

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **RAVENSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ravenswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique reference number: 108475

Head teacher: Mrs P Summerhill

Reporting inspector: Mr A Smith  
18037

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 246794

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 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ravenswood Road Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE6 5TU
Telephone number:	0191 2659599
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Murray
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18037	Mr A Smith	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it?
				The schools' results and pupils' achievements
				How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	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?
30834	Mrs A Lowson	Team inspector	English	
			Geography	
			Special educational needs	
30439	Mr M Heyes		Science	
			Design and technology	
22452	Mrs M Farman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
			History	
			Education inclusion	
29188	Mrs G Ulyatt	Team inspector	Art and design	
			Religious education	
			Citizenship	
			The Foundation Stage	
2041	Mrs V Reid	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

			Music	
			English as an additional language	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ravenswood Primary School is much bigger than most primary schools and currently has 505 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 11 years. A further 58 children attend part-time in the nursery. The backgrounds of the pupils are varied and cover a wide social spectrum, however, many pupils come from less advantaged backgrounds. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, 15 per cent, is close to the national average. There are 41 pupils on the school's special educational needs register. This is 8 per cent of the school's pupils and is below average when compared to all schools. Their needs are wide ranging but are mostly moderate learning difficulties in language and numeracy and a small number of pupils have more complex difficulties. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need and this is below the national average. The school also educates a very small number of refugee children. Seventy three pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the majority of these pupils speak English as an additional language or are at an early stage of language acquisition. Childrens' attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but in 2002 it was below that normally found for children of this age.

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

Ravenswood is a very good school with several excellent features and much to celebrate. Teaching and learning throughout the school are very good and pupils make very good progress. As a result, standards are above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities to enhance the very good curriculum. A very effective head teacher, supported by a very capable second in charge, leads and manages the school very well. The school has a dedicated staff, well-informed, influential governing body and very supportive parents. This is a very caring, effective school, which provides very good value for money.

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

- Teaching and learning are very good and this enables pupils to make very good progress. By the age of 11, when compared with similar schools, pupils do well in English and science and very well in mathematics.
- The school has very good partnerships with parents and the community; parents feel welcomed and supported by the school.
- The school provides very well for the pupils' personal, social and moral development. It is a very friendly, caring community and the behaviour of pupils is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good. The head teacher with very good support from staff, governors, parents and pupils creates a very good ethos that promotes high standards.
- The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that motivate pupils very well.

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

- The school needs to make better use of the outdoor play area in order to provide a balanced curriculum for children under five.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in March 1998. Standards in reading are much improved. Weaknesses in the school library have been addressed and the school now has a

well-organised and frequently used library, which pupils use to support their learning using a good range of research skills. Parents are sufficiently involved in helping their children to read at home. All lessons identify clearly what the pupils are expected to learn. There is an effective match of work to the pupils' different needs and abilities. The school has good assessment procedures and practices to guide curricular planning and monitor the progress and standards of pupils. These improvements to planning and assessment have had a significant impact upon standards in the school.

The school has developed very good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators. All co-ordinators have well structured, regular opportunities to visit all classes, improve their knowledge and understanding of what is happening in their subject and to support colleagues in teaching and learning. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	A	B	B
mathematics	A	C	A	A
science	A	A	B	B

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

Results in Key Stage 1 tests for 2002 were lower than usual, due to higher levels of pupils with special educational needs. Standards have usually been above national averages, particularly in reading and mathematics. In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged seven meet national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, although standards in writing are weaker. This represents good achievement for these pupils from when they first enter school. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are similar to those found at the previous inspection, but the progress pupils make is better, particularly in reading and mathematics.

At Key Stage 2, results in 2002 were above the national average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. These results were mirrored in work seen during the inspection. By the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening meet national expectations. Standards in reading, writing and science are above national expectations, and in mathematics they are well above. Standards have risen since the last inspection, mainly as the result of very good teaching. The absence of complacency at the school and shared commitment to improvement should take them higher.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school, are ready to work, keen to respond to challenges and willing to celebrate the achievement of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave very well in the classroom. Their very good behaviour makes an outstanding contribution to their learning because there are hardly any disruptive periods in lessons. Behaviour at lunchtime and break times is very good.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good and supported by the very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff. School council members take the responsibility of speaking for their classmates seriously and regularly report back on whole school issues in council meetings.
Attendance	Pupils are keen to come to school and their attendance is in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence amongst pupils is below the national average.

Pupils are very conscious of tackling any potential bullying behaviour in the school, and know that they can approach both staff, and their school councillors if they have any concerns.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very Good	Very 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 in the nursery and reception classes is good. Staff work well as a team and have made a concerted effort to plan the curriculum using the national guidelines. Plans show clearly what children are expected to learn, consequently children are acquiring new skills and developing understanding. Staff know children well and make effective use of everyday assessments.

