

INSPECTION REPORT

**FELTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED FIRST SCHOOL**

Felton, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122273

Headteacher: Ms D Hellawell

Reporting inspector: Fran Gillam
21498

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 23rd April 2002

Inspection number: 244681

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev P Etterley
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd February 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Felton is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School; it is smaller than most other primary schools nationally. There are 109 pupils on roll; 59 boys and 50 girls. Twenty-seven children attend the Nursery part-time and there are 18 children in the Reception Year. When children start school their attainment is above that expected for their age. Almost all pupils are from a white British background. The percentage entitled to free school meals is 8.4 per cent and below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is just above ten per cent and broadly average; one pupil has a statement of special educational need. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, there has been a new headteacher and two teachers appointed. There are five classes, including the Nursery. All year groups are taught in mixed age classes except for Year 4. During the afternoons the class organisation changes so that some year groups are taught.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Felton First is a good school because standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in English and mathematics are also well above average. Pupils do well during their time in the school; they are eager to learn because teaching often inspires them and lessons are often interesting. The pupils listen and concentrate very well as a result. In most lessons they take on new learning quickly because teaching is good. Teachers provide interesting activities that challenge pupils of differing abilities. The headteacher, staff and governors work together very well. They have a clear idea of how well the school is doing and what they need to do to improve further. There are very good arrangements for checking how well pupils are progressing; the use of this information sets targets for improvement effectively. The school provides good value for money

What the school does well

- By the time pupils leave the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above those expected for nine year olds.
- Pupils progress well in mathematics and writing because teaching is good.
- Pupils enjoy school; they work hard and are interested in their lessons.
- The headteacher, senior managers and governors work most effectively together; they manage improvements successfully.
- The activities the school offers are rich and varied; teachers make effective links between subjects that make lessons interesting.

What could be improved

- Standards in speaking by Year 4.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in February 1998. Standards by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained against an improving national picture and standards by the time pupils leave the school are now well above those expected for nine year olds. These improved standards reflect the effectiveness of the changes made to how classes are organised and the teaching which is now better in Years 3 and 4. The school now has clear guidance for what should be taught in each year group. The very good arrangements for checking how well pupils are doing are effective in setting targets for pupils to strive for and in informing teachers about what individual and groups of pupils need to learn next. As a result, teaching meets the needs of pupils of differing attainment more effectively than at the time of the last inspection and this reflects in the good progress made and the well above average standards in English, mathematics and ICT by Year 4. The school has invested considerable funds in improving the resources and also time for training staff in ICT; the resources are excellent and teachers and pupils use them very well.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	A	A*	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A	A	A	A	
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	

In the tests in 2001, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools; Felton did much better in the tests compared with schools of similar backgrounds. The trend in the school's performance has kept pace with the improving national trend. Standards in the present Year 2 are above average in writing and mathematics and well above in ICT. This group of pupils has a number with special educational needs. As a result, standards are not as high as last year. By Year 4, standards are well above those expected for nine year olds in writing, mathematics and ICT. Pupils achieve well during their time in school. The school uses what it knows about pupils' achievements to set realistic targets for the year groups to attain by the end of each school year. By Year 2, pupils write clearly and use lively and imaginative words to make their writing interesting. Pupils of differing attainment do well because their needs are clearly identified and those with special educational needs have good help from learning support assistants. In mathematics, pupils solve problems quickly both mentally and in paper and pencil exercises. In ICT, pupils devise presentations, expertly insert pictures, alter text and develop their ideas using computer programs. They have a good understanding of how ICT can help them with their work and its use in the wider world. By Year 4, pupils' writing develops further and so the higher attaining pupils use speech marks and paragraphs in their writing. Pupils spell more accurately and in mathematics solve complex problems effectively. In ICT, pupils in Year 4 devise pages for the school website. They access programs quickly and update their work using a range of information such as photographs, details downloaded from the Internet and their own word-processed writing. By comparison to the well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT, standards in speaking and listening are average. This is because average attaining and lower attaining pupils are not always able to express themselves clearly or adapt their talk to suit the topic they are discussing. By the time children are ready to move into Year 1, effective teaching in the Reception class leads to good progress and standards that are above average in children's personal and social development, communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils love coming to school; they work hard, follow instructions effectively and concentrate very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – pupils are courteous, behave very well in and around the school and fully understand the effect of their actions upon others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – from the children in the Reception class through to Year 4, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory – the attendance rate is below the national average because a number of parents take their children on holiday during term time.

