

INSPECTION REPORT

LARKSPUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beacon Lough East, Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108330

Head teacher: Mrs C Haddock

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell
2456

Dates of inspection: 3rd to 6th March 2003

Inspection number: 246784

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 and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beacon Lough East Gateshead
Postcode:	NE9 6SS
Telephone number:	0191 4875628
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor B Richmond
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	Mrs J Bell	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
			Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
			Religious education	What should the school do to improve further?
			Foundation Stage	
			Educational inclusion	
			English as an additional language	
			Citizenship	
11368	Mrs K Lee	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?
17709	Mr A Giles	Team inspector	Science	How well are pupils taught?
			History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
			Physical education	
21397	Mrs I Bradbury	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Art and design	
			Geography	
			Music	
			Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Larkspur Primary School is similar in size to most primary schools and admits pupils aged three to 11. It is situated in the Beacon Lough East housing estate, close to High Fell in Gateshead, and serves an area of mainly local authority housing. The area is one of high unemployment and social deprivation. The school is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) that funds a range of initiatives to improve standards. There are 200 pupils on roll including 23 children who attend part-time in the nursery. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Children enter the nursery with a broad range of attainment but most have very low language, literacy, social and mathematical skills for their age. Many have had a very limited range of experiences before joining the nursery. Only one pupil is from an ethnic minority background but is not at an early stage of learning English. There are 105 pupils eligible for free school meals; at 59 per cent this is well above the national average. The school has 46 pupils on its register of special educational needs, 24 per cent, which is above average for a school of this size but only one pupil is supported through a statement of specific need and this is below the national average. The range of needs of those identified for greater support includes specific learning difficulties, speech and communication problems, physical difficulties and developmental delay. Eight pupils joined the school at other than usual admission time and 10 left so there is some mobility. The school was successful in gaining a School Achievement Award in 2000 and has recently achieved a Healthy Schools Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school; it provides a very caring and supportive ethos for all its pupils that enables them to achieve well. The teamwork is good and senior staff ably support the very good leadership and management of the school by the head teacher. The head teacher provides a very good direction for improving the school. The very effective work of all staff in developing and nurturing the very effective ethos throughout the school promotes very good relationships; pupils have very good attitudes, enjoy their work and behave very well. The high proportion of good and sometimes very good teaching and learning has improved pupils' progress and is enabling them to improve standards; those in English are still below average but are improving, and standards in mathematics and science are now at the level expected by the time pupils transfer to secondary school. The head teacher, staff and governors have a shared commitment to raise standards and this is proving successful. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher provides very effective leadership and management and has a clear philosophy for promoting the learning of all pupils; she is supported well by the deputy head, senior staff, staff and governors.
- The school has a very caring and supportive ethos within which every child is valued and this effectively promotes pupils' very good personal development.
- Relationships are very good and so pupils develop very good attitudes to their work and behave very well. These areas are a strength of the school and a key to the good progress pupils make.
- The substantial amount of good teaching is enabling pupils to achieve well and make good progress.
- The very good and sometime excellent teaching, and the very good provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) ensure that children make a very good start to their education.

- The school has very good procedures to check on and support pupils' behaviour and academic and personal development.
- The school provides pupils with rich and stimulating experiences that support their learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The consistent use of the day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons so that all teachers plan work that builds more closely on what pupils already know.
- The curriculum, to ensure all subjects are taught in sufficient depth.

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 responded very well to the previous inspection in 1997 and has made very good progress since then. Standards are steadily improving. There have been several staff changes and the quality of teaching has improved with more good, very good and excellent teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. The national guidance for literacy and numeracy and other subjects has been adopted and provides a sound framework for teachers' planning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good; these pupils are identified early in their school career and all are well supported according to the targets clearly identified in individual learning plans. The school's provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved substantially; equipment and staff expertise are used well to ensure that pupils' skills develop well. However, this provision is very recent and although pupils are making rapid progress in their skills, standards are below average by the age of 11 because of gaps in their earlier learning due to limitations in equipment. The school now has useful assessment procedures to analyse a wide range of test results and to intervene to support individuals and groups of pupils to improve the standards they achieve. However, more could now be done to ensure all staff use the results of their day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons to modify their planning for the next lessons, so that work is matched well to the abilities of all pupils. The school's administrative procedures are good and work well. The head teacher is new to the school since the last inspection and has worked well with staff to establish very good systems to monitor the performance of the school. This information is now used very well to identify very clear and pertinent targets for improvement and in taking the required action to meet them. There is good commitment from staff and governors to continue to improve the school's effectiveness.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	E	D	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D
mathematics	C	E	C	A	

science	B	A	A	A*	well below average	E
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The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Teaching and learning are mainly very good for these children. As a result they achieve very well and make very good progress from their often very low starting point on entry to the nursery. By the end of the reception year their personal and social development is as expected for their age. Children are on track to attain the standards expected in all the areas of learning with the exception of language and literacy where standards are likely to be well below those expected for their age. Attainment in the mathematical area of learning, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world about them is below those expected on entry to Year 1. The results in the 2002 national tests for seven year olds in reading were above average and in writing and mathematics were well above average when compared with similar schools. However, standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics when compared with those expected nationally for pupils by the age of seven. In the 2002 tests for 11 year olds, pupils' attained standards that were well above the national average in English and mathematics when compared with similar schools and the school's performance was in the highest five per cent nationally in science when compared with these schools. When compared with all schools nationally the standards were below those expected of 11 year olds in English, matched the national average in mathematics and were well above this in science. Pupils did well when compared with their previous performance when they were aged seven. These standards reflect the good value added to the pupils' learning by the substantial amount of effective teaching and the good range of opportunities and experiences that motivate pupils to want to do well. Over the past five years the school's performance has improved at a similar rate to most other schools. It has set challenging targets for this year and is on track to meet them. On the basis of the current work, pupils' standards by the age of 11 are below average in English and average in mathematics and science. These standards represent good achievement for many pupils since there are high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 class. The improved provision and good teaching means that standards in ICT are improving rapidly and gaps in pupils' earlier learning, due to limited quantity and quality of computers and software, are being resolved. Standards are as expected at the age of seven but are still below expectations by the age of 11. Pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of religious education, and although pupils often know more than their limited writing skills enable them to show, standards by the age of 11 are at the levels identified in the syllabus taught in local schools. Standards in other subjects are at least satisfactory by the age of seven but are still below those expected at 11 in art and design, geography, history and music. This reflects the high priority and extra time given to developing literacy and numeracy skills that have meant that many other subjects have not been taught in sufficient depth. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and so make good progress in relation to their ability.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils take a keen interest in lessons and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Teachers manage pupils well and so behaviour is very good in lessons and when pupils go out to play.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The very good relationships reflect the positive ethos in the school. Pupils show a growing maturity and respect for others.

Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below the national average.
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Pupils work well in groups and help each other. The oldest pupils show initiative and take their responsibilities seriously. The school works hard to improve attendance, a small number of pupils are regularly absent, which inevitably affects their progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	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 overall, and includes some teaching that is very good or excellent. Teaching is often very good and sometimes excellent in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers in the Foundation Stage plan their lessons very well with nursery nurses and classroom support assistants and all staff have a very good understanding of the needs of these young children. As a result, children achieve very well, make very good progress and are well prepared for work in Year 1. There are examples of good and very good teaching in most year groups. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 1 and 2 where teachers build on the good work done in the Foundation Stage and so pupils' progress is good. There is often good, and some very good teaching in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and so pupils frequently achieve well and this is reflected in the improving standards by the time they transfer to secondary school. No lessons were unsatisfactory. In many lessons teachers provide interesting activities that encourage learning. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well but are not yet developed and practised well enough in other subjects such as history and geography. Teaching is good in ICT and leads to good learning so pupils' are making rapid progress. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Activities are well matched to their age and the targets identified in their individual learning plans ensure work is matched well to their abilities. Support staff are deployed well and have a substantial impact on the good progress made by these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good range of experiences that promote pupils' learning. Staff enhance pupils' learning through well-planned visits to support the curriculum and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for the Foundation Stage is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well supported both in class and when withdrawn to receive extra help, either individually or in small groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' personal development is given high priority and the provision for their moral and social development is very good. The school supports pupils' spiritual development well and they have a good awareness of their own culture and are gaining a sound understanding of other faiths and cultural traditions.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a very caring school where all pupils are valued. The most striking aspects of the school's care are the warm relationships that the school nurtures between all adults and pupils. There are very good procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
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There are very good procedures to track pupils' progress over time and to intervene with well targeted support. However, information from day-to-day assessments is not used consistently enough in all classes and subjects to ensure that work is as well matched to the pupils' needs as it could be. The school works hard to develop its good partnership with parents; they have positive views of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The head teacher's very good understanding of effective primary education enables her to provide a clear direction to move the school on. She works well to ensure that all staff work well as a team. The deputy head and senior staff provide very good support in leading and managing the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are kept well informed and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where it could improve. However, their role in monitoring teaching, learning and curriculum development is at an early stage and should be developed further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school analyses and uses a wide range of information to check how well it is doing. This ensures that relevant priorities are clearly identified, targets set and action taken to meet them.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses very well all resources to support pupils' learning and achievement. Specific grants are used effectively for the purpose intended. The governors apply the principles of best value to all spending decisions to ensure the very best provision for the pupils.

The accommodation is satisfactory and the best use is made of the limited space available. The accommodation is well looked after by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Staffing is good and funding has been used well to provide extra support staff in classrooms. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The work children are asked to do at home. • The way the school works with them and the information about their children's progress.

The inspectors agree with all these positive views. Inspectors find that the level of homework is satisfactory and similar to that of other schools. The school runs a good range of out of school activities, both after school and at lunchtime. Inspectors find that the school tries hard to work together with parents and encourages parents to be more involved in their children's learning. The response is slow but is improving. It keeps them regularly informed of how well their children are doing through formal consultation meetings, informal opportunities at the start and end of school day and written annual reports.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1 The very good management and substantial amount of good and very good teaching add value to pupils' experiences and opportunities during their time in school. The school provides a good range of learning experiences that make the pupils keen to do their best and so they achieve well and standards are rising. The school does very well when compared with others with a similar intake of pupils. Children enter the nursery with a broad range of attainment but most have very low language, literacy, social and mathematical skills. Many have a limited knowledge of the world about them. The very effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes enables children to make very good progress. The very good range of activities presented to the children means that they achieve very well from their very low starting point on entry to the nursery. Many are on track to reach the learning goals expected for their age in the creative and physical areas of learning, and in their personal and social development. The staff place a very high priority on supporting children's personal and social development and the children are already very settled in school and relate well to adults and each other. However, although teaching and learning are very good, many children are likely to be well below the standards expected in their language, literacy and attainment in the mathematical area of learning, and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them are likely to be still below that expected on entry to Year 1.

2 Over the past five years, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved at a similar rate to most other schools. The school does very well when compared with similar schools. Standards in the Year 2002 national tests for 11 year olds in English and mathematics were well above the national average and in science were very high and the school's performance was in the highest five per cent nationally when compared with these schools. Standards in English were below average, matched the national average in mathematics and were well above average in science when compared with what is expected nationally of pupils at the age of 11. Standards in mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection and are the same in English. Pupils did well when compared with their previous performance when they were in Year 2. The school has set challenging targets for this year given the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 but is likely to meet them in mathematics and science and to be close to the target for English, given the good progress pupils are making. There are few differences in the performance of boys and girls.

3 In the 2002 national tests for pupils aged seven, standards were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics when compared with similar schools. However, standards in reading were well below average and below average in writing and mathematics when compared with what is typical of seven year olds nationally. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science was broadly average but was above that of similar schools.

4 There are several reasons why standards are improving by the time pupils transfer to secondary school at the age of 11. The school has a comprehensive programme for analysing results and tracks pupils' progress in order to target particular groups of pupils and to intervene to put in place a good range of initiatives to raise attainment. The EAZ funding is used well to provide a part-time teacher to work with groups of pupils in Year 1 to improve their literacy skills so that they reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 2. The school now has a useful system for checking children's attainment when they start in the nursery. Staff use the information to monitor the children's progress against the targets identified for their age as they move through the Foundation Stage and to intervene with extra support if necessary. The improving results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 show the success of these strategies.

5 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress, which is an improvement since the previous inspection when pupils were not formally identified as needing extra help until they were in Year 3. The pupils' good progress across the school is the result of the identification at an early age of those who need additional support, the good use of additional support and precise individual educational action plans. These are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that all targets are relevant to the pupils' needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs keeps very clear records of the pupils' progress and ensures that planning is linked to the individual pupil's targets.

6 Pupils make good progress throughout the school and on the basis of their current work, pupils are on target to attain the standards expected of seven year olds in mathematics and science but are likely to be just below average in English, where standards reflect the pupils' very low starting point in language and literacy. By the end of Year 6 pupils are likely to attain the standards expected for their age in mathematics and science but work is below that expected of 11 year olds in English. Pupils are making good gains in English but their weak reading and writing skills limit their attainment. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving well given the high numbers with special educational needs in this class. Pupils are achieving well as they move through the school and standards in the current Year 5 show the potential to be well in line with what is expected of pupils nationally by the time they are in Year 6.

7 Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory for pupils aged seven and 11. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are developing sound listening skills because teachers make lessons interesting. This encourages pupils to listen carefully so that they can join in all activities. By the age of 11, pupils also speak and listen satisfactorily but many still have little confidence and use a limited range of vocabulary. Not enough is done yet to build on the good role-play opportunities in the Foundation Stage; these are not extended well enough into Years 1 and 2. There is a drama option in 'Prime Time' the Friday afternoon session where pupils from Year 1 to 6 have a choice from a wide range of activities offered by teachers. In this activity pupils of different age groups work well together to plan and act out different situations. During the week of the inspection the visiting British Telecom workshop was a good example of the school's awareness of pupils' limited skills in these areas and the lively role-play and activities in the programme promoted and reinforced the Year 5 and 6 pupils' speaking and listening skills. There are too few planned activities such as drama, role-play, discussion and debate in English and in other subjects such as history and religious education to further develop pupils' confidence and their breadth of vocabulary.