Teaching is very good overall with a significant proportion of excellent lessons in the infants and juniors. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is consistently at least good. Teaching in other subjects is never less than satisfactory and is mostly very good. The significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection has helped to raise standards throughout the school. This is largely due to the school's commendable programme for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching throughout the school is consistent and teachers are continually seeking to improve the way in which they teach and the way in which their teaching helps pupils to learn.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides full coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education. It gives its pupils a very rich and varied curriculum and an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has established a comprehensive policy that is reflected in everyday provision and follows national guidelines of good practice.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language have equal access to the full and extended curriculum (extra-curricular activities and extension work for gifted and talented pupils) with targeted support to ensure that their competence in English does not inhibit their progress, whatever their ability.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A particular strength, within this area, is the very good provision made for the cultural development of pupils. The excellent range of after-school clubs supports pupils' personal development particularly well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Child protection arrangements reflect the Local Education Authority guidelines and are supported by trained members of staff. Pupils are well cared for when they are ill or injured in school. Procedures for monitoring academic and personal development and attendance are good.

The school has very good relationships with parents. Parents perceive relationships between children and staff to be excellent, especially where it influences expectations regarding behaviour and learning. Parents have differing views on the value and content of homework but are generally supportive of the range of work sent home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher, with the very good support of the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. Subject co-ordinators carry out their roles very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body are very supportive and very involved in the life of the school. Governors have specific curriculum support responsibilities, for example, in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and the teaching of special educational needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of performance is very good. There is a rigorous analysis of standards, frequent checking of the progress towards targets in the school development plan and regular observations of teaching. The school identifies areas of concern in its performance and works hard to bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is clear link between development planning and finance. Financial planning is good and the school works hard to obtain value for money. The school provides very good value for money.

The school is well staffed, with a good spread of qualifications. Learning support staff make a valuable contribution to learning and school life generally. The accommodation is good and the school buildings are well maintained by the school caretaker and cleaning staff. Learning resources are good. The library is situated centrally and well organised with a clearly labelled guide for pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	

Parents' views of the school are generally good and the vast majority of parents are positive about all aspects of school life. The inspection team agrees that parents are right in the positive views they hold of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes make good progress. Attainment on entry to the school is below average and by the time they enter Year 1 they have made good progress. Their attainment in communication, language and literacy is in line with national averages and in mathematics it is above average.

2 Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. By the age of seven, standards meet national expectations in speaking and listening and reading and broadly match national expectations in writing, although standards in writing are weaker. This represents good achievement for these pupils from when they first enter school. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are similar to those found at the previous inspection, but the progress pupils make is better, particularly in reading.

3 By the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening meet national expectations and are above national expectations in both reading and writing. This represents very good achievement against their prior attainment. Standards have been improved since the previous inspection and pupils now achieve much better standards in their reading. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress against the targets set for them. Standards are good because of the consistently good and often very good quality of teaching English in this school. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, very good relationships with pupils and have very good pupil management skills. Classrooms are well organised and teachers and learning support staff promote good learning attitudes. Such consistency throughout the school ensures pupils of all abilities are taught basic skills thoroughly and this has a very positive effect on their learning.

4 Standards in mathematics have shown good improvement since the last inspection. This is the result of very good and often excellent teaching and improvement in the leadership and management of the subject. Standards in mathematics are consistently high across the school. All pupils do as well as they can. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils achieve the standard expected of seven year olds and a significant number of them achieve above it. Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is very good and by the age of 11, pupils' overall attainment is well above the standard expected.

5 Standards in science have been maintained since the last inspection. By the age of seven, standards match national expectations. By the age of 11, standards are above expectations. However, since the previous inspection there have been good improvements made in teaching and approaches to learning in science. There is now an emphasis in all lessons on an investigative approach, which allows pupils to learn from direct first hand experiences in a practical and scientific way.

6 Standards in information and communication technology exceed those expected for most pupils at the ages of seven and 11. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory. There is a significant improvement in the facilities and provision available to all pupils. The improved level of provision and teacher confidence is having a significant impact on standards.

7 Standards in religious education have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils reach above average standards when compared with other pupils aged seven and 11 because teaching is good in all classes. Standards in art and design are average as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school has maintained good standards in music and physical education since the last inspection. The musical performance of pupils is a major strength of the school, as is the broad range of physical activities on offer to pupils. Pupils' standards in history are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Standards in geography have been maintained since the previous inspection but the school has improved the progress pupils make throughout the school. Satisfactory standards in design and technology have been maintained since the previous inspection.