The higher attaining pupils are eager to talk and answer questions in lessons. However, the average attaining and lower attaining pupils are more reluctant to speak up and sometimes have difficulty in explaining clearly what they know.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good; the pupils learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy quickly because there is sufficient time for them to practise and refine what they know. Activities challenge pupils of different attainments because teachers plan tasks that build effectively on what they have learned before. Pupils settle quickly to tasks and know what they are doing because teachers share information with them and clearly explain what they are to learn and why. Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate well because teachers make good links between different subjects and this makes activities relevant and often exciting. For example, in Year 4, pupils developing their ICT skills in altering text and updating the school website also develop their geographical knowledge and understanding of the local area. They pick out the key features of the Northumbrian region and local landmarks; they use these to highlight additional information about their school and its surroundings. Pupils have a very good idea of how well they are doing because teachers carefully assess and record their achievements. They share this information with the pupils and set targets in English and mathematics for them to work to. The pupils like knowing what to do next and what they need to concentrate upon to improve even further. It shows in the effort they put into their work, the good quality work they produce and their quick pace of working. The support lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs receive is effective in helping them to make good progress. Small group work provides good chances for more focused work, for example on letter sounds and spelling. In the Nursery, teachers provide an interesting range of activities for children but they do not do enough to help them to develop their ideas through talk, which would speed learning. By comparison, children in the Reception class talk animatedly and show their natural inquisitiveness in the questions they ask and the comments they make; teaching here is effective and places a strong emphasis upon children expressing their thoughts and ideas. In other classes, teachers do not give enough emphasis to developing the speaking skills of the average attaining and lower attaining pupils; in lessons these pupils find it more difficult to talk about what they think, know and have learned.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good – there are effective links between different subjects. Chances for pupils to use their writing and ICT skills to support work in other subjects are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – pupils' needs are met effectively. Support for individuals and groups is focused well upon developing basic skills and building confidence and self-esteem.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good – staff set good examples for the pupils to follow. They are courteous and respectful and the pupils mirror these positive attitudes. There are good chances for pupils to work together, and to learn about the difference between right and wrong and about their own culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good – children feel well cared for and that their efforts are appreciated. The school has very good systems in place to track how well pupils are progressing.

The setting of targets, arising from the careful assessment of how well pupils are doing, and the analysis of the test results, are very good. Both pupils and parents appreciate the support this provides and the chances for pupils to get involved and take responsibility for their own learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good – the headteacher leads a very effective team of senior managers. They are enthusiastic, are willing to take on responsibility and work together to bring about improvement in a climate of professional support and development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good – the governors are active in the drive to raise standards. They have a very clear understanding of school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are fully involved in the school's programme for self-evaluation and make informed decisions to help raise standards further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good – the school uses the analysis of test results and of pupils' work to very good effect to identify areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good – spending decisions are based upon clearly identified priorities for development and linked effectively to raising standards.

The governors use funding wisely to support development. They ensure good value for money by comparing how well the school is doing in comparison to other similar schools and by challenging the school's performance, and, with the support of the staff, seek ways to improve further. They also listen to the views of parents and enlist their support, for example, in developing the ICT provision in the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The way the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons.

Parents are generally very happy with the education their children are receiving and the progress they are making. The inspection team endorses the positive views of parents. A small number of responses expressed dissatisfaction with the range of activities the school offers outside lessons. However, at the parents' meeting there was strong support for the rich and varied range of activities the children have the chance to take part in. The range of additional activities is good and pupils benefit, for example, from visits out of school and by taking part in events with other local schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the time pupils leave the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above those expected for nine year olds.