8 Standards in reading are below those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Reading skills are taught well in Years 1 and 2 and build on the good done work on letter sounds and the recognition of simple words in the Foundation Stage. However, only the more able pupils read at the level expected at the age of seven and many average pupils still read hesitantly and refer to pictures for clues when struggling to read unknown words. Not all pupils are confident in using letter sounds to build unfamiliar words, but the extra support from the part-time teacher funded by the EAZ is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' reading skills in Years 1 and 2. Although pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 to 6, only more able pupils are confident and fluent and too few other pupils are likely to be at the standards expected by the time they are 11. The library is used well and pupils know how to find information in reference books to support their work in other subjects. The very recent improvement in information and communication technology provision means that they have had limited opportunities to use the Internet or CD-ROMs to find information but pupils are making rapid progress now the school's computer suite is set up.

9 The school has identified writing as a key priority for improvement. Children often have a very limited range of experiences and vocabulary when they start school. Staff work hard to broaden pupils' opportunities through a good range of visits out of school and enriched experiences in school.

This is beginning to be reflected in steadily improving standards. However, by the age of seven pupils' writing skills are below those expected for this age group. They are beginning to sequence sentences into simple accounts or stories and they remember to use capital letters and full stops when necessary. By the age of 11, pupils are beginning to write effectively in a range of styles and a few more able pupils attain standards above those expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. However, standards are likely to be just below those expected by the end of the year. Spelling is weak but punctuation is satisfactory. Standards in writing are depressed because of the lack of opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their reading and writing skills more regularly in subjects such as history, geography, religious education and science. For example, too few pupils are developing higher order skills that will enable them to evaluate their findings and use skills of inference independently in investigative work in science. These skills are not yet used in investigative work in history or geography because these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth. The school has rightly focused on literacy skills and given extra time to practising English skills such as handwriting. This has improved substantially and the school is ready to look at where the development and use of basic literacy skills can be planned for to improve work in all other subjects.

10 The provision for mathematics is good and so standards in mathematics are at the levels expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the good teaching of mathematics, which is supported by the use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils build on their previous knowledge and understanding and make good progress. However, there are insufficient practical activities to enable pupils to learn about using and applying mathematics. The use of booster classes, Springboard and individual work sessions, help the high number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is particularly useful in Year 6 where many pupils need extra support. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils can add three digit numbers, name simple two and three-dimensional shapes and estimate and measure length. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 supported by good teaching. By the age of 11, pupils accurately read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants and use this to reflect a two dimensional shape. They know how to calculate the perimeters of simple compound shapes. The more able pupils are able to do long multiplication accurately and use brackets correctly in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils are beginning to use data using programs in ICT to collate and present information.

11 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in science are likely to be as expected for seven and 11 year old pupils. The differences in current work and last years well above average test results reflect the lower number of pupils who are above average standards for their age. More pupils in this year group have special educational needs and, as indicated in the last inspection, there are still weaknesses in the whole-school approach to investigative work. Pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is often good. Pupils are interested in practical, experimental work and are beginning to use key words and sentences to describe the processes they observe. Year 2 pupils describe accurately the changes that occur when heating and freezing different materials. Year 6 pupils are making very good progress in understanding breaks in electrical circuits and varying current strengths. They understand the impact of gravitational forces, measure forces accurately in Newtons and record pulse rates and temperatures. However, there are too few opportunities to plan, predict, carry out fair testing, and to write-up their conclusions.

12 Pupils achieve well in ICT and standards are at the level expected for pupils aged seven but below expectations at the age of 11. The provision for ICT has improved, and, together with good teaching, pupils are making rapid progress. However, the computer suite and improvements in software are recent and although gaps in pupils' earlier learning are being filled the oldest pupils still have some catching up to do because of the limited quantity and quality of computers and software when they were younger. Pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of religious

education, and although pupils often know more than their limited writing skills enable them to show, standards by the age seven and 11 are at the levels identified in the syllabus taught in local schools. Teachers make good links with social and moral issues that support pupils' personal development.

13 Standards in other subjects are at least satisfactory by the age of seven but are still below those expected at 11 in art and design, geography, history and music. This reflects the high priority and extra time given to developing literacy and numeracy skills. This has meant that these other subjects have not been taught in sufficient depth. However, the school has seen benefits in the extra time spent on basic skills and is now ready to further develop and use these skills to support learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour are very good. There have been no exclusions in the past year. As identified at the last inspection, these areas are a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages show enthusiasm for their work and their life in school, which enables them to learn well in class and make good progress. They try hard and concentrate well. They respond very well to the good quality teaching and the very good relationships and encouragement that all adults promote throughout the school. For example, in a religious education lesson, Year 5 pupils listened intently to their class teacher's reading of the Hindu story of Krishna's birth and were disappointed when it had to end, asking for 'More next time'. Most parents agree that their children like school and older pupils commented that they 'do lots of interesting things'. While most pupils attend school regularly and on time, the overall attendance rate is below the national average. Despite the school's efforts, a small number of pupils have unsatisfactory attendance, which inevitably affects their progress.

15 Pupils behave very well throughout the school day. This is due to the school's emphasis on promoting high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the consistent way that all adults encourage pupils to follow the rules and take responsibility for their own actions. Parents are right to be pleased at the high standards of behaviour. Pupils are very friendly and polite. They follow the good example set by the adults who work very hard to promote this very caring community. For instance, the youngest children in the nursery remember to say 'thank you' and 'sorry' to each other because of the constant support of the adults in class.

16 Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with all adults in school. They work together well in class and get on well in the playground. For instance, four older girls spent their afternoon break practising a dance, which they are going to perform at the school's fundraising concert for 'Comic Relief'. Pupils are proud of each other's efforts; Year 6 pupils were very keen to point out the good work displayed in their classroom, commenting about a pupil who 'is the best writer'.

17 The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are good; they are enthusiastic and interested in all the activities in class. In all aspects of school life, pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and relationships between all pupils are very good. When pupils are withdrawn from the classes for additional support or for work on their individual objectives, they settle quickly and join in the main activities on return to their classrooms.

18 The personal development of pupils is very good. The school starts to promote this in the nursery where the children soon get used to the consistent routines and can register themselves at the beginning of the session, for instance. Older pupils gain confidence in class because their teachers promote a calm working atmosphere and give praise and encouragement throughout lessons. Pupils are very enthusiastic about many opportunities that the school provides for them to show initiative and

take responsibility. For example, they act as ‘Buddies’ in the playground and enjoy the ‘Prime Time’ sessions, which give pupils of all ages the chance to work together on a wide range of activities such as football, design and technology, sewing, drama, ICT, French, construction and mathematical games.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The quality of teaching is good. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good and is sometimes excellent. In Years 1 to 6 it is good overall. There are no significant variations in the quality of teaching throughout the school and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. This is very good improvement since the last inspection where teaching was judged satisfactory overall but with a significant percentage of unsatisfactory teaching between Years 3 and 6. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is consistently good. This is one of the main contributory factors to the good progress made by pupils and the improved standards in these subjects since the last inspection.

20 The high proportion of very good and sometimes excellent teaching in the nursery and reception classes ensures that children have a very good start to their learning and make very good progress. Teachers in these classes plan their lessons very well, with very clear aims and good links to national guidance. The nursery nurses and other adult support staff work very well with teachers to support the children’s achievement across all the areas of learning. These support staff take a full role in teaching and work very well with the children, particularly those who need extra help. All staff in the Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of the needs of these young children and how best to support their learning.

21 Central to the success of teaching is the positive atmosphere for learning in classes. This is achieved as a result of teachers’ excellent management of behaviour and because of their very good relationships with their pupils. As a result pupils behave very well and remain focussed in their lessons. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations set for them by their teachers. They have a clear understanding of how to conduct themselves in lessons and listen enthusiastically to the explanations given. The very good relationships in lessons encourage pupils to gain confidence in sharing their ideas. In response to looking at art objects one pupil volunteered, ‘I looked up and then down and got the picture in my head.’ In a geography lesson pupils confidently explained where would be a good place in the Mexican village picture for a church and a school. Year 6 pupils are encouraged by the class teacher’s very good humour and his relationships with them to confidently listen and then perform their own rap compositions.

22 In many lessons teachers offer a rich variety of activities and teaching methods. Pupils respond particularly enthusiastically and this encourages them to improve their work. For example, they are enthusiastic about art and design and show development in skills over time. Their self-portraits develop proportion and accuracy and their designs for a vase are colourful and well done. The teacher’s well-planned range of activities meant that Year 3 pupils made excellent progress when they investigated the tearing strengths of paper in science. They changed variables, considered fair testing and systematically recorded and communicated findings in appropriate detail. Teachers make learning fun and for example, they reinforced pupils’ understanding of number patterns in the brisk warm-up mental sessions at the start of mathematics lessons.

23 Teachers have good subject knowledge and apply this effectively in most subject areas. They have introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy well. Their understanding of these frameworks help them and the pupils to be clear about what learning is expected in each lesson. Six and seven year old pupils make good progress in mathematics because numeracy planning helps to ensure that they all work at a suitable level equally ensuring that more able pupils are motivated into attempting additional work set for them. The teachers’ identification in their planning for English and

mathematics makes clear what they want pupils to learn and this helps the marking of the pupils' work and allows for new targets to be set to help them to know what they need to do next. In science teachers have good knowledge of all programmes of study and this is a major reason why all pupils, including those with special educational needs and lower abilities, increase their levels of understanding year after year. Teaching in ICT is now good throughout the school and substantially improved since the last inspection. Planning is good and reflects national guidance. Teachers have taken part in effective training and now have greater confidence in what they teach. In design and technology they ensure that pupils learn the full design and make process. Planning effectively links with other subjects such as history where Year 4 pupils designed and made furniture in the style used in Tudor times. The school is aware that further professional development is needed for those teachers who are required to teach in different age ranges and who are sometimes unfamiliar with the learning capabilities of their new pupils.

24 Teachers ensure that pupils have a sound knowledge of their own learning and of the progress they are making. The staff make good use of whole school targets and the current focus on writing is successfully raising standards. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2 the teacher's clear expectations for setting out findings correctly ensured that pupils made good progress in writing about changes in materials after heating, freezing and boiling experiments. The use made of time at the end of lessons to establish what has been learnt is inconsistently applied as teachers do not always relate what has been covered to the aims for learning or ensure that pupils talk about what they have achieved. Although newly created assessment procedures are very good, the teachers' upgrading of their planning in light of day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons is not yet consistent. Further continuity could be achieved, especially for the more able, if the planning related more to pupils' previous work. For example, in some lessons pupils do not achieve as well as they might because planning, mirroring national documentation and guidelines, is not adapted to match the range of abilities in the class. Teachers' planning does not yet show clearly enough how work will build on what pupils of different abilities already know.

25 The teaching of basic skills is often good in English and mathematics lessons but these are not yet developed and practised well enough in other subjects such as history, geography, religious education and science. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well and pupils' make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing, given their very low attainment when they enter the Foundation Stage. The improvement in mathematics is due to the excellent start the pupils receive in the early years. After this start teaching is further supported by the use of the Numeracy Strategy to build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. In science teachers use the pupils' interest in scientific phenomena to create interesting lessons. This stimulation is a major reason for the very high results achieved in recent years in Year 6. The teachers' use of ICT across the curriculum is at early stages of development. Occasionally computers are used to improve knowledge in other subjects, for example, older pupils are beginning to use the Internet in geography to research different mountains to help their work on landforms. Similarly, pupils who used the Internet in a Year 6 history lesson substantially increased their understanding of the 'Jarrow Crusade.' However, the computer suite was established very recently and there have been 'teething troubles' with the installation and so teachers are only just beginning to incorporate ICT into all subjects. The key skills in all subjects could be further improved if teachers' planning further utilised cross-curricular opportunities for learning.

26 Teachers make good use of resources to make lessons lively and interesting. In dance, pupils are encouraged to interpret carefully chosen key words and musical rhythms to extend their movement. In history learning was successful when the teacher used video and other source material to make the plight of the Jarrow marchers real for pupils in Year 6. The teacher planned very effectively to enhance Year 3 pupils' understanding of life in Saxon times through the work of a visiting speaker.

The visitor, dressed in costume used role-play and an excellent knowledge of the Saxon period to help pupils experience the conditions of the times. Teachers make good use of the local area and further afield and pupils' writing on the Romans was more meaningfully expressed as a result of their visit to Hadrian's Wall. Teachers use resources well in music and support pupils' learning by giving them access to a range of tuned and un-tuned instruments.

27 In the satisfactory lessons observed there were sometimes areas for improvement. Pupils thrive on investigations, practical tasks and problem solving activities in their learning. However, these principles are inconsistently applied throughout the school. Work in books too often shows that teachers are not using these methods to encourage pupils to explore and investigate to acquire further skills and knowledge at their own levels of understanding. The strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy means that teachers have not given priority to developing the depth of personal study in subjects such as history and geography needed in Years 3 to 6; too much work has been based on filling in work sheets, maps or copying from notes. At times the lack of different work to extend the more able pupils means that the majority can be working on the same task irrespective of ability. For example, the more able pupils who finish their tasks quickly do not always have resources available for them to extend their learning.

