

INSPECTION REPORT

BARNWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Penshaw, Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108809

Headteacher: Mrs P Tennant

Reporting inspector: Mr C Rhodes
16408

Dates of inspection: 10 - 13 June 2002

Inspection number: 245953

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant & Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whitefield Estate
Penshaw
Houghton le Spring
Tyne & Wear

Postcode: DH4 7RT

Telephone number: 0191 553 6578

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Mawston

Date of previous inspection: May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16408	Mr C Rhodes Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19727	Mr E Langford 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?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	Science Design and technology Provision for children in the foundation stage.	How well is the school led and managed?
14851	Mr G Laws Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32139	Mrs A Firby Team inspector	Art and design Geography Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barnwell Primary School is on the outskirts of Sunderland. There are 254 pupils aged between four and eleven on roll, which is an average size for a primary school. Most children live in one of three former mining villages. The area has been identified as one of acute, long standing deprivation. An above average percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Approximately one in every five pupils has special educational needs, usually moderate learning difficulties. This is broadly in line with the national average. Three pupils, whose educational needs are severe, complex or persistent, are given the protection of a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils from ethnic minority families is very low. Attainment on entry to the reception class is close to expected levels.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many strong features. All pupils make good progress. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science at the age of seven. Standards at 11 are in line with national averages, but the pupils concerned have made good progress when compared to their own previous attainment at seven. The quality of teaching is good. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, governing body and senior members of staff is very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils make good progress, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in the younger classes.
- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to school. Relationships are excellent.
- The headteacher and senior colleagues lead the school very strongly and sensitively. Pupils, staff, parents and governors are equally committed to its aims.
- The teaching is good throughout the school. It is particularly effective in Years 1 and 2.
- There is a high level of care. Attainment is monitored very carefully.
- The partnership with parents is strong and open, and extends to the local community.

What could be improved

- The use of information and communication technology [ICT] in English, mathematics and science.
- The range and depth of opportunities for learning in design and technology and music in Years 5 and 6.
- The range of resources for creative play in and out of doors in the reception class.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was previously inspected in 1998. The key issues have been addressed systematically and successfully. Particular progress has been made in raising the quality of teaching. The percentage of very good teaching is now ten times higher than before. Standards at the age of seven are higher, and the main concerns about ICT have been addressed. Attendance has improved, and links with parents are much stronger. The internal accommodation has been upgraded. The school now gives increased value for money.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were in line with national averages for reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Standards compared very well with those in schools containing pupils with similar backgrounds, especially in writing. Standards in writing and mathematics in Year 2 have improved in each of the past four years. The school analysed the results obtained by seven and 11 year olds very thoroughly, and has increased the levels of support for those pupils who had difficulties. Standards in Year 6 have risen consistently year on year in writing but dipped in mathematics and science in 2001. This particular group contained an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Their actual overall achievement against their previous attainment was very good, and results in English and science compared very well with the results achieved in similar schools. The school has very efficient and rigorous systems to analyse pupils' performance, to measure progress and to set realistic but challenging targets for improvement.

The inspection team's judgement is that current standards **at the end of Year 2** are well above average in reading, and above average in speaking and listening, mathematics and science. Standards are above expected levels in art and design and in design and technology, and close to expected levels in ICT, religious education, history, geography and music. **Standards at the end of Year 6** are in line with the national averages for English, mathematics and science, and in line with the expected levels for art and design, ICT, religious education, history, geography, music and physical education. There was not enough inspection evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in physical education in Year 2, or for design and technology because the subject has insufficient curriculum time in Year 6.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Progress from starting school in the reception class is good, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2 and results in above average attainment at seven years of age. Progress in Year 3-6 varies from class to class. It is satisfactory in Year 5 and good overall. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made particularly good progress in mathematics and good progress in reading, when their present attainment is compared with their attainment in tests four years ago.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and are keen and enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in class and around the school. Pupils work very well together in pairs and groups, and with younger children.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent. Pupils willingly take responsibility for their own personal development, and are very aware of the impact of their actions on others.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Approximately four out of five lessons were judged to be good or better. Four of the lessons seen during the inspection were excellent. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good in the reception class and Years 1-2, and is good overall in Years 3-6. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively, and pupils' work in other subjects has been strengthened by the school's successful drive to raise standards of speaking, listening and writing. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons, and make good progress because their work, especially in English and mathematics, is set at the correct level of difficulty, and they receive good quality support from the teaching assistants.

Pupils are managed very well. Teachers have established a very positive working atmosphere in their classes. The quality of planning is also high, and lessons have a pace and rigour because teachers move briskly through the various stages of the lesson, with regular reminders to the pupils of the standards they expect and the target that they are working to achieve. Teachers do not always use their teaching assistants to best effect in whole class teaching sessions and, occasionally, do not make their expectations clear enough. This allows the class rather than the teacher to set the pace. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching was very small and arose when pupils were not sure what they had to do to complete the work and did not make enough progress.

The quality of learning is also good because pupils respond readily to their teachers. This is especially noticeable in Years 1-2, where pupils respond actively to teachers' secure subject knowledge, enthusiasm and enjoyment of their work. Pupils in all classes enjoy the intellectual and creative challenges they are given and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Children in the reception class do not have enough opportunities to develop their imagination through role play. The activities that are provided do not always have a clear focus for learning and although children enjoy them, their play can be unproductive because they are not learning anything new.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The schemes of work for Years 1 and 2 have been extended imaginatively. Extra-curricular provision is good. The potential opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum are not fully exploited. Music and design and technology are not taught in sufficient depth in Years 5 and 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are comprehensive. Precise targets help pupils to make good progress. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of the school's life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. It provides the bedrock on which the pupils' positive attitudes, behaviour, quality of relationships and opportunities to mature and grow responsibly, are based.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. There are secure and effective systems that ensure the welfare and best interests of pupils. Pupils' attainment in lessons and national tests is monitored very carefully and results are used effectively to set realistic, challenging targets.

There is a very strong and effective partnership between parents, carers, and the school. They get very good information about how well their children are doing, and make important contributions to their learning by helping at home and in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear sense of purpose and direction. She is ably supported by senior staff who share her commitment to the achievement of high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and play an active part in contributing to its future direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are many effective systems that enable the school to measure how well it is meeting its targets and what it needs to do to improve further.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial resources, including specific grants, are used effectively to extend pupils' learning. Governors and staff are fully involved in making best use of the budget in order to gain best value and raise standards.

The level of staffing is good. The accommodation has been improved internally and is good, but the quality of learning in some lessons in Years 2 and 3 is adversely affected by the open-plan nature of the teaching bases. Resources are adequate, but there are not enough computers for whole-class ICT lessons, for group work using ICT in other subjects, or enough software for aspects of the ICT curriculum to be explored in depth. There are good systems for ensuring good value for money at the time of purchase but these are not used enough to evaluate the effectiveness of the purchases once they are in use.

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 are happy and like school. • The way the school is led and managed. • Teachers' high expectations that their children will work hard. The good progress they make. • Their children's good behaviour and positive attitudes. • The good teaching, and teachers' willingness to listen to parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no major areas of parental concern. A small number would like to know more about their children's progress.

The inspection team agree with parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors feel that the school's arrangements for keeping parents informed about their children's progress are very good, especially the weekly 'surgeries'. One or two parents were unsure about the responsibilities carried by older children in the playground at lunchtimes. These are very suitable and are always under the supervision of an adult.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 **Current standards in English and mathematics in Year 2 are above the national average** and are similar to those attained one year ago in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds. Standards in reading are now much higher. Early indications are that the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in writing will be twice that attained last year. Attainment in 2001 compared very well with attainment in schools containing pupils from similar backgrounds, especially in writing, where results were very high in comparison. The school has very well developed systems for analysing test results and sets challenging targets for further improvement based on very detailed information about each pupil's ability to make greater progress. Attainment has risen steadily over the past five years, except for a dip in reading in 2001, which has now been more than corrected through additional adult support in the current Year 3. Targets have been achieved. Accelerated progress can also be linked directly to the school's proactive approach to developing teachers' skills, the involvement of outside agencies including Lancaster University for work in speaking and listening, and the successful implementation of the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy.

2 **Standards in English, mathematics and science in the current Year 6 are in line with national averages.** This is a larger group than last year's cohort and not so high a proportion of the pupils are likely to gain the higher Level 5. However, the class's progress since they sat their National Curriculum tests at the age of seven has been good. Standards in mathematics have risen from well below average to average, and reading from below average to average. Overall standards in Year 6 have risen steadily over the past five years, with a dip in the 2001 mathematics and science results. The school's data shows that the pupils concerned had made very good progress against their previous attainment at seven. Boys did particularly well, advancing from well below average standards in writing at seven years of age to very high levels in 2001. Targets were achieved and the good progress was recognised with a national School Improvement Award.

3 **Achievement** is measured by comparing how much pupils improve as they pass through the school. Children in the reception class start with levels of understanding that are close to the local authority's average. They do well, and most are likely to exceed the standards expected nationally for personal, social and emotional development. Most will achieve the expected levels for their age in all other aspects of their development, and some will exceed them in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. The good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 in response to the very good teaching and pupils' own eagerness to learn, and standards are above average by the end of Year 2. The current Year 6 have made good progress against their own attainment at the age of seven.

4 Standards at the age of seven have improved in English, mathematics and science since the school was previously inspected in 1998. They have also improved in information and ICT, history and geography. Current standards in Year 6 are close to those previously reported.

5 The high standards of speaking and listening at seven and eleven result from the importance placed on developing pupils' oral skills before they start to write. Many subjects in Years 1 and 2 are taught with an emphasis on talking, and the very good progress made by five to seven year olds in acquiring communication skills is contributing to very good learning in all their lessons. High standards of speaking and listening are reinforced in older classes, and have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing in all subjects. Seven-year-olds standards of reading and writing are well above average because pupils are taught very effectively in Year 1 and Year 2, and are keen to use the skills that they have learned. Standards in mathematics are rising because of the continuous use of appropriate mental strategies and the insistence on pupils explaining their reasoning to problem solving. Standards in **science** in Year 2 are above expectations. Standards in investigative science are not high enough in Year 6 because the

opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves and record their findings are more limited in Years 3-6 than in younger classes. The lack of practical experience prevents the more able pupils from reaching higher levels.

6 **Standards** in ICT, religious education, music, history and geography are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. They are above expected levels in art and design and design and technology at seven years of age, and in line with the expectations for physical education [PE] for Year 6. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations in Year 6. There was not enough inspection evidence to make a judgement about standards in PE in Year 2, or about design and technology where no work was seen because the tasks planned for the year had not been done.

