

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CONSETT JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Consett, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114051

Headteacher: Mr D. Yates

Reporting inspector: Mr G. W. Cooper  
23647

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2001

Inspection number: 243343  
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beechdale Road Consett County Durham
Postcode:	DH8 6AY
Telephone number:	01207 504 431
Fax number:	01207 504 431
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Alan Stephens
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> September – 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23647	Mr G. W. Cooper	Registered inspector	Geography History Music Physical education	Information about the school  The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well is the school led and managed?  What should the school do to improve further?
9921	Mrs P. Blackshaw	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19709	Mrs J. Fisher	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design	
11611	Mr J. Hall	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Equality of Opportunity	How well are pupils taught?
7958	Mrs G. L. Lewis	Team inspector	English Religious education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections  
'Grasshoppers'  
1 Anglesey Close  
Chasetown  
Burntwood  
Staffordshire  
WS7 8XA

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Consett Junior School caters for 159 boys and girls aged seven to eleven. Almost all pupils come from a white United Kingdom heritage. There are no pupils learning English as a new language. About 14 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is below average for schools of this type. Five pupils have a statement of special needs and this is above average. Ten per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal and this is below average. When pupils enter school, assessment of their knowledge, skills and understanding indicates a broad range of prior attainment. Overall, prior attainment is about average.

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

Consett Junior is a very effective school. Standards of work seen during inspection consistently exceeded the standard expected for pupils of this age. Teaching is good, with examples of excellent and very good teaching. Leadership and management are very good and have been instrumental in raising standards and the quality of teaching. The school provides good value for money.

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

- In keeping pace with the national trend of improvement, pupils attain standards in lessons that at least match, and frequently exceed, those expected nationally.
- Teaching is consistently good. Some lessons are very good and excellent.
- The school provides a rich and diverse curriculum.
- A high level of care successfully reflects the dedication of all staff. The care is rewarded by the very good personal standards achieved by pupils.
- Parents think highly of the school: they play a full part in the home and school partnership.
- Leadership and management are very good.

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

- Subject co-ordinators do not get enough opportunities to evaluate lessons in their subject area.
- Assessment in other subjects is not as good as it is in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

*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 previously inspected in September 1997. It has made very good improvement since then. Standards have continued to rise in line with the national trend of improvement. Teaching is much improved since the previous inspection. Difficulties in the curriculum have been completely resolved. The school provides a high level of care, including better evaluation of pupils' academic progress. The school's partnership with parents continues to improve and parents are right to feel confident in the school. Improvements in leadership and management have kept the school on target to meet the challenge of its most important priorities.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	D	D
mathematics	B	A	C	B
science	B	C	C	C

**Key**

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

The results of national curriculum standard tests vary from year to year. This is a feature of relatively small year groups where one pupil's score can have a profound effect on overall performance and, in some year groups, a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs moving through the school. This was a factor of the dip in standards in 2001. The evidence of the current inspection is that standards are again rising above the level expected of eleven year olds. Even with a recent drop, standards are improving broadly at the rate of improvement nationally. Any trend of difference between the attainment of boys and girls has been arrested. The trend of attainment for both boys and girls is above average. The school sets challenging targets. Targets in English were exceeded in 2001 but missed in mathematics. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils are on track to achieve their 2002 targets. In the work seen, standards are above those expected nationally in English, mathematics, science and music. Pupils have well developed literacy and numeracy skills. These are used to good effect in other subjects of the curriculum. Rapid progress has been made in ICT. Some aspects of music are exceptionally good. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, ICT, physical education and religious education match expectations for eleven year olds. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs make good progress. Given attainment when pupils enter school, they make good progress throughout the school. Achievement is good.

## ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and apply themselves eagerly to tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in classrooms and enjoy each other's lively company during playtimes. There have been no exclusions for many years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work well together. They organise their work responsibly. They get on well with other pupils and adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are similar to the national rate of attendance. A slight drop recently is due to parents taking family holidays during term time. Most pupils arrive in school on time.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There is a consistently good quality of teaching and learning across the school. A good proportion of the teaching seen was excellent and very good. No lessons were seen that were less than satisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. As a result the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. This has a profound impact on pupils' learning in other lessons. They use their basic skills well to research and to learn independently. Good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make very good progress. Because of this few pupils attain below the level expected for their age. Many higher attaining pupils achieve above the standard expected for their age. However, the school has made the further attainment of these pupils a priority for development. A particular strength of teaching is the high expectations of teachers of the quality of pupils' work and personal qualities. There are no weaknesses in teaching. The strengths in pupils' learning lie in the effort they make and in their interest, concentration and independence. Gifted teaching ensures pupils achieve very high standards in some aspects of music.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets legal requirements. It is well enriched by visits, visitors and a challenging range of activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The provision for these pupils is thorough and purposeful, ensuring that they make good progress against identified learning needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are particular strengths in the provision for moral and social development. Provision for understanding of and appreciation of local culture is very strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Strengths of the school lie in the analysis of test results and the use of such analyses and in procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Systems for assessing some subjects are not as strong as those for assessing English, mathematics, science and ICT.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Very good. Parents have a very positive view of the school and they are right to feel confident. The school works very effectively 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 is well supported by all staff in ensuring a calm and purposeful sense of direction to the work of the school. Coordinators in some subjects have little opportunity to evaluate and develop teaching in their subject area.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are well informed, committed and give good support to the school in their decision-making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school knows its strengths very well and uses self and external evaluation to identify areas to develop.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Money available to the school is purposefully spent in supporting rising standards and school priorities for improvement.
Staffing accommodation and learning resources	Staffing levels are good. Teachers get good support through their partnerships with learning support assistants. Learning resources are good. The accommodation is adequate. A disadvantage is the 'leakage' of sound from one class to another in the open plan building.
Application of the principles of best value	Very good. The school takes every opportunity challenge its provision, consult with those outside its establishment and to compare its standards with those of other schools.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vast majority of parents who returned pre-inspection questionnaires were very positive in the views of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A very small minority of parents - one or two in number - raised questions about homework and the approachability of the school to discuss concerns.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully agrees with the very positive views of parents. Consett Junior is a good school and parents have every right to be confident in its provision for their child. The team views the provision for homework as satisfactory. As much is given at Consett Junior as is seen given elsewhere. The school operates an 'open door' policy for parents who want to discuss concerns. This is highly effective for the vast majority of parents. It is difficult to suggest what else the school could add to its provision for the very small number of parents who do not feel satisfied with this.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standard National Curriculum test results and school assessments show that pupils enter the school in Year 3 with standards of attainment broadly in line with the standard expected. National Curriculum test results for eleven year olds in 2001 show attainment to be below the national average for all schools in English, and in line with the average in mathematics and science. When compared with schools in a similar social and economic setting, standards were below average in English, above average in mathematics and in line with the average in science. This is not typical of the school's results but the drop in standards was not unexpected. A larger than normal number of pupils with special educational needs was in that year group and a number of pupils of lower attainment were admitted to the school after the usual date of joining. The trend of results in the school is one of significant improvement. In most years, pupils achieve standards above the national average. The evidence of inspection is that pupils do better than the standard expected for eleven year olds in English, mathematics, science and music. Standards in all other areas of the curriculum match the standard expected. There has been a trend of some difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The results of national tests in 2001 show that any difference in attainment is being narrowed. The school has made attainment in the higher levels of the National Curriculum a whole school target. There are also plans to be more specific about the targets set for pupils with special educational needs. Despite this, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their current targets. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language. The school sets challenging targets for attainment. The target in English was exceeded in 2001 but narrowly missed in mathematics. Pupils are on course to meet the targets set for 2002.

2. Pupils acquire good basic skills in English and mathematics. They produce good work within the subjects themselves but also apply their reading, writing and number skills well in science, history, geography and religious education. Good attainment in science is supported by consistently good practical work that obliges pupils to do and to think. Good use of local history maintains a high degree of interest and challenge to pupils in this subject. Visits out of school and interesting visitors into school maintain the impetus of progress and learning in subjects across the curriculum. The school ensures that all pupils – boys and girls, those with average talent and those who are physically gifted – have opportunities to enjoy competitive sport and high quality coaching. This supports maintained standards in physical education where the school is unable to allocate as much time as previously. Given national strategies in numeracy and literacy, all other subjects of the curriculum have had less time for teaching and learning. The school has done well to maintain standards in these subjects. There has been significant improvement in standards of attainment in ICT. The subject was the focus of criticism at the previous inspection. Standards are now in line with those expected. Attainment in some aspects of music, particularly singing and playing in the brass band, is especially high. The progress of many pupils is excellent in these areas. Overall, pupils make good progress across the subjects of the curriculum. Given attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well.