1. Over the past three years the school has done much to raise the standards of attainment in ICT; this has proved successful. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 4 are working well above the levels expected for their age because:
 - By Year 2, pupils already have a good knowledge of how to open, retrieve and save their work. They are adept at altering the text by colour, size and type and in accessing the Internet to gather information to help them in their research work. The higher attaining pupils are successful at remembering the steps in devising a *PowerPoint* presentation and some are able to animate the text to add further interest. Average attaining and lower attaining pupils develop their ideas well, sometimes with help from adults, but they too know how to download information from websites and insert artwork or photographs in their work.
 - By Year 4, pupils include text, animation and pictures in their work. They are able to edit their work to increase the size of the font, adapt the colour and choose a typeface more suitable for the theme of their work. Pupils use a range of programs competently including those that sort and arrange data, those that calculate mathematical formulae, those that are mainly used for word processing and those used for giving presentations. This work gives the pupils the opportunity to develop their ideas and make things happen, exchange and share information and to review and modify the task as they are working. In addition, the work they complete when updating the school website and accessing the Internet provides good chances for pupils to find things out to support their work in other subjects, for example, researching information about life in India for geographical studies.
 - Both boys and girls are interested and do well in ICT. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 4 understand the use of ICT in the wider world.
2. There is now an excellent range of equipment for pupils' use. The most recent purchase of laptop computers has increased the chances for pupils to develop their skills further and to use ICT to support their work in other subjects more effectively. Pupils work effectively with partners and they have a lively interest in what they are learning. They take turns sensibly and respect the ideas and contributions of others.
3. Teachers have had training, which has proved effective in giving them the skills and confidence to plan exciting activities that challenge pupils and so speed learning. There is a strong team spirit and staff support one another and seek ways to improve what they are offering the pupils. Pupils know what they are doing, what they are going to learn and how to tackle tasks because teachers share information with them very clearly. Teachers use the computer-linked projector effectively to show pupils how to access programs and to use tool bars, and this means that the pupils settle quickly to their work. In a lesson in Year 2, the teacher used the computer linked projector to good effect to show pupils how important it is to consider the background colour, typeface and font colour when designing a *PowerPoint* slide. The pupils quickly learned how the colours could make all the difference to how well the audience could view the information. Further examples quickly showed pupils the importance of organising the information clearly so that diagrams and pictures are accompanied by suitable captions. When working in pairs, pupils used this new learning well, experimenting with background colours and font sizes until they were satisfied with their designs. These skills, knowledge and understanding develop very well and, by Year 4, pupils use what they know most effectively to design their web pages for the school website. They draw on their

geographical knowledge of the area and use the Internet to download pictures of local landmarks and gain additional information to add to their design with minimal support from adults. Their skills are developing very well and reflect in the confidence with which the pupils use computers and their knowledge of the use of other ICT equipment such as digital cameras and facsimile machines. The very effective teaching ensures that pupils build effectively on what they have learned before, and results in the well above average standards by Year 2 and Year 4.

Pupils progress well in mathematics and writing because teaching is good.