7 Teachers make good use of **literacy and numeracy** in many aspects of the broader curriculum. Year 6, for example, used the skills of skimming text and note-making for the project work in history and religious education, Year 4 linked work in data-bases in ICT to their understanding of bar and pie charts in numeracy lessons, and Year 1 pupils recognised right angles when planning the route for a floor robot. Skills in mental mathematics are good, and Year 4 pupils had no difficulty in calculating in units of 45 as they worked out the angles of turn needed to draw regular mathematical shapes on a computer screen. The most noticeable impact is the quality of language pupils use in their writing. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 used imaginative writing in their study of Greece. Picturing himself as an athlete one pupil wrote, "I had to keep to the rules – no biting, no eyes to be gouged out." Another imagined herself as a charioteer, "I whipped those horses until they ran like cheetahs.... So, as you know – I won! "

8 Pupils with **special educational needs** make very good progress in Years 1 and 2. By the age of 7, they are developing skills in reading and writing that enable them to communicate effectively. The development of vocabulary increases their ability to express themselves. They also listen well, and this helps them to learn more quickly. Almost all of these pupils reach nationally expected levels in mathematics at this point. Throughout Years 3 to 6, the pupils benefit from the careful plans prepared for them and make good progress towards their targets. Many have a good knowledge of the structure of language, knowing, for example, what is meant by phoneme. Some still experience problems with handwriting and spelling, and a small number struggle with basic arithmetical skills. Nevertheless, most leave the school with better standards than predicted by diagnostic tests when they were younger.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Children in the reception class have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and thrive in the well-ordered environment that the teachers and the nursery nurse provide. They are eager to explore new activities and share what they have done at the end of lessons. Expectations of good behaviour are made very clear from the start and children respond by being polite, helpful and co-operative. They frequently help one another without any prompting, playing sensibly together and taking turns with toys and equipment.

10 The **attitudes, behaviour and social development** displayed by pupils in older classes and around the school are very good and are a notable strength. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. A warm and welcoming family atmosphere of care, consideration and tolerance towards others permeates the whole school and pupils feel safe. They are keen to come into school and the great majority settle quickly to their work. Many demonstrate the good listening and speaking skills that enable them to take an active part in class lessons. Most pupils have mature and positive attitudes, ignoring the rare silly behaviour of a few and not allowing this to disrupt their learning.

11 The vast majority of pupils show high levels of commitment to their work and are motivated and enthusiastic learners. Most display high levels of confidence and a willingness to share and discuss their learning with others. Many pupils are able to sustain very good levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with each other in both group and paired

activities. Pupils enjoy being in school, as one Year 2 pupil reported by saying that: 'I really like coming to school because we do loads and loads of work and learn lots and lots of things.'

12 The standard of **behaviour** in and around the school is very good and reflects the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The very occasional lapses in behaviour seen in Year 4 and 5 were managed very skilfully and the flow of good learning was maintained. Parents are very pleased with the high standards of behaviour that have been achieved over recent years, including behaviour outside school. The high standard of behaviour is very much the product of the overall good teaching. The social behaviour policy and well-structured system of rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils and are applied consistently by all the staff.

13 Apart from one fixed term exclusion for inappropriate behaviour, there have been no pupil exclusions in recent years, and no evidence of any inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection. The school promotes its anti-bullying culture actively, and parents and pupils agree that incidents of inappropriate behaviour, such as mild name calling, are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff to the benefit of all involved.

14 Pupils fully understand the impact of their actions on others. **Relationships** between pupils, and between pupils and adults in the school, are excellent. This is a thinking and reflective society where pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors. They show that they know right from wrong through their actions and conversations. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others. Many examples of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils and adults were seen in the school and playground. These include showing care and concern when a pupil fell in the yard, holding doors open for each other in school and saying, without thinking, 'Please', 'Sorry' and 'Thank you.' Inspectors were impressed with the courteous and polite manner in which pupils responded to them during the inspection week.

15 Pupils collaborate well with each other in their learning and play activities, happily taking turns without question, and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care. Pupils take a pride in their work and readily appreciate and acknowledge the good work of others. This was well illustrated in a Year 4 art lesson when pupils walked around the class to view and comment on the artwork produced by other class members before going out to play. Pupils have a pride and sense of ownership of their school and there was no evidence of any graffiti, litter or damage to property in or around the building during the inspection.

16 Pupils in Year 6 undertake a wide range of whole-school responsibilities that have a positive advantage in preparing them for life beyond the school. These include looking after the office during lunchtime, monitoring playground doors during breaks, acting as bus monitors and helping in assemblies. This strengthens their moral and social development and prepares them effectively to become valued citizens of the future. In particular, the role they play in supporting the reception children during lunchtime in the dining hall and in the playground is of significant benefit in developing their social and 'caring for others' skills, and provides a very good role model for the younger pupils.

17 Pupils with **special educational needs** have very positive attitudes towards their work. They play a full part in classroom discussions and often work independently. They ask questions when unsure and are usually well supported by teaching assistants. They take a pride in their work and co-operate well with other pupils in the class. A pupil with special educational needs was a key player in a well organised drama presentation. This reflects the school's philosophy of ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in all facets of school life.

18 The overall good level of **attendance**, low levels of late arrival and a commendable zero level of unauthorised absence, are an improvement since the previous inspection. Punctuality within the day is good and lessons start on time. A quarter of all absence is due to family holidays taken during term time. This restricts the learning opportunities of the absent pupils and has a negative effect on teacher planning and overall class progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The quality of teaching is good and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The proportion of very good or better teaching is ten times greater, and the amount of unsatisfactory teaching is very much smaller. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively, and teachers' confidence in English and mathematics lessons has increased. Teachers are good at transferring the skills pupils have been taught in the formal literacy and numeracy 'hours' to work in all aspects of the curriculum. Homework is set more consistently and extends the learning that has started in lessons.

20 Teaching in **the reception class** is good with very good features. A particular strength is the high expectations that the two teachers and the nursery nurse have of how children should behave. High standards are set from the day children start school, and they are expected to show courtesy and respect, work sensibly, listen carefully to adults and to each other, and to keep their classroom tidy. The teachers and the nursery nurse work closely together to plan and organise practical activities that interest and enthuse the children. Teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and number is good and prepares children very well for their more formal lessons the following year. Teaching in other aspects of the curriculum for children in the reception class is satisfactory. Teachers plan relevant practical activities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Learning in these activities is good when teachers work with the children to guide them but there are times when their play lacks purpose because not enough thought has been given to what they are supposed to be learning.

21 The quality of **teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good**. All of the 12 lessons seen were at least good, seven were very good and three were excellent. Teachers have a very good understanding of how pupils learn, and are very skilled in planning and teaching lessons that combine fun with rigour and high standards. A very good example was seen in the Year 1/2 class. The pupils knew exactly what they had to achieve by the end of the lesson because it was explained carefully at the start, and was written on the white board for later reference. The teacher's very good relationships with the class and their close attention to everything she said meant that they concentrated hard. She set high standards in her own use of words and handwriting, which the pupils used as a model in their own answers. The learning, how to retell a familiar story, was very good because the pupils were intellectually and creatively challenged, and wanted to do well. There are many similar planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers' displays are bright and colourful, but most importantly, are used as a stimulus to the lesson. The retelling of the story of the light keeper's lunch was alive and real to the pupils because they had the lighthouse in the room with them, and had seen the basket pulled backwards and forwards past the greedy seagulls. Additional adults give good support in many lessons. Some, however, are not as fully involved in supporting the whole class teaching as they are in the group work. This limits the effectiveness of this important resource.

22 The quality of **teaching is good in Years 3-6**. It varies from excellent to unsatisfactory, but two thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or better. Pupils are managed very well. Teachers apply the school's agreed procedures consistently and fairly, and have established a very positive working atmosphere in nearly every lesson. The very occasional lapses in behaviour seen in Years 4 and 5 were managed very skilfully and successfully. The quality of planning is high, and teaching has pace and rigour because teachers move briskly through the various stages of the lesson, with regular reminders to the pupils of the standards they expect and the target that they are working to achieve. Teachers do not always use teaching assistants or volunteer helpers to best effect in whole-class teaching sessions, although they are consistently well deployed in group activities. Where some teaching was satisfactory overall, but could have been improved, teachers did not make clear enough how much pupils should complete in their written work. Pupils achieved their target but could have done more with greater effort. The overall amount of unsatisfactory teaching was very small and largely arose when pupils were not sure what they had to do to complete the work and therefore did not make enough progress.

23 **The quality of learning** is also good overall. This is especially noticeable in Years 1 and 2 where pupils respond actively to teachers' secure subject knowledge, enthusiasm and enjoyment of their work. This was seen, for example, in the Year 1 mental mathematics session when pupils answered progressively difficult questions briskly, referring to the 100 square as the questions got harder, and enjoying the stimulus of timing their answers to the rapid bounce of a springy puppet. Pupils with special educational needs learned just as effectively, as they were closely supported by the teaching assistants who made sure that they understood the questions and encouraged them in attempting answers. Learning in the Year 4 art and design lesson was excellent because the work was challenging and interesting, and the very skilful use of questions made the pupils think hard about what they were doing. All pupils were included in the lesson and made the same very good progress because of the teacher's skilful individual support. Pupils in all classes enjoy the intellectual and creative challenges they are set and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Learning was not as good as it might have been on the few occasions when tasks did not challenge the higher attaining pupils enough by giving them an opportunity to develop their investigations in greater detail, as in a Year 5 science lesson on the parts of flowers. ICT is not used enough in many English, mathematics and science lessons, and pupils do not have the opportunity to practise what they have been taught in ICT lessons.

24 Class teachers and teaching assistants are fully involved in the preparation of individual plans for pupils with **special educational needs**. Planning almost always ensures that work is matched to the ability of the pupils and that support is provided whenever necessary. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, the assistant provided high quality support by using well-considered questions and well-prepared materials, and made the learning fun as well as challenging. Pupils are expected to think and act independently, and this helps them to become good learners. Teachers make sure that the pupils are given regular opportunities to experience success. If a child has a medical problem, all staff have full documentation to advise them how to plan if that affects the way the pupil's needs should be met.

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

25 Curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff in the reception class provide a practical curriculum which covers all the areas of learning required by the national guidelines for children of this age. Careful planning ensures that learning in these areas links together wherever possible. Tasks planned for the children are interesting and based on relevant practical activities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there were weaknesses in the planning. The provision for learning through role-play and outdoor play is currently underdeveloped. As a result children's progress in creative and physical development is slower than it might be. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good in the foundation stage and they are given all the help they need to do well. In this way the school ensures that, right from the start, all children are included in all its activities, and have the same access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress.

