges. Sound progress is made in developing technical vocabulary and mapping skills. Pupils write directions for getting from Hartlepool to Scarborough, using appropriate language.
117. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. Enthusiastic and probing questioning from the teacher enables pupils to explore the possible implications of changes in land use. For example, in one lesson seen with Year 5 pupils, the teacher cleverly asked, as a starting point for discussion, 'How has the erection of the new school security fence affected land use?' Pupils suggested the obvious. 'It has stopped people getting into school to vandalise it', and then what was less obvious to some of them, 'We now have to go to another part of the district to play'. They gained an insight into how changes can have unforeseen outcomes, and how changes favoured by some will not be welcomed by others.

HISTORY

118. Standards are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. Planning has recently been revised and the time allocated for the subject has been increased. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met but these improvements have not been in place for long enough to allow the various topics to be covered in sufficient depth to raise standards.
119. In Key Stage 1, pupils build on early experience of considering how they have changed since birth by comparing the old with the new. For example, they consider toys and buildings and identify which ones are old and which are new. However, there is insufficient evidence that pupils compare these items and explain which clues suggest they are old or new. Pupils study historical events, such as the Fire of London, and they consider the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. However, their writing is restrained by their limited literacy skills and, for many pupils, this is limited to writing short lists.
120. In Key Stage 2, pupils write more extensively on historical topics. They study the mummification process in ancient Egypt and contrast the clothes of the rich and the poor in Tudor times. In a study of the daily life of the Victorians, pupils find out about the games Victorian children played in their leisure time and the clothes they wore. Older pupils enjoy finding out about the Aztecs and the weapons and tactics that they used in warfare. Pupils study a broad range of historical topics, reflecting the requirements of the National Curriculum, but they do not do so in sufficient depth to develop the historical knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to meet national expectations. This is being addressed in the revised planning for the subject but it has not been implemented for long enough to raise standards at the end of the key stage.
121. The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory in both key stages, although it is clear that this is a recent improvement. Teachers plan lessons well with a clear statement of the learning intended in the lesson. Explanations are clear and pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers maintain a good pace to the lesson and they manage pupils well, despite the challenging behaviour of some of the older pupils. The tasks that are set for pupils in lessons are carefully planned with consideration for what individual pupils are capable of achieving but this is not always the case, and on some occasions, all pupils are set the same task. This does not provide sufficient challenge for the potentially higher attaining pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. However, there have been significant improvements to the provision of the subject since the last inspection and statutory requirements are now met. Resources have been improved and each class has a modern computer with suitable equipment. The school has established a well-equipped computer suite with a network of computers that greatly assists teaching in the subject.

123. In Key Stage 1, pupils use a drawing program to draw a flower on screen. They use the line tool to draw the flowers and colour them with the fill tool. Pupils confidently print their work unaided. They also use information and communication technology to improve the numeracy skills. They create pictograms using information about the class, such as hair colour and eye colour. Pupils use programmable toys to develop their understanding of control technology. However, there was insufficient evidence of them using word processors to communicate their ideas and amend their work.
124. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop the skills necessary to use a word processor effectively. They save and load files from the hard drive and they correct mistakes in the text using the backspace key. Pupils change the style, size and colour of the font when making amendments to the layout. The older pupils combine text and images when designing a web page and they use a database when conducting a survey of opinions on the local estate. Pupils gain good experience of using a spreadsheet. They identify and name cells correctly and they insert simple mathematical formulae, such as '=sum(C1-C8)'. Pupils make good use of control technology and they have created a 'Spooky Theatre', which is displayed on the local education authority's page on the Internet.
125. The school has improved the planning for the subject and this ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Every class visits the computer suite regularly and teachers make good use of the opportunities it offers. However, there has not been enough time spent on the subject across the key stages to cover the different aspects in sufficient depth for standards to meet national expectations.
126. The teaching observed in both key stages was satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the networked computers to demonstrate techniques and their explanations are clear. Lessons are planned well with a clear focus on the intended learning for the lesson. This helps pupils to understand what they are doing and they apply themselves to their tasks enthusiastically. As most pupils' skills are below expectations, teachers focus on developing these skills systematically. This is appropriate but it leads to all pupils working at the same pace and some of the more able pupils become bored and restless while waiting for other pupils to finish the task. Teachers generally manage pupils well but, on occasions, expected standards of behaviour are not maintained.

MUSIC

127. Although medium-term planning confirms that across a year pupils are provided with a music programme that meets statutory requirements, no lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make a secure judgement of standards in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below national expectations, which is similar to the finding of the last inspection.
128. Key Stage 1 pupils were observed singing a song based on the theme of friendship in assembly. They clap to the rhythm at the appropriate pace and sing tunefully with enjoyment. Pupils sing confidently, adding actions and keeping satisfactorily to the beat.
129. In Key Stage 2, most pupils name several types of music such as rock music and country music. However, when listening to music and asked about their knowledge of its origin, few express opinions relating to the melody, the mood or the rhythm.

Although most can spot the beat produced by the drums, they are not secure in identifying other instruments. In Year 6, pupils are more confident in responding to the sound of a 1950s rock sequence where they confirmed that the music made them feel happy with one pupil describing the sound as 'energetic'. When performing, such as in singing a round, pupils' performance is not sufficiently developed and in Year 5, they became over-excited, which led to shouting rather than singing.

130. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching, currently, in Key Stage 1 but teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers work particularly hard to motivate pupils in music lessons as their attitudes are sometimes unsatisfactory. Teaching is most successful when the pupils are managed well and enthusiastically involved and enjoyed what they are doing. In a good Year 5 lesson, effective demonstration and leadership by the teacher, who was supported well by the learning support assistant, led to noticeable gains in improvement in singing as pupils practised a round. With each repetition they refined their performance. These pupils achieved well in three aspects of music because they also practised a scale and clapped to a 4/4 beat. Although their singing confirmed that shortcomings in quality remain, clear progress is nevertheless being made in improving accuracy in percussion skills. Pupils with special educational needs are making similar progress to those with other levels of attainment.
131. Shortcomings in pupils' knowledge and understanding of music and a lack of refinement when performing are being addressed. Medium-term plans now identify what is to be taught in each half term, and sufficient attention is given to achieving a balance between performing, composing, listening to and appraising music. Music has been identified as a school improvement target for this year with priority given to improving teaching and learning particularly in the quality of singing. Collaboration has been sought with the Tees Valley music service and through this link the subject leader and teachers can access external expertise. The school intends to increase the involvement of professional musicians in the school and to encourage more pupils to join the media club.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Standards meet national expectations at the end of both key stages and have been maintained since the last inspection.
133. By the age of seven, pupils are familiar with the structure of lessons in the hall and move from one activity to the next sensibly. They make good use of the hall space so that they develop a good sense of space and work with an awareness of others around them. In Year 2, their warm up activities link well with their work about puppets. For example, pupils practise moving like a puppet that has no strings. They develop their skills by bending, jumping, creeping and tiptoeing, listening carefully and moving in time to the rhythm of the music. They work well in pairs when creating a dance and change their facial expressions with the mood of the music. Pupils enjoy performing for others and appreciate each other's efforts.
134. By the age of 11, pupils understand that exercise is essential to health and fitness. Teachers and pupils work together in the warm up session, which takes place at a good pace. Pupils work well in small groups to develop their dance routine and both girls and boys are equally keen to demonstrate their sequences. They change the

speed of their movements to link with the music and work at different levels of difficulty. When pupils watch other groups demonstrate their routines, they identify movements they like and those they think could be improved.

135. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. At the time of the inspection, the focus for the whole school was dance and teachers were confident and enthusiastic. They organise and manage lessons well and have positive relationships with the pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to instructions and demonstrations. Lessons are well structured with a suitable emphasis on warming up and cooling down. Teachers evaluate pupils' performance carefully and use pupils well to demonstrate different movements in their dance. Pupils' concentration is very good and they respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Teaching is less successful when the teachers' behaviour management is not good enough to ensure that pupils are fully engrossed in the task and the pace of the lesson is slow. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have regular opportunities to go swimming, using two local swimming pools and most pupils can swim the nationally expected 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
136. The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities including dance, football and netball. This makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have the opportunity to experience a range of outdoor activities, including orienteering, during a residential field trip.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. At the end of both key stages, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have improved since the last inspection. This is because religious education is now taught regularly and effectively. Changes in the timetable now ensure that enough time is spent teaching religious education to meet requirements. Planning for the subject has also improved and the school offers a more balanced and progressive curriculum.
138. In Key Stage 1, pupils consider their own importance and that of the family. They understand that taking part in a religious festival or visiting a certain place are important to people of different faiths. Year 1 pupils, in studying the Christian faith, learn of the baptism of Jesus and why it is important to Christians. The teacher's effective use of personal artefacts such as a christening gown and a card containing promises from godparents captures pupils' attention. Sensitive, probing questioning during the lesson helped pupils explore more spiritual aspects of the occasion. One pupil remarked that the splashing of water 'is to keep all the badness away'. Pupils learn about symbolism in the world's leading faiths such as Judaism and Islam, as well as Christianity.
139. In Key Stage 2, pupils interviewed a visitor from the local gospel church during the inspection. Questions they had prepared revealed thoughtfulness. 'Do you enjoy reading the Bible?' and 'Is there more good than bad in the Bible?' When the visitor remarked that he felt 'a little like Daniel' pupils revealed their knowledge of the Old Testament story. At the end of the session, one final comment by the visitor, 'I read the Bible every day and I am always finding something new', was very telling, judging from pupils' expressions and their close attention. After visiting a local church and Durham Cathedral, the oldest pupils are encouraged to reflect on

'special places'. They comment that inside a church is special 'because God may be listening to us'. Other pupils quietly and openly talk about their 'special places. 'It is up a tree...There is a rope and a branch...It is quiet and warm' or 'It is a bridge...You can see the sun going down on it'.

140. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good, but there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching in Key Stage 1. Lessons are planned well to take account of pupils' knowledge and experiences. Pupils enjoy the variety of approaches that teachers employ to help their learning, and teachers very effectively encourage pupils to think for themselves and provide opportunities for reflection. Good use is made of local resources such as visitors to school and visits to places of worship. Useful evaluations at the end of each half term enable the subject leader to monitor the effectiveness of planning, address any issues that have arisen and provide a tool for further development of the subject.