4. Children in the Nursery begin to count, match and organise numbers correctly. They have good support from home and this gives them a positive start to their learning. Some of the activities offered allow children to develop an awareness of number and build in repetition and practice so that skills, knowledge and understanding are consolidated. When children move into the Reception class they develop a greater knowledge of the order of numbers and the names and properties of different shapes. Teaching makes good links with the other areas of learning such as communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the children gain a greater understanding of time and the sequencing of events. This is because the teacher takes opportunities to strengthen their understanding of the passing of time, for example, by writing about their visit to the Grace Darling museum and asking questions such as “What happened first?” and then, “What did we do next?” The children have a good grounding in mathematics by the time they move into Year 1 and many attain the Early Learning Goals¹ in mathematical development.
5. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to do well. The Year 2 pupils, taught either with Year 1 or Year 3, make good progress and this is because the teachers provide pupils of different attainments with good opportunities to achieve and do well. Work is planned and tasks are set at a level that is suitable to pupils’ needs. This shows in the way that pupils use what they know to solve problems. There is a strong emphasis upon working practically with numbers and shapes so that pupils learn through discussion and trying out their ideas. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils were encouraged to sort different shapes following certain rules. Throughout, the adults encouraged the pupils to explain why they had sorted the objects that way. The higher attaining pupils in this situation did well. Staff encouraged the average attaining and lower attaining pupils by posing probing questions such as “Is he right?” and “Why is he right?” and “What do you need to do next?” to develop thinking. Teaching provides well-paced steps during introductions and so pupils quickly settle to their work. This is evident not only in the younger classes but also in Year 4. During introductions, pupils are attentive and listen well to the teacher. Effective strategies to help pupils of differing attainments to learn, for example, their multiplication tables, by swinging a pendulum at different speeds to which the pupils supply the answers means that those who need more time to think have the chance to, yet feel they are doing as well as their classmates. Target setting throughout the school is effective in guiding pupils to what they need to do to improve further. Pupils as a matter of course work on targets, for example, that require them to learn their multiplication tables, when they have completed other activities. They enjoy the challenge this poses and this makes good use of time.
6. Children in the Nursery have the chance to experiment with writing and gain a deeper understanding that words carry meaning and letters have special sounds during story time. By the time they are in the Reception class, the teacher makes effective use of the literacy strategy to get children off to a good start. They quickly learn the sounds of letters and how to write them because the teacher makes writing activities enjoyable and relevant. The confidence of the children is high. This is because they have a very good understanding of letter sounds and blends and use this to spell words correctly. For example, higher attaining children happily spelt words such as ‘interested’ and ‘sleepy’. The teacher skilfully drew out the

¹ Early Learning Goals set out what children are expected to know by the end of the Reception Year before starting the National Curriculum in Year 1.

words that children might need when they came to write their account of their visit to the seaside. This provided a very effective start to the writing activity. Children quickly grow in confidence and so the higher attaining children begin to write short sentences, often using a capital letter and full stop and spelling many words correctly. Average attaining and lower attaining children also do well and, whilst they rely more upon the support of adults to help them put their thoughts down on paper, they write their own names, some individual words and short sentences correctly. Boys are every bit as involved in activities as girls are. They offer their ideas clearly and, like the girls, respond well.

7. Writing continues to develop effectively and so by Year 2, higher attaining pupils write interesting short stories and accounts. They make good attempts at spelling more complex words such as 'rescuing' and 'starving' and show good understanding of choosing words in their stories for interest and excitement. Work is neatly presented, showing a pride in their achievements, and pupils take note of the teacher's comments, for example, including more action or describing words in their writing. Higher attaining pupils organise their writing well; for example, they use full stops, capital letters and often commas correctly. Average attaining and lower attaining pupils often use full stops and capital letters correctly. Their spelling is not as accurate as that of the higher attaining pupils but increasingly they use more exciting and imaginative words in their writing. The emphasis on teaching spelling patterns gives these pupils the confidence to 'have a go'.
8. By Year 4, higher attaining pupils show a clear understanding of how to use paragraphs to organise their writing. Teaching introduces this effectively and marking ensures that pupils are reminded to use paragraphs each time they write. There is a strong emphasis upon pupils of all attainments using lively and imaginative words and phrases to bring interest for the reader. Pupils write in a lively manner and develop their ideas effectively because story starters and endings, different types of writing and for different reasons are taught well. Teaching provides good examples from the works of famous writers for pupils to study and to draw inspiration from. Writing is usually clear but not always joined. Average attaining and lower attaining pupils make good progress. They are able to sustain their ideas and develop the characters in their stories more effectively as they gain in confidence over the year. All pupils show a clear understanding of how to structure their writing and how to use speech marks to show dialogue in the text. Marking provides clear pointers for pupils about how to improve their work, as well as summarising their achievements. This encourages the pupils to work hard and improve.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the booster work in small groups and the suitability of tasks in the classroom. Help is well paced and encourages pupils to be confident and to have a go. The build up of, for example, spelling patterns involves those well known to the pupils as well as those that need further work. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs can draw on what they already know to help them spell more accurately.