26 The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1-6 are satisfactory overall. The **curriculum** is broad and relevant and meets the needs of all pupils. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, including religious education, which is taught in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There are suitable policies for all subjects. Short-term planning includes an evaluation of how much pupils have learned and an increasing level of challenge as they become more skilled.

27 The emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy throughout the school is improving standards. In Years 1 and 2, this is fully complemented by a variety of practical experiences offered in other subjects. Aspects of music and design and technology are not taught in sufficient depth in Years 5 and 6. Pupils do not learn the skills of musical composition regularly enough, and the work planned in design and technology for the year in Year 6 was cancelled. Pupils are learning to apply their knowledge when solving problems in mathematics, but opportunities for

investigating and experimenting in science are too limited in their last two years at school. ICT is not used enough in teaching mathematics and English. The digital cameras are well used.

28 The national strategies for **literacy and numeracy** have been implemented effectively, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where extension activities are boosting pupils' levels of attainment. Opportunities for speaking and listening are incorporated in all lesson plans resulting in the rapid development of these skills. Teachers are adept at weaving literacy into most lessons, for example with imaginative writing in history and commentaries in religious education. Numeracy is also blended into subjects such as science and geography where graphs and diagrams are used to interpret data.

29 Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the strong commitment to equal opportunities that is evident throughout the school. Their targets are mainly addressed in normal lessons with appropriately planned support from teaching assistants. Some pupils also receive regular help with literacy on an individual basis. The most competent pupils in Year 6 are withdrawn from English and mathematics lessons to extend their skills with challenging activities.

30 Provision for pupils' **personal, social and health education** is particularly effective. A comprehensive policy has been developed to include sex education and drugs awareness. The strong relationships that exist in the school ensure that the separate weekly timetabled lesson generates informed and honest discussion. Visitors are used to extend the provision – for example Zone Rangers come into lessons to talk about drug abuse and Eco Rangers introduce pupils to environmental issues. The programme also benefits from input by organisations such as the police, fire brigade and Barnardo's. The school is pursuing the 'Healthy School' award, and is part of the Edinburgh University 'Healthy Schools' project. Education for citizenship is promoted effectively in a number of ways, including the Pupils' Parliament.

31 **Extra-curricular provision** is good. All major sporting activities are covered, and the school is justly proud of the range of musical activities offered to pupils. The weekly 'After School' club is led by teaching assistants and volunteers. This attracts large numbers of pupils who enjoy a range of activities such as mosaic construction, computers, sewing and art. There is a thriving drama club. Visitors to the school include representatives from a range of faiths, storytellers, an artist in residence and theatre groups. The school also makes good use of the local community. Visits are arranged, for example, to museums at Beamish and Newcastle, Durham Cathedral and the National Glass Centre. All pupils undertake projects to research the local landmark, Penshaw Monument. Pupils in Year 6 spend three days on an outdoor education expedition at Weardale House.

32 **Links with other educational institutions** are particularly productive. Reception teachers talk regularly to their counterparts at Penshaw Nursery. Biddick Sports College has an outreach programme that supplements the school's work in physical education, science, drama and music. Teachers from Biddick often teach at Barnwell and pupils sometimes go for lessons at Biddick to use the specialist facilities. Lancaster University liaises with the school in its 'Thinking Skills' project, which provides good support for speaking and listening skills. The comprehensive assessment systems in the school have been influenced by the school's involvement with Durham University.

33 The school has improved its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. It is now very good and a real strength. Pupils' cultural awareness is also good, particularly in relation to local culture and heritage. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for religious education as well as for personal, social and health education and demonstrates, by example, strong leadership in all areas of personal development. She succeeds in setting very high expectations and promoting excellent relationships throughout the school community. Every adult shares responsibility and works consistently with pupils at all times so that the very good behaviour, politeness, trust, respect, care and concern for others are constantly reinforced in the wholesome living environment of the school.

34 **Spiritual development** is planned within religious education teaching and through the varied programme of assemblies and acts of worship. Themes and ideas for the assemblies are drawn from pupils' work in class and contribute to their development from an early stage. Younger pupils used shakers made in design and technology in an assembly to add a stormy 'mood' to the story of a Paradise Island being spoiled by thoughtlessness. Teachers use resources of very good quality, so that spirituality is seen in other settings. For example pupils in Years 1 and 2, studying Goldsworthy's sculptures made from fallen leaves and ice, were filled with wonder at his creativity. They were encouraged to make their own non-permanent sculptures and not to spoil the environment. A Year 1 pupil commented, "No, because it is our future." In Year 4 space photographs of planets and constellations inspire pupils to create images that express speed of movement, and the oldest pupils wonder at the natural world, showing great interest in satellite pictures of the Solent in a Year 6 geography lesson.

35 A very strong **sense of right and wrong** is developed from the first days in school. Parents recall the honesty of pupils in returning cash found during a school disco and in the street, and how praise and recognition are used to reward such acts. The positive behaviour management systems are very effective in that pupils consider how their behaviour may affect others. Moral issues are explored within assemblies, class lessons and personal, social and health education sessions.

36 The provision for developing pupils' **social** skills is very good. The school has continued to build upon the previous good practice. Democratic leadership within the school permeates all the systems and routines used so that pupils are empowered to take responsibility and support others fairly. For example, in Year 1 group 'chiefs' are nominated on Monday mornings, in list order, for the week. Monitors' jobs in Year 6 are advertised. The pupils are invited to apply for interview and, if successful, take on the responsibility for a term. Teachers plan many paired and group learning opportunities during which collaboration is essential for success. This was evident from a Year 4 art and design display of dreams, completed by groups of pupils. Discussion, negotiation and co-operation produced memorable images using a range of techniques and materials including tracing, decoupage and digital photography. Independent social skills are fostered during residential visits to Weardale House. A strong sense of community is promoted through the choir's activities locally and when pupils entertain and visit the elderly in local residential care. Pupils are also aware of groups within society through their direct involvement with the YMCA carol service and women from the Women's Institute instruct in handicrafts.

37 Provision for **cultural** development overall is good, in that pupils absorb information across the curriculum about local heritage and largely white British and European cultures of the past and present. Pupils visit several local museums and heritage sites. However, the school still does not adequately reflect Britain today as a multi-cultural society. Pupils learn a little about other races, faiths and traditions in their study of art, music, religious education, history and geography but they do not recognise that many of these are represented in the cultural diversity of the modern British society beyond Peshaw and the surrounding villages. The school is aware of this and is planning to invite business people from minority ethnic groups to participate in the cultural life of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38 The provision for pupils' **care and welfare** is very good and is a strength of the school. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils concerned. Very good working relationships have been established with external support agencies. All staff are familiar with the procedures. Very effective strategies have been established to care for and support pupils with special educational needs. Effective procedures are in place to ensure the regular review of their progress in consultation with parents and carers. All pupils appear happy in school and most show they have the confidence and independence to approach staff with any queries and concerns they may have.

39 The school has established very good **health and safety** procedures that involve governors and cover all aspects of school life. Risk assessment techniques are well embedded into school routines. Formal health and safety inspections, involving staff and governors, are undertaken each term, and outcomes and recommendations are discussed at governing body meetings. The headteacher and caretaker have a good routine for informal weekly health and safety checks on the building. During the inspection, staff and pupils demonstrated good health and safety awareness in and around the school. The premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness and provide the pupils with a safe and secure learning environment.

40 The school has an adequate number of staff with first aid training and very good procedures are in place for the management and reporting of injuries. Examples were seen during the inspection week of the high quality of care and attention given by qualified first-aid staff in school and of the trust and reliance in them shown by the pupils. Good procedures are in place for the recording and reporting of pupils' attendance and the school works in close liaison with the education welfare service to monitor and follow up absences. The daily registration practice fully complies with statutory requirements.

41 The school has established excellent routines for promoting good **behaviour**. These contribute greatly to the very good attitudes to learning displayed by the pupils. The school's policy is discussed by each class so that pupils have a clear understanding of their teacher's and their own expectations for good behaviour. The clear and simple procedures are liked and understood by pupils and parents, all of whom judge these to be applied by teachers in a fair and consistent manner. The school has a philosophy of zero tolerance towards bullying and has worked hard to promote a culture of anti-bullying amongst the pupils. There was no evidence of any oppressive bullying or harassment of pupils during the inspection. Past incidents of inappropriate behaviour are judged by pupils and parents to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.

42 There are good systems for **assessment** in the foundation stage. Teachers monitor children's progress informally on a daily basis and make periodic checks on what they have learnt in each area of learning. They keep detailed records of progress in language, literacy and number and this enables them to adapt their teaching of the basic skills to individual needs.

43 Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now good and sometimes very good. Teachers use a manageable system of tests and tasks to assess what pupils already know and can do. They analyse the results in order to plan new work and predict pupils' attainment at seven and eleven. A team of teachers, alongside the headteacher, monitors the progress of individuals and groups each term. Good use is made of this information to plan and organise additional support for any pupils who are thought to be falling behind in their rate of progress. This support includes additional support for literacy, a reading recovery programme and 'booster' groups. These very good procedures, when combined with good teaching, are proving effective.

44 Daily assessments enable teachers to change their planning to match learning to the pupils' needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the quality of marking varies. The best marking gives pupils positive information about what they have achieved and sets targets for further progress. Pupils in Year 4 and 5 are very aware of their individual targets, which are displayed on cards on the tables, and are able to discuss how these were agreed with the teacher. Where marking is less thorough, work is ticked and sometimes graded, but pupils are rarely guided by comments on how they have succeeded or what they must do to improve.

45 Pupils' personal development is also regularly assessed, recorded and acted upon. The results of the 'Flying Start' assessments in reception are used to decide the groupings for the Year 1 classes, as well as to allocate any ongoing support for pupils with special educational needs. This is built on in future years in the 'Getting to Know You' assessments and when pupils move from one year group to the next. The school's systematic and thorough approach to assessing pupils' academic and personal needs and progress is contributing to the high levels of attainment

and achievement. The headteacher checks that the systems are in place and working through sampling.