8 Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding so that by the ages of seven and 11 they achieve well in relation to their age and ability in most subjects. The very good level of support and encouragement and the emphasis on early intervention ensures that pupils with English as an additional language gain sufficient competence to attain standards in line with other pupils, with many making rapid progress. For example, one pupil arrived at the end of Year 5 with no understanding of English and attained the expected national standard in English at the end of Year 6. Reading comprehension is the greatest challenge. This is mainly because of cultural differences. The very good procedures for identifying the particular difficulties of pupils having English as an additional language, and the well-targeted intervention and monitoring of their progress, enables these pupils to do as well as they can. For example, pupils with English as an additional language who are considered to have special educational needs are assessed in their original language. Pupils in the school identified as needing greater challenge, for instance in mathematics and music, are from all cultural groups in the school.

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

9 Attitudes to school are very good. A purposeful bustle pervades the school at the start of the day as pupils go to the cloakroom areas and then straight into their classrooms ready for work. Pupils greet staff respectfully, but with pleasure, and waste no time in commencing the morning routines of registration and class tasks. Lunchtime activities and after school clubs are extremely well attended, with pupils enthusiastically joining in music, dancing, drama, craft and sports activities. All pupils spoken to enjoyed coming to school and appreciate the opportunities that are open to them. They like the house points system and cherish the awards they win. Pupils are open about improvements they would like to be seen being made, for example an improvement in outside playing facilities, but this does not detract from their pride in their school. They enjoy the challenge of learning. In a Year 4 art and design lesson, pupils debated hotly over the different design, style and decoration for a seat for an imaginary character or friend. Fantastical and imaginative ideas were realised and no detail was ignored or too small to be thought through. Overall, different groups and ages of pupils display little variation in their attitude to learning. Pupils get pleasure from their success. In a Year 6 booster class for mathematics, pupils thrived on the challenge of solving an algebraic task to complete a set of graphs. In a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson, Year 2 pupils were delighted with the booklets they were completing for reception pupils, to warn them of possible electrical dangers in the home. Outside activities are enjoyed very much. A group of Year 3 pupils on a joint session of visiting the community swimming baths and public library co-operated very well with their swimming instructors and the librarians. Assemblies reflect the hard work and application of pupils, for example displaying their drawings of the different animals that represent the Chinese New Year or receiving their house point scores. Their very good attitudes to learning reflect the gains being made in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all areas of school life.

10 Overall behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions in the past two years. Pupils are very conscious of tackling any potential bullying behaviour in the school, and know that they can approach both staff, and their school councillors if they have any concerns. The school is honest in declaring that bullying is an issue that can never be ignored and that it's perception can vary amongst pupils, and parents. The behaviour of a few pupils is related to their special educational needs, but taken as a whole the school is very happy and secure and pupils state that they feel safe. Pupils know that good behaviour is one of the elements of winning a coveted house point, and this is a good incentive to many of them to be kind to each other and generally helpful. Behaviour at lunchtime and break times is very good, although noisy in the canteen hall amongst all groups of pupils, and boisterous in the playgrounds. However, pupils generally observe the demarcations in the different playgrounds spaces available outside, by respecting that some areas are for ball games, and others are for other activities such as skipping. Their very good behaviour makes an outstanding contribution to their learning because there are hardly any disruptive periods in lessons.

11 Personal development amongst pupils is very good and is supported by the very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff. Pupils seize opportunities to contribute to charitable causes enthusiastically, for example donating to Shelter. Corridor displays and the audit for the school's Healthy Award, demonstrate the range of commitments undertaken by the pupils both in the school and the community. For example a citywide photography competition, which a pupil won, saw pupils appreciating aspects of Newcastle's 'Public Places and Private Spaces,' that they had never realised existed. Pupils can discuss characteristics of their school, which they consider contribute to good health. For example the strong focus on sport in the school, diet, water in the classrooms and the strategies for anti-bullying and reward systems. Pupils are knowledgeable about other cultures represented in the school, because of the way that the school celebrates different cultures through religious education, assemblies and PSHE lesson. Year 5 pupils became very involved in a discussion on refugees in Pakistan from the recent Afghanistan conflict and appreciated the traumas of war and the options and considerations facing children of their own age in other parts of the world. Through PSHE, pupils learn to value each other and there is a healthy spirit of tolerance and general good will in the school. There is no evidence of any racially motivated bullying and the complete ethos of acceptance amongst pupils of their school friends for themselves, with no regard to gender or race, is an outstanding feature of the school. In lessons pupils work well together in groups, and pairs. Pupils are generally very keen to take on responsibilities. Not only are there lists in each class which detail the sharing out of classroom jobs, but in the corridors, out in the playgrounds and in assemblies, there are always pupils to be seen taking on responsibilities to help and advise, or monitor, other pupils. These responsibilities are taken very seriously and completed with care. School council members take the responsibility of speaking for their classmates seriously and regularly report back on whole school issues in council meetings.