Pupils enjoy school; they work hard and are interested in their lessons.

10. Pupils enjoy their time in school. They like school because they find the activities the teachers plan interesting. They talk enthusiastically about what they do in school and the lessons they like best.
11. Children in the Nursery are happy in their work and play. They initiate conversations with adults and other children and will work on their own for periods of up to 15 minutes. Children both in the Nursery and Reception class work very well with each other. They share equipment sensibly and will wait their turn to talk or work, for example, in the sand. The children behave very well because they follow the good example that adults set them; they know the difference between right and wrong. By the time they are in the Reception class, both boys and girls willingly answer questions and listen well in whole class talks and activities. They are eager to talk about what they are doing and offer their ideas. The children are confident, happy and secure in their interactions with adults because they know that the staff value their efforts and

respond sensitively to their needs. The children's very good behaviour and the very good relationships they form with each other and the adults who work with them mean that activities run smoothly.

12. Throughout the rest of the school, staff continue to set good examples for the pupils to follow. Pupils build effectively upon their personal skills and positive behaviour, which shows in their willingness to work together. Pupils behave very well because they know this is expected of them and importantly because they recognise that it is the right thing to do. They understand the need for rules because it makes their school a happy place in which to work and play. Pupils listen well and this helps them to settle quickly to their work and tackle activities confidently. In most lessons, and more regularly in small group discussions, both boys and girls offer their ideas willingly because they have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults who work with them. However, the higher attaining pupils are more confident in whole class discussions to answer questions and comment upon what they have learned. Pupils know that their teachers will listen to them and value their efforts and this builds their self-esteem and confidence.
13. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and small groups and this develops pupils' awareness of the need to listen to and respect the views of others. For example, pupils work in pairs in ICT. They take turns, discuss their work together and agree changes to their presentations. Pupils are highly motivated in ICT lessons; they work at a good rate to produce what the teacher expects, paying close attention to instructions. Like the children in the Reception class, these older pupils also like coming to school. They enjoy having responsibility for their own learning by working to achieve the targets set for them. The pupils' levels of concentration and the effective way they work together, aid their learning and contribute well to the standards they attain.

The headteacher, senior managers and governors work most effectively together; they manage improvements successfully.

14. The headteacher, staff and governors are a strong and effective team. The headteacher builds confidence in the staff by providing well-focused support. She responds to their needs by supporting their professional development and training. This has brought about a greater level of confidence in teaching, for example ICT, and in developing strategies for teaching writing more effectively throughout the school.
15. The school does a very good job of analysing results of tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 and of tests in other year groups. The headteacher uses this analysis to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that staff build upon the successes in pupils' achievements. Together with the governors and senior managers, she checks how well the school compares to all schools and to those of a similar background and uses this information very well to assess how successful the school is in raising standards. From this they identify those areas that look stronger or weaker by comparison and check what is working well and not so well. From this evaluation, the governors and staff identify what it is in reading, writing and mathematics that needs improving. For example, following the analysis of the results in the tests in 2000 the staff placed a greater emphasis upon:
 - The teaching of spelling, seeking more effective and different ways in which the skills of spelling might be taught.
 - The teaching of writing, seeking to inspire boys and raise the standard of their writing.
16. The headteacher and governors make very good use of the accurate and careful analysis of test results and the regular evaluations that are carried out to set targets for each year group. They also use this information to provide support and resources for pupils with special educational needs and booster groups for teaching literacy and numeracy. This is proving

successful, with improved standards at the higher levels in both spelling and writing; standards in reading and writing have been maintained against an improving national picture.