46 Identification of pupils with special educational needs is very thorough. The individual plans drawn up for pupils on the register are detailed and informative. Appropriate targets are set and regular testing ensures that progress is monitored very carefully. The assessment techniques used ensure that areas for improvement are quickly identified. Examples of pupils' work are often kept so that teachers, parents and pupils can see how well pupils are doing over time

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47 Parents are very supportive of the school, hold staff in the greatest regard and believe that their children receive a high quality of care and education. They consider the staff to be very approachable. The very good links with parents ensure that they are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education. The very good provision of information enables parents to be kept fully up to date on their children's progress and achievements. This aspect has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

48 Parents are welcomed in school and are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. All parents have signed the home-school agreement and most expressed high praise for and take advantage of the flexible 'Tuesday surgery' as a valuable opportunity to discuss their children's progress with the teacher. Parents commented that as a result of attending the surgeries they had gained confidence in helping their children to learn at home and felt much more involved as partners in their children's education. Parents particularly praise the 'Barnwell Beginners' initiative, which is designed to help parents of reception children to become familiar with the rigours of mainstream education and give them a good introduction to their working partnership with the school.

49 Many parents make good use of the home-school diaries to exchange comments with teachers and often talk with them at the beginning or end of the school day in order to clarify ways they can help with their children's homework. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed and have regular opportunities to discuss and agree targets for their children's development. The use of parent questionnaires to canvas parental opinions and suggestions is a further example of the school's good practice. The school is rightly proud of the positive involvement that the great majority of parents have in supporting their children's learning, and consider this to be a vital factor behind the good progress being achieved in developing standards in literacy and numeracy.

50 The voluntary involvement of parents, governors and members of the community in the work of the school is of particular benefit to pupils' learning and development. Teachers greatly appreciate the valuable contribution of some ten regular voluntary helpers. Many more parents volunteer willingly on an ad-hoc basis to accompany pupils on field trips and out-of school visits, all of which helps to extend their opportunities for learning. The school benefits from a very active Friends of Barnwell association, which organises regular fund-raising social events, all of which are well attended and provide informal opportunities for meetings and communication between teachers and parents. In addition to raising money for, for example, new wall apparatus for physical education, the 'Friends' events and meetings provide a valuable means for making known parents' views.

51 The termly school newsletter and regular 'Dear parent' correspondence ensure that parents are kept up to date on all aspects of their children's time in school. The school prospectus and governors annual report are comprehensive publications and are viewed by parents as valuable reference documents about all aspects of their children's time in school. Of worthy note are the good attendance levels of parents at the governors' annual meeting and the innovative use of this occasion for two pupils from each year group to tell the parents about their work over the past year. The overall quality of end-of-year progress reports is satisfactory. Good levels of detail are

provided about what pupils know and have achieved in English, mathematics and science. However, limited information is given about achievements in other subjects, and there are inconsistencies between the year groups in the identification of targets and areas for improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52 The strong leadership noted at the previous inspection has been sustained and improved. The headteacher continues to provide very good leadership. Her very clear vision of the school's work promotes a productive sense of direction and purpose. Her very definite ideas of how the school needs to develop have ensured that the key issues raised in the previous inspection have all been tackled successfully. The headteacher has moved the school forward at a good rate, with the strong support of the acting deputy headteacher and key staff. The school has the clear capacity to maintain the high standards of personal development that its pupils exemplify, and to sustain and improve academic standards. The shared vision of the headteacher, staff, governors and parents ensures that the ethos of the school, based on care and mutual respect, is apparent in everything it does. The way that teachers manage the personal and social development of pupils is one of the school's most significant strengths, and ensures that all pupils have an equal chance to gain the best from their school days and become mature and responsible members of the community.

53 Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. The foundation stage is very well managed and ensures that children make a very good start to school. Leadership of special educational needs is also strong. The co-ordinator has developed a team approach with all teaching and non-teaching staff, which operates to the benefit of all identified pupils. Regular meetings are held to refine individual targets and records are monitored regularly. All teachers and the designated governor have undertaken training in the new Code of Practice. Appropriate resources are directed towards meeting the needs of all pupils. The team of teaching assistants is deployed effectively.

54 Subject co-ordinators provide informal advice for colleagues, and more formal training when required. As a result, there is a strong sense of shared purpose and teamwork in the school, which is evident in the support that teachers give to one another and their willingness to work hard to continue to raise standards. The improvements made in curricular planning and assessment have led to improvements in the quality of teaching, and are resulting in year-on-year improvement in standards as pupils move through the school. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science. Co-ordinators analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science and are involved in consultations about setting targets and identifying gaps in teaching or learning. The co-ordinators' role in monitoring in other subjects is less effective, and weaknesses in teaching and learning and any inconsistencies in the amount of time given to different aspects of the subject are not always identified quickly enough.

55 Governors continue to support the life and work of the school extremely well. They are fully committed to the well-being of the pupils and the school's success. They work in close and harmonious partnership with the headteacher which enables them to be actively involved in determining policy, monitoring the curriculum, checking the school's progress and managing spending. The headteacher and governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A thorough system for planning and evaluating targets for development has enabled them to identify the same issues for development as this report. Governors are responsible for setting goals for the work of the headteacher and are involved appropriately in setting realistic targets for raising standards in English and mathematics in National Curriculum tests.

56 The level of **financial planning** and the strategic use of resources are very good and are clearly focused on providing pupils with a high quality education. The governors are fully involved in the school's financial management and decision-making processes, and make sure that all

expenditure is linked to agreed educational priorities. The principles of best value are well established and are integral to managing the budget. This aspect of the school's management has been improved considerably since the previous inspection. There are very good financial reporting and control systems. The school secretary carries out the day-to-day monitoring and management of the school's expenditure very efficiently. She makes good use of computer-based systems to provide the headteacher with up-to-date financial information.

57 The **improvement plan's** educational priorities and targets are costed and agreed with governors and staff, and provide a clear route forward for the school's development and a focus for the review and evaluation of past spending decisions. However, there is no formal practice for governors to review their spending decisions against previously agreed success criteria. Prudent budgeting has enabled governors to maintain the funding of existing teaching staff and the nine-class structure to the school. Effective use is made of 'what if' financial modelling techniques to evaluate future budget planning scenarios and enable governors to be more informed when taking decisions which ensure best value for money. Competitive tendering is actively practised in respect of all school purchases and the governors have set appropriate criteria for the evaluation and selection of chosen suppliers. They compare school costs with those of other local schools.

58 The school actively seeks additional funding and makes good use of specific **grants** to improve the school environment and extend the opportunities for pupils' learning. Money allocated by central government is well used to promote and support literacy and numeracy, and enable an additional teacher to be employed in the reception class. Examples of the benefits gained through the use of special grants include the use of a capital allocation of £41,000 in partnership with the local authority to refurbish the reception classroom, the rooms for Years 1 and 2 and the external soft surface play area.

59 The use of new technology is good and supports the school's financial and administrative processes efficiently. The school has recently established a school website, although its use to support pupils' learning is at an early stage of development. A digital camera and camcorder are used well to record and display pupils' work and to enable them to evaluate their own performance.

60 The school has an adequate number of appropriately qualified **teachers and support staff** who are deployed in a flexible and effective manner to make best use of their skills. Teachers and their assistants co-operate effectively with each other to provide the full range of curricular activities for all pupils. The employment of a part-time teacher to share the teaching in Year 6 increases their learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy. The school administrative staff, mid-day supervisors and caretaker are dedicated to their duties and ensure that the day-to-day life of the school functions effectively and fully supports pupils' educational development. Very good induction procedures have been established for new staff, and have been used effectively to benefit and develop the newly qualified teachers. Effective appraisal and performance management procedures make sure that the professional developmental needs of all staff are identified and linked to training, and that targets match the priorities in the school improvement plan.

61 The standard of **accommodation** is good. The refurbishment of some classrooms has added considerably to the quality of the rooms in which pupils are taught, and is an important improvement since the previous inspection. The open-plan nature of classes 4 and 5, and the subsequent noise interference between the two rooms occasionally distracts pupils from their learning. The school hall, which is relatively small, is well used for assemblies, pupils' presentations, school dinners and physical education. However the available space is limited for Year 6 and restricts what they can do in physical education lessons, especially when the room is also used for displays. Very good use has been made of bright colours to give the building a warm and welcoming feel. There are many attractive displays of pupils' work, photographs of their achievements and educational materials and posters of good quality. The outside play facilities are very good, and include a secure fenced soft surface area for the youngest children. There are large grassed areas and a number of mature trees that provide shade during sunny days.

62 Overall the range and quality of educational **resources** is satisfactory. Resources for art and design are very good. They are good in mathematics, science, music and physical education. However resources for ICT are unsatisfactory overall. The school has extended its range of computers with the purchase of a set of eight laptops that can be used in any classroom. Although this brings the total number in the school close to recommended levels, there are still not enough for pupils to work in pairs in class-based ICT lessons. An additional weakness is the current unreliability of the laptop computers themselves. There is no designated area for teaching food technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63 In order to build on the school's current successes, the headteacher, staff and governors should continue to work closely together to:

(i) Increase the use of ICT in English, mathematics and science:

- Extend the range of opportunities to use ICT in literacy and numeracy lessons;
- Increase the range of software and equipment;
- Use ICT to record and investigate the outcomes of scientific enquiries.

See paragraphs 23, 83, 91 and 101

(ii) Improve the range and depth of opportunities for learning in design and technology and music in Years 5 and 6:

- Make certain that the work planned for each term is taught in enough depth and range to ensure that pupils reach expected standards.

See paragraphs 6, 27, 110-11, 127 and 130

(iii) Improve the range of resources for children in the reception class to learn through creative play in and out of doors by:

- Increase the opportunities for role play within the classroom;
- Plan more opportunities for in and outdoor play that stimulate children's imagination and extending their learning in other areas of work.

See paragraphs 20, 76 and 77

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	11	24	10	1	0	0
Percentage	10	22	47	19	2	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 approximately two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		254
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	19
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91	97	100
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91	94	91
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	8	19	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	13	9	18
	Total	21	17	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78	63	96
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	8
	Girls	12	9	13
	Total	18	17	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67	63	78
	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	0
Chinese	0
White	253
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
Total income	480,442
Total expenditure	481,465
Expenditure per pupil	1,965
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,565
Balance carried forward to next year	18,542

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
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
Number of questionnaires returned

254
81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	48	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	49	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	57	4	5	0
The teaching is good.	67	31	1	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	34	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	33	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	35	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	42	2	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	37	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	33	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	38	9	1	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64 In Barnwell School, the foundation stage is the time that children spend in the reception class. They start part-time in September and are soon ready to attend full-time. The school's assessments show that when the children start school, their experiences and knowledge vary. On the whole they are typical for their age, but a small proportion of children are not as secure in aspects of personal and social development as they should be.