12 Pupils are keen to come to school and their attendance is in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence amongst pupils is below the national average. A few families take their children away on holidays during the school term, and this is one of the main contributors to absences amongst pupils. Lessons start on time, although there are nearly always a few families who bring their children after the start of registration each day, and who are therefore recorded as late arrivals.

13 Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate fully in all school activities with the aim of increasing self-esteem and confidence. Those pupils who have special educational needs in relation to their learning attitudes or their behaviour are given individual education plans and learning programmes to tackle their problems with good support from the school and external agencies. Where possible, and in most cases, the school is well supported by parents and carers, who work with their children at home on individual targets. As a consequence of this good practise, the attitudes to learning and the behaviour of most pupils with special educational needs is very good.

14 A clear set of values supports what being part of the school community means for adults and pupils. Wide-ranging cultures and faiths are welcomed, valued, respected and celebrated in subjects, assemblies and with special festivals. Books and signs are in school community languages. Because of this, pupils with English as an additional language share the same enthusiasm for school as all pupils. They behave very well in class and around school and show great interest and involvement in lessons and other activities.

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

15 The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching is very good overall, with a significant proportion of excellent lessons in the infants and the juniors. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good throughout. Staff work well as a team and have made a concerted effort to plan the curriculum through the national guidelines. Plans show clear learning objectives, consequently children are acquiring new skills and developing understanding. Staff know children well and make effective use of everyday assessments. They support children well and interact in their play to help them increase their skills and knowledge. Activities are well planned and offer children a good range of learning opportunities in classes. Adults set high expectations for good behaviour and this has a positive impact on pupils throughout the school. They encourage children to share books at home with their parents. In this way the learning that takes place in school is well reinforced at home.

16 The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is consistently good or better. Teaching in other subjects is never less than satisfactory and is mostly very good. The significant improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection has helped to raise standards throughout the school. This is largely due to the school's commendable programme for the monitoring and evaluation for teaching and learning. As a result, teaching throughout the school is consistent and teachers are continually seeking to improve the way in which they teach and the way in which their teaching helps pupils to learn.

17 Teachers' have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is used in excellent lessons to stimulate pupils' learning and encourage a love of the subject. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, the excellent knowledge of the teacher resulted in a very well constructed lesson which led to pupils organising their thinking logically as they worked through the session. The teaching encouraged a fascination for mathematics, inspired the pupils and was an excellent opportunity to feed their appetite for mathematics. In a Year 6 physical education lesson, the excellent knowledge of the teacher led to very effective pupil learning when they discussed their positioning for attack or defence in a game of basketball. Teachers make very effective use of questioning and intervention to gauge the extent of pupils' understanding and knowledge. This was evident in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils identified the position of Newcastle in summer and winter on a globe using a torch beam and the teacher guided pupils to gain a very good understanding of why it is hotter in the summer.

18 Teachers' planning is generally good because it identifies clearly what pupils need to learn and this is very well shared with them so that they know what is expected of them. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils are able to talk at length about what they have learned about electricity using batteries and bulbs. In most lessons, teachers are well prepared. This means that pupils move smoothly from the lesson introduction to their work, with no time being wasted. For example, in an art lesson in Year 2 the teacher had fruit set out ready for pupils to draw.

19 A highly commendable feature of much of the teaching is the enthusiasm which teachers bring to lessons, for example in a Year 5 history lesson when pupils learn to understand the social and cultural issues of different times. Carefully structured and enthusiastic teaching grips the pupils' imagination and makes them want to learn. The teacher's careful preparation of interesting and relevant resources makes the pupils want to find out why children worked so hard. Teachers make very good use of pupils to demonstrate what they have learned in order to support other pupils in their learning and to increase the level of challenge in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 physical education lesson, the teacher skilfully used demonstration of balances so that the pupils faced increased challenges and were working at the full extent of their capabilities.

20 Marking is variable between the staff. At its best teachers mark alongside the pupils, using it to encourage pupils to develop their skills, understanding and knowledge as well as to praise and to motivate. However, on occasions the marking is merely an acknowledgement that work has been completed this gives no indication to the pupil what they do well and what they must do to improve their work.