17. The headteacher, staff and governors are very much aware of particular trends in pupils' learning. They know that over time boys tend not to do as well as girls in the reading and writing tests by Year 2. The staff have actively sought ways to redress the imbalance by raising their awareness through training and developing strategies to help with teaching and learning. This has included:
- Introducing a wider range of non-fiction books into the school's reading bank.
 - Looking at preferred learning styles in spelling, for example:
 - Some pupils preferred to be given spellings to write down, some preferred to listen to the letters being read out aloud.
 - Introducing catchy exercises that appealed to the pupils such as air tracing and the 'word prison' – pupils put words that cause difficulties into prison until they are able to spell them correctly.
 - Playing games like 'Who wants to be a millionaire?' : the more complex the spelling the greater the number of points to be won.
 - Providing individual spellings, which include those that pupils find difficult, as well as key words being used in class.
 - Providing resources such as whiteboards for practising, word searches and building word banks on the computer.
 - Bringing in a male poet to act as a role model for boys in both reading and writing.
 - Setting individual targets for improvement.
 - Ensuring that the purpose chosen for writing appeals to both boys and girls.
18. The headteacher draws together the information about pupils' achievements and the standards that the school attains very well. This is shared with the governors. A smaller group of governors works with the headteacher to set targets for each year group. This leads to the staff and all the governors knowing exactly what areas need to be addressed to raise standards further. Because of this, the governors have a very good understanding of what the school does and how well it is doing. The information feeds into the school development plan effectively and decisions about spending therefore relate closely to raising standards. The governors work closely with the school and expect regular feedback upon how well initiatives are developing. This includes the performance of the headteacher and staff. Teachers' planning is checked against the work analysis and this indicates how successful planning has been and importantly whether the pupils have learned enough.

The activities the school offers are rich and varied; teachers make effective links between subjects that make lessons interesting.

19. The school offers many exciting activities outside normal lessons that enrich and extend the pupils' learning. There is a strong emphasis upon developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding through practical activities, which help to develop in pupils a sense of the wider world as well as their own cultural roots. These activities, which include visits out of school and visitors into school, cover a range of subjects and support the learning that is going on in the classroom. For example, children in the Nursery experienced an outing to the local tearoom and village shop to allow them to get ideas for the 'shop' that they made in the classroom. This provided them with a good starting point, stimulated their interest and gave purpose to their learning. Parents appreciate the chances their children have for visiting places of interest because they feel it heightens their children's interest in their work and makes school an exciting and interesting place to be. The effective links with other local small schools allow the pupils to take part in larger events such as a visit to Alnwick Drama Centre for a Victorian day. The pupils develop a clear understanding about times gone by and this type of activity puts their learning about the Victorian way of life in perspective. Pupils in Reception,

Year 1 and Year 2 thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the Grace Darling museum, harbour and lifeboat station. The Reception children's recall of events both in discussion and in their writing reflects the depth of their learning and the way that activities like this can give purpose to different types of writing, such as diaries.

20. Not only do these activities bring purpose to pupils' learning but so do the effective links teachers make between different subjects. This is particularly evident in the way that teachers use literacy and ICT skills to develop knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. For example, in Year 4, pupils' historical accounts are well written. Pupils draft their account of a Viking raid on a Saxon village, they correct their work and develop the words they use, for example, changing 'fine' to 'perfect', 'saw' to 'spotted' and 'went' to 'sneaked'. The structure of their writing is good and the finished accounts are then word processed and loaded on the school website. This activity gave relevance to the literacy and ICT skills the pupils had practised in lessons and, at the same time, allowed the pupils to show the depth of their historical knowledge and understanding. Teachers give similar purpose to reading skills when pupils download information about the Ancient Egyptians to make notes on embalming techniques and read about the life of Mary Jones in religious education and her influence upon the distribution of Bibles by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Writing for different purposes also develops well in other subjects, for example, writing the diary of Howard Carter the archaeologist, writing letters home from soldiers during World War II and making flyers to advertise local landmarks in geography. All these activities provide an interest and stimulus for pupils' learning and contribute effectively to the standards the school attains and the good progress the pupils make.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in speaking by Year 4.