65 Children achieve well during their time in the reception class. The majority reach or are close to reaching the expected standards by the time they leave in all areas of learning. Many reach higher standards in aspects of personal and social development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

66 Very good teaching ensures that, during their time in the foundation stage, children develop confidence and independence and make good progress in this area of learning. The majority achieve or exceed the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. From the start children are expected to get what they need for a task, organise themselves with a minimum of fuss and put equipment and toys away at the end of the session. As a result, children quickly get into the classroom routines and their ability to fold their clothes neatly when they change for physical education and tidy away efficiently at the end of the lessons is impressive!

67 One of the strengths of the teaching in this area is that the staff promote children's personal development in everything they do. They provide very good role models for children. They are calm, well organised and approachable and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another. Staff expect children to be considerate at all times and are very clear about the rules of sharing and waiting their turn. Children respond by being well-mannered, patient and helpful. For example, children organising themselves in preparation for an art lesson helped each other with the fastenings on their aprons and waited patiently until everyone was ready to start. Staff help children to understand the difference between right and wrong through stories and discussions, and set a good example by always listening to what children have to say. As a result, the children respect one another and feel secure in the purposeful learning environment that the staff have created.

Communication, language and literacy

68 When they start reception class, most children have the language and literacy skills that are expected for their age, although a small number have below average speaking and listening skills. Good teaching ensures that by the end of the reception year, children have achieved many of the early skills in reading and writing and attainment for some is above average.

69 The permanent full-time class teacher promotes the development of language very well by taking good opportunities to engage children in conversation about their work and by widening their vocabulary when reading stories. Wherever possible she links vocabulary to work in other areas of learning such as the work on mini-beasts being undertaken in science. Children playing with plastic insects in the sand tray could talk confidently about them and some could use the technical words for the different parts of their bodies. Other adults in the classroom do not always take the opportunities they could to provide good models of language or encourage children to use vocabulary accurately when speaking.

70 Children are given opportunities to read books, listen to stories and write each day. Children enjoy sharing 'Big Books' with the adults. The two teachers question children skilfully to help them understand the story and to use clues in the pictures to work out what might happen next. As a

result children understand how books are organised and what the teacher means when she refers to the 'title' and 'author.' They read together confidently, copying the teacher's expression and joining in enthusiastically with sound effects. Children are taught their letter sounds systematically and teachers make very good use of clues and actions to help children learn them. Children participate enthusiastically in the learning games and by the end of the year most can use their knowledge to help them read and write words they find difficult. From the start children are encouraged to have a go at writing independently. The many opportunities for writing and the smooth transition from mark-making to having a go at writing words for themselves enables the most able children to write simple, correctly punctuated sentences by the time they leave the reception class, and all children are confident to attempt their writing independently. This gives them a very good start for their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1.

Mathematical development

71 Good teaching ensures that by the end of the reception year nearly all children have reached the early learning goals and some are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum.

72 One of the main reasons for this is that teachers use mathematics in everyday activities. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day and have no difficulty in working out how many are present in the morning or how many spaces they must move on a board game. When children line up to leave the classroom teachers encourage them to state what position they are in the line and this helps them remember the ordinal numbers such as first, second and third.

73 Teachers ensure that children learn about number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as sorting objects into sets, counting and playing games. This helps children make good progress in understanding numbers and concepts such as adding and taking away. Teachers also encourage children to record their mathematics as pictures and then, as they get older, as number sentences with symbols for addition, subtraction and equals. Most children can work out sums to ten by the time they leave reception and more able children use much bigger numbers and can easily work things out in their head.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74 Teaching in this aspect is satisfactory and helps children develop many of the basic skills that help them make sense of the world. By the time they leave the reception classes most children's knowledge and understanding of the world are at the level expected for their age.

75 Teachers make good use of the local environment to help children learn about the world around them. For example, in their study of insects children had conducted a search in the school's wild-life area and used scientific equipment such as hand lenses to help them learn from firsthand experience what the creatures they found there looked like. Teachers set up well-planned experiments to help children observe natural processes. For example, children worked with staff to set up an experiment to see how water with coloured dye in it would be absorbed by the plant over a period of time. Teachers used the activity creatively to encourage children to begin to ask scientific questions and find out the answers. Children use the computer regularly to play games that help them with their learning, and use the mouse confidently to find their way around the screen. Teachers make good use of visitors, such as the community police and visiting arts groups, to give children first-hand experiences of the outside world.

Physical development

76 Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall and by the time they leave reception, most children attain the skills expected for their age. However, there are areas of strengths and weaknesses. Well planned practical activities that involve cutting, pasting, manipulating small toys and construction equipment help children to master the skills of handling small tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors. Teachers ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to

engage in physical activities, both indoors and when playing outside. Children learn to skip, hop and jump in their physical education lessons in the hall and teachers take care to teach basic skills such as throwing and catching. As a result, children move confidently and in a controlled way. They enjoy playing with larger toys and construction equipment in the newly built outdoor area and make good use of the equipment in the local park when the weather allows. The provision for outdoor play is an area that the school has already identified for further development. Better resources, particularly wheeled toys, and more precise planning linked to the next steps in learning are needed to improve children's development and control of movement, and give them a greater awareness of space when playing together.

Creative development

77 Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall and by the time they leave reception, most children attain the skills expected for their age. Photographs of children's work over the year demonstrate that they have suitable opportunities to undertake a good range of art and design activities, such as painting, collage and pattern making. Teachers plan an appropriate variety of activities that enable children to experiment with materials and different media. Children enjoy their work and take pride in it. They take great care when painting and sticking, and this was clearly demonstrated in their paint and collage pictures inspired by the works of Matisse. Children have fewer opportunities to develop their imagination through role-play in the classroom or the outside area. The range of resources for role-play is limited. There is no 'home corner' for example, for the teacher to use imaginatively to support and extend learning in other areas of the curriculum. The activities that are provided do not always have a clear focus for learning and although children enjoy them, their play can be unproductive because they are not learning anything new.

ENGLISH

78 **Standards** in English are above average at the age of seven, and in line with national averages at the age of 11. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations in all parts of the school. Standards have been rising steadily over the past four years, and in 2001 pupils achieved well above average standards in the National Curriculum tests for writing at the age of seven and in English at 11. Their results compared very favourably, especially in writing in Year 2, with those obtained in schools containing pupils from similar backgrounds. Overall progress is good. The school's drive to raise standards in writing is already taking effect. The proportion of pupils likely to gain the higher Level 3 in Year 2 is double that attained in 2001. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their work is set at the correct level of difficulty, and they benefit from the skilled help they receive from teaching assistants when they are working in small groups.

79 Standards of speaking and listening are above those expected by the end of Year 2. The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills has been a particular focus of recent work. Skilled teaching has resulted in very good learning. Pupils speak confidently and converse fluently, asking questions and offering opinions enthusiastically. They enjoy learning and using new vocabulary because teachers plan excellent opportunities for them to learn by talking to adults and other children. Work in small groups and adult support allows less confident speakers and those with special educational needs to practise their ideas and make equal and valued contributions to the lessons. Pupils listen attentively in literacy lessons, answer questions about what they have heard and discuss ideas with a partner before telling the whole class. In a Year 1 writing lesson, for example, the pupils planned the middle part of their own story by talking in pairs about what might happen next to the teddy bear. The paired work allowed them to plan ideas, change words and choose the best way to tell the story. The pace was brisk but allowed them to be adventurous and creative in their choice of vocabulary. Collaboration led to the very good written work later. Many subjects in Years 1 and 2 are taught with an emphasis on talking and the very good progress made by the pupils in these years in acquiring communication skills is contributing to very good learning in the mental and oral parts of their mathematics lessons.

80 Standards of speaking and listening are also good in Year 6. Teachers in Years 3-6 have introduced a wide range of teaching methods that encourage pupils to listen attentively, think about what has been said and engage in discussion. For example, in a geography lesson, eight and nine year olds were asked to act as envoys, discussing similarities and differences between Barnwell School and one in an Indian village and then report back. Changing roles between speaker and listener and the purposeful nature of the organisation resulted in very good learning in terms of communication skills as well as geography. The high proportion of pupils with special needs were fully integrated in this lesson without the help of teaching assistants. Where teaching is less good, adult help is not used effectively in oral work to prepare pupils for independent work. Pupils of all abilities excel in performance with expression and clear diction, as in the Barnwell Players' excellent production of *The Prodigal Son*.

81 Standards of **reading** are well above average by the end of Year 2 and are typical for the ages of the pupils concerned in Year 6. Younger pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make and tackle new words and texts confidently. Standards are rising because pupils are taught basic reading skills very effectively, are well supported at home, and enjoy reading and talking about books. Year 2 pupils use words like 'index,' 'alphabetical order,' and 'fantasy' correctly in their discussions. The good progress and positive attitudes continue in older classes. Pupils in Year 4, for example, continue to respond to good teaching in literacy lessons. Information retrieval skills are taught systematically, and pupils scan text quickly to find information or examples of a writer's style. They discuss characters readily, express opinions and recognise changes of mood within a text. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national averages, but pupils have done well to achieve them as their attainment was below average when they were in Year 2. Attitudes are positive. Pupils learn to scan text and skim for information within their literacy lessons, but have no formal lessons in the library to discuss and practise what they have been taught. The teacher compensates for this by ensuring that pupils use a range of selected texts within the classroom as the basis for their researches. Pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to discuss their personal reading choices with an adult. This limits the range of texts they experience and they tend to keep with familiar authors rather than reading more widely. Pupils also scan text effectively on CD-ROM and Internet information pages as part of their research in history and geography.

82 Standards in **writing** are above average in Year 2 and in line with national averages In Year 6. Standards in Year 2 are higher than at the time of the previous inspection, and early indications are that the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in this term's National Curriculum tests will be more than double the 2001 national average. Pupils' books show that they have made good progress during the school year. Their writing communicates meaning, and is often expressed in a series of linked sentences. Higher attaining pupils use punctuation correctly, including commas within sentences. Their writing is organised, imaginative and clear. Middle attaining pupils also write at length but their use of full stops is not so secure. All pupils, including lower attainers, use a good vocabulary and enjoy the craft of writing poetry and stories for someone else to read. All pupils spell simple words correctly. They will 'have a go' at more complex words but some higher attaining pupils tend to be careless, writing 'happaly' or 'brige' for example, when they do know the correct spelling when asked. Standards of handwriting are satisfactory. Letters are formed accurately and are consistent in size. Many pupils are developing a fluent, joined script in their practice books, and several are more than ready to use their new skills in all their writing.