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

3. The school provides a very positive environment for learning. As a result pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, have very good attitudes to school and to learning. Behaviour is good and often very good with just a few children who are restless and inattentive in some lessons. These are dealt with very effectively by teachers with minimum distraction for the learning of other pupils. Very good relationships and strong

policies and procedures, developed in response to the previous inspection report, ensure a consistent and whole school approach to behaviour and high quality learning in lessons. There have not been any children excluded from school over the last school year.

4. Pupils are highly motivated and demonstrate a high level of interest and involvement in the activities set for them. Working in small groups they collaborate and support each other in a very productive way, thinking things through, sharing ideas and materials maturely. For example, in an excellent Year 6 physical education lesson, which included three children from a local special school, pupils worked very successfully in groups to develop ideas and demonstrate interesting sequences of movements. Oral contribution by pupils in lessons and their application to subsequent independent work is very good and enables good progress to be made. This was aptly demonstrated in a Year 5 library session where pupils were researching a project on the history of the Salvation Army.

5. Parents are correct in thinking that pupils of all ages behave well in lessons and around school. Behaviour is good and pupils are attentive and eager to learn; as a result their concentration is good and good progress is made in most lessons. In the playground the children play happily with the normal noisy and boisterous activities, channelling their energies into organising their own games and making good use of the equipment available. They are careful and look out for each other and no child appeared isolated or left out. An excellent and very successful buddy scheme, provided by very committed Year 5 and 6 pupils, effectively supports Year 3 pupils. This supportive relationship helps build confidence and a sense of belonging to the larger community of the school.

6. Pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are very good. Very effective confidence and self-esteem building initiatives encourage a positive approach to learning and to the development of the trusting relationships that are evident in the school. Pupils enjoy being helpful to others and undertake their roles as monitors and helpers responsibly and with enthusiasm. They show sensitivity, kindness and consideration, demonstrated well when Year 6 pupils shared their lesson with pupils from a local special school with excellent results. Important opportunities like this, where pupils can develop responsible and mature attitudes have increased significantly since the previous inspection, particularly for older children. They are less well developed for younger children. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the school and into friendship groups.

7. Attendance has shown some fluctuation over the last two years but is now more stable and around the national average for similar schools. Parents are consistently good at providing reasons for their child not coming to school and so unauthorised absence is rare in the school and well below the national average. The small minority of late comers, although in the main just a few minutes late in reaching the classroom, sometimes miss the valuable reading time and teacher support at the beginning of the day. A recent small decline in attendance can be attributed to a growing number of parents taking family holidays during term time.

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

8. The overall quality of teaching is good, with more than eight out of ten lessons seen judged to be good or better. Some excellent teaching was observed in Year 5 and Year 6, whilst no lessons seen during the week of the inspection were judged to be unsatisfactory. This indicates that the school has improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

9. The teaching of English is good. The National Literacy Strategy is now used thoroughly in all classes and groups. All teachers use the strategy to structure their teaching and to set objectives for pupils' learning. Teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully and develop confidence in speaking through good guidance and use of praise. Many

opportunities are given to pupils to use their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils with special educational needs are given clear guidance on writing a story whilst being encouraged to continue and extend their descriptive writing. Teachers promote pupils' reading skills well through class readers and library books, giving opportunities to read aloud in groups and individually.

10. The quality of mathematics teaching is good and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve. Pupils' learning is encouraged well through the introduction of teaching pupils in groups according to their previous attainment. Teachers' planning for mathematics lessons is good, with precise objectives that they communicate clearly to pupils. Good use is made of the information that teachers gather about pupils' previous attainment to plan future lessons.

11. The quality of science teaching is good. There is a consistent approach throughout the school to the way in which teachers give pupils opportunities to learn and acquire knowledge for themselves through investigative work. Exercise books show that pupils write extensively about their observations, and teachers' comments encourage and prompt pupils to think for themselves. In a very good science lesson in Year 6, the teacher prompted pupils well throughout their investigation into cleaning pond water to make their own decisions and conclusions from first hand observations.

12. The quality of teaching ICT is good, which is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report. As a result of effective training, teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and the requirements of the National Curriculum. They provide pupils with many opportunities to use their skills to enhance learning in other areas of the curriculum. Teaching of music is very good overall. In an excellent music lesson in Year 5, pupils show high levels of interest and concentration. The teacher clearly has a comprehensive, enthusiastic knowledge of the subject that is conveyed to the pupils. They have acquired good understanding of the vocabulary of music and styles of composers such as Mozart. They sing with good diction, precise rhythm and audience awareness in response to the high expectations of the teacher. There is perceptive and effective teaching to be seen in all subjects of the curriculum.

13. Teachers have high expectations of the attitudes that pupils show in their work. Very good working routines are well established. Consequently, pupils have very good levels of concentration and effort. They settle quickly to their tasks without time being wasted, and behaviour is good. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and good support is given in lessons. Day to day assessment of pupils and marking of their work is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The marking policy is fully implemented. Teachers' written comments on pupils' work are informative and helpful.

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

14. The quality and range of the learning experiences offered to pupils is good. The school offers a curriculum that is broad and balanced. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place for all the National Curriculum areas and religious education. There are policies in place for all core and foundation subject areas and a timetable is set for reviewing each policy. The previous inspection report identified a number of areas within the curriculum that needed further development:

- Staff expertise in ICT, design and technology, music and art and design;
- Continuity and progression in history, geography, design and technology, ICT and art and design;
- Guidance in English, music and art and design needed to be securely embedded in teachers' practice;

- Pupils' responsibility and opportunities to show initiative and independent learning capitalise on available space so that large classes have full use of ICT equipment and the library.

The school has responded very well in resolving these issues.

- The full curriculum in ICT is covered thoroughly.
- Good use of national strategies and recent national guidance for the subjects of the curriculum has ensured the continuous progression of pupils.
- The school teaches a good, skill based curriculum that challenges pupils' thinking and independence skills.
- Pupils' responsibility has been extended.

15. Pupils have the necessary skills to do research; they know how to use library facilities and computer programs to find out information and are also very motivated and well behaved. Good opportunities are created for taking responsibility. Pupils in Year 6 shared a physical education lesson with pupils from the nearby special school and showed great care and responsibility for them. In science opportunities are created in meeting the challenge of practical and investigative work. Personal, social and health education provide opportunities for pupils to extend their independence in lessons on esteem building in Year 6 as part of the 'Investors in Excellence' programme.

16. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and conclude each lesson with reflection about what has been learned, referring back to the lesson objectives shared at the beginning of lessons. Schemes of work are based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, national guidance and the local syllabus for religious education. These provide a good framework to ensure that the curriculum is taught in each subject area and that progression over time is monitored carefully.

17. Provision for higher attaining pupils is very good, overall. Setting by prior attainment has begun to reap benefits for pupils of all ability. The pace of lessons has been positively affected by the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and teachers are using the framework to plan other subject lessons. There is a whole school commitment to raising standards and this year writing has been a whole school priority.

18. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of out of school and in school experiences. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 have French lessons; the school has been involved in local theatre performances; the band plays for the nursery and infants schools, also the local elderly population: they have a been booked to play for a civic function recently. The school holds a tea party each month for local elderly residents that is run and organised by Year 5 pupils. There are sports teams and these have enjoyed some success as displayed in the entrance hall to the school. A recent visit to the local museum at Beamish has helped pupils to appreciate their own history and culture. The school has met the Healthy Schools National Award standard and also a Basic Skills Quality Mark award for its work. Visitors to the school include the police, drugs awareness teams, 'Get Wise' and other health authority specialists to assist with the personal, social and health education. School policy making covers the need to teach elements of sex education. Recently pupils were able to work with an author.

19. Extra curricular activities for pupils support and enrich the curriculum. These include the choir, band, dancing, French, thinking skills, recorder group and library club as well as various sporting teams. Sunderland Football Club also supports school through coaching. The local clergy positively influence the school through their active involvement in school life; the curate is a governor and regularly visits, taking a weekly assembly. He has been involved in teaching Year 6 pupils when they studied the life of Martin Luther King.