21. Teachers in the Nursery do not place enough emphasis upon encouraging children to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas with an adult and each other. In both of the lessons seen, teachers rarely instigated talk with children. For long periods children worked independently or with a classmate with little or no interaction from an adult. Children were not reluctant to talk but adults did not make the most of opportunities to help children to channel their ideas, to probe what they were thinking or to help them develop their use of language. Chances for imaginative play and for children to recreate experiences were missed in both lessons. For example, as children worked in the sand they made magic castles and homes for imaginary creatures. They wanted adults to share in what they were doing and initiated discussion by asking, "Do you want to know what I am doing?" Both children spoke animatedly and used words such as 'invisible', 'spooky' and 'hidden' when describing what was happening. The wealth of language used by the children showed they had already developed quite a sophisticated vocabulary yet at no point did the teacher listen to what the children had to say. In both lessons, the teachers concentrated upon the one or two children they were working with rather than supporting the learning of others. Whilst the activities provided for the children were enjoyable the children were left too much to their own devices to get the best from them. Although the teachers' planning relates to the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage it was not always clear what the children were expected to learn, but related more to what the children were to do.
22. In Years 1 to 4, higher attaining pupils are eager to talk and answer questions but the average attaining and lower attaining pupils are more reluctant. This lowers standards in speaking and listening by the time pupils leave the school. The school has worked hard over the past two years to develop the pupils' skills in reading and writing and this is proving successful. However, developing pupils' skills in speaking has not had as high a priority. Pupils have opportunities to take part in dramatic activities such as re-enacting a Viking invasion but even here the emphasis has been very much upon using this work as a stimulus to writing.

23. In a number of lessons, average attaining and lower attaining pupils found it difficult to fully explain their ideas during whole class sessions. Whilst teachers pose questions that challenge pupils of different attainments, and invite pupils to offer their ideas, this does not always have the desired results. At present, teachers' planning is not precise enough about what skills pupils should develop to aid the fluency and clarity in their speech. There is not enough emphasis upon encouraging pupils to organise their speech and to focus on essential points. For example, pupils were obviously moved by a discussion about the death of a World War II soldier whose family life they had been discussing as part of their historical work. However, it was only the higher attaining pupils who could discuss relevant details in any depth. The average attaining and lower attaining pupils found it more difficult to organise their ideas and make responses relevant to the topic being discussed. This sometimes is also due to teaching providing too much of the dialogue and not giving enough time for pupils to think and formulate their ideas.
24. Even when opportunities are planned for pupils to extend their ideas and present information in a more interesting manner, they still find it difficult to talk freely. For example, they tend to read their notes word for word rather than having the confidence to talk about what they already know. In this instance, the pupils had very recent experience of visiting the Grace Darling museum, as well as reading and hearing stories about her life. When talking with the pupils they showed a good knowledge of the main events in her life but found this difficult to present to the class in a more formal situation.
25. In small groups pupils are more confident to discuss their ideas, likes and dislikes but sometimes talk across each other. This leads to their contributions not always being relevant to what has been discussed before. However, they are able to provide reasons for their own opinions and actions.
26. Improving pupils' speaking skills would not only give the average attaining and lower attaining pupils greater confidence to express their views in lessons but also provide teachers with greater information about what the pupils know and understand.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. The headteacher, staff and governors should raise standards further by:

Improving pupils' skills in speaking by ensuring that:

- Teachers in the Nursery, through their planning, provide better chances for children to talk about their thoughts, feelings and ideas to adults and each other;
- Throughout the school, teachers, through their planning, provide chances for pupils to develop skills in speaking clearly and confidently either independently or as a group member.
- Pupils have the chance to organise their speech to take account of different situations and listeners and to develop their ideas through greater opportunities for discussion.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

11

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

6

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	4	2	1	0	0
Percentage	9	27	36	18	9	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 ten percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR - Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	95
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	8.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	13

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
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 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	10	9	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	17	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (96)	100 (96)	95 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (96)	95 (96)	95 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

* Because fewer than ten boys and fewer than ten girls took the tests in 2001, the numbers at each level are omitted from the tables in line with the governors' reporting arrangements to parents.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	108
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	36

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	236562
Total expenditure	240950
Expenditure per pupil	2042
Balance brought forward from previous year	23682
Balance carried forward to next year	19294

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	24	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	18	2	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	29	0	2	10
The teaching is good.	82	14	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	31	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	12	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	16	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	71	18	4	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	24	0	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	20	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	22	10	4	6