83 Year 6 pupils are working successfully at expected levels. Ten of the most able are taught separately each morning so that they can work at higher levels. The strategy is successful and the pupils write confidently and effectively for a range of purposes and readers. They use words precisely, and make imaginative choices of vocabulary. Simple and complex sentences are organised correctly into paragraphs, and commas, apostrophes and inverted commas are used accurately. Spelling is good, and handwriting is joined and fluent. Middle attaining pupils reach expected standards. Their vocabulary is not quite as wide but contains examples where they have responded well in a lesson and have used a more adventurous range of words. Some spelling is careless. Lower attaining pupils are achieving close to expected levels. Their books also contain examples of key words being used to good effect in response to good quality teaching. Progress

over the past three terms has been good. Little use was made of computers during the literacy lessons seen during the inspection, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to draft work on screen or use the other skills they have learned in ICT lessons. A similar concern was noted during the previous inspection.

84 The **quality of teaching** is very good in Years 1 and 2 and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. While the teaching is good overall in Years 3-6, a very small proportion of the teaching seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory. Teachers use the structure of National Literacy Strategy very effectively to develop all aspects of the subject, especially writing. This is an improvement. A very good example was seen in Year 2 when the pupils wrote introductions to a longer story about their magical adventures under the sea. The teacher's own excitement about the possibilities within the stories was infectious and pupils were aching to get started. The emphasis on 'better words' and references to a colourful display that contained key vocabulary ensured that pupils of all abilities could start with a clear description of the setting and the characters in the stories. Out went 'big,' said' and 'lovely,' and in came 'gigantic,' 'gasped' and 'brave.' All the pupils wrote a series of interesting linked sentences and could explain how the drama would unfold. The quality of planning is nearly always very high and results in good progress. For example, the Year 5 lesson on using words to join sentences and clauses progressed at a brisk pace from simple pairs of phrases to imaginative descriptions suggested by a painting of a Victorian classroom. The teacher's clear expectations, well prepared materials and brisk pace meant that the learning was effective. One pupil announced he would be too tired to play football! Occasionally, teachers do not make the standard of the completed work clear enough and pupils set the pace of the lesson rather than the teacher. In one instance, they became confused because they did not know what they were supposed to do and did not make enough progress because the teaching was unsatisfactory.

85 Teachers make appropriate use of literacy in all parts of the curriculum, and pupils enjoy writing for a range of purposes. Good use was made of note taking skills, for example, in project work that required captions to explain a series of digital photographs, in writing historical accounts and setting out the results of scientific investigations. Pupils in Year 4 wrote stories for pupils in Year 1, who responded in letters: 'They read stories to us and I loved them. Their writing was very good because they had capital letters and full stops and finger spaces.'

86 The subject is managed appropriately. The **co-ordinator** has a sound understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses within the subject through direct observations of lessons and very careful analysis of test results. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy means that teachers now have a clear structure for their planning. The concerns about repeated work and the lack of a clear focus for each lesson that were included in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Several members of the support staff, governors and parents support literacy lessons on a voluntary basis. This is very effective in group work when they are given precise guidance on their role and a target for the pupils to achieve. Not enough advice is given to them about the support they can also offer during whole class teaching, and they tend to sit and observe rather than be quietly but actively involved with a small group of pupils.

MATHEMATICS

87 **Standards** are above average in Year 2 and in line with national averages in Year 6. Pupils are making very good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Good progress continues throughout the next four years. The high standards achieved in Year 2 are a direct result of the high quality – and sometimes inspirational – teaching. Good teaching continues to predominate thereafter, so that all pupils continue to achieve well. Pupils' ability to calculate mentally is a significant factor in their progress. Current standards are close to those obtained in Year 2 in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. Standards in Year 6 are higher than those obtained in tests in 2001.

88 Standards in **Year 2** are above average and have improved since the previous inspection. Virtually all pupils can instantly recall their 2, 4, 5 and 10 times tables. When adding up, their number bonds to 10, 20 and 100 are secure. This enables them to add two or three digit numbers with ease. Their teachers continually urge them to 'apply your strategies.' The pupils know what this means and they employ a range of methods when confronted with problems covering the four rules of numbers. A higher attaining pupil asked to be given a 'difficult' number to double. When given 12,000, he immediately continued a sequence up to 96,000, and after a brief pause, correctly offered 192,000 as the next number. The pupils love a challenge and when they have a 'no fingers day' all calculations are done 'in their heads.' Pupils with special educational needs are able to add up accurately three numbers, including a two digit element. As early as Year 1, many are counting patterns in 3s, 5s and 10s.

89 This knowledge serves pupils well when they tackle problems. Pupils in Year 2 added up the cost of various items on a shopping list quickly and accurately and worked out the change they would get from £5 or £10. They are also beginning to understand the principles involved in adding on, for example, half an hour to different times. Discussion with pupils reveals a significant ability to present information clearly and to organise their own work. They know the geometrical features of all standard two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and understand the basic properties of angles. Higher attainers are successfully using grids and Venn diagrams to sort information. All pupils accurately interpret information using block graphs to group birthdays of pupils in the class or when classifying books in the library. They have a homework book to extend their learning. In the current Year 2, more than two thirds of the pupils are reaching standards that are above average, and some are even further ahead than that. The teaching is so enlightened that these year groups are continually challenged and stretched.

90 The standards observed in **Year 6** are in line with expectations. However, when these pupils were in Year 2, their attainment was below average. They have made good progress over the past four years to reach current standards. The school has recognised the need to extend the most competent pupils. A group of ten in Year 6 is withdrawn for intensive support. During the week of the inspection, these pupils were conscientiously tackling algebraic statements. They were analysing information from sequences, describing them mathematically and proposing formulae of their own. Throughout the school, the insistence on pupils explaining their reasoning is resulting in systematic approaches to problem solving. Almost all pupils can readily convert straightforward fractions into decimals and percentages. Year 5 pupils quickly converted $\frac{3}{20}$ into a percentage. Their understanding of probability is secure, although the quality of estimation is still variable. For instance, pupils in Year 4 estimated the area of their classroom in a range of 20 to 500 square metres. They did, however, recognise the need to use 'square' metres.

91 The continued use of appropriate mental strategies provides a solid basis for all aspects of pupils' work. This particularly helps pupils with special educational needs, who are acquiring a solid understanding of place value within the four rules of number. Confidence with numbers enables many pupils to interpret information quickly. Higher attainers have a good understanding of equivalences and use co-ordinates effectively. Most pupils use line graphs competently. The strong emphasis on problem solving is helping pupils to develop a mathematical language and think logically. They regularly experiment with methods of their own to see if they work, for example when classifying reflective shapes. Pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to use ICT to record or develop their mathematical ideas.

92 **Teaching** is almost always good, and sometimes is of the highest quality. The very good and excellent lessons in Year 1 and 2 were characterised by high expectations for all pupils. Work was well matched to the ability levels of all pupils. The targets of pupils with special educational needs were addressed. Planning was thorough. These elements combined to create a sense of mathematical discovery for pupils, who then joined in with the fun of learning. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious. The good teaching throughout Years 3 to 6 contains many of these elements. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher adapted her original lesson plan after evaluating pupils' understanding of co-ordinates in the previous lesson. Strong recapitulation and consolidation ensured that this was completely understood so that pupils could move on to the next phase successfully. All teachers prepare and use resources effectively.

93 When teaching assistants are involved in planning, their interventions are very productive. In a class of pupils from Years 3 and 4, the teacher made good use of the overhead projector to develop pupils' ability to use a calculator to check their calculations. Later, in the same lesson, pupils worked independently on a number investigation. The encouragement of pupils to use their initiative was also evident in a Year 4/5 class, where the teacher adroitly managed the silly behaviour of a group of boys, enabling all pupils to get on with their work. All teachers use good questioning techniques to involve pupils fully in all class discussions. Praise is used sensibly and collaboration between pupils is encouraged. Planning that includes sequential build-up enables pupils to tackle complex problems as in the Year 6 withdrawal group when they grappled with an investigation into number sequences. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils responded particularly well and showed a real enthusiasm for learning, although the level of challenge for more able pupils was too low. All teachers use mathematical language effectively, share their objectives with the class, and help pupils to evaluate what they have learned at the end of the session.

94 **Leadership and management** are strong. The development plan for mathematics has appropriate priorities. The co-ordinator has identified the need to integrate ICT more meaningfully into the schemes of work. She recognises the need to place greater emphasis on data handling. The termly scrutiny of mid-term plans is effective. The numeracy governor attended the training day. The Education Business Partnership recently involved the school in trialling new materials that have now been published.

95 There has been good progress since the previous inspection. All the reported areas for development have been tackled vigorously. Standards have improved. Progress, particularly of boys, is now good. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now a strength. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good, as is their progress. The heavy concentration on investigations has been successful, as teachers have concentrated on developing pupils' learning strategies, and not just on knowledge. Resources are much improved and planning is more consistent. Assessment is rigorous. All this leads to pupils who look forward to their mathematics lessons, play a full part in them and derive enjoyment from the intellectual challenges presented to them.

SCIENCE

96 **Standards** are above average at the end of Year 2. They are average at the end of Year 6, a similar position to that attained in National Curriculum tests in 2001. The good standards at Year 2 represent an improvement since the previous inspection, and good achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teaching and learning are good for most pupils and very good in the younger classes. Pupils in Years 3-6 achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of science. The progress they make in acquiring the skills required to carry out scientific investigations for themselves is not as good, the teaching is not as strong as in other aspects of the subject, and attainment in this area in Year 6 is more limited. Pupils with special needs receive the help they need, make good progress and are fully included in lessons.

97 A good improvement in **teaching** since the previous inspection has been that there are now many more opportunities for pupils to learn through experimentation and investigation, particularly in Years 1 and 2. This was seen clearly in the work of pupils in Year 2 who were involved in studies of plants and growth. These pupils were investigating the conditions necessary for healthy growth in plants in some depth. As a result of their close observation of the roots and leaves of growing plants, they were able to recognise changes due to growth and discover for themselves how roots absorbed water from the soil. In this lesson the teacher made very good use of a microscope linked to a laptop computer so that pupils could observe the roots in fine detail. The very good resources, opportunities for pupils to discover for themselves and brisk pace of the lesson generated high levels of interest and involvement, together with a real sense of wonder at the complexity of the plants.