28 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers and support staff know their pupils well and relationships are very good enabling pupils to learn confidently. When teaching and learning are particularly good, work is set to meet individual needs. For example, in a Year 2 literacy withdrawal group, all the pupils' targets were clearly displayed both on the wall and in their workbooks, which helped the pupils know how they were progressing towards them. The pupils' understood the aims for the lesson and the teacher's good use of praise helped the potentially distractible pupils to focus well. The teachers plan with the special needs co-ordinator and specific work, linked to the pupils' individual targets, is identifiable on the weekly lesson plans. When teachers work closely with classroom assistants, the help these staff can give has a positive impact on the pupils' progress. However, not all teachers deploy the classroom support assistants as well as they could, and in a small number of lessons, there is no specific planning or communication to guide the assistants in what the teacher expects them to do to support pupils.

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

29 The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a good range of learning opportunities for all the pupils. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in developing curriculum policies. These guide teachers on what they are expected to cover within each of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The school recognises that it can raise standards further by adapting national and other commercial schemes to the needs and learning potential of all pupils. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and develops citizenship through its good range of community links. The pupils in the top years of the school are taught sex education as part of their health education. The school ensures that pupils learn about the use and misuse of drugs.

30 There are many enriching experiences on offer to the pupils that make a significant impact on their enthusiasm for learning. The school provides a very good range of extra curricular activities for pupils and these are very popular. 'Prime Time' on a Friday offers pupils lively and creative options such as drama, art and shared reading for them to follow. The curriculum is further enriched with music and theatre workshops, art and design and technology weeks and theatre visits. During the week of the inspection the visiting British Telecom workshop made a positive contribution to the older pupils' speaking and listening abilities. The additional time given to boosting literacy and numeracy skills has been successful in raising achievement in these areas. The school can now usefully examine the balance and depth of the curriculum and time allocations given to different subjects such as history,

geography, art and design, and music, in order that the older pupils' standards can be improved to match those expected for their age.

31 The school has successfully implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies. These have been instrumental in raising standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection. The school is making positive strides in addressing the key issue in the last inspection to improve the provision for ICT. The new computer suite is beginning to have a positive impact on teachers' confidence and pupils' skills in this curriculum area are developing quickly. Opportunities for planned links across the curriculum to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subject areas are presently under-developed.

32 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. All pupils with special educational needs are fully included in aspects of the curriculum. Any withdrawal is for short periods for intensive work on individual targets and the activity is related to work that is going on in the class where possible. Work is well planned to take account of useful individual education plans that contain relevant targets, mainly linked to literacy and numeracy. These are reviewed regularly and new targets set; this ensures these pupils are supported well and make good progress.

33 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The well-planned curriculum takes account of national guidance for these children. The staff provide a rich and exciting range of activities and experiences that ensure the children make a very good start to their education and are well prepared for transfer to Year 1.

34 The school makes good use of its links with the community to extend pupils' learning and experience. Pupils visit local places of interest and welcome a good range of visitors into school to enhance the curriculum and extend their personal development. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils gained good knowledge of the importance of communicating well while enjoying the plays and workshops put on by British Telecom.

35 The school has good links with its partner comprehensive school in the EAZ to help pupils prepare for secondary education. However, few pupils transfer to this school because it is some distance from Larkspur. There are few links developed with the nearest secondary school to which many pupils transfer.

36 The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These areas are central to the very good ethos for learning that effectively supports the achievement of all pupils. The provision that the school makes for pupils' spiritual development is good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to share their feelings, values and beliefs. In assemblies during the inspection pupils are encouraged to think about special things; about sharing and valuing each other's talents, that we are all different and that all the varied celebrations in life are important to us. Prayers form an integral part of the assemblies; they are informal but sensitively worded and listened to. Music is played to make these occasions special. Further opportunities to plan spiritual features into art and design, music, literature and the humanities, are under-developed. Teachers make good use of opportunities as they arise in lessons, for example, the Year 6 teacher successfully linked work on the Jarrow march in history to the plight of poorer areas today and pupils showed great awareness and empathy for those who face difficult and unhappy lives. A lively video was made of the head teacher, deputy head and a Year 6 pupil dressed in costumes of the Three Bears and 'living' in their house (the caretaker's on site house). This showed the wonder of the Foundation Stage children as they peeped into the window and saw their favourite story characters

'come to life' and sought ideas from the children on some 'rules' for Goldilocks to encourage her to think about trespassing in their house.

37 The arrangements to promote pupils' moral and social development are very good. Equality of opportunity and personal entitlement is a strong feature of the school and very well developed. All adults in the school maintain consistently high expectations of pupils in all areas of school life and pupils respond to these exceptionally well. Behaviour is sensitively handled and reinforced and during the inspection there was an absolute minimum of misbehaviour. The pupils are respectful of visitors and are always ready to help. Teachers provide very good examples in their relationships with pupils and encourage them to take responsibility for their own thoughts of what is right and wrong. Similarly in lessons, team and group work is successful in promoting sharing and valuing other's work. Pupils' spontaneously clap when classmates make a useful contribution in a lesson. Whenever possible opportunities are created to raise the self-esteem of the pupils. The school is very successful in doing this. Older pupils, some with special educational needs, naturally accept responsibility to look after younger pupils in the school. They help them in and out of assemblies, encourage them in their reading and act as 'Buddies' during break times.

38 The school provides a good variety of cultural experiences. Music and theatre workshops, art and theatre visits, all give a strong cultural focus. Local cultures and traditions are studied in history and geography. Pupils' understanding of other cultures and faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism are studied in religious education. There are opportunities to gain an awareness of other cultures and traditions through literature and topic work in history and geography. There are too few opportunities grasped to introduce pupils to the art and music of other traditions, particularly non-western cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39 This is a very caring school where all pupils are valued. This high level of care has strengthened and improved since the previous inspection. The most striking aspects of the school's care are the warm relationships that it nurtures between all adults and pupils. Class teachers promote such good relationships with pupils that they give them the confidence to try hard in lessons and offer their answers, knowing that they will be listened to and given help if needed. Pupils know that the school cares for them. Year 6 pupils said that some of the best things about school are that 'our teachers are kind and help us if we're stuck' and 'comfort us' if they are troubled.

40 There are very good procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Child protection procedures are effective and the school now has good procedures for dealing with and recording accidents. The school promotes the welfare of pupils very well. It has gained the Healthy School Award for its consistent practice and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The Breakfast Club is a very good social occasion and encourages healthy eating.

41 A strong feature of the school's care is the head teacher's and staff's very good knowledge of all pupils and the consistent support to raise their self esteem through praise and rewards for good work and effort, appropriate to the ages of the pupils. For example, in Year 2 there are 'Star Spellers' and in Year 5 'Hats off to you' certificates. The school promotes and monitors the personal development of pupils very well. The very good personal, social and health education programme teaches pupils to be aware of health and safety issues and citizenship. It assesses their progress well in these areas and class teachers record good comments in the annual report to parents.

42 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for combating bullying. Pupils are convinced that these are successful and respond very well to the

consistent rules and to the calm purposeful atmosphere that all adults work towards in the classroom. The school tries hard to improve the attendance of individual pupils through careful monitoring by class teachers and the secretary. Good attendance is promoted well through a good range of rewards for individual pupils and classes with certificates displayed proudly on all classroom doors. The school has very good links with the Education Welfare Officer, who works with staff and parents to promote good attendance.

43 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the use of the new Code of Practice is effectively working to support the pupils' progress. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils on the register of special educational needs, and these plans are clearly written, reviewed twice yearly in January and June, when the pupils' progress is assessed against their individual education plans. Reviews take place at the same time as the individual education plans are re-written and parents discuss their children's progress and the new targets.

44 With the help of colleagues, the assessment co-ordinator has implemented very good whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These include statutory and optional standardised assessment tests and end of unit assessments. Management has clear insight into the links between data analysis and target setting. Very good use is made of national data and statistics to inform school improvement and future classroom practices. Thorough records of pupils' progress are in place in all subjects; these give the school clear impressions of the progress pupils make from year to year. There is a whole-school commitment to the assessment policy and there has been very good progress since the last inspection in the way teachers record the progress of their pupils. The recent development to identify more appropriate learning outcomes for foundation subjects is a very good example of how the school has improved this area of its work since the last inspection. There are insufficient ways established to inform both pupils and parents of the progress being made.

45 The school has good procedures for using assessment information to improve on future provision. Very effective use is made of the base-line assessments that are made as children enter the nursery. This information is used exceptionally well to track their progress through the nursery and reception classes. The whole-school targets for improving writing are well implemented into teachers' planning and make a positive impact on pupils' learning. The assessment co-ordinator monitors and reviews these procedures and as a result the school has a clear view of the next stages in development. Assessment data informs planning and targets for a number of differing groups of pupils. Pupils with special education needs and additional literacy and numeracy groups all make good progress as a result of accurate and specific target setting. However, staff do not yet use their day-to-day checks on the progress pupils make in lessons to consistently to match work more precisely on what pupils of different abilities have already learned.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46 The school has a good partnership with parents, which it is working hard to improve. From the small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire and meeting, the majority are supportive of most aspects of the school's work. They feel that their children like school and are making good progress. They feel that the teaching is good and that the school has high expectations that their children will work hard and do their best. The inspectors agree with all these positive views. A few parents are less happy with homework and the range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors find that the level of homework is satisfactory and similar to other schools. The school runs a good range of out of school activities, both after school and at lunchtime.

47 While most parents would feel comfortable approaching the school with any problems, a few parents feel that they are not kept well informed of their children's progress or that the school works

closely enough with them. Inspectors find that the school tries hard to work together with parents. It keeps them regularly informed of school matters and events with especially good newsletters for parents of the youngest children. The nursery and the reception class regularly encourage parents to be involved in class but with little response. For example, no parents volunteered to bring in their pet to talk to the children about it. Parents receive an appropriate annual report on their children's progress, especially in English, mathematics and science but they have less information on other subjects. The reports for the nursery and reception children give parents very good information on what their children can do, how they have improved and what they find difficult. Not all parents discuss their children's progress at the regular formal meetings but some do take the informal opportunities to talk to teachers at the start and end of the day. Parents at the inspection meeting agreed that the school is welcoming but said that they felt nervous about going into any school.

48 Some parents have begun to respond to the school's initiatives to encourage them to help their children's learning in school but, on the whole, parents are much less involved with their children's learning at home. For instance, few parents attend any meetings to learn about the curriculum or listen to their children read at home which would help the school in its efforts to raise standards. A small number of parents give good support in the younger classes, helping groups of pupils with literacy and art, for example. The pre-school playgroup, "Play People", set up by the school is now run by parents and a group of parents meet weekly for the "Shared Beginnings" course where they are making good resources such as story sacks for the school. One parent commented, "I've never enjoyed myself so much" which is a good indication that the school's efforts are beginning to succeed.

49 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed on a regular basis about their children's progress towards their individual targets and links with parents are satisfactory. Annual reviews of statements of educational needs are appropriately organised and the pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and reflect the requirements of individual pupils' learning needs. Some children are identified before they enter the nursery, for example, during the parents' group as having special educational needs or specific difficulties. This has a positive effect in ensuring early action by the school to help the children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 The leadership and management of the school are very good. The head teacher provides excellent leadership. She has a very good understanding of best primary school practice and shares this successfully with all members of staff. The deputy head teacher and senior staff take an effective role in management and all staff work well as a team. The high quality of teamwork is a key to the effectiveness of the school. For example, all staff share a commitment to improving pupils' work and behaviour. They work well together to raise pupils' self-esteem and set high expectations that have a positive impact on standards. As a result, there is a very positive and caring atmosphere in the school, together with a common sense of purpose. The head teacher promotes not only the well being of pupils but also their sense of achievement. She has a very clear vision of what the school needs to do to continue developing.

51 The school's well-defined aims are met effectively in its day-to-day life and work and focus on the development of pupils' spiritual, intellectual and personal skills. The head teacher was appointed after the last inspection and had to manage difficult staffing issues. These have been resolved and the quality of teaching has substantially improved; the high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is a strength of the school. It is a key factor in the good progress made by pupils and is enabling them to make a steady improvement in standards.

52 The head teacher's very clear direction has ensured that the school has made very good progress since the last inspection. There is good, shared commitment from staff and governors to continue to improve the school's effectiveness. The adoption of The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, together with national guidance for all other subjects, has resulted in a secure framework for teachers' planning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good; the school has good procedures to identify and support these pupils early in their school career and so they make good progress. The provision for ICT has improved but this has been recent and there have been problems with the installation; although pupils are making rapid progress, standards are below those expected at 11. This is due to gaps in pupils' earlier learning because of the lack of up to date equipment when they were in the lower years of the school. The school now has useful procedures and staff analyse a wide range of test results and other assessments. It uses this information to intervene to provide extra support for groups and individual pupils to help them to reach higher standards. However, there are inconsistencies in how well staff use the results of day-to-day checks on pupils' progress to plan the next pieces of work to build precisely on previous learning. The good practice already in the school is not yet shared well enough to ensure work is matched to all abilities in the class and, in particular, enables staff to provide greater challenge to more able pupils.

53 The school has very good systems to monitor its performance over time and the information is used effectively to identify key priorities for inclusion in the school improvement plan. These priorities are very relevant to the current needs of the school and are checked regularly to ensure that the right action is being taken to meet them. Several subject co-ordinators are new but all provide good support to colleagues and are beginning to analyse their subjects carefully and suggest what needs to improve. The whole staff discuss areas for improvement and after consulting the governors, the head teacher and senior staff prioritise the most important issues for the school. The whole school impetus that follows works well.

54 The governors undertake their roles satisfactorily and are very supportive of the school. They are kept well informed by the head teacher and individual governors are linked to subjects and areas such as special educational needs. Some help regularly in school and so are gaining an overview of how the curriculum is taught and how well pupils learn. This role could be further developed to make subject links more effective and ensure that all governors have a good overview of the work of the school. The governors are not directly involved in the creation of the school's improvement plan but systematically evaluate the priorities. In the same way, they ensure that the plans are linked to sensible expenditure.