20. The provision for spiritual development is good. There are good opportunities in music and art and design and through the general ethos of care and support. In the assemblies seen pupils were given the opportunity to reflect. In one assembly pupils were asked to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. The song sung at the beginning of the assembly was seen by pupils to reflect the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping, of the commercialisation of the occasion. Pupils then listened to the school brass band play 'Away in a Manger' and as they listened, contrasted the difference between the two sides of Christmas portrayed. The prayer used by the leader of the assembly was verses from the carol. Other opportunities for spiritual development have been given in a variety of lessons as displays around the school reflect on hopes and dreams and care for our world. Also displayed are 'inspirational' verses and posters that provide pupils with a higher focus on the world and move away from thoughts only of self.

21. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are actively encouraged to respect good. The discussion by set two – comprising average and lower attaining pupils - in Year 6 of Macbeth's, Lady Macbeth's and the witches' actions and behaviour shows that they have clear perceptions of right and wrong and understand that just because the play is several hundred years old things do not change in terms of behaviour to others. They contrasted Macbeth's behaviour with that of Banquo and commented on Macbeth's greed and hunger for power. The school's expectations of behaviour are clearly understood. The environment and example set by staff at the school encourages pupils to behave appropriately toward each other; the mutual respect is visible.

22. Provision for social development is also very good. During the inspection pupils were courteous and polite; they held doors open for visitors and worked co-operatively with teachers, other adults and each other. Teachers reinforced caring for each other and in lessons for personal and social development pupils listened to each other and respected each other's views. Good manners are expected and reinforced in lessons when discussing topics. In one personal and social development lesson, caring for others was put on a higher level than academic or sporting success because of the effort and sacrifice it sometimes meant. A Year 6 lesson was effectively shared with pupils from a nearby special school. Pupils are involved in their community and also beyond in raising funds and gifts for others. The school has established a 'buddy' scheme involving thirty Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. This is very effective in giving older pupils responsibility and developing a caring attitude.

23. Provision for cultural development is good. The visits to Beamish provide a wealth of opportunities to research and learn about the history of the area. Studies of Consett ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of their roots in the steel and coal industry and what has replaced it. Opportunities are afforded in geography and art and design to explore other cultures. The developing religious education syllabus provides further opportunities for pupils to study other cultures. In geography pupils are looking at life in an Indian village and contrasting this with their own environment. In literacy and art and design lesson pupils have looked at Aboriginal art and North American Indian art and myths. Music offers a wealth of opportunities; as part of the assembly pupils are told about the music played and listened to. In religious education and literacy work music is used to illustrate aspects of the study. Respect and understanding of other cultures is encouraged through assembly.

24. The school has fostered very good relationships with partner institutions. Pupils from the school go to the adjacent nursery school to work with their pupils; staff have liaised with both the infant feeder schools and secondary schools. Data from the infant school has provided the school with a base line from which they have tailored what needs to be taught in Year 3. Feedback from the secondary school to which most pupils transfer has led to the introduction of homework diaries so that pupils are better prepared for Year 7 in the secondary school. The community impacts on the pupils' education positively through its involvement with school. Although there is no formal parents, teachers and friends of the

school association, parents of pupils are very supportive of the school. Some parents help with readers and their attendance at school events is very good.

25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There are 22 pupils identified on the register of special educational need. Five pupils have a statement of special needs. Efficient strategies for identifying pupils with special educational needs include half termly assessments, optional National Curriculum standard test results, phonic spelling tests and teachers' observations. All pupils on the register have their own learning plans and targets. The school makes good use of the limited time available for consultation with the school educational psychologist service. The special educational needs coordinator in liaison with the learning support assistant writes learning plans. Individual education plans are clear and action defined to achieve targets. The school has efficient procedures for the review of targets and progress made towards them. Reviews involve parents and other agencies as needed. Personal record sheets, with detailed reports from past years and schools illustrate the progress made over time. A recent innovation is a register of the higher attaining pupils in the school, based on their academic ability. The commitment of the special educational needs coordinator and the support staff ensures that special educational needs pupils' needs are well served.

26. In its strategy for equality of opportunity, the school ensures that there are very good opportunities for all pupils to take full advantage of the curriculum. As well as the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs, the school identifies and provides very well for higher attaining pupils. Very good opportunities are offered for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities. For example, the school brass band is a mixture of boys and girls from all year groups. Both boys and girls get the full range of sporting opportunities.

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

27. The school continues to place a suitably high emphasis on pupil's welfare, health and safety, building on the positive findings of the previous inspection report. Formal and informal support to aid personal development is excellent and contributes significantly to the quality of learning in the classroom. Parents greatly appreciate this aspect of school life and the security and care provided for their children by the school. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupil's academic progress are good with very good use being made of assessment information to plan future work.

28. Parent's fears expressed at the pre-inspection meeting about inadequate supervision at lunchtime are unfounded, particularly since the increase in provision from two to three supervisors. The regular presence of the head teacher and the positive impact of the buddy system make this a very comprehensive and effective support system for pupils. There is at present no formal system of support for supervisors to discuss issues that arise or training programmes to develop and maintain the level of care. In lessons pupils with special educational needs are ably supported by teachers, non-teaching assistant and visiting specialist.

29. Procedures for dealing with emergencies, child protection issues, accidents, illness and school visits are good. They are well linked throughout school documentation, including the very useful staff handbook, but which as yet does not include information on child protection. A file of school policies and procedures is very accessible to parents in the school entrance. Health and safety procedures receive a high priority. Staff make regular checks on the premises and risk assessments are recorded.



30. The school has satisfactory procedures for overseeing and promoting regular attendance. Registers are monitored closely for attendance levels and patterns of absence. Parents are very co-operative in informing the school of reasons for absence and as a result there are no unauthorised absences recorded. However a significant number of parents take holidays during term time and their children then miss valuable learning time. Full annual attendance is appropriately rewarded but there are no rewards that are realistically attainable for the majority of pupils. Punctuality is promoted satisfactorily. Very good use is made of the registration period when children are quietly absorbed in independent reading and the teacher gives additional curriculum support to individual pupils.

31. High standards of behaviour are promoted well, with good procedures and practices for monitoring and eliminating unacceptable behaviour. The key to the success of these policies is based on respect for others, achieved by example and the rewarding of good practice. In response to the last inspection there is now a good whole school policy for the management of behaviour, with an effective and consistent approach by staff to dealing with poor behaviour. The provision of a very good behaviour guide for parents suitably encourages the support of parents by clearly explaining the rationale behind the schools' positive approach to behaviour and discipline. Shared responsibility for school rules between staff and pupils ensures joint ownership and commitment to maintaining a calm and effective learning environment. The head teacher plays a major role in moderating behaviour with his approachability and high profile around school.

32. The support for pupils' personal development is excellent, making a significant contribution to successful learning. Teachers know their pupils very well and good relationships underpin both the responsible conduct and mature approach pupils have to their work. Wide-ranging opportunities for all pupils support the building up of skills, confidence and self-esteem. Examples of this are the buddy system, the class and school council, supporting young readers, circle time and the breakfast club. Individual pupil portfolios are effectively used to monitor personal development and with assessment reviews half termly with each pupil areas for improvement are identified for future progress.

33. The school has good procedures and practices for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' attainment and progress. These have improved since the previous inspection. There are now consistent, effective procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In addition to the compulsory tests at the age of eleven, pupils take optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 in English and mathematics. The results that pupils achieve in the national tests are carefully analysed and compared with what pupils achieved when they entered the school. This gives the teachers a clear picture of how well pupils have progressed and how to plan future work.

34. Assessment in other subjects, however, is in the early stages of development. Assessment in some subjects of the curriculum consists only of a summative end of school year judgement to inform what is said to parents in end of school year reports. Where good assessment information is gathered, teachers use it very well to match the level of pupil's individual work to their ability. Pupils' targets are regularly and systematically reviewed. Pupils' academic progress is supported and monitored well. Teachers maintain thorough records of pupils' attainment and targets are set. Teachers throughout the pupils' school life compile an individual record of achievement. Pupil reports are of good quality and indicate the national curriculum work covered, but do not indicate the level reached. Marking is used well to support and develop pupils' learning, but the school is conscious of the need to extend the good practice that already exists throughout the school. There are very good assessment, record keeping and communication systems which enable the progress of pupils identified with special educational needs to be monitored regularly and supported well by consistently thorough individual education plans.

35. A thorough analytical approach to looking at assessment results has enhanced teaching and learning. For example, this has led to a more focussed approach on areas for development such as problem solving in mathematics, writing in English and setting in science. It has also led to changes in the organisation of classes, such as setting in Year 6 to support pupils of differing abilities. There are plans to extend this successful practice to Years 3, 4 and 5. The Springboard classes for lower attaining pupils are a particular strength. Analysis of test results has also led to refinement of teaching strategies with emphasis on differentiated work for pupils of all abilities, thus challenging pupils to achieve more.