98 The sense of discovery and wonder is a feature of the very good teaching based on practical investigation. Other aspects of these practical lessons also contribute strongly to pupils' personal development. Classroom relationships are strong and pupils collaborate well in their

working groups, take turns with activities and equipment, and clear up sensibly at the end of their sessions. A factor in this success is the quality of teachers' planning. Detailed lesson plans ensure that teachers structure lessons well and have clear objectives for the activities. Teachers explain these to pupils at the beginning of the lesson and take time at the end to find out what has been learnt.

99 Opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves and record their findings are more limited in Years 3-6. Work in pupils' books shows that these opportunities are there in Year 4, but there is less evidence of practical work in other years. This puts more able pupils at a disadvantage, particularly in Years 5 and 6, when they are expected to write about their experiments and find their own ways of recording their findings as charts, graphs and tables. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 confirmed that much of their learning is from textbooks or published worksheets, and a lot of time is given to revising for the national tests. This lack of practical experience prevents the more able pupils from reaching higher levels. In one example pupils had found out about insulators and conductors in electrical circuits from books rather than by testing materials to find out for themselves. In the lessons seen in Years 3-6 the teachers' planning was detailed, providing structure for the lesson and ensuring that pupils met the objectives set out for them. Teachers planned harder work for higher attaining pupils, but there was less evidence of this provision in work in pupils' books. Teachers mark pupils' books conscientiously but only in Year 4 does the marking tell pupils enough about how they are doing and how they can improve.

100 A significant improvement since the previous inspection has been the introduction of a scheme of work that ensures that all aspects of the science curriculum are given equal weight. Work in pupils' books confirms this. Pupils in Year 5, for example, had explored how sound travels through different materials in physical science, learnt about the main organs of the body and their functions in biological science and designed an experiment to show that melting chocolate is a reversible change in their studies of material and their properties. Thought has been given to what should be taught each year to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes do not cover the same work twice and this successfully addresses another weakness noted in the previous inspection.

101 The subject is very well managed. Time and resources have been given to developing the subject and providing training for teachers. The co-ordinator monitors test results carefully to identify areas where the school can improve its provision. The school is developing the use of ICT within the subject but recognises that this is an area for further improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

102 Standards are higher than expected levels in Year 2 and in line with expectations in Year 6. The good attainment of the younger pupils is an improvement since the previous inspection and the result of very good teaching in Year 1 and 2.

103 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthused by their teachers, and study the work of famous artists and sculptors to find out what inspired them. Pupils are creative in their use of a wide range of materials, and teachers ensure a balance between developing artistic skills and using them to illustrate and enhance other learning. For example, pupils made paper flowers to sell in the class shop, and collages of mermaids and seabirds for their study of the seaside. Pupils painted portraits of the Queen showing careful observations, good scale and attention to detail. They produce good design work using ICT, experimenting with different fonts for effect and, supported by teaching assistants, used a software package to create self-portraits. Learning is very good because teachers make art an exciting experience. They use exotic and stimulating resources, as in a Year 1 lesson making non-permanent sculptures and then using a digital camera to record the pupils' efforts as images. Overall progress is satisfactory.

104 Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress through Years 3 -6 as they are offered a wide range of opportunities in art and design. The teaching is good because resources are selected and used to illustrate the teaching points clearly and enthuse the pupils. Learning is built on in a systematic way so that portraits, for example, are studied again in Years 3 and 6, with a different

focus in each year. Year 3 study portraits by several artists, ranging in style from Gainsborough to Picasso and Hockney. In Year 6 pupils produce self-portraits again and look more seriously at faces and body proportions, learning to use an outline shape they describe as a 'sausage man', and make studies of hands to improve their skills in figure drawing. In discussion they recall with enthusiasm how their art lessons were organised and how they set about achieving the results, including any improvements discussed with teachers. They remember looking at work by famous artists but struggle to name them. Design and technology was being taught simultaneously with art in the Year 6 lesson seen. This slowed the pace of work and pupils lacked the confidence and flair to experiment freely.

105 The co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role and makes good use of visiting artists and community groups to extend the art curriculum and raise standards. A photographic portfolio of pupils' work is being compiled, rather than using sketchbooks, to demonstrate progress over time.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106 It was not possible to make many judgements about standards, teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3-6, because of limited evidence. There were examples of pupils' work in the classrooms in Years 1-4 and some photographic evidence. Only one lesson was seen, in Year 5, and some of the work planned for Year 6 this year had not been carried out.

107 The standard of work seen in Years 1 and 2 is above expected levels and some is of very good quality. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were close to expected levels. Pupils in Year 1 had made musical shakers, which were finished to a high standard and worked well. Pupils had clearly enjoyed the task and took great pride in demonstrating how the instruments worked in an assembly. Year 1 pupils had also made wheeled vehicles to an equally high standard. They had taken great care with their first designs, which were labelled clearly with axles, wheels, and windows. The finished buses, cars and planes had been carefully constructed and painted with great attention to detail, for example, several pupils had painted faces at the bus windows. Pupils had written up how they had built their vehicles in their own words and had made simple evaluations, describing ways in which they could improve the product next time.

108 Photographs of models of play park equipment made by Year 2 pupils showed equal attention to detail. These pupils had visited the park to research their designs and then used a variety of materials such as wood, card, string and plastic to construct their own models. These showed that they had learnt to use strengthening techniques and had worked with a suitable range of tools. The quality of the work demonstrates that teachers in Years 1 and 2 are teaching all aspects of the curriculum effectively and giving pupils good opportunities to develop their designing and making skills.

109 The quality of the work seen in Years 1 and 2 is not sustained in the older classes. Teachers' records in Years 3 and 4 and photographic evidence show that pupils have suitable opportunities to carry out designing and making tasks, and the small amount of work seen was of a satisfactory standard. For example, pupils in Year 3 had constructed wooden picture frames and produced a class book to explain the process. The finished products, although identical, were well made and fit for the purpose.

110 In the lesson seen in Year 5 the standards of work were below the level expected for pupils of their age. Pupils designing vehicle chassis from construction equipment showed little imagination and worked at a very slow pace, partly because the teacher had not made clear the purpose of the activity and it seemed a pointless exercise. By contrast, activities given to younger pupils are purposeful, often linking with learning in other subjects, and they stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. No work was seen in Year 6 because the tasks planned for the year had not been done. Discussions with older pupils confirmed that they are unlikely to have had the experiences necessary to enable them to reach the standards required in the subject.

111 The school has addressed some criticisms of the previous report by introducing a scheme of work that ensures that skills are taught systematically as pupils move up the school, and that pupils in mixed age classes do not cover the same work twice. As yet this has not been in place for long enough for the oldest pupils to benefit and not enough time is given to design and technology in Years 5 and 6 to enable pupils to catch up. Assessment of pupils' progress and skills in Year 6 is very difficult when the subject is taught at the same time as art and design. Weaknesses in the management of the subject mean that these shortcomings have not been identified and put right quickly enough. The school is suitably resourced with tools and materials.

GEOGRAPHY

112 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve the standards expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the attainment of Year 2 pupils was below national expectations.

113 Although no direct teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2, it is evident from the work seen in books and on display, and from discussions with pupils, that there is some good teaching which covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. The mixed year groups study the same units of work with the tasks at the right level to support learning for their different ages. Work is matched to pupils' ability to enable them all to understand new ideas. By the age of seven, pupils know about their own locality and are aware of other towns in the UK and can find them on a large scale map of the British Isles. They recall natural features and lifestyle on a Scottish island and make comparisons with the Penshaw area. They know about different landscapes such as coastal cliffs, beaches, rural farmland and cities. They can say why they might prefer to live in Sunderland because of the good facilities for leisure and entertainment it has to offer.

114 By the time pupils are in Year 6 they discuss recent work on rivers confidently and correctly use vocabulary such as source, meander, tributary and erosion. They do not, however, recall studying a developing country. They are able to discuss changes in the climate and environment. They are able to use reference books, mostly provided by teachers, to research information, but do not have many opportunities to go to the library to find possible resources for themselves. Teachers' comments on their planning indicate that not all the work planned for the autumn term was covered. This is limiting pupils' progress, because gaps remain in their learning.

115 The teaching in Years 3 – 6 is good because teachers present the work in a lively and interesting way, use up-to-date resources, including the Internet, to research information, and share higher expectations of what pupils can do. Other good features are teachers' clear explanations, and the ways they organise the lessons to promote thoughtful discussion and full participation by all groups of pupils. This was evident in a Year 3/4 lesson comparing the school with one in a village in Kenya. All pupils were able to identify similarities and differences and some were ready to justify their views.

116 The co-ordinator is conscientious in her leadership and management of the subject and attends courses to raise her level of expertise. She is developing a view of standards throughout the school by looking at teachers' planning and recording, by assessing pupils' work and by observing and supporting teachers in their work. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection but the school has not yet developed ways to measure the rate of progress and achievement of pupils from year to year.

HISTORY

117 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations. Since teaching in Years 1-2 is good, pupils learn effectively in their lessons. They make satisfactory progress in Years 3-6. There has been substantial progress since the previous report. Attainment and progress in Years 1 and 2 have improved. Planning is now secure and assessment is more rigorous.

118 Pupils in Years 1-2 already have a sound idea about 'now' and 'then'. For instance, they recognise the different modes of transport used in 1900 compared with present day. They appreciate that the Second World War affected life in 1950, and that fashion is influenced by social circumstance. Pupils in Years 3-6 study National Curriculum topics in depth, and combine factual detail with a selection of information from a range of sources. For instance, pupils in Year 6 surf the Internet to uncover information about Penshaw Monument. However, they are fully aware of the unreliability of sources, and make considered judgements about the details they have found. These pupils also have good recall of their study of the Greeks. They can describe events from the Olympic Games and can identify some of the famous Greek philosophers and their contribution to world culture.

119 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. Objectives are clear and questioning is brisk. Pupils' opinions are valued and trite contributions are challenged. Planning and preparation are thorough. Although it was not possible to observe lessons in Years 3 - 6, the course structure and assessment of work indicate a determination to ensure that historical enquiry and interpretation are a high priority. There is an insistence on the acquisition of appropriate vocabulary, so that pupils are aware of terms such as 'basilica', 'aqueduct' and 'column' when studying the Romans. Investigative work ensures that there is an understanding of the roles of archaeologists in uncovering history. Teachers continually insist on imaginative presentation. In newspaper reports about the Aztecs a pupil wrote 'Men were gasping for air. The river turned red and the Spaniards were trampled by their own horses.'