55 The school is engaged in very good financial planning and the administration of the school's finances is very efficient. The annual budget is carefully considered to reflect the changing needs of the school. The head teacher and senior staff carefully match expenditure to the educational priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The school is very active in seeking extra funding and uses to good effect the money available from the local EAZ to further raise standards and enhance pupils' experiences. The head teacher and governors are keen to get the best value for the pupils in all resources and services and gather information before financial decisions are taken. They also compare the school's performance with other schools both nationally and locally. The school is able to support its priorities financially and still has a fairly large surplus this year, however, this is linked to planned expenditure to further improve the building and to purchase resources. All resources devolved to the school are used very well to support teaching and learning. Given the very low attainment of many pupils on intake, the good teaching and learning and the very good progress made since the last inspection the school provides very good value for money.

56 The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. There is a useful policy to guide the teachers, it is clear, concise and useful for all staff, and it supports the inclusion of

all pupils in all aspects of school life. The head teacher and specialist teacher work together well to co-ordinate provision for those pupils with special educational needs, they are well informed, proactive and concerned. The school is now meeting all the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The governor responsible for special educational needs is very interested in the pupils' progress and is a regular visitor to the school. Resources to support the teaching and learning for pupils are satisfactory, they are well stored and easily accessible.

57 The staffing levels are good and all staff are deployed well to make best use of their skills and experience. In some subjects staff exchange classes, for example the Year 3 teacher, who is the co-ordinator for religious education, teaches this subject in Year 6 while the Year 6 teacher takes Year 3 for music. The skills of all teachers are developed effectively through the school's clear performance management programme. Teachers are set agreed personal targets for improvement and these, in addition to any needs identified in the school improvement plan, form the basis of the schools in-service programme. There are good induction procedures for new staff and newly qualified teachers; these staff are supported well by a mentor and other staff.

58 The support staff work very effectively as part of the teaching team. They provide very effective support in classrooms or when working with groups of pupils who need extra help. The nursery nurses have a complementary role in teaching in the Foundation Stage and they play an important part in the very good start these children have to their learning. The school is well managed on a day-to-day basis and this reflects the very good work of the school secretary who uses ICT appropriately to support the smooth running of the school.

59 The school has adequate accommodation but space is limited. However, the staff make very good use of what is available. There are no spare classrooms and the computer suite is housed partly in the dining hall and in a small annexe attached to this area. This means that whole classes have access to lessons in the suite but accessibility is limited since the computers have to be moved into the annexe at lunchtime. This means the school cannot run lunchtime ICT clubs or allow pupils to use the computers independently at that time. There is no space for a separate library and a part of the hall has been turned into an attractive and inviting library area. This promotes pupils' interest in reading and enables them to use books for information and gain library skills. However, this loss of part of the hall space limits some of the activities in physical education, particularly for the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 when involved in vigorous games and dance activities. The caretaker ensures that the school is very well cared for. He is very much part of the staff team; he gives up a lot of his own time and uses his expertise well to support staff and pupils in ICT.

60 Learning resources are sufficient to support teaching and learning in all subjects of the curriculum and are good in the Foundation Stage. Staff ensure that resources are well managed and make good use of visits out of school and visitors who share their expertise to enhance pupils' experiences.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 In order to improve further the standards the head teacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) Further raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:-
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop spoken vocabulary in all subjects;
 - providing more opportunities in all subjects for pupils to develop their confidence in speaking through drama and role-play;
 - ensuring that teachers' planning identifies opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their reading, writing and numeracy skills in other subjects;
 - planning for more opportunities for pupils to learn through investigative and problem solving activities that enable them to take a more active role in their learning.

(Paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 11, 25, 27, 87, 88, 91, 96, 103, 105, 116, 145)

- (2) Further improve the systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress by: -
 - ensuring that the information gained from the day-to-day assessments of progress in lessons is used by all teachers to plan work that builds more precisely on what pupils have already learned;
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about what they are going to learn, how well they are doing and how they can improve.

(Paragraphs 24, 45, 52, 94, 105, 106)

- (3) Review the curriculum to ensure that:
 - there is a suitable balance of time to all subjects;
 - there is greater depth and breadth to teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics, science and information and communication technology;
 - the high proportion of extra time given to practising English is evaluated so ensuring sufficient opportunities for these skills to be practised in all other subjects;
 - planning takes account of and develops the links between subjects.

(Paragraphs 13, 27, 30, 91, 94, 107, 114, 118, 131)

62 In addition to the issues above, the governing body should consider the following less important issue when drawing up its action plan:

- Continue to work with parents and outside agencies to improve the attendance of the significant minority of pupils whose progress is limited by frequent absence from school.
- (Paragraphs 14, 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	14	18	0	0	0
Percentage	6	26	30	38	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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)	12	177
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		105

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	44

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	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3%
National comparative data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8%
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
	2002	12	16	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	13	14	15
	Total	22	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79% (82%)	86% (75%)	93% (93%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	11	11	15
	Total	20	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71% (82%)	79% (82%)	93% (89%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

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
	2002	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	12
	Girls	11	9	14
	Total	18	19	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64% (59%)	68% (66%)	93% (97%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	9	9
	Girls	8	7	10
	Total	13	16	19
Percentage of pupils	School	46% (55%)	57% (59%)	68% (79%)

at NC level 4 or above	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	176	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
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Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	558343
Total expenditure	514115

Total aggregate hours worked per week	82
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Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.0:1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Expenditure per pupil	2764
Balance brought forward from previous year	14688
Balance carried forward to next year	58916

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
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	200
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	29	6	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	61	33	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	25	10	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	37	17	6	4
The teaching is good.	56	35	0	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	37	14	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	39	2	4	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	29	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	36	39	17	6	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	44	0	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	48	6	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	40	12	2	4

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

63 The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. It has improved since the last inspection. The staff in the nursery and reception classes work closely together to provide a stimulating curriculum and wide range of activities that ensure that the children get a very good start to their education. There is a caring and supportive, yet challenging atmosphere that encourages the children's learning and enables many of them to make very good progress. By the end of the reception year the children are well prepared for transition into Year 1.

64 Children enter school with a broad range of attainment but many have had a very limited range of experiences to support their learning. When children join the nursery they have very low language, literacy, mathematical and social skills. The flexible accommodation means that the nursery and reception bases can be opened up to enable children to use the whole of the early years activities. Staff are making very good use of the unit and work together to plan a wide range of stimulating activities. These enable the children from both the nursery and the reception class to work together on three afternoons each week; this makes best use of all resources and children benefit from the wider range of experiences available.

65 All staff have a very good awareness of the learning needs of young children and plan work that takes account of their ages and abilities. This is a key factor in the very good provision throughout the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good and sometimes excellent. This ensures that children of all abilities achieve very well in their skills and understanding across all the areas of learning. Staff make careful assessments of the children's progress and use this information effectively to ensure that activities build on what the children already know and to provide extra support or challenge for those who need it. Children with special educational needs are very well supported in both their group and individual activities. They are encouraged to take a full part in all activities at a level where they are confident. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants support these children very well and so they make substantial gains in their personal and social skills.

66 All learning resources are deployed and managed very well to provide good opportunities for children to gain independence as they take responsibility for getting out and returning their own equipment. Staff often use resources very imaginatively to develop exciting role-play areas. For example, role-play areas are changed frequently and staff often involve the children in creating stimulating areas that have included the dentists' surgery, the opticians, the post office and the Three Bears' house, shops, a health clinic, a restaurant and the current houses of the Three Little Pigs. These areas are exciting and show innovative use of different materials and equipment. Staff establish good links with parents and the induction of children into the nursery and reception classes works well and includes visits before they start nursery or move into the reception class. The well-presented, useful written guidance helps parents to prepare their children for school. Many parents feel that these very supportive first links with the school make them feel welcome and give good guidance on how best to help their children. In conjunction with Newcastle Literacy Trust the school is working with parents on a 'Shared Beginnings' course. Currently eight parents are working together with a tutor to make 'lift the flap' books to use with their children at home. The finished books are of good quality and will encourage the children's interest because they include photographs relevant to each child. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage manages effectively the provision for children in the Foundation Stage; she works well with her colleagues and provides a clear direction for the organisation and development of the children's learning. There are good links with the on site

playgroup 'Play People' that provide a good introduction to the school. This playgroup provides a welcoming venue for parents to come with their pre-school children who enjoy the good range of indoor and outdoor games and activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

67 These areas are taught very well and the provision for the children's personal and social development is very good; from starting in the nursery they are encouraged to be independent. For example, they 'register' themselves by placing their name cards on a peg to show who is in the classroom. Many children in the nursery have only just begun their second term in school but they are already secure, confident and well settled into school routines. For example, only two children at a time were allowed to play with the puppet theatre and one little girl complained bitterly when a boy pushed in 'I'm a two and no more can come in!' The shared unit means that children who have transferred to the reception class have settled well to full time education. In both the nursery and reception classes, children move confidently about their classrooms and the wider areas of the hall and playground.

68 The staff ensure that children's personal, social and emotional development are given a high priority and promote the children's learning very well by providing good opportunities for them to make choices from the range of activities on offer, to identify where they plan to work and to talk about the work they have done. This begins in the nursery where the teacher wisely works with four children at a time when introducing them to the notion of taking part in planning what they will do. The children enjoy their activities, respond well to adults and are eager to learn. They gain in confidence within the very supportive environment provided and, despite their limited language skills, become keen to ask and answer questions. In whole school assemblies, reception children behave well and respond well to the older pupils. In both the nursery and reception classes, the staff manage the children very well; their high expectations and the exciting programme of activities means that children are engrossed in their tasks and so behaviour is very good.

69 Relationships between the staff and children are excellent and promote very good attitudes to learning. Children gain independence and quickly learn to show initiative. For example, the nursery children enjoyed physical activities outside and, at the end of the session, they sensibly help to put away some of the more manageable apparatus. By the time they transfer to the reception class the children work well together, learn to take turns and to share equipment. These children are already very confident when they move into different groups and work well together, sharing and helping each other, for example taking turns to control the mouse when using the computer.

70 There is a good programme for developing the children's personal, social and emotional development and this is taught very sensitively. In a very well planned session with reception children, the teacher's effective questioning helped them to recall what they had learned about Jesus. Most could recall their work on the Nativity and the parable of 'the loaves and the fishes'. They showed a good understanding of the need to care for others and knew for example that; 'He used food to make loads so everyone could have some'. The children's spiritual and moral development is promoted through stories, and is reinforced within the activities linked to the areas of learning. For example, they have rich experiences from visits out of school; for example, a visit to a local farm helped the children to gain a good awareness of how young animals need to be cared for. By the end of their time in the Foundation Stage, the children understand the importance of co-operation, kindness and caring for others. They are well on course to attain the learning goals identified for their age in these areas by the time they move into Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

71 The teaching of early language skills is very good and sometimes excellent throughout the Foundation Stage. This enables children in the nursery and reception classes to make a very good start in language and literacy work. However, despite the very good teaching and very good progress

they make, many children are likely to be well below the standards in language and literacy that are expected for their age at the end of the reception year. This reflects their very low attainment on entry to the nursery. Many children have very limited speaking and listening skills when they start in the nursery. Staff rightly set a high priority on the development of early speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. They plan well together to provide opportunities for children to practise these skills in all activities and in particular reinforce children's speaking and listening skills. The children respond well to the careful and purposeful questioning in both the nursery and reception classes, and to the opportunities for discussion provided by the staff. In the nursery they begin to listen well to each other, learn to take turns when speaking, follow directions carefully and are developing a suitable range of vocabulary. The staff in the reception class build effectively on these skills within all areas of learning and widen the children's experiences to prepare them well for literacy work in the National Curriculum. However, although listening skills are sound, children still have below and sometimes well below average speaking skills and many use mainly short phrases or simple sentences by the time they transfer to Year 1.

72 In both the nursery and reception classes the children quickly gain confidence through well-planned opportunities to ask and answer questions when working with adults and when showing their work or sharing ideas with other children. Role-play is used well to promote the development of language and social skills and children respond imaginatively as they act out different situations. Sometimes adults join in and stimulate dialogue in these areas. For example, nursery children made good progress as they worked in the houses they had constructed for the 'Three Little Pigs' and acted out the roles of animals using the very well chosen dressing up clothes and masks. In the reception classes children were well supported as they took turns to talk about the work they had done. For example, one child described the book she had made and used correctly terms such as 'author' and 'illustrator' to describe her role in making the book. The staff's very well timed praise for each individual reinforced their speaking and listening skills and many children could emphasise the cadence of a question well, putting emphasis on the first word as they asked 'Where is the door?' This session was a splendid celebration of all the work done in the session and children concentrated well and listened to each other very well, without prompting from adults.

73 Throughout the Foundation Stage children listen carefully to stories and know many action songs and rhymes by heart. In the nursery they listened carefully to a story of the 'Three Little Pigs' and joined with great enthusiasm in the refrain 'I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down.' The nursery nurse enthralled the children as she manipulated the animals in the puppet theatre and provided the different voices. This stimulated the children to act out the story independently when they played with the puppet theatre later. The teacher read the story very expressively and they eagerly followed the story through looking at the pictures and quickly learned phrases that they could repeat. Most children are encouraged to take books home each week to share with their families. In the nursery they know how to use books and are aware that pictures and print in books go from left to right. They know that print conveys meaning and that pictures give clues to what is written. By the time they are in the reception classes, children are beginning to discriminate between different letter sounds. Teachers reinforce letter sounds in all activities as they name equipment or, for example, when cooking, name ingredients and equipment. By the end of their time in the Foundation Stage, most children are aware of the initial letter sounds in many commonly used words. About half can match a letter to its sound but many are less secure when blending together the sounds of two letters.