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

36. The school has continued to build on an aspect of school which was sound at the previous inspection and which is now very good. Parent's views of the school are excellent and this aspect is a strength of the school. They consider the educational provision to be very good. Their children enjoy coming to school and they feel the school helps their children grow in maturity and responsibility, producing well rounded considerate young people. Parents feel that the introduction of the buddy system of support for younger children and the extra curricular opportunities now provided are notable and significant improvements since the previous inspection. They value the supportive and caring environment they feel the staff provide for their children. Parents appreciate the welcome they receive in school and the approachability of staff when they have concerns.

37. There is good evidence of improvement in pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development as a result of parental involvement. The school has a very good range of productive and consistent links with parents that make an important contribution to pupils learning. Parents regularly comment in the reading diary after listening to their children read and support other areas of homework, with the help of very good information provided in a booklet 'A Parents Guide To Homework'. This helpful booklet gives parents supportive information on practical ways they can help and understand the work their children bring home in English, maths and science. A number of parents give very good reading support in school, adding value to the learning and progress of the pupils.

38. Parents appreciate the regular and informative newsletters, which effectively update them about the everyday life of the school. Useful curricular information leaflets explain to parents the sort of work their child will be doing in English and maths. This information is planned to be included on the school web site, which is already being used by some parents as a useful additional information source and means of communication. Previous workshops for parents have been poorly attended, but further programmes of learning for parents are being planned, for example in information technology to extend communication links and offer new and useful skills. Parents with pupils who have special educational needs welcome the opportunity provided to be fully involved in the discussion and planning of their child's programme of work.

39. The provision of three consultation evenings for parents to meet teachers provides very good opportunity for parents to be fully up to date and informed of their child's progress. They are greatly appreciated by parents who feel secure in the knowledge that concerns will be identified early. Annual reports are well presented with informative and constructive information, giving parents a clear insight into their children's progress. This is particularly so in Years 3 and 6 where targets for future improvement are clear and precise and where reports indicate how parents can help. In other years this is not consistently the case where targets are often not specific enough for parents to respond effectively.

40. Although there is no active parent association in the school, parents respond enthusiastically and in large numbers when requests are made for help with events, trips and fund raising. It provides a very flexible and successful structure enabling a wide body of helpers to be involved in the school. However it does not allow for a regular input into decision-making about initiatives for parent contribution and support.

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

41. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has provided a sense of vision that all adults in the school share. This makes for very good relationships and a determination to support school priorities for improvement. As a result in most academic years, the school achieves standards that compare favourably with those of similar schools. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have risen consistently, except for an anticipated drop in 2001. Pupils' personal attributes have been maintained and strengthened. The quality of teaching and learning has undergone strong improvement. Areas of the curriculum criticised at the previous inspection are now well established in good practice. The care of pupils has improved, particularly in the way the school evaluates and supports the progress pupils make. The school has an open and healthy relationship with parents. In maintaining and improving standards and provision, the headteacher has used his management skills to very good effect.

42. The aims of the school are clear and challenging. All activity in the school goes towards supporting the aims, ensuring a great deal of success in making the goals achievable. Rich opportunities are provided for pupils and there is determined commitment to ensure that all pupils benefit. Much of the improvement since the previous inspection can be attributed to the school's procedures for evaluating teaching and learning. This has been mainly focused on enhancing teaching of literacy and numeracy and has been carried out by senior members of staff. There are good agreed procedures for classroom observation. This has helped the school put the national system for managing the work of teachers into effect strongly and promptly. However, in establishing important priorities, there have been few opportunities for subject co-ordinators to see lessons in their subject area. This hinders them in establishing what needs to be developed next in their subject area. All teaching staff have a delegated role in the management of the school. These roles are carried out efficiently according to the current expectations of the school. Even a newly qualified teacher has a management responsibility within which he is being carefully supported. The school's strategy for the induction of new teachers is good and well used. The special educational needs co-ordinator gets a quarter day of administration time with the special educational needs learning support assistant. They use this time effectively to prepare work and review targets, ensuring that the provision for special educational needs runs smoothly and efficiently. There is an action plan and a development plan for special educational needs that fits in with the school's action plan to improve attainment.

43. The school has effective ways of establishing priorities for development. These are clearly set out. It is made transparent when things need to be done, who is to do them and what resources are available. Because there is whole-hearted commitment from all adults, the school is effective in achieving its priorities for development. One element of development is that funding is well used. The school knows precisely what money has been made available, how it has been spent and what benefits have been gained. Specific grants have been well spent in ensuring that school development priorities have met their target. The budget is well balanced and only a small amount of money is held as a prudent reserve.

44. The school has a committed and knowledgeable governing body. Governors carry out their legal responsibilities well. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise that is well used when covering their responsibilities. All governors have a specific curriculum link. They are regular visitors to the school. They know the school's important priorities. They

have an understanding of the strength of the teaching and learning. This puts them in a good position to support the school through their decision-making. One of the most important school priorities supported by the governing body has been seeing through recent good improvements in standards and provision for ICT.

45. The school is well staffed by skilled teachers. What they do is well supported by the valuable work of learning support assistants. The commitment of staff runs through all aspects of the work of the school: within the school office, among those who maintain the premises and those who work in the school meals service. The accommodation is well suited to its use and there are no major hindrances to teaching and learning. Some classes are large for the space available. The main teaching bases are open plan. There is some spread of noise from area to area that affects whole class teaching sessions. It is sometimes difficult for teachers to get through introductions to lessons efficiently. Learning resources are good in the way they support the needs of pupils and the different elements of the curriculum. Teachers use resources well.

46. This is a school that knows itself well. It is good at evaluating its standards and provision. It welcomes confirmation from outside – for example, from the local education authority and from organisations such as Investors in People and the Basic Skills Agency. In knowing itself and in seeking external evaluation the school uses the principles of best value well.

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

47. To sustain the very good improvement made over the past four years, the headteacher, governing body and staff of the school should:

- (1) make arrangements to assess progress in those subjects of the curriculum that are currently only assessed at the end of each school year;  
(Paragraphs: 34, 74, 84, 93, 96, 98)
- (2) provide opportunities for all subject coordinators to evaluate the quality of teaching in their subject area on a systematic basis, to give them the opportunity to identify what should happen next in their subject area.  
(Paragraphs: 42, 84, 93, 96)

The school has already identified these two points as priorities for development.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	15	4	0	0	0
Percentage	7	25	53	14	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	159
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

#### 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	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	25	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	18
	Girls	21	19	23
	Total	35	35	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (92)	81 (92)	95 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	18
	Girls	22	22	24
	Total	35	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (79)	88 (87)	98 (95)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	158
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	31.8

#### **Education support staff: Y3 - Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	301 712
Total expenditure	283 800
Expenditure per pupil	1 764
Balance brought forward from previous year	13 529
Balance carried forward to next year	31 441

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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	159
Number of questionnaires returned	55

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	31	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	58	4	0	2
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	40	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	55	0	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	38	0	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	38	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	33	2	0	0

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

One or two parents raised individual points of view. These have been discussed with the school. They included lunchtime supervision and the approachability of the school with concerns. The inspection team's response is dealt with in the parents' summary of the report.



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

### **ENGLISH**

48. Pupils' attainment in English by the age of eleven is above the levels expected in comparison with the national average. Attainment in English over the previous four years has had an upward trend that matches the national picture. The results of National Curriculum tests have varied from year to year. The results for 2001 showed a decline compared with recent years. This was because a higher proportion of special needs pupils were in that year group. There were also a number of pupils who joined the school at a later date than usual. These pupils had not had the benefit of the consistently good teaching found throughout the school. A large proportion of the present Year 6 pupils already achieve higher levels than is expected nationally. Few pupils in Year 6 do not achieve at or above the expected level for their age. Since the previous inspection, the National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and is now a central part of teaching in English. The school has a literacy action plan, which has evolved from the whole school plan. It identifies the teaching of writing as a priority.

49. Speaking and listening skills are well developed in all pupils. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to engage in discussion and to read aloud, either as individuals or as a group thus helping to promote good speaking and listening skills. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they contribute effectively in discussion and most read aloud with confidence and expression. Pupils are made aware of Standard English forms of spoken language when they revert to colloquial expression. This is done positively so that pupils continue to value the heritage of their own dialect and culture. Pupils from all classes were able to discuss their reading, talking about the plot, characters and their favourite parts of the story with confidence. They have a clear understanding of the lesson objectives for each lesson and are able to recall prior learning.