120 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The action plan recognises the need to improve resources and the use of ICT. Resources have been developed in Years 1 and 2, although the range of artefacts remains limited. This was also noted as a concern in the previous report. The use of oral testimony has provided a vivid resource for pupils' understanding of major historical events. A good example is the video of interviews with local residents for Year 3-4s' studies of World War 2. Assessment is based on 'end of unit' grades. The needs of higher attainers – particularly in mixed age classes – have not been fully evaluated. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and their literacy targets are taken into consideration in the detailed lesson plans. Actors from the Biddick Arts Centre have visited the school to present a well-received 'Ancient Greece' day, covering life, art and culture.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY [ICT]

121 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below expected levels in Year 6 and progress was unsatisfactory. All pupils now make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs feel confident in using computers because they do not have to worry about basic spelling and writing skills, and because much of the learning takes place in pairs where pupils learn together and practise with the support of a friendly 'adviser'.

122 Pupils in Year 2 are familiar with computers and basic word-processing, and have a secure understanding of how information and communication technology is a natural part of their everyday lives. They know that devices respond to commands, and are able to program a floor robot so that it moves forward and turns in response to the instructions they have entered into its memory. They used the visit of the 'Liaze Bus' mobile ICT suite to develop their skills in changing font colours and sizes in word processed work. Pupils in Year 3 are able to use a simple database correctly, entering information about themselves, and produced pie and bar charts that illustrate how many pupils, for example, have brown eyes. Pupils in Year 4 present ideas and information in flow charts and use a variety of computer tools to create pictures using screen brushes, sprays and copy routines for repeating patterns. They have a good range of word-processing skills, and used the digital camera to take photographs of the Penshaw Monument in preparation for observational drawings. Good use was made of the photocopier, an excellent example of pupils being trusted to handle adult equipment, to enlarge pencil designs into templates for cutting out shapes for fabric collages in art lessons.

123 Pupils in Year 6 use computers to communicate and handle information confidently. They have a sound understanding of how to retrieve information from CD-ROM and the Internet. They understand and use e-mail, and welcome the simplicity of communication by mobile phone text messages. They understand the role of ICT in modern society, and could explain that the checkout computers in a supermarket not only read the price from the bar coding on the purchase but also informed stock-control so that more items could be brought into the shop to replace those sold.

124 The standard of teaching is consistently good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers in all parts of the school work confidently with the pupils, who respect them for their knowledge and understanding. This was seen very clearly in the Year 6 lesson when pupils were shown how to create a multi-media presentation of the history of Penshaw. By the end of the session pupils were starting to put together a home page that included animation, text in a range of fonts and colours, sounds, and their own digital photographs. The teaching was good because the lesson was well planned, questions were asked that encouraged pupils to reflect before answering, and a brisk pace was maintained through timed tasks and reminders of pupils' short-term targets within the lesson. Learning was good because pupils were stimulated intellectually by the historical content of the lesson and creatively by the potential of the multi-media software.

125 The school has extended its range of computers with the purchase of a set of eight laptops that can be used in any classroom. Although this brings the total number of computers in the school close to recommended levels, there are still not enough for pupils to work in pairs in class-based ICT skills lessons. When it becomes necessary for a third, or even a fourth, pupil to join the group, individual progress seldom rises above satisfactory. An additional weakness is the current unreliability of the computers themselves. A well planned lesson in Year 4, for example, where pupils were required to enter instructions into computers so that the screen 'turtle' moved in a square or other geometric shape, had to be changed mid-lesson when half the laptops failed to work. The teacher was fully prepared for this eventuality and had prepared a back-up activity, but pupils' progress was not as good as it would have been if all the computers had worked.

126 The subject is currently managed efficiently by the headteacher but will be passed to a new post-holder at the end of the term. The headteacher has ensured that concerns in the previous report about a lack of opportunities for pupils to use computers to control events have been addressed. Although there are several good instances of ICT being used in all areas of the curriculum, the digital camera is a very good example, the school is aware that computers are not used enough in English, mathematics and science lessons as an automatic extension of the basic range of resources and media used in those subjects.

MUSIC

127 Evidence from the many extra musical activities, as well as from the one lesson observed, indicates that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach nationally expected levels. Standards are especially secure in singing, listening to music and group instrumental tuition because they are taught regularly and systematically. Musical composition is not taught often enough, and the concerns in the previous inspection report about this aspect of the curriculum remain.

128 Music has been a particular focus for the school, and additional finance and resources have been invested to provide good teaching. There are many-extra curricular opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills and talents and as a result, outside of class lessons, this is a musically rich school. All pupils learn to appreciate live music performances by the Barnwell Players. Music specialists who teach and play regularly in the school, and the many visiting musicians, add to the varied provision. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 are also offered tuition in the choir, and on violin, recorder and brass instruments.

129 Although no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, discussions with pupils and observations within other subject lessons indicate that Year 2 pupils have made steady progress and achieve

levels that are close to those expected nationally. They enjoy music, can talk about favourite songs, sing tunefully together, and recognise and keep a steady beat going using percussion instruments. They join in singing with adults in class and assemblies enthusiastically, and are gaining an awareness of how music can create mood. They know 'loud and soft', 'fast and slow' in relation to music and other sounds from their work in science. Year 2 pupils do not recall using instruments to compose their own music since they were in the reception class, and are reluctant to experiment making up their own rhythms. This represents a gap in the teaching and learning. Some choose to play instruments when other work has been completed, and a few pupils are selected to accompany songs and hymns during hymn practice and for assemblies, plays and concerts.

130 Older pupils are not taught musical composition systematically. Year 3 and 4 pupils enjoy learning about rhythm and tempo, using dance to respond to the music they hear and match the musical notation. By the end of Year 6, pupils find clapping the same kinds of rhythms equally challenging and they lack the technical vocabulary to discuss simple conventions of notation. They do not know words like 'tempo' and 'stave', or the names of notes such as 'crotchet and quaver', although they do recognise them on sheet music. They remember listening to music by famous composers, but struggled to name any. Year 6 pupils enjoy singing and can name different types of music that they study. They were well taught in the lesson observed. They work hard to improve their performance when singing in parts with the confident music co-ordinator. Many eleven-year-olds are becoming competent musicians as a direct result of the good tuition, but this is not always true of those pupils who choose not to take part in the extra-curricular activities.

131 The very knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject and is careful to support the non-specialists on the staff. National guidelines and a scheme of work have been introduced and evaluated. The school has decided to purchase a commercial scheme to improve the programme of teaching and learning for class music. Resources are generally good and often very good, especially when the school makes use of external expertise. Additional resources, such as links with Biddick Secondary School, extend music-making opportunities. The inclusive approach that makes sure that musical tuition is available to as many pupils as possible is an improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION [PE]

132 It was not possible to observe lessons in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach levels of performance that are close to national expectations. Standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection, although self-evaluation is now more structured and pupils with special educational needs are integral and valued members of the teaching group. Assessment has not been formalised and lesson plans do not recognise the varying needs of pupils of different levels of ability. Target setting was praised in the last report, but this was not evident in this inspection.

133 Pupils come to school with the correct clothing for physical activity and are aware of the reasons for a 'warm-up' session. In indoor lessons pupils make good use of space and show reasonable control of movement. Year 3 pupils analyse their own performance and that of their peers in simple terms, for instance: 'He swings his arms too much from side to side.' The requirements for an effective running style are understood, although in Year 6 baton changing for relays is still undisciplined. Pupils particularly enjoy the competitive element in lessons.

134 The school benefits significantly from the close association with Biddick Sports College. Specialist teachers from the college support the physical education programme in the school. The Year 6 lesson observed during the inspection was led by a teacher from Biddick, well supported by the class teacher from Barnwell. The college identifies talented pupils and special programmes are organised for them. One of the strengths of the school is its provision for outdoor education. An introductory lesson for pupils in Years 3/4 provided a solid grounding for collaborative group activity and the need to recognise symbols on maps. In the week following the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were to spend three days rock climbing, abseiling and orienteering at Weardale House.

135 Schemes of work combine local and national guidance. A small amount of monitoring has been undertaken. Extra-curricular provision is good. There are netball and football teams, both of which are open equally to girls and boys. There is an increasingly strong association with Sunderland AFC, who send training coaches into school. Parents provide valuable assistance. Two mothers, for example, help out with netball and a former parent with football. A key figure in school football is the school caretaker, who coaches soccer teams and is qualified to use Top Sports equipment. Last year the senior soccer team topped the Sunderland small schools league. The school has enjoyed mixed success at the annual inter-schools athletics event.

136 The co-ordinator is committed and enthusiastic. The development plan concentrates on better resourcing and the improvement of teachers' expertise. There is a strong expectation that the links with Biddick Sports College will be instrumental in effecting change in the design of the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in learning to respond to questions of meaning and value, and in developing a knowledge and understanding of different religions. This is a similar position to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. The subject makes a very important contribution to the general ethos of the school through its focus on reflection and respect for the views of others.

138 Seven-year-old pupils have a sound understanding of worship, and are used to reflecting and thinking about the deeper aspects of life. They recalled their feelings and responses to Remembrance Sunday very clearly, although it had been marked six months previously. They know the basic facts about Christianity, retelling the stories of Christmas and Easter in some detail. They knew that Jesus told stories in order to make people think, and explained the importance of the parables of the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son. Eleven-year-olds recognise that people have different belief systems, and have researched the main beliefs and customs of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. They know that each has a 'special' book and that all worship a 'God,' but few have the depth of knowledge needed to make comparisons between the various faiths. Although they understand that different faiths are found in modern Britain, pupils tend to associate non-Christian faiths with 'other countries.' Their books indicate an appropriate knowledge of the Christian year, well known parables and some basic facts about Judaism.

139 There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in younger classes, but the quality of the teaching seen in Years 4-6 was satisfactory or better. This is a similar position to the previous inspection. Conversations with pupils indicate that teachers are very effective in extending the provision for their social and moral development in religious education lessons. Pupils are reflective and talk about feelings unselfconsciously. They know the difference between right and wrong, and have an empathy with the teaching of Buddha, who gave up his life as a rich man in order to discover the meaning of life. The quality of learning is satisfactory. Occasionally the teacher's own knowledge of the subject material is limited to the actual lesson material, and pupils' wider ranging questions are unanswered. This limits the progress they can make. Teachers make good use of literacy and recording skills in setting pupils tasks that require them to research for themselves from a number of texts, CD-ROM or the Internet. Good examples were seen, for example, in Year 6.

140 The subject is managed by a knowledgeable and active co-ordinator. She has addressed the criticisms in the previous report about resources and is keen to extend the current curriculum through more visits to places of worship and the school's use of the Internet.