74 In the nursery, most children are beginning to recognise their names from their name cards and many can find these readily. Children in the reception classes are beginning to recognise a number of commonly used words, which are reinforced by the clear labels and captions around the classrooms. They are beginning to retell stories in their own words and, when sharing a book with an adult, can describe the roles of the author and illustrator. Only a few children recognise familiar words from their

early reading books. They make very good progress in the whole class sessions when they share a book with teachers. These sessions are used well to enable children to develop their knowledge and use of letter sounds that will help them read, write and spell.

75 The staff provide a very good range of purposeful activities to enable children to begin to act as ‘writers’ and, from starting in the nursery make attempts at their own writing, ranging from ‘play’ writing to emergent writing where a few letter shapes are recognisable. In the reception class, children write over or copy the teachers’ script to add captions to their pictures or tell stories. Most form recognisable letters and show sound control of pens and pencils for their age. A few children write several simple three-letter words, using well-formed letters. Children are eager to write and many of the children attain well and make good progress in letter formation and early writing. However, many children have a long way to go given their very low starting point and are therefore likely to be well below the level expected in writing skills for their age by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

76 Teaching is very good in both the nursery and reception classes and children make very good progress over time. They are taught mathematical skills through opportunities to play well-chosen games that enable them to sort, count and create sets of objects by colour, shape and size. For example, children in the nursery enjoyed counting the numbers of dots on cards as they were turned over; with help they counted accurately to six. They can often count well beyond this but are less secure when counting sets of objects and, while they count numbers in the correct order they sometimes miss out an object and count five objects as four. They begin to recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and many know a triangle and circle but find an oblong difficult. Teachers make good links within other activities and so children count the number of masks to be used in role-play or the number of pancakes made in a cooking session. In the reception class the teacher builds on the work done in the nursery and this enables the children to consolidate their counting. In a very well planned group activity outdoors, children had two hoops and five beanbags and practised counting the number of beanbags they threw into their hoops. The teacher assessed the children as they worked and intervened very well to challenge individuals by adding extra beanbags to bring numbers to six. Her clear questioning reinforced effectively the process of addition, ‘How many in this hoop?’ or ‘How many altogether?’ When the children could not add two lots of four the teacher asked ‘How can we work it out?’ and the children responded quickly ‘We count them all.’ Most count and matched beanbags to seven accurately and a few managed to match ten. The mathematical activities were well matched to the different abilities. In other activities a more able group added on one more object to make ten while others were asked to add one more to make six and a third group matched objects to written numerals up to seven. The time at the end of the lesson was used well to enable children to tell the rest of the class what they had done but this was only volunteered after much careful questioning by the teacher and children responded with very short answers.

77 Children enjoy their activities and the teachers use well the oral sessions to reinforce counting and recognition of numbers through well-resourced number rhymes, games and activities. The very good pace to the lessons and wide range of activities reinforce well the children’s basic number skills through first-hand experiences. Staff reinforce children’s understanding and use of mathematical language in all activities so that they know terms such as ‘large’, ‘small’, ‘short’ and ‘long’. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are developing their understanding of volume through practical activities that enable them to use sand, water, cubes and counters to fill different shapes and sizes of container and to compare how much each will hold. They are beginning to use vocabulary such as ‘full’ or ‘empty’ and understand the terms ‘more than’ and ‘less than’. In free choice activities, many children make patterns with beads, cubes and shapes and are beginning to repeat them. Many of the children recognise the main colours of red, green, blue and yellow.

Children's mathematical skills and understanding are developing well and they achieve very well from their low starting point on entry to the nursery. Many children make good progress in their number skills in the nursery and reception classes but are on course to still be below the early learning goals expected for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78 The nursery and reception staff plan very well together to provide a good range of experiences that will enable the children to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the world about them. The teaching is very good and sometimes excellent and the children learn quickly through the many first-hand experiences provided by staff. These activities provide a good foundation for the children's future learning in science, design and technology, history, geography and information and communication technology. However, many children have had a very limited range of experiences before starting in the nursery and although they make rapid progress and achieve very well, standards are below those expected when they transfer to Year 1. They practise skills using computers, listening centres and tape recorders to support their learning. Children learn to cook and in a well-planned lesson made pancakes. The children knew why they needed to wash their hands at the start of the activity 'we get rid of germs' and understood that they must stand well back from the cooker. They watched carefully as the nursery nurse carefully named and measured the ingredients and described the changes in the dry ingredients as they were mixed with milk and eggs. The children were delighted when the pancake was tossed and all enjoyed counting the portions as each pancake was cut into four pieces. The next day when playing in the home corner one group re-enacted making the pancakes and had a good recall of the ingredients and utensils and knew they had used flour, eggs and milk and identified a sieve by saying 'We needed one of those things to shake the flour.'

79 The staff in the Foundation Stage plan a rich and interesting range of activities to underpin children's future learning in subjects such as science, history, geography and ICT. In 2002 the children worked with the Gateshead Grounds Maintenance Service to set up the nursery garden. They planted seeds and bulbs in the outdoor area and make careful observations of how they grew. They grow plants in the classrooms and learn what is needed to enable them to thrive. In work that is planned effectively to provide a basis for future work in geography the Foundation Stage children observe the weather and in the reception class can describe what is happening and choose the correct symbols for different conditions such as cloud, fog, rain, snow and sun. Children learn through well-planned opportunities for visitors to come into school to work with the children. For example, the children learned about caring for animals and an officer from the RSPCA talked with them about how to care for animals. This inspired children in nursery and reception to use successfully a wide range of construction materials such as Lego to create a home for Bella the guinea pig.

80 Children have regular opportunities to use computers and by the time they are in the reception classes, many show good control as they use the mouse to manipulate cursors and move pictures on the screen. Staff ensure that programs reinforce basic skills in literacy and numeracy. For instance, children match colours and shapes and count objects to match numbers. Teachers plan well to ensure that computers are used well in classrooms to support the children's learning and are also providing wider opportunities for children to use the school's computer suite now that this is in place and use programs to draw and colour pictures or create patterns. Staff balance well their direct teaching with good opportunities for the children to practise and develop their skills in using the keyboard and mouse. The children work well in pairs and help each other.

81 In a very well resourced lesson the excellent teaching enabled children in the nursery to gain first hand experiences of forces in work that used the current story of The Three Little Pigs. The teacher's very good understanding of how young children learn enabled her to reinforce language,

counting, recognition of colours and to show the children real-life applications of the force of air. This was a very good introduction to the concept of forces in science. The children had made the Three Pigs' houses of card, straw and sticks, and had constructed one with their building blocks. The children took turns to try to blow the houses over and tested a range of different ways. They tried blowing through straws, then the teacher showed them how to blow air through a football pump and children watched carefully to see the effect of their tests. When the teacher introduced two Spanish style fans the children opened them and felt the air on their faces. One child stated 'My Nana puts it up and down on her face and her hair blows away.' The teacher made effective safety points when she used a hair dryer to test which house would not be blown down. 'Only adults touch these because they could be hot and dangerous.' Her excellent questioning reinforced the children's understanding of their observations and they were very clear that the brick house was the strongest.

Creative development

82 Standards of attainment in creative development are on target to meet the expectations for children by the end of the reception year. Teaching is very good throughout the Foundation Stage and the wide range of well planned and resourced activities mean that children achieve very well. Staff ensure that creative activities are available on a daily basis and children have free access to paint, paper and collage materials at all times. They enjoy painting pictures, and use a range of colours and brush sizes. Children are enthusiastic and keen to take part in all activities. In art and design activities, they explore colour and texture using a range of materials to create pictures, collages, prints and patterns. For example, in the nursery, children blew paint through a straw to create a brightly coloured house. They decorated biscuits by creating the face of a pig using pink icing and cut out a double shape of a paper house, coloured it and stuck the edges to create well-made bags in which to take home their biscuits. Reception children make good attempts at portraits and have contributed effectively to create colourful collages about stories they have read. Reception children successfully learn to mix colours to create different moods and effects. The staff carefully mount the children's work and displays in the class bases are of good quality. They represent a wide range of areas of learning and promote the children's self-esteem.

83 Children have frequent opportunities to create three-dimensional models in clay and 'junk' modelling materials. In the reception classes, children work in the construction area and many show good manipulative skills using large blocks and 'fix' broken models with their 'tools'. They explore and use malleable materials such as play dough to experiment with texture. For example, children used play dough to make letter shapes and numbers. Many children competently use a variety of techniques such as cutting, folding and sticking paper, fabrics, foil and feathers. Children regularly experience musical activities; in the nursery and reception classes, they memorise counting and action songs and learn to sing in tune. The staff join in and demonstrate well the actions and movements and this encourages the children to take part. The children sing tunefully and quickly learn new words, actions and tunes. In the nursery, when making their choices for a session, the children will choose music making and have access to a range of percussion instruments, which they 'play' enthusiastically. In the nursery and reception classes, children have good opportunities for music making. In a very well taught lesson the nursery children learned to identify long and short sounds. Children took turns to walk along a taped, broken line on the carpet and made long or short sounds according to the lengths of tape they moved along. Their learning was further reinforced very well as they sang, hissed or hummed to create different sounds. The staff provided excellent examples and their enthusiasm and continual encouragement were central to the children's success and supported very well their personal and social development. The children recognise and name correctly percussion instruments such as bells, triangles, and castanets, and successfully recalled and identified Indian Bells that they had used in past lessons. Children have frequent opportunities for imaginative play in their role-play areas. These are linked well to the topics for each term and are used well to support the children's imaginative play

and speaking skills. There is a good balance between the children working independently in these areas and opportunities for adults to be involved to initiate imaginative scenarios and reinforce vocabulary. Children also use small toys to create a range of environments such as roads, North American Indian villages, zoos and houses.

Physical development

84 In the nursery, the children develop confidence and control of the way they move when they play outdoors where they have opportunities to control and manoeuvre wheeled vehicles or play a variety of imaginative games. Teaching is often very good in both the nursery and reception classes. Adults are deployed well; they intervene with well-timed questions and provide very good support for less confident children. They join in the games; for example, the nursery nurse effectively reinforced the children's speaking and listening skills as they directed her to 'pin the tail on the donkey'. She encouraged the children to identify terms such as 'right', 'left', 'up' and 'down' by well timed comments such as 'I can't see so you will have to tell me' and so children became more precise in their directions. During their physical education lessons in the school hall, the staff effectively reinforce the children's confidence in using space. In a well-taught lesson in the hall the reception teacher ensured that the children understood the need to work safely and to warm up their bodies. When asked how they felt after exercise one said 'I'm puffed out'. The children used space very confidently and thoroughly enjoyed the warm-up game. Children laughed in delight as they stretched in different ways as 'Mars Bars' or 'Milky Ways'. The children showed good control as they practised three movements and then linked them together to form a sequence that they fitted to music. The children were developing good co-ordination as they tapped toes, bent knees, took large strides, scurried lightly 'like mice' and practised 'star' jumps. They listened well to the music 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' and had a good recall of the order of their movements as they worked hard to match their movements to the music. The children are developing sound hand and eye co-ordination and learn to handle tools and equipment safely. Many children are well on course to meet the early learning goals identified for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1.

ENGLISH

85 Standards in English are rising although they are still below average at the end of Year 6, as found at the last inspection. However, standards are just below those expected of 11 year olds and reflect the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6. Pupils are achieving well as they move through the school and standards in the current Year 5 show the potential to be well in line with what is expected of pupils nationally by the time they are in Year 6. The school's high priority on basic literacy skills and good use of EAZ funding to support a part-time teacher to work with Year 1 pupils are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' reading and writing skills although by the end of Year 2 standards are still below those expected of seven year olds. This reflects the very low language and literacy skills of many pupils on entry to nursery.

86 The school makes good progress in tackling the weakness of standards in English. This is achieved through rigorous monitoring of both teaching and learning and the setting of challenging but achievable targets for both teachers and pupils. The staff analyse a wide range of information from national tests and other assessments and use this information to set specific targets for each class, groups and individual pupils. This assessment information is also used well to intervene and provide support for pupils who are close to the standards identified for their age group but need extra help to achieve them. The quality of teaching English throughout the school is good, with examples of very good teaching in all year groups. Pupils enjoy their lessons and behaviour is very good because teachers manage the pupils well; lessons are interesting and so learning takes place in an orderly environment.

87 Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Throughout the school most pupils listen well in lessons and are keen to contribute to discussions. Many of the pupils are gaining in confidence when giving answers to questions. However, many pupils still have a limited range of vocabulary and teachers work hard to reinforce and extend pupils' awareness and use of a range of different types of language. For example, in a well-taught Year 4 lesson on how writers create an imaginary world using adjectives, the teacher used an overhead projector to show passages from David Orme's book 'Planet of the Robots' and to highlight effective vocabulary for describing a robot. This stimulated pupils very well and they volunteered terms such as 'gigantic', 'metallic' and 'glittering'. In Year 6, the good teaching and the teacher's very good rapport with the pupils that acknowledges their status as senior pupils in the school, ensures that they are challenged to express their thoughts and discuss their ideas about writing stories, either in pairs or within small groups. Pupils are quiet in their answers to questions, but make relevant replies. Whilst teachers use the initial part of the Literacy Hour in English lessons effectively to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, opportunities are missed throughout the school to further extend language skills within drama or role-play activities. The good role-play opportunities in the Foundation Stage are not yet extended well enough into Years 1 and 2. There is a drama option in 'Prime Time', the Friday afternoon session where pupils from Year 1 to 6 have a choice from a wide range of activities offered by teachers. In this activity pupils of different age groups work well together to plan and act out different situations. The school seeks to stimulate pupils' awareness of the importance of developing good communication skills and during the week of the inspection the visiting British Telecom workshop provided lively role-play opportunities and activities to promote and reinforce these skills with Year 5 and 6 pupils. There are too few opportunities for activities such as drama, role-play, discussion and debate in English and in other subjects such as history, geography, science and religious education to further develop pupils' confidence and their breadth of vocabulary.