50. Reading is actively encouraged and standards in reading are better than expected for pupils of similar age. Pupils have a selection of class reading books that are colour coded to match the reading scheme. The school's target is that every pupil should reach the end of the reading scheme by the time they leave the school. One pupil in Year 6 whose reading skills were below that expected of a pupil at the end of Primary school was enthusiastic in his determination to meet that target and he was confident that he would make it. He had worked out a strategy in order to do so. He intended to read all the thinner books first so that he would have more time to concentrate on the thicker ones. By Year 6 pupils are writing confidently about the books they have read and providing good book reviews for their fellow pupils. They have scanned book covers and word-processed their copy to present a very professional book review. Most pupils are able to use their phonic skills to build words that are unfamiliar and correct their own mistakes. The higher attaining and average pupils are reading accurately and expressively with understanding at the level expected of pupils at the end of the Year 6 or better.

51. Pupils are given a variety of opportunities for extended writing and writing for specific purposes and audiences. In science pupils are encouraged to give detailed responses in their research and investigation work. Extended writing is also found in history. Some exceptional descriptive writing was seen in a Year 6 class with pupils who had special educational needs. The whole class had studied Shakespeare's Macbeth and were in the process of writing about the first scene. The class activity had developed the use of adjectives, adverbs and powerful verbs. Different groups were working on their own version. A group of six pupils worked with the class teacher on their first paragraph. The resulting description was very good and although the teacher guided the pupils they were allowed to develop their own language. The exercise also gave pupils an opportunity to develop their

drafting skills as they changed words in the text for 'better' words. Pupils in Year 6 write descriptively and use simile and metaphor to improve the style of their writing. Most pupils in Year 6 write fluent, joined up handwriting with a pen. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 are developing a fluent joined up style of writing.

52. A detailed policy for English follows the National Literacy Strategy. It is supplemented by school guidelines for handwriting and speaking and listening. The policy sets out for teachers the objectives for the teaching of English and provides detailed guidance on the teaching of the three attainment targets - speaking and listening, reading and writing. It cross-references for teachers other policies that are expected to be observed, for example, marking and assessment and recording progress.

53. Teaching of English is good overall. All teaching of English is at least satisfactory and much is very good. Lesson objectives are clearly stated and explained at the beginning of the lesson and reinforced during the lesson. The plenary at the end of the lesson focuses on what the pupils have learned through questions and discussion. In lessons where the teaching is judged to be satisfactory, while the planning and management of pupils is satisfactory, the pace of the lesson and the resources provided do not fully ensure pupils are always productively occupied. Sometimes teacher intervention is required to avoid disruption and the work rate of pupils falls. The very good lessons are characterised by very good planning, a variety of tasks set using whole class, group and paired work, differentiated materials and approaches and effective management of the pupils. In two lessons judged to be very good the pace of lessons was brisk and the variety of methods used ensured that pupils were challenged and achieved a high work rate. A lesson on descriptive writing using Macbeth as stimulus, together with a piece of music played to create atmosphere, took pupils through feelings and senses associated with the music which were then transferred to their writing about the first scene from the play. The group was a second set, Year 6 having been divided to give the higher attaining pupils more challenge, and included several special educational needs pupils. The teacher had organised the group in such a way as to give the opportunity to spend a greater amount of the time supporting the special educational needs pupils. The outcome was that all pupils in the group were able to complete the task with success and achieved the lesson objectives. The quality of the writing was good and above the expectation of pupils assessed to be average or lower attaining.

54. The quality of learning in the lessons seen matched teaching. Where teaching is very good, the learning is also very good. Pupils enjoy the work set and are enthusiastic in their attitude to work. The vast majority of pupils are keen to progress and work co-operatively with others to further that aim. Pupils are expected to read regularly and are encouraged to use both the school and the local public library. Year 6 pupils visit the local library and work with the librarian as part of the extended provision for pupils. The Year 6 pupils with whom this was discussed have responded very well to this initiative. Each pupil keeps a record of reading. Parents also comment in the reading record. The behaviour of pupils is good overall. Some pupils present challenging behaviour but good teacher classroom management strategies ensure that disruption is prevented. The support for special educational needs pupils is effective. The attitudes of pupils to English and literacy lessons are very good. The pupils are willing and co-operative and work well most of the time. During the time of the inspection there were no raised voices and pupils quickly responded to reminders about acceptable attitudes and behaviour.

55. The pupils have developed useful research skills. By the time they reach Year 6, they are confident in using the library non-fiction section for personal research, for history and geography in particular. They know how to use dictionaries, index and contents pages and understand the purpose of a glossary. In a Year 3 class, pupils were learning how to use dictionaries. They knew that definitions might differ in different dictionaries. They found words given by the teacher and read the definitions. Most classrooms had an ample supply

of dictionaries for pupils to use. Reading scheme books and class libraries supplement the library fiction stock. Pupils have opportunities to work independently in subjects such as history, geography and religious education, using literacy skills to support their learning. Pupils use the ICT equipment available in the bays between classrooms to good effect to support their learning. This was an aspect of the use of computers criticised at the previous inspection.

56. The work displayed in classrooms and in spaces between classrooms provides a stimulating environment for learning and shows the pride both staff and pupils take in the work presented. There are poems and inspirational verses which make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' work expresses their hopes and dreams and their awareness of the world around them. The local history studies seen show how important the local environment is to all members of the school. The industrial past of the area is still the present for many of the pupils' parents and grandparents, who may have worked in the local steel industry and that heritage is not forgotten in the school community. Pupils use their reading and writing skills to reflect their heritage.

57. Displays in all classrooms have a strong emphasis on both literacy and numeracy; key words and lesson objectives are prominently displayed. Guidance on the topics being studied is also prominent. For example, in a Year 4 classroom where pupils were studying limericks, there is a display to which pupils referred whilst constructing their own limericks. In other classes, studying elements of grammar and spelling, references are available on the walls to reinforce the topic's main objectives. All these displays provide a stimulating atmosphere in which pupils can learn. The library has a good stock of texts for research and independent learning. Pupils have regular library lessons and there is an after school library club.

58. The school is committed to raising achievement in English and has invested in materials and resources to support the teaching of literacy since the previous inspection. There is good data collection and analysis of pupils' attainment in English. There are half termly reading tests and the optional National Curriculum standard tests are used each year. The data analysis of pupils' test results prompted the decision to split the Year 6 class into two sets. This has resulted in both sets of pupils benefiting, the higher attaining pupils are provided with more challenging tasks and lower attaining pupils are not intimidated by the higher attainers having all the right answers and are also making better progress. The school action plan has identified writing as a priority and all teachers apply the criteria for improving writing in all the work done. Marking is done regularly but does not always provide sufficient guidance for pupils to improve the quality of the work they do. Good practice in marking is seen where teachers have recognised precisely the work done and the effort made and also set targets for future work. In pupils' reports specific targets are set for some year groups but not for all year groups.

59. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator evaluates the work of teachers and pupils through the examination of pupils' books and teachers' planning. At present observation of teachers by the co-ordinator is limited and is to be developed. There is a governor representative linked to English who has visited school to observe the teaching of Literacy and has reported back to the governing body.

## **MATHEMATICS**

60. The results of the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds in 2000 were well above the national average and had improved since the previous inspection. Pupils attained well above the national average when compared with all schools. Compared to pupils in similar schools, the pupils achieved results that were well above the national average. The

percentage of pupils reaching the expected level and the higher National Curriculum levels was higher than in most schools. Trends over the last three years show pupils' performance close to the national average. Standards rose significantly in 1997. Between 1998 and 2000, standards have risen broadly in line with the national trend. Over the previous three years, girls have out-performed boys in the National Curriculum tests, particularly in Year 2000. In Year 2001, test results indicated that standards were lower than the previous year, but standards were similar to those nationally and were above when compared to similar schools. This fall in attainment was because of the number of pupils with special educational needs; their standards were lower than most of the other pupils in the year group. Inspection findings indicate that the current Year 6 are on course to attain standards above the national average because of the analytical approach the school has now adopted to pupils' individual assessments resulting in good and very good teaching of all pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

61. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on standards. Mental mathematics work is used very well. Pupils use quick recall of addition, subtraction, and multiplication and division facts very well. Pupils in Year 3, for example, count backwards and forwards in tens, from any two-digit numbers, accurately, while most pupils in Year 5 double and half numbers to 100 and use multiples of 10 and 100 to 10,000 quickly and accurately. There is now a growing emphasis on using practical methods and problem solving techniques. Pupils in Year 6 use cards which rely on their knowledge of factor, multiple, prime square and square root, while in a Year 4 lesson, pupils interpret Venn and Carroll diagrams to sort appropriate criteria.