88 Standards in reading are below those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, reading skills are taught well in Years 1 and 2 and build on the good done work on letter sounds and the recognition of simple words in the Foundation Stage. The extra support from the part-time teacher funded by the EAZ is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' reading skills in Years 1 and 2. Despite the effective teaching of reading throughout the school, only the more able pupils read at the level expected at the age of seven and many average pupils still read hesitantly and refer to pictures for clues when struggling to read unknown words. Not all pupils are confident in using letter sounds to build unfamiliar words. Although pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 to 6, only more able pupils are confident and fluent and too few other pupils are likely to be at the standards expected by the time they are 11. Pupils from all year groups and ability levels often lack fluency or expression when reading, which again reflects the need for more opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking skills through drama and role-play activities. Some parents are involved in developing reading for enjoyment by sharing a 'home-school' reading diary with the school but many pupils do not read widely at home. The good initiative, enabling parents of Foundation Stage children to attend a course enabling them to make books to share with their children, has the potential to develop parents' awareness of the importance of reading activities.

89 Reading records are thorough, with the teachers using data from tests and other assessments to have a clear understanding of the reading ability of each pupil. All pupils learn library skills and for example, Year 1 pupils achieved well in recognising letters of the alphabet and knowing how a dictionary works. The teacher used a hand puppet to good effect to encourage pupils to take part and to learn to use alphabet order to find information. Year 6 pupils enjoyed their timetabled library session to change books and browse through the good selection of books, comics and magazines available to read. By the end of Year 6, most pupils can find information in books using the contents and index pages. The very recent improvement in ICT provision means that there have been limited opportunities to use computers to support learning but pupils are making rapid progress now the

school's computer suite is operational and set up and are beginning to accurately interrogate the Internet and CD-ROMs to find information to support topic work in other subjects.

90 The school has rightly identified writing as a key priority for improvement. Children often have a very limited range of experiences and vocabulary when they start school. All staff work hard to broaden pupils' opportunities through a good range of visits out of school and enriched experiences in school. This is beginning to be reflected in steadily improving standards, which have improved since the last inspection. However, by the age of seven, pupils' writing skills are below those expected for this age group. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to sequence sentences into simple accounts or stories and they remember to use capital letters and full stops when necessary.

91 By the age of 11, pupils are beginning to write effectively in a range of styles and a few more able pupils attain standards above those expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. However, standards are likely to be just below those expected by the end of the year. Spelling is weak but punctuation is satisfactory. The school has used information from national tests and school-based assessments to highlight weaknesses in the basic writing skills of pupils and the monitoring of teaching has identified where teaching needs to improve to deal with these weaknesses. As a result of these initiatives, teachers' lesson planning is more detailed and the strategies they use in the literacy hour to tackle weaknesses in handwriting, spelling and writing in various styles, is beginning to show an improvement in the standards achieved by the pupils. Standards could further improve if more pupils developed higher order skills that would give them the ability, for example, to evaluate their findings or use inference independently in investigative work in subjects such as science, history and geography. These skills are not yet used in investigative work in history or geography because these subjects are not taught in sufficient depth. The school has rightly focused on literacy skills and given extra time to practising English skills such as handwriting. This has improved substantially and pupils' standards could be further improved if they had more opportunities to develop and apply their reading and writing skills more regularly in subjects such as history, geography, religious education and science.

92 By Year 2, letters are mainly correctly formed and positioned correctly on the line. Older pupils from Year 3 onwards are taught well basic skills in writing and as a result they make good progress in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. All teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to write for a range of purposes and in a variety of styles. In Year 4 pupils have written a job description for a king and included ideas such as 'You must be able to fight and stick up for yourself.' Other pupils felt that kings should 'speak three or four languages, know where other countries are and who the queens are.' Teachers use well-chosen stories, myths, legends, poetry, and factual accounts to develop pupils' awareness of the range of writing styles and the need to consider audience. The teaching of writing is often good throughout the school and pupils are beginning to write with some imagination and choose interesting words to express their thoughts and feelings. A good example of this was in a very well taught lesson on myths and legends with Year 5 pupils, where the excellent reading of the story of Odysseus promoted imaginative writing and pupils achieved very well and produced written work well up to the standard expected for their age.

93 In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher effectively developed pupils understanding and use of writing structure. His very good relationships with the pupils resulted in very well led discussions; pupils responded very well to identify the key themes for each paragraph of a displayed text and then to identify technical vocabulary. Pupils worked well in pairs on a text 'Hot Deserts' and most accurately found sections with statistics about temperatures and many identified whether text was written in the 'first person' or 'third person'. Work was well matched to the abilities in the class with the many lower attaining pupils making very good gains in their learning through well-chosen texts and well timed intervention and support from the teacher. The well chosen materials from national

'Planning Exemplification Units' is having a very good impact on the progress of pupils of all abilities and has the potential to rapidly improve standards in this class.

94 There are some inconsistencies in lesson planning however; there is sometimes too little difference in the activities planned for the more able pupils, and as a result, they are not always sufficiently challenged in their work in English. This reflects differences in teachers' use of the information gained from day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons to match work more precisely to what they already know. However, pupils make good progress in their writing and the extra time given to improving handwriting has resulted in big improvements in the presentation of written work. The school now plans to review how best this time could now be used to support developments in other subjects.

95 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has carried out rigorous monitoring of teaching in the Literacy Hour and has given teachers subsequent pointers for development. This, alongside the analysis of national tests and school-based assessments, is providing the school with secure evidence of which things work well in the teaching and learning of English and where there could be improvement. The school keeps useful portfolios of pupils' work in literacy and these show the good range of opportunities presented to pupils to enhance their work in English. The school organises theatre groups and puppeteers to visit the school and pupils have opportunities to visit the theatre to see a range of appropriate productions. The school lacks space and the library is a section of the main hall but it is very attractive and is used well by pupils, both independently and when they have whole class library sessions.

MATHEMATICS

96 The provision for mathematics is good. Standards in mathematics are at the levels expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when pupils at the end of Year 6 were below the standards for their age. This improvement is due to the excellent start the pupils receive in the early years and the overall good teaching of mathematics, which is supported by the use of the National Numeracy Strategy. This enables pupils to build on their previous knowledge and understanding and supports their progress, which is good across the school. The assessment procedures are very good for identifying pupils' progress and areas for development and the use of assessment to guide teachers planning is good, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, there are insufficient practical activities for the pupils to learn about using and applying mathematics. The use of booster classes, Springboard and individual work sessions, help the high number of pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. All pupils are fully included in the mathematics lessons. Where pupils are withdrawn for additional help the work often reflects the work happening in the classroom and they rejoin the class for the main part of the lesson having effectively completed the introduction in the small group. This is especially effective in Year 6 where over half the pupils have additional needs and the additional teaching helps them reach expected levels.

97 By the end of Year 2, the more able pupils are confident in the addition of three digit numbers, they are able to name simple two and three-dimensional shapes, such as a cube, cone and a pyramid and estimate and measure length. They use their skills in accurately partitioning two numbers when working out calculations. The less able pupils are able to show that seven is smaller than 11, tell the time to the hour and add 1p coins together. Teaching and learning are good and the pupils make good progress in developing mathematical skills. The pupils responded very well to the brisk pace of the introductory activity when they worked in two teams and took turns to throw a large dice to find out which of two numbers was more or less than the other. The teacher encouraged them to work as teams and to support each other during the game and the good use of humour and the pupils'

amusement when two identical numbers were thrown made the activity enjoyable for everyone. The very well planned work ensures that all the pupils work at a suitable level and the more able pupils were enthusiastic about getting on to additional work set for them. The pupils show pride in their work, the numbers are written accurately, and in a way that helps them complete a sum or activity. The careful marking of the pupils' work by the teachers and new targets set for the pupils helps them to know what they need to do next. On occasions, for example, with the younger pupils, the introductory session of the lesson is too long, pupils lose concentration and the sharpness of the mental activities is lost because they become distracted.

98 After Years 1 and 2 the pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 supported by good teaching. By the age of 11, pupils develop their skills in reading and plotting co-ordinates in all four quadrants and use this to reflect a two dimensional shape. They are able to calculate the perimeters of simple compound shapes. The more able pupils accurately work at long multiplication and use brackets in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The less able pupils use good written methods to help them work out a variety of sums. In Year 3, good use was made of the warm-up session to reinforce the pupils' understanding of number patterns. The teacher's very good use of questions, careful preparation of resources and a well-organised classroom helped the pupils to settle quickly and concentrate on the task. The teacher's high expectations of the pupils' behaviour meant that they concentrated well and were all involved in the counting practice. Very good encouragement given to the pupils by the teacher helped them to use the correct terms for the process they were practising. For example, the teacher made consistent use of the term 'subtraction' rather than 'take away', and most pupils used this term correctly by the end of the lesson. The less able pupils, working with a support assistant, practised subtraction patterns and one cried 'I've got it' when they understood the emerging pattern. In Year 4, the pupils continue to extend their skills and understanding when they work with rules for multiplication and division corresponding to the two, four, five and ten times tables. The teacher makes it interesting because of 'fun' and 'tricks' showing the pupils how to use their skills. Pupils used number 'fans' to calculate multiplication facts by ten, then by halving these to calculate answers when numbers were multiplied by five. At the end of the lesson the teacher challenged the pupils to multiply and divide using two digits, such as 33×4 and a number were able to do this. Although they had been working with single digits they were able to apply what they have learned.

99 In Year 5, the teaching and learning continue to be good and there are examples of very good teaching. The more able pupils are able to work out long multiplication consistently and correctly, they are able to use brackets and solve word problems. They know how to collect data and create tables and graphs. The less able pupils lack accuracy and are less secure in, for example, addition and subtraction of hundreds, tens and units but their work shows improvement over time through becoming more accurate. The teacher's high expectations and very well planned lesson enable the pupils to learn at a level that is appropriate to their abilities. The good pace of the lesson helps the pupils to concentrate, and the good questioning by the teacher evaluates their understanding and extends their learning. For example, the teacher uses the pupils' ideas to work out the answer to a problem in the plenary session. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and this has a positive effect on the pupils' confidence in their own learning, and a positive 'can do' atmosphere helps the pupils to succeed. The pupils continue to make good progress in Year 6 and the teaching is good. For example, in one lesson seen during the mental warm-up session, the pupils revised work on quantities, such as metres, different weights and volumes. A discussion followed when the use of scales and measurements in science linked to their current work on the mean, median, mode and range of a set of statistics. The pupils were confident in their responses and all tried and this is encouraged by the teacher's very good relationships with the pupils and consistent, accurate use of the correct vocabulary.

100 Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the lack of different work to extend the more able pupils means that the majority can be working on the same task irrespective of ability. For example, the more able pupils who finish their tasks quickly do not have resources available for them to extend their learning. On occasions support staff are not effectively deployed for the whole lesson because their role in the lesson and its purpose is not shared sufficiently with them.

101 There are opportunities for the pupils to use ICT in mathematics particularly in creating databases, in science using measurement of forces and in mathematics to reinforce work on measuring perimeters. The National Numeracy Strategy is satisfactorily in place and supports teachers' planning well, although the school has identified the need to strengthen the pupils' learning in mental calculations and strategies, and to support staff in this through training.

102 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors the teaching and learning in the subject well on a regular basis through observing teaching of mathematics annually; she also monitors teachers' planning, discusses the results of assessment with staff and looks at a range of pupils' books. This enables her to have a comprehensive overview of how the pupils' are making progress and areas that may need additional work. There are sufficient resources for the teaching and learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

103 The very high results for 11 year olds have been maintained over a period of three years and indicate very good improvement on the standards indicated in the last inspection. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are likely to be as expected for seven and 11 year old pupils. The differences in the work seen and last years high test results reflect the lower number of pupils who are currently achieving standards above those expected for their age. As indicated in the last inspection there are still weaknesses in the whole-school approach to investigative work.

104 In spite of present standards being lower than previous test results suggest, the achievements in science are still good. Both boys and girls make good progress. Recent results have been high because pupils are very interested in the wide range of scientific phenomena presented to them by their teachers. This is still the case. Older pupils are keen to find out and describe how electrical devices work within a circuit; they are successful in describing the abstract idea of gravitational forces. They communicate the physical states in materials very well using key words and sentences to describe the processes. In lessons they confidently describe a variety of processes and use appropriate scientific vocabulary. These levels of understanding have served them well in completing the format of recent national tests. The lack of a more consistent policy in applying these levels of knowledge and understanding into appropriate scientific investigations is hindering further progress. The phenomena mentioned above are not always presented in the form of questioning to enhance the processes of planning, predicting, fair testing and the writing-up of conclusions. There are some good opportunities for measuring forces in Newtons and recording pulse rates and temperatures. However, teachers need to use further literacy and numeracy strategies to help pupils make predictions about their studies, to independently plan their experiments and to record the outcomes of their thinking and observations

105 Overall teaching in science is good. In all lessons pupils show a great interest for learning scientific phenomena. They respond very well to challenges set and because teachers have excellent management skills they are always working productively. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge. A very informative explanation of the way electricity is conducted results in Year 6 pupils making very good progress in understanding breaks in circuits and varying current strengths. Good

literacy strategies help year two pupils describe changes when heating, freezing and boiling materials. More able pupils in this class make more progress by extending these principles to baking a cake. Teachers have made good progress since the last inspection in identifying appropriate learning outcomes for lessons. In the main they identify the essential areas of knowledge in all expected programmes of study. This is a major reason why pupils with special educational needs and lower abilities increase their levels of understanding year after year. Further continuity could be achieved, especially for the more able, if the planning related more to pupils' previous work. For example pupils in Year 2 under-achieved in a lesson because national guidance was not adapted to the range of abilities in the class. Year 3 pupils made excellent progress when they investigated the tearing strengths of paper. They changed variables, considered fair testing and systematically recorded and communicated findings in appropriate detail. These principles are inconsistently applied throughout the school. Work in books too often shows that teachers are not using these methods to encourage pupils to explore and investigate to acquire further skills and knowledge at their own levels of understanding.

106 The leadership and management of science are very good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the requirements for science in the National Curriculum. He has been instrumental in the high results achieved recently. The co-ordinator recognises that present monitoring systems are not effectively remedying the problems related to inconsistent investigation procedures and is working with staff to identify ways of ensuring better planned and resourced opportunities throughout the school. Useful assessment procedures enable teachers to make perceptive evaluations of what pupils have achieved in each programme of study. Teachers are less good at using day-to-day assessments of what pupils achieve in lessons to inform the next stages in learning. The school's ICT provision has only recently improved and is currently not used well enough to further improve pupils understanding of science.

ART AND DESIGN

107 Standards are at the expected levels by the time the pupils are seven and they are below those expected for pupils at the age of 11. These are the same as those reported in the previous inspection. Since then the school has begun to use the national strategies for numeracy and literacy, which has altered the time available for the teaching of art and design. This along with the additional work the pupils have to support literacy means that, although the programme of study is covered, there is insufficient depth to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design.

108 Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing practical skills, such as painting, modelling and drawing, over time because when they enter the school their manipulation skills are at a low level. By the age of seven, pupils develop drawing skills and are able to sketch simple objects. For example, the younger pupils learned to use a pencil when drawing objects to shade the picture, some were able to do this but others still had difficulty in handling a pencil for shading. The class teacher helped the pupils to see the different colours in the objects and the pupils enjoyed feeling the different textures. The good questioning by the teacher in the plenary session encouraged the pupils to say how they looked at the objects and one pupil replied, 'I looked up and then down and got the picture in my head.' The pupils in both classes are keen and enthusiastic about art and show development in skills over time. Their self-portraits develop proportion and accuracy and their designs for a vase are colourful and well done.

109 By the age of 11, the pupils continue to develop their skills and this can be seen in their sketchbooks. In Year 3, they develop skills in designing a sculpture; the observational drawings of a still life are more accurate and they understand hot and cold colours as well as opposite colours. They are able to mix colours producing flesh tones for portraits and experiment with 'exploding' paper patterns. In a lesson seen the pupils used symbols to produce a face and meticulously decorated them

with tissue paper. All the pupils made a well-finished piece of work; they blended and toned the tissue paper colours well. Pupils in Year 4 know primary and secondary colours, and are able to create repeating patterns. They make effective drawings of a dream and create storyboards. They design and make model chairs, which they proudly display, having investigated materials for the chairs in their sketchbooks. However, drawings in the sketchbooks generally lack perspective and fine detail, because of insufficient practice. In Year 5, the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their design skills, and they are able to develop their initial drawings into still life pictures. They learn to manipulate clay and make containers, which are of a good standard and well made. In Year 6, the pupils understand and can explain different ways to use paint, draw with accuracy, and for example create designs for hats, which show a range of different styles. However, the pupils have insufficient understanding of the work of other artists and their techniques; they have not used computers to create any artwork or repeating designs.

110 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is temporary and has only been in place for the last two months but recording, assessment, monitoring and planning for the subject were already in place and of good quality. The curriculum planning uses national guidelines without any enrichment or extension, the school feel that this is too narrow for the needs of the pupils and plan to review the programmes of study to create more flexibility for the subject. The resources for the subject are satisfactory, well stored and easily accessible for all staff.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111 Standards in design and technology match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There is high quality finished work on display around the school that show pupils' skills or illustrate the breadth of their knowledge. For example, in good work linked to their study of the Tudors, Year 4 pupils have studied the design of furniture of that time and carefully constructed their own scaled down versions of chairs and tables, and added crockery and foods to place on the tables. Teachers' planning is supported well by national guidance and work is taught to ensure a good understanding of the design and make process, with good links made with other subjects such as history and science. Pupils are encouraged to use their numeracy skills to measure accurately so ensuring that work has good proportion. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by adults and, sometimes, they are supported well by their classmates in small group tasks.

112 Teaching is mainly good and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to plan, choose tools and techniques. For example, pupils in Year 5 made musical instruments such as recorders and recorded their process, listed their resources and evaluated their finished work. They learn about food technology and have tasted different breads such as Naan and Pitta bread and charted how these are representative of the changes in popular taste that encourage people to try foods once associated with particular countries and traditions. Teachers have a secure knowledge of design and technology and their lessons are planned well to identify what pupils are expected to learn. These aims for the lesson are shared with pupils, and this impacts well on their learning because they know what they are expected to do. Teachers resource their lessons well and in a good lesson the Year 4 teacher provided a stimulating range of 'pop-up' books to enable pupils to look at a wide variety of levers and linkage systems before planning their own books, either information books or books for younger children. Pupils worked very well in groups and explored how the folds in the 'pop-up' sections enabled the page to lie flat so the books could be closed. The pupils paid careful attention the different ways the books were constructed and made sensible suggestions about how their own books will be created.

113 Teachers use real-life examples well and, for instance, Year 2 pupils made puppets, each with a winding mechanism to let 'Santa' get down the chimney. In many topics, teachers take apart

objects to show their construction. For example, in Year 3 the teacher disassembled photo frames and pupils evaluated their design and made their own. In Year 4, pupils have designed and made purses from different fabrics. By Year 6, pupils look at structures and know ways of strengthening them. For example, they designed and made shelters and responded very well to the challenge. Pupils use sketchbooks to plan their designs and marking gives them a good guide on how they can improve and so they modify their designs. Pupils work with a wide range of materials and are developing a good range of skills. This is because the subject is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who supports staff very well.

GEOGRAPHY

114 Standards are at the expected levels by the time the pupils are seven and they are below those expected for pupils at the age of 11. These are the same as those reported in the previous inspection for pupils up to the age of seven but lower than before for pupils at the age of eleven. Since then the school has begun to use the national strategies for numeracy and literacy, which has altered the time available for the teaching of geography. This along with the additional work the pupils undertake to support literacy means that, although the programme of study is covered, there is insufficient depth to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of geography and insufficient extended writing in their work to support literacy. However, pupils make satisfactory progress and build on previous work in a systematic way and teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching in the upper years of Key Stage 2.

115 By the age of seven pupils can describe their route to school with accuracy and use a printed map of the locality to mark their houses. They are able to mark the countries of the United Kingdom on a photocopied work sheet and mark the position of Gateshead. The younger pupils in Year 1 are able to draw the routes to different parts of the school on a map and to measure the distances between different places. In one lesson observed, the teacher used the pupils' knowledge of their own locality to compare it with that of a village in Mexico. Through good relationships the teacher enabled the pupils to respond confidently to the questions, about where would be a good place in the Mexican village picture for a church and a school. The pupils were also able to place name cards to the mountains, river and roads. The pupils know their own locality well and compare its landmarks to those of the village, for example the Angel of the North, the Tyne Bridge and the large shopping centre nearby. The pupils have carried out a traffic survey near to the school and recorded it accurately; this is beginning to help them understand the impact of people on the environment.

116 By the age of 11 pupils are not studying all aspects of geography in sufficient depth. They do not have a secure understanding of geographical patterns or use geographical skills to find evidence to respond to a range of questions. There are insufficient opportunities for them to develop a real depth of understanding of the geographical processes and skills. In Year 3, the pupils begin to work on understanding the wider context of where they live. They are able to conduct a survey, and in a lesson observed, the results of the survey they had made were discussed with the pupils. The teacher made good use of the results to find out about the area to ask very good questions to enable the pupils to talk about the area, which was illustrated by the use of maps. Year 4 pupils, just beginning a study of the Indian city of Jodhpur, were able to use secondary evidence in the form of pictures to find out about the city. The teacher's good use of resources in the form of Indian articles such as a sari, a box and model elephants helped to bring a flavour of India into the classroom. In Year 5, they understand about ways to save water and learn about the local river system but not in depth. Work on the world's climate is limited to a keyed map and drawings of the water cycle. In a good lesson seen the pupils develop their map reading skills and are able to find different towns around Newcastle and then focus on a local map to see where the estate where they live fits into the local area. The teacher's good use of an overhead projector enabled all the pupils to see the map clearly and eventually identify landmarks

accurately. In Year 6, the pupils continue to extend the work done in Year 5 on rivers and they are able to draw the course of a river and label the different parts correctly. They are beginning to work on landforms and use the Internet to research different mountains. The pupils do not draw maps free hand but mark photocopied maps. There is insufficient extended writing in geography to further develop pupils' work in literacy, and insufficient time given to cover the whole of the curriculum in depth.

117 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and have strengths in terms of monitoring pupils' work, planning and assessment of pupils' progress. However, the co-ordinator has only recently taken over the role but has already made a positive start. The curriculum meets requirements, is supported by national guidance, and informs teachers' planning, which is satisfactory, and assessment takes place on a regular basis. This is a good improvement since the last inspection because the teachers are now able to identify what the pupils' should learn in each class and how well they progress. There are sufficient resources for teaching and learning in the subject and the school uses the local and wider environment well to support the pupils' progress.

HISTORY

118 At the age of seven pupils achieve standards in history that are expected for their age. When engaged in relevant studies many pupils at this age are beginning to develop appropriate historical knowledge and a sound understanding of chronology. At the age of 11, standards in history are below those expected. Curriculum organisation is limiting the time given to historical studies and low teacher expectations of the quality and extent of pupils' written work further reduces standards.

119 The achievements of pupils between the ages of five and seven are good. Progress is enhanced by thoughtfully planned topic work by their teachers. Pupils begin to understand differences between ways of life at different times. Their work on toys and houses across a period of time enables them to make observations using historical sources. Good progress is achieved in a study of Remembrance Day where pupils learn the significance of memorials. The more able pupils extend their writing with facts and dates when they study Florence Nightingale and Queen Victoria.

120 Between the ages of seven and 11 pupils make a satisfactory beginning to build on previous achievements in earlier years. Year 3 pupils responded enthusiastically to a visiting guest who gave an excellent input into the lives of Anglo-Saxons. In a follow-up they improved their independent writing skills by writing imaginary letters discussing their lives in a monastery. Further work on personal recollection of life in Britain since World War 1 also improves historical understanding. Older pupils' work on Tudor and Roman times insufficiently communicates the expected knowledge and understanding of these periods. By Year 6 pupils lack the key historical skills to evaluate the main characteristics of the periods they study.

121 Overall standards in teaching are satisfactory, but pupils' written work shows that there have been periods of where little has been covered and so learning was unsatisfactory. In a well-taught Year 6 lesson, pupils made good progress in their understanding of life in the 1930's. This was because the teacher used video and other source material to make the plight of the Jarrow marchers real. Similarly a visiting guest used role-play and an excellent knowledge of the Saxon period to help pupils come to terms with the conditions and heritage of the times. When using these teaching approaches, learning is much more successful. Written work and worksheets on the Romans was poorly covered but when pupils visited Hadrian's Wall they were successful in conveying feeling in their writing. Other lessons suffer from a lack of relevant resource material with pupils having little opportunity to improve their independent learning.

122 There has been an improvement in planning since the last inspection. There are now systems in place that guarantees a breadth of study. However, present monitoring is not ensuring that the appropriate depth of study is undertaken and that standards are appropriate for all ages and abilities. The very good assessment procedures developed for history should now be used to evaluate pupils' progress and to challenge pupils of all abilities at the next stages of their learning. The newly appointed co-ordinator has begun to address the lack of resources to improve observations in history. There is limited use of ICT to support work in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123 The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and standards are better than they were. Standards are now as expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 but are below those expected of pupils at the end of Year 6. The school has established a computer suite in an annexe off the dining hall. It also uses part of the dining hall until this area needs to be cleared for lunch, when the caretaker moves the computers into the annexe and sets them out and connects them again later. This improvement in resources has been very recent and the teaching area is still far from ideal since the suite has to be cleared before lunch and this shortens the time available and limits opportunities for pupils to practise ICT skills independently at lunchtime. The school's server has also had some snags and sometimes computers are out of use or access to the Internet is limited. However, the school is using its improved provision for whole class lessons on ICT skills and to reinforce basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have some opportunities to use the Internet and CD-ROMs to find information to support work in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education but these are at an early stage due to the very recent improvements in provision. There are some opportunities for pupils to control devices using computer programs but pupils have had few opportunities to use sensing equipment to monitor experiments in science.

124 Teaching is often good; teachers have taken part in effective training and have been well supported by the temporary subject co-ordinator. As a result they are more competent in teaching computing skills and have a greater understanding of using ICT across the curriculum. They are confident when exploring ICT with pupils and this has a direct impact upon learning. Teachers organise their work effectively and provide good opportunities for all pupils to have regular access to ICT, both in the computer suite and on the computers in each class base. Pupils respond very positively to this and work sensibly in pairs and help each other. Critical to this is the early introduction to basic skills, giving all pupils opportunities to practise and improve these. Pupils make good progress over time and standards are improving rapidly but are still below the levels expected by the age of 11. This is due to poor provision earlier in their school career for pupils in the top years of the school, when there were insufficient computers and suitable programs available. These gaps in their learning are being rapidly filled and with the improved provision have the potential to be at least satisfactory by the time the current Year 5 pupils reach the end of Year 6.

125 The teaching is at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and by the age of seven pupils log on to the computer. They need support to get started but then can open the program, find their file and type in text. They are beginning to understand how to insert pictures into their text. All know how to print their work. Teachers use ICT to support basic literacy and numeracy skills and pupils practise these through games that improve their matching objects to words, to practise spelling and to do simple addition or subtraction or to find their way to a given point by using the mouse to move the cursor in different directions. By the end of Year 2, pupils have mastered the keyboard skills expected at the age of seven. They know the function of different keys, such as 'shift' and 'spacebar.' They use these to good effect when writing sentences and short stories. Most pupils control the mouse correctly and this enables them to 'click and drag' when using such programs as 'Colour Magic' to create pictures and patterns.