62. The quality of teaching is consistently good and pupils make good progress as a result. Very good lessons were seen in Years 4 and 5 with some high quality teaching of lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4. There have been improvements since the previous inspection. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy ensures that pupils learn mathematical skills in a logical progression and cover all areas of the National Curriculum regularly and consistently. The three-part lesson structure is well established. Teachers' lesson planning indicates what pupils of differing abilities should achieve and which resources will be used to support them. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are very high. For example, pupils in Year 6 extended their knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages on a probability line to the probability of picking prime numbers from cards numbered 20 to 40. Ongoing assessments are used effectively to match work closely to the needs of individual pupils. Additional extension work is provided for higher attaining pupils who complete exercises more quickly and lower attaining pupils are given very good support in the 'Springboard' classes. Lessons have clear learning objectives and most teachers share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils at the beginning of the session. This helps pupils to focus on what they are to learn. As a result pupils have very positive attitudes and most concentrate well. They listen carefully to their teachers during mental mathematics sessions and are keen to answer questions. They are well behaved and co-operate well when working in pairs or in small groups. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and this ensures that pupils work hard and do their best. Occasionally, teachers spend too much time on introducing the tasks to be done and this can lead to lack of concentration and effort. The quality of teachers' marking is good overall. The best marking gives clear guidance, is written in a positive and encouraging style and helps pupils to move ahead in their learning.

63. Pupils with special educational needs are given perceptive support and assistance and make very good progress towards the targets in their individual plans for learning. Support staff are well briefed on the main learning objectives of lessons to ensure that help is well focussed. For example, Year 3 pupils worked happily on tasks such as  $30+49$  and  $5+10+63$ , using a 100 square, while Year 4 pupils were supported well when reading the

time in five-minute intervals from an analogue clock. Teachers set homework regularly and use it well to consolidate work begun in lessons.

64. The management and co-ordination of mathematics is good. The school's provision and teaching reflects the emphasis placed on improving standards and the regular and consistent use of all the mathematical areas of the National Curriculum, in particular problem-solving activities. Teachers, governors, pupils and parents work together well in a joint venture to raise standards. Monitoring of the subject has improved since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator now analyses information from national and school-based tests to search for strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' work. This has had a beneficial effect on raising standards. She scrutinises pupils' work, reviews teachers' planning and observes teaching across the school. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and to track the progress of groups of pupils and the progress of each year group. As a result, challenging but achievable targets are set to raise standards for each year group. Assessment information is used very well to guide curriculum planning. Learning resources are well cared for, well stored and used efficiently to assist pupils' learning. The use of ICT has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is used well to consolidate and support learning during lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

65. The 2001 national tests showed that eleven-year-old pupils attained standards that matched the standards attained by pupils of a similar age nationally. Pupils also attained standards that matched the performance of pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher National Curriculum levels in 2000 was below the national average. The school recognised this shortcoming and has pursued strategies to raise the number of pupils attaining the higher level. Whilst the percentage of pupils achieving this higher level in 2001 national tests was still below the national average, there was an improvement from the previous year.

66. Inspectors judge that the attainment of eleven-year-olds is above the standard expected for children of this age, which matches the judgement made in the previous inspection report. Standard test results for pupils in the previous year were not as good as the standards found currently in the school. A significant proportion of pupils in that year group were identified as having special educational needs and despite good targeting by the school, it was not possible to lift the overall performance of this group of pupils.

67. Pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of the function and care of teeth. Through their own personal observations, they examine, draw and describe their teeth using the appropriate vocabulary such as "incisor, molar and canine". Higher attaining pupils write thoughtfully and at length about their knowledge of the working of the human body. They apply their knowledge of nutrition well when deciding on the best balance of food from a shopping list. Year 5 pupils make good, labelled diagrams to describe the lungs and heart. They carry out tests on pulse rates during various stages of exercise and use their findings to make predictions. Higher attaining pupils present their work very precisely and write at greater length. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school and, by the time they are eleven years old, they have a good understanding of how to record their investigations and tests. They use graphs to show the link between the height of a shadow and the distance of a torch from an object. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of the nature of reversible and irreversible materials through substantial recording of their experiments and investigative work. In a lesson on cleaning dirty pond water, pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of mixtures to separate the various materials by successive filtration operations. They select the equipment

required to carry out the filtration and make careful observations. They record their findings methodically as a series of instructions on how to conduct the experiment.

68. The quality of science teaching is good. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to learn and acquire knowledge for themselves through investigative work. Teachers plan thoroughly for lessons, ensuring that the activities are matched to pupils' previous learning and the aims of the work are clear. Exercise books show that teachers' comments encourage and prompt pupils to think for themselves, and higher attaining pupils are urged to write more extensively. In a science lesson judged to be very good, the teacher planned and prepared activities and equipment very carefully so that Year 6 pupils were able to work at a good pace throughout. The teacher prompted groups of pupils well throughout their investigation into cleaning pond water to make their own decisions and conclusions from first hand observations. Teachers use expertise outside the school effectively to support pupils' learning. For example, a dental hygienist gives Year 3 pupils a good insight into the function and care of teeth, using a wide range of learning resources and visual illustrations. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their work. They support each other and co-operate very well in groups when carrying out investigations.

69. The subject is managed well. The teacher with responsibility for the subject has recognised that fewer pupils than the national average have gained the higher National Curriculum levels in tests in the previous two years, and has taken steps to help to improve this situation. For example, more investigative work is embedded in planning, activities and targets for higher attaining pupils are more clearly identified and a specialist teacher from the secondary school visits to teach science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

70. Standards are similar to those expected nationally for pupils at the age of eleven. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection. The evidence indicates that all pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning, including those with special educational needs. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Curriculum and teaching issues identified in the previous report have now been addressed satisfactorily. There is a refined scheme of work, which reflects the school's adoption of national guidelines and offers step-by-step development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. By the time they leave school, pupils have experienced a satisfactory range of techniques in two and three dimensions and their work is beginning to show some attention to detail and developing sophistication. They study famous artists and express their own ideas and interpretations with increasing confidence as they comment on their own work and that of others.

71. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection so no judgement can be made on the overall quality of teaching in the school. In the Year 6 lesson seen, the teacher demonstrated clearly the techniques needed to cut out sections of print block and use them to over print. Most pupils worked independently and very enthusiastically and most resulting prints showed care and attention to detail. However, a few pupils applied paint too liberally on their roller pads and their prints lacked clarity. The artwork seen in the scrutiny of pupils' classroom work and the many examples of attractive work displayed round the school confirm that the standard of work seen is similar to that expected nationally.

72. Throughout the school, pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to explore colour, pattern and texture, line and tone, shape, form and space. They combine, organise and use these elements well for different purposes. They have experiences of a satisfactory range of media and apply colour in pastels, chalk, paint and crayon. Sketching of Willow Plate designs and 'Snail Trail' drawings show a developing eye for line and observational drawing. Planning shows that pupils build on their knowledge of famous artists and re-create their

styles. For example, they investigate the way artists such as Claude Monet, Turner, Katsushika Hokusai and Vincent Van Gogh represent water and recreate their style. They study the perspective skills of Canaletto and compare the detailed work of the traditional artists such as Turner with the freer style of the impressionists, such as Claude Monet. Evidence of this knowledge is shown in the large size paintings of the Nativity Story, each scene capturing well the style of various artists such as Van Gogh, Claude Monet, Picasso and Georges Seurat. Computer generated artwork, used to produce Andy Warhol's painting of 'Cans', demonstrates pupils' skills in selecting a range of colours and controlling their application. A weekly art club is run by an enthusiastic volunteer. During the inspection, interested and involved pupils were making calendars of 'Snow White'.

73. Visits such as those to the Laing Art Gallery enhance pupils' cultural understanding. Opportunities are also given to experience and appreciate the work of local artists in residence. Pupils visiting Barnard Castle had opportunities to extend their knowledge of perspective and have opportunities to use cut and torn paper techniques to create collages in the style of Canaletto.

74. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. She monitors the standard of work on display and evaluation of teachers' planning takes place, but there has been no monitoring and evaluation of teaching in art and design to improve standards. There is an end of year assessment record in place and planning is supported by the scheme of work. However, there is no formal assessment of pupils' skills nor are there assessed samples of pupils' work to help teachers to judge the standard of pupils' work. This makes it more difficult for teachers to base lessons on the skills that individual pupils need to develop. The use of sketchbooks provides a valuable contribution to the development of ideas, knowledge and understanding. However, this good practice is not consistent in quality throughout the school. Resources are good overall, are accessible and are used well.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

75. Standards of attainment of eleven year-old pupils match the standards expected of pupils this age. This maintains the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.

76. From their own designs, pupils in Year 3 make a "monster" which is constructed to move with wheels and axles. Materials such as wood, doweling and card are used. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils design a photograph frame and recognise that the design has to be freestanding, decorative and hold a photograph successfully. They choose tools and equipment such as scissors, card and glue to cut and attach the component parts to meet the original design needs. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and build successfully on their design skills. In Year 5, pupils understand the principle of using a net in order to prepare a design for a box. The finished box is decorated and has a lid. By the time they are eleven years old, pupils have developed skills in using textiles, and sew a variety of letters and motifs with coloured threads. Pupils work with component kits to tackle more complex activities, such as building a model vehicle that can be controlled for speed and direction.

77. Only one lesson was seen during the week of the inspection, and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. In this lesson, the teacher's planning was detailed and clear in the objectives of the lesson. Pupils' discussions show that they understand the problems that may be encountered in realising a design. For example, sticky tape was discounted because, "paint will not go on it when we paint the picture frame". Good, logical progression of activities, based upon clear design sheets, help to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and how to proceed.

78. Planning has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers' daily plans for lessons fit into overall schemes for the school terms, based upon an appropriate design and technology policy. This helps to ensure that pupils work now progresses appropriately and with continuity as they move through the school, which was a shortcoming identified in the previous inspection report. Resources are relevant and appropriate for the development and coverage of the curriculum

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

79. Standards of attainment match the standard expected for eleven year olds nationally. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection despite the reduced amount of time available for these areas of the curriculum. The previous inspection identified a lack of continuity and progression in the geography and history curriculum. The school has successfully resolved this difficulty, not least through its approach to the most recent national guidance for schemes of work.

80. The school places a great deal of emphasis on local studies and successfully makes good links across the curriculum for geography and history. For example, pupils study local land use. They use current and historical maps. They study census data, comparing the size of the population and employment patterns now with those in Victorian and more recent periods in history. There is a great deal of use of first hand documentary evidence to support learning and to build skills. Pupils discuss and write about proposals such as should the high street be shut to traffic. In Year 4 and 5 they took part in a lively debate about the environmental and social consequences of a new superstore in a local town they were studying. These pupils were quick to identify closely with the part they played in the discussion: a group of local shopkeepers for the development, residents for and against it and the developers themselves. Not only was this lesson a good opportunity for pupils to practice their speaking and listening skills, and learning to use argument and counter-argument to persuade and dissuade, but also they experienced a depth of learning which would not have been gained by a paper exercise.

81. Not all the work in history and geography is linked to the locality. In geography, Year 4 pupils study the Indian village of Chembakolli. They learn a great deal about daily life in rural India. They find India on the map and identify features such as cities, rivers and seas. Year 3 pupils simulate the preparations for going on holiday. They discuss a range of destinations both at home and overseas. They know what weather conditions they are going to find and what they need to pack. Some have a very sophisticated knowledge of the different climatic regions of the world and talk very confidently about rain forest regions, two season climates and desert and polar climates. They understand the different holiday activities they can take part in, for example, a safari in Africa or a ski holiday in Canada. Pupils have a good understanding of modes of transport. They recognise resorts in different continents. Pupils take part in fieldwork, learning the practical elements of mapping and planning. A visit from a member of the local planning office helps put their learning into context.

82. In history, pupils carry out their own research using books and computers to learn about the history of travel and trade by sea – including research into piracy. They compare the history of Ancient Greece with conditions in Greece today. They research the history of the Greek army and navy in ancient times. Pupils compare the original Olympic games with the Olympic games today. Studying Greek ideas helps pupils to understand how Greek thinking is brought into modern life.

83. Insufficient direct teaching was seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching overall in history and geography. However, the evidence of the lessons seen, scrutiny of teachers' planning and analysis of the work in pupils' books implies that teaching



is at least satisfactory. It is clear that some teaching is good. There is good coverage of National Curriculum requirements. Not only does teaching support pupils' acquisition of facts but the style of teaching and the tasks set expect pupils to learn a range of practical skills. The use of these skills ensures that pupils find out for themselves, learn to use first hand evidence and above all think as young historians and geographers. Where lessons were seen, the teaching is lively and gets a lively response from the pupils. Sometimes the response is so lively that it is difficult to get the full focus of pupils on what the teacher has prepared. The content of lessons and the tasks set are interesting and challenging. Pupils are intrigued, involved and concentrate well as a result. Tasks are sufficiently open for higher attaining pupils to be challenged by them and for them to find creative ways of completing their work. Because tasks are open, lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to tackle the work at their own level. Some need – and receive – additional support to help them understand but these pupils make satisfactory and good progress in relation to their prior learning.

84. The curriculum is good. Legal requirements are met. Beyond the expectations of the National Curriculum the school ensures a range of interesting and challenging resources are well used and that pupils have the opportunity to meet interesting visitors and go beyond the school to find real history and geography. This enriching of the curriculum gives pupils great insight into what historians and geographers do. Good use has been made of the most recent national guidance for the curriculum. Both subjects are efficiently managed within the current school expectations of the job. There is no strategy for the regular assessment of history and geography to track pupils' progress through each school year. There is a summing up, end of school year, assessment of progress. Priorities for evaluating teaching have been in subjects other than history and geography. Subject coordinators do not know how well the subject is being taught and therefore are unable to identify how teaching can be further improved.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

85. Inspectors judge that the attainment of eleven-year-olds in ICT matches the standard expected for children of this age. This is an improvement in pupils' attainment since the previous inspection.

86. Pupils in Year 3 make good use of a paint program to produce freehand drawings in colour. They demonstrate confident use of the mouse and keyboard to select tools and create images. They collect information on the frequency of eye colours and represent their findings in a computer-generated pie chart. Most pupils understand how to communicate and exchange information by E-mail. Year 4 pupils have good word processing skills. For example, they produce a script for a play using alignment and indent successfully, and combine text and graphics to present a poster of swimming pool rules. They understand and explain in writing how to make a simple program to guide a screen "turtle" through a maze on the computer screen. In Year 5, pupils develop their knowledge of how to collect, find and interrogate information by using CD-ROMs and the Internet. For example, they research information in history on industrial Britain and enhance their work in English by finding out more about the Harry Potter novels on the Internet. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The cumulative effect of the progressive volume of work gives pupils a sound body of knowledge, skills and understanding by the time they are eleven years old, across all programmes of study of the national curriculum. Year 6 pupils use their word processing skills successfully to support their work in English. They write letters, produce descriptive writing such as "My pirate" and write their own biographies of famous people. They know that the results of information gathered about temperature changes over time may be recorded and shown as a display on a computer and they interpret these findings. They discuss their work and

experience of creating mathematical shapes on the computer such as triangles and hexagons by combining a number of commands into a single procedure.

87. The quality of teaching is good. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report. As a result of effective training, they are confident in their knowledge of the subject and use their skills very well to support and extend pupils' learning. They now understand the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are provided with opportunities to access the range of programmes of study, and given many opportunities to use their skills to enhance learning in other areas of the curriculum. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils skilfully combine text, graphics and photographs to compose a local history newsletter containing facts about Beamish museum. The teacher had prepared sheets that explained the task carefully and built upon pupils' previous knowledge. This enabled pupils to work independently and over a sustained period of time applying their skills.

88. Management of the subject is good. There have been substantial improvements made in the way that teachers assess and monitor pupils' progress and attainment since the previous inspection. A portfolio of pupils' work in ICT is kept which shows how pupils are progressing in relation to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. Each pupil has an individual booklet where they enter the skills that they have acquired which helps them to understand the progress they are making. Teachers also maintain a record of the attainment of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum targets. Resources are effectively deployed. Computers are grouped to teach a number of pupils together, whilst also allowing easy access from classrooms for individual pupils to use.

## **MUSIC**

89. Standards of attainment are well above what is expected nationally of pupils aged eleven. This is because the school places great stress on the importance of music throughout the school and because of gifted teaching. Some aspects of attainment are very high – in particular the singing in assembly and the playing of the brass ensemble. At the previous inspection, teacher expertise and confidence was identified as an area for improvement. Although all teachers were not seen teaching music, the lessons seen, the extra-curricular activities observed and the incidental use of music in other subjects of the curriculum show that the expected developments have been achieved.