126 Teaching is good and pupils make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6. However, the older pupils have not had sufficient opportunities in previous years to acquire a wide range of skills to match the demands of the curriculum. In Year 3 pupils attain the standards expected for their age and understand and use the technical language related to data handling because the teacher uses this well. They confidently use terms such as 'field' and 'file', and enter simple data but their keyboard skills were not always reinforced as well as they could have been because there were too few prompts or demonstrations of what is best practice. However, the program was well matched to the age and abilities of the pupils. In a good lesson in Year 4 the teacher used her very good subject expertise to plan work that would enable pupils to interrogate the Internet and find pictures of 'alien worlds' that they would then use to write science fiction stories. Problems in accessing the Internet meant that only half the class could find the large pictures with space to type in their text. The teacher managed this problem very competently and she changed the task for the rest of the pupils so that they could find four smaller pictures of 'alien environments' and could type in the text separately. Most pupils confidently opened up the pages required and could minimise or maximise their work. The teacher's good links to earlier work done in their literacy lesson enabled most pupils to make a start with writing their sentences. Keyboard skills were slow and pupils often had to search for the positions of letters but confidently used the icons to change font type and size, change low case letters to capitals or highlight their text. Pupils know how to 'back-space' and save, close and log off at the end of their lesson.

127 Year 5 pupils are making good progress and made good links with their work in numeracy in a very well taught mathematics lesson. The class teacher's very good subject knowledge meant programs were very well matched to the different ability groups in the class and so all made very good progress. More able pupils worked independently and worked together using a computer program that challenged them to work out the area of compound shapes; this was done accurately with good knowledge of how to use icons to access different functions and to move from one problem to another on screen. Average ability pupils struggled a little with the on screen text but coped well in using their program to identify shortcuts and type in answers. The classroom assistant supported less able pupils well so that they were not disadvantaged by their lack of confidence in both mathematics and ICT. These pupils learned to use the cursor to highlight their chosen answers to addition problems and to write directly on screen, demonstrating well that they knew how to correct their work by highlighting and using the delete key. Pupils gained a good awareness of the real-life application of ICT to speed up their work in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6 the very good balance between the direct teaching of new concepts and opportunities for pupils to practise their skills, particularly where there are gaps in their earlier learning, enables pupils to make very good progress within the lessons. By the end of Year 6 they input data and create and use graphs in mathematics and to record findings in science. Terms such as 'formulae' are taught well and pupils are beginning to use data handling programs to speed up calculations and reach conclusions. Sensing equipment to monitor experiments in science is new and Year 6 pupils did not have access to this area of the ICT curriculum when they were in Year 5 so they do not have sufficient experience to cope with this work.

128 These gaps are closing rapidly, and by Year 6 pupils can use a control program to create a pattern on screen by using a repeat command that would draw a shape, such as a square, and rotate it through small distances to complete a 360 degree turn. Pupils are very eager to learn and are now broadening their experience and their competence in using PC's for research in other subjects but this is at an early stage due to the recent improvement of resources. They are beginning to use the Internet and CD-ROM to support work across the curriculum; for example, in history and English. For example, Year 4 pupils used an encyclopaedia program to find information and print out copies of pictures from Tudor times, which they used to design and make scaled down models of furniture of that period.

129 Teachers now promote a wider range of learning opportunities, because they have the confidence to do so. They actively plan opportunities for using ICT to enable pupils to draft and edit stories and accounts using word processing packages. For example, Year 6 pupils produce well-presented stories and poems for display and many choose to word process their best work. The improving opportunities provided help to promote an independent and mature approach from many pupils. They can be trusted to work sensibly together. They are keen to learn and often support one another effectively.

130 The temporary co-ordinator is leading and managing the subject well and has identified priorities to further develop the subject. She has very good subject expertise and supports colleagues effectively. The school has made considerable improvements since the previous inspection and standards are rising. The school has satisfactory systems to ensure the safety of pupils when using the Internet. The caretaker has very good expertise and uses this to support both staff and pupils. He gives freely of his own time to work with groups and individuals, for example, he effectively supports ICT in the reception class and this impacts well on their personal development as well as developing their confident use of ICT.

MUSIC

131 Standards are at the expected levels by the time the pupils are seven and they are below those expected for pupils at the age of 11. These are the same as those reported in the previous inspection for pupils up to the age of seven but lower than before for pupils at the age of 11. Since then the school has begun to use the national strategies for numeracy and literacy, which has altered the time available for the teaching of music. This, along with the additional work the pupils have to support literacy, means that although the programme of study is covered there is insufficient depth to the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of music. The pupils do make satisfactory progress over time and the quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory.

132 By the age of seven, pupils can sing in time and tune, and do so enthusiastically, the teachers use correct musical terms such as rhythm to explain how they should play their musical instruments. The teaching is satisfactory; resources are well used to support the pupils' learning giving them access to a range of tuned and un-tuned instruments. In Year 1 the pupils listen to music and learn to sing the words, but on occasions, the tempo is too fast for the pupils to sing the words in time. The majority of the pupils are able to identify high and low notes but when clapping to music to learn the rhythm, although the teacher claps in time, the pupils find it difficult to follow. In Year 2, they make satisfactory progress in singing, although the boys sing more with enthusiasm than melody. The teacher encourages the pupils to play different un-tuned percussion instruments in time with a rhythm and to build their own rhythms, which they can repeat.

133 By the age of 11, the pupils continue to make progress and are confident performers. However, their understanding of musical terms is patchy, they understand how to harmonise when singing but have little knowledge of major composers by name or composition, they know about pitch and volume, but are not sure about the use of other musical language such as 'note values' and 'treble clef' which is important in reading formal notation. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but constrained by the time available to the subject. In Year 3 the pupils begin to use symbols for notation to create a simple percussion rhythm with varying volume. They develop these skills in Year 4 when they use the correct letter names for chords and are able to mark the notes for the cords C, F and G on a diagram of the keys of a piano. They are also able to use an electronic keyboard to play these chords. In Year 5, the pupils develop the skills, which enable them note down a rhythm and put in accent symbols to enable them to play it, which they do successfully. In a Year 6 lesson observed,

where the teaching was good, the pupils concentrated very well when listening to rap music, encouraged by the class teacher's very good humour and relationships with them. They listened well to the music played, accurately identifying differences. One pupil was confident enough to perform a rap on his own, much to the delight and encouragement of the teacher and the class. The activities are designed to interest the pupils, encourage them to listen to their own performance and refine it. For example, they succeeded in sustaining the rap beat and off beat. The very good pace of the lesson encouraged the pupils to concentrate and the humour of the teacher and pupils stopped them being embarrassed when performing. They took turns and listened to each other carefully, which had a positive effect on their performance.

134 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the co-ordinator has only taken up the role this term. However, the music file, passed on from the last co-ordinator is good; it is well-organised, very well kept and includes assessments of pupils' progress in music. The curriculum is satisfactory, in line with the National Curriculum and supported by a commercial scheme of work, which ensures that all areas of learning are included. This commercial scheme is good in that it supports those teachers who do not have substantial musical skills themselves. Music makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development when they learn to take turns using the instruments, singing, or listening to others. The resources for music are satisfactory and are stored centrally and are well labelled to enable easy access. The Local Education Authority's music services contribute to the variety of music by holding music workshops at the school every term, playing a range of classical and ethnic music. They also contribute to the 'Prime Time' time session in the school held each week although they are not always able to attend every session. A group of Year 5 and 6 pupils are learning to play the recorder in school as an extra curricular activity adding to the range of clubs available to the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135 Standards in physical education at aged seven are in line with what is expected nationally. These pupils have a sound understanding of creating sequences corresponding to musical phases of movement. Pupils broadly attain the standards expected at the age of 11, and some demonstrate good games skills. However, when required to practise and refine their skills in the school hall the limited space restricts the amount of progress they can make.

136 Achievement was good in a Year 2 dance lesson. Pupils made good progress using a theme on colouring to create sequences of movement. Pupils achieved average standards in a Year 6 games' lesson. They practised a range of kicking skills, consolidating passing, dribbling and shooting. When displaying this range of skills, girls showed particularly good control for their age. Some boys have above average techniques but restricted space inhibits their work. Improvement in planning since the last inspection means that the school is now clearly focusing on logical patterns of skill acquisition as pupils move through the school. This aids progress in gymnastics, dance and games. Despite adequate provision for swimming, pupils are not currently achieving the standards expected for 11 year olds because the majority cannot complete the 25-metre distance required.

137 The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of after school clubs these have a positive impact on pupils' motivation and experiences in the subject. The caretaker runs two very successful football clubs and also teaches a football option in 'Prime Time' on Friday afternoons, when pupils work well and develop good skills in their chosen activity. This impacts well on their personal and social development as they work together and learn the importance of teamwork. The older boys have additional coaching at the local secondary school. Newly created links with a local football club further aids the latter provision.

138 Teaching is at least satisfactory. The teacher's good knowledge and understanding of dance in the Year 2 class resulted in exciting and invigorating challenges being given. Pupils became involved in self-valuation to improve their understanding of how to develop quality in their work. They made very good progress interpreting key words and musical rhythms to extend their movement. The teacher's very good management of a Year 6 class meant that pupils consolidated their games skills in cramped spaces. The pupils in this class have excellent self-control and work well in groups to show initiative and take responsibility for their work. They enjoy physical education and this is reflected in their very positive efforts in lessons.

139 The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and future development needs for the subject. National guidelines are used to ensure the minimum balance of curriculum tasks and activities are taught. Teachers are beginning to adapt other commercial schemes to personalise their planning to the needs and interests of their pupils. Pupils take part in a residential visit each year and this has positively contributed to the outdoor and adventurous aspects of pupils' learning. Very good progress has been made recently in clarifying the criteria to be used to assess pupils' work. This is accompanied by good procedures for monitoring the subject by the co-ordinator. The outcomes from these procedures are not yet fully evaluated to judge whether standards being achieved are commensurate with pupils' ability and that provision has sufficient depth of study.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140 Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection and by the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment matches the requirements of the agreed syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. Teachers' planning is sound and takes account of national guidance and links this with what is required in the agreed syllabus.

141 By the end of Year 2, pupils know that Jesus was born at Christmas, and died at Easter. They hear stories from the Bible and know about the lives of Jesus and Moses. By the end of Year 2, seven year olds know that God gave Moses Ten Commandments and recall that these were on tablets of stone. One pupil had drawn the scene, remembered and recorded commands, and rewritten them in her own words 'Don't 'cill' people' and 'be kind.' Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about Christian teaching and that Jesus taught us to be glad for the gifts we have. One Year 1 pupil identified her talent as 'looking after people.' In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils learned about 'new life' and looked at plants that were just beginning to come up through the soil in flowerbeds outside school. The teacher linked the work with natural science and pupils recalled that plants need water, air and sunlight in order to grow. They quickly decided that 'Jesus cares for us'. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a sound basic understanding of Christian and Jewish beliefs.

142 In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. By the end of Year 6 many pupils know about the celebrations and special meals that are part of these faiths. In work linked well to art and design and design and technology, Year 5 pupils produced attractive Hashanah patterns used by Hindus. Older pupils make good comparisons between the traditional dress of the different cultures and have produced well-drawn posters showing the dress worn by Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. Pupils know that the Bible consists of two books, the Old and New Testament, and Year 4 pupils produced well-drawn scrolls showing The Creation story.

143 Teaching is often good and sometimes very good. In a very good lesson in Year 5 the teacher made very good links to work in English on legends to begin to teach the class the stories linked to the origins of Hindu Gods. The teacher very effectively told the story of the birth of Krishna and had written the difficult names on the board so that pupils could recognise the characters. The

pupils quickly identified the nature of different characters 'Khan is clever, he is getting rid of everyone who might take his kingdom.' By the end of the lesson, pupils began to make links between aspects of this story and the Christian account of Jesus' birth. For example, when Khan had all the new born babies killed, many pupils recalled that Herod had ordered the deaths of all baby boys. They were disappointed when the end of the lessons came and groaned when the teacher ended the first part of the story and wanted, 'more next time'. The school makes good use of the specialist expertise of staff and, for example, the co-ordinator exchanges her Year 3 class to teach to good effect in Year 6, while the Year 6 teacher works successfully with Year 3 in technology.

144 Pupils are interested in their work in religious education because teachers find interesting ways of presenting the topics and in enabling pupils to record what they know. Staff recognise that pupils often know more than their reading and writing skills allow them to show and use art and design as well as design and technology skills to enable pupils to show their understanding by creating posters, making their own books or making some of the special meals. Teachers make clear the aims for the lesson, for example the Year 5 teacher reminded pupils that they had not had time for extended writing in English and so would be writing about the life of Krishna. Teachers make good use of all resources and interest pupils with well-chosen artefacts. There are too few of these in Key Stage 1 and the school is seeking to improve the range. Good use is made of visits to places of worship such as the local church in Key Stage 1 where pupils learn about Baptism. Key Stage 2 pupils visit Durham Cathedral to learn about local saints such as Cuthbert and Bede and have a good recall of why they are important figures in the early church. There have been no visits to places of worship of other faiths and this is a lost opportunity for pupils to learn first hand about other traditions. Visitors use their expertise well and the local Baptist Minister takes assemblies and runs an after school 'Crusader' club that is well attended.

145 The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. She supports staff well and monitors planning and checks on end of summer term assessments to ensure standards are maintained. Some staff make good links with other subjects but there is potential to enable pupils to develop and practise their reading, writing and ICT skills within their work.