90. Standards in singing are high. Pupils have a good repertoire of songs, especially ones that they sing in assembly. They sing with well-controlled gusto. The joy of singing does not affect their ability to deliver the words with meaning and sensitivity. They discuss expression in a sophisticated fashion. For example, a Year 5 pupil explained to the teacher and the rest of the class the impact of 'sustaining the long minims'. The teacher encouraged the use of technical musical terms by adding 'Isn't it good when we can talk the same musical language'. Pupils manage words and rhythms very effectively, even when the words are wrapped around very 'jazzy' syncopation. Pupils listen very well. They recognise composer's techniques, such as repetition. They enjoy and show their appreciation for music such as *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* by Mozart and the *Nutcracker* ballet music by Tchaikovsky. In discussion Year 6 pupils reveal a comprehensive knowledge of composers, famous pieces of music and instruments of the orchestra. Music is used to set the tone and mood for writing and to interpret in physical education. Pupils use these opportunities well as a stimulus. Again in discussion, Year 6 pupils explain how they take known songs and melodies and use instruments to create their own accompaniments.

91. The brass band is outstandingly good. It comprises 32 players from all year groups. It rehearses as an extra-curricular activity at lunch times and after school. The quality of ensemble playing is very high given the age of the pupils. They play accurately in three and four parts, with good embouchure and true pitch. They have an uncanny sense of

togetherness in their rhythm, playing separate parts that move convincingly against each other. The pieces they play are managed sensitively, whether at a brisk pace or extracting the most from a lingering melody. A good sense of variety in dynamics is instilled in the players.

92. Although only one full lesson of music was seen, the cumulative evidence within music is of very good teaching. There is some gifted teaching. Only one full lesson of music was seen and that was excellent in its quality. The incidental evidence – of singing throughout the school, of music being used as part of other lessons, planning throughout the school, the enthusiasm and knowledge of pupils with whom music was discussed – is compelling and suggests that teaching is consistently good and frequently better than that. In the lesson seen, high quality teacher knowledge was used convincingly, drawing an enthusiastic and knowing response from pupils. The lesson seen successfully taught all elements of the music curriculum – listening and appraising, composing and performing – to good effect. Pupils learn well. They behave well because they are challenged and interested. As no time is wasted the teachers got central messages over quickly and pupils made very good use of available time. Teaching of the brass band is outstanding. The teacher makes very high demands and pupils respond in mature fashion. He teaches the technical aspects of ensemble work very well to draw upon pupils' growing understanding and skills. For example, he tells pupils, 'You don't need to force your instrument to play loudly. A loud passage can still be sensitive.' and 'Here's where the lift needs to come to get the most out of this chord.' or, 'It is difficult for you to sustain a phrase as long as this. Make sure you take the breath in the middle of the phrase to keep the flow of the tune.'

93. The curriculum for music is good. It fully responds to legal requirements. It goes much further in providing a rich diet of interesting opportunities and tasks. Visiting teachers add their part to the range of experiences. The band and school choir perform regularly – within school in concerts and out in the community to a range of audiences. Music adds a significant element to the school's charitable efforts. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and personal development is enhanced a great deal by the musical opportunities provided. They add to the spiritual dimension of school life. Through music pupils learn to work together and to behave well. It builds confidence and reliability. Pupils' own culture and the culture of Western classical music are very well promoted through music. The subject is efficiently managed to provide varied and meaningful activities. There is no formal strategy for assessment, other than end of school year assessment and the assessment of potential skills for playing and singing in the band and choir. Nor does the subject manager have opportunity to see colleagues teaching in his subject area so that he can identify what priorities need to be put into place to improve standards still further.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

94. Standards of attainment for eleven year olds match the expectations of pupils of similar age nationally. Only one lesson of physical education was seen during inspection. Other evidence has been gathered from teachers' planning, discussions with the subject coordinator and pupils and from photographic evidence. In the lesson seen, Year 6 pupils shared their work with pupils from the local special school. Pupils have the confidence to perform in front of others, to discuss their work and to give support to pupils whose skills are not as well developed. Pupils participate eagerly at their own level and work hard to improve their performance. In discussion pupils talk about the wide range of activities they have in physical education. They enjoy the competitive nature of small team games and explain how it is important to work together so that team does well collectively. They discuss the way they practice different skills in gymnastics and assemble them to make a satisfying sequence of movements with good starting and finishing positions. Pupils particularly like the fact that all can take part equally in sporting events: boys and girls, those with good skills and those with limited skills. They understand the importance of warm up sessions to get ready for vigorous

activity and that cool down time is an opportunity to reflect on their own performance. They appreciate the extra-curricular opportunities the school provides: competitive matches, sports days, dance instruction at the sports centre and line dancing.

95. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching. Not enough lessons were seen. The evidence available suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory. The one lesson seen was excellent. It was a good example of brisk and well-informed teaching. Pupils from the special school were well supported and integrated. Because there was challenge and a high degree of interest, pupils concentrated and were eager in everything they did. Pupils made good progress as they analysed their performance, demonstrated as individuals, supported others and found out how to improve their sequence. The special educational needs pupils from the visiting school made good progress. They were challenged by the support they got from other pupils and because they saw the good example set by higher attaining pupils.

96. The curriculum is good. It fulfils legal requirements and offers a good range of enriching extra-curricular opportunities. There are good links with professional football clubs and the local sports centre. The school makes good use of coaching opportunities. The subject makes a good contribution to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially in the moral and social aspects of physical activity. There is no system for regularly recording the progress pupils make. The only recorded assessment is an end of school year assessment for reporting purposes. The co-ordinator is a newly qualified teacher who is being supported in his development as a subject manager. He has clear ideas and is determined to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. He has no opportunity to see lessons taught by other members of staff.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

97. Attainment in religious education is satisfactory. Attitudes are very positive and behaviour is good overall. Pupils show enthusiasm for the tasks set. The long term planning identifies two cycles for each of the four main classes. Years 3 and 4 have one cycle and Years 5 and 6 another. It is anticipated by the end of Year 6 that pupils will have covered all the elements of the primary school syllabus. Curriculum links with the infant school do not yet determine what pupils have already studied. This is desirable to the planning needs of the junior school phase to ensure that the syllabus requirements are fully met.

98. The school has adopted the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and uses this together with national guidance to plan the schemes of work. The agreed syllabus has clear assessment criteria for religious education. The religious education co-ordinator has only recently taken up this post from the Headteacher and is still developing the long term and medium term plans to guide teachers through the syllabus. The syllabus requires the study of Christianity and five other faiths: Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. The syllabus also suggests which faiths should form the core for pupils in the junior school and which in the infants school, and which faiths should be supplementary. As the school is also using national guidance to determine their programmes of study there is no clear understanding shown how the school will meet the targets set in the syllabus. Assessment in religious education is at an early stage of development.

99. The work in pupils' religious education books showed that pupils develop understanding of other faiths and Christianity and learn some of the basic facts associated with them. The contribution to multi-cultural understanding is not yet extensive and the co-ordinator appreciates that the syllabus and schemes of work need further development.

100. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time but this is not tightly structured to meet the assessment targets set down in the syllabus. Good use is made of the association with the parish church and pupils have access to artefacts associated with other faiths. Collective Worship builds on the knowledge pupils gain in religious education and makes a valuable contribution to consolidating prior knowledge.

101. Only two lessons of religious education were seen. The teaching was satisfactory with aspects of good teaching. In a Year 4/5 mixed class, pupils described the various journeys associated with the nativity. They understood how the journeys were started and why the different people were involved, showing good prior knowledge. The pupils went on to design a storyboard of the events suggesting several different ways in which they could be represented. Pupils were engaged by the task set. In the Year 5 lesson seen, half the class learned about the meaning of Advent. Using music to support the teaching they were able to discuss the various ways in which Advent is a preparation for Christmas. The lesson concluded with pupils making Advent wreaths with candles to mark the weeks leading up to Christmas. Each class in the school will have one of the wreaths made by the group and light the candles as the weeks go by. Making effective use of subject knowledge, the teacher led a mature discussion about Advent calendars. Good use of resources involved the teacher showing two different calendars to contrast with the more commercialised ones usually bought for/by the children. The discussion ended with thoughts about the symbolism of the Advent candles. Pupils were very enthusiastic about their wreath making and there was a good-natured competition to see who had created the best.