21 The management of pupils is very good and enables them to concentrate on their work and make good progress. Even when the behaviour of a minority of pupils is challenging, teachers work hard to move the lesson along and ensure that the learning of other pupils is not greatly affected. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson, a child was allowed to work at the teacher's desk in order to prevent other pupils from being disturbed. Teachers know when it is appropriate to explain things to the whole class and when group work is more effective. The use of additional adults to support group work is particularly effective throughout the school, particularly when pupils work in ability sets in literacy and numeracy lessons. This enables all staff to ensure that pupils are on the right track in their learning and allows them to use questions to help pupils build on their prior learning and deepen their understanding. For example, in a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson on the use of the Internet the teacher knew exactly when to ask a probing question and when to leave pupils to try things for themselves.

22 Time and resources are used well. Lessons start promptly and are generally well paced allowing for quick responses and also more extended periods for concentrated work. Pupils are effectively encouraged to develop good enquiry skills, as demonstrated by Year 4 pupils when they very effectively conduct a fair test on air resistance by investigating and recording how long it took for a parachute to land. Resources are well prepared and used effectively to promote learning, for example in a year 1 science lesson on the use of different materials.

23 Teaching is greatly helped by the very good relationships that exist between all adults in the school and the pupils. Praise is used very effectively to encourage pupils and teachers value pupils' contributions. Teachers provide very good role-models, demonstrating enthusiasm, interest and enjoyment for the subjects they teach and supporting pupils to achieve their best. All teachers use opportunities to circulate during group work, giving pupils one-to-one help and encouragement to maintain their concentration and to praise their efforts.

24 Teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is well-targeted for those pupils whose level of competence in English is holding back their progress in English and mathematics. Most support is within class - either for a group of pupils with the same first language or for an individual. Occasionally a small number of pupils are withdrawn for specific support during the literacy hour but they are always with the whole class at the start of the lesson and return for the plenary session towards the end. During these times with the whole class they are very well supported with additional explanations to allow them to participate and have the confidence to answer questions or offer ideas. As a result of such well-focused, encouraging teaching, pupils learn well and make good progress. For



example, in one such lesson, five Year 1 pupils learned more about story writing by being storytellers. They chose and fitted together three jigsaw pieces and then told their own simple story. The learning resources were very well selected to enable pupils to confidently think of a beginning, middle and end and to tell the story in the correct sequence. 'Once upon a time there was a little boy with his teddy and he cleaned his teeth and went to bed'. This activity also led to much conversation allowing them to practise their English, and it was fun.

25 Overall, the quality of teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. Pupils in Year 1 are taught in mixed ability classes and have activities planned specifically for individuals or for small groups in literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 are taught in set groups for literacy and numeracy, with lower ability groups taught in smaller classes and given good support from both their class teachers and learning support staff. In other curriculum subjects, lessons are not always planned to take into account the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs, but all staff do ensure that pupils are fully included in lessons.

26 When pupils are withdrawn for specialist support, or to work with classroom support staff on their individual learning programmes, the teaching is tightly structured and focuses on the pupils' individual difficulties. Consequently, in these sessions, pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in literacy and in the awareness of their behaviour. Support staff are well trained, know pupils very well and place a high priority upon developing good attitudes to learning. When external support agencies such as physiotherapy, behaviour support or speech therapy provide programmes for pupils, the support staff follow these carefully.

27 Throughout the school, teachers give homework that has a positive impact upon pupils' reading, spelling, the learning of number facts and supports their investigative studies in a number of subjects.

28 The very good teaching, combined with the very good attitudes displayed by pupils, enables them to make very good progress in their learning. Because tasks are generally matched well to their prior attainment and the assessment of their work informs the next stage of learning, they extend their knowledge and understanding systematically. They are very confident, enthusiastic learners because they are provided with a secure environment where their efforts are valued.

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

29 The school provides full coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education. It gives its pupils a very rich and varied curriculum and a range of excellent extra-curricular activities. The school amply reflects its values, 'Relationships Promoting Success', in all curriculum policies, school procedures, and the conduct of staff and pupils. It checks the progress of all pupils carefully and provides sensitive and effective extra support when necessary. For example, those pupils who have English as an additional language learn and achieve as well as their classmates. There has been good improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection.

30 Adults working in the nursery and reception classes plan effectively towards the Early Learning Goals. They provide a good range of learning opportunities in classes for children. All children, including those with special educational needs are given equal access to what is on offer. Children who do not speak English at home are well supported by experienced staff. The outdoor curriculum is unsatisfactory because the facilities outdoors are insufficiently developed. The school has rightly identified that children have too few opportunities for learning outdoors.

31 The school's steps to raise standards in English, mathematics and science have been very effective. This has not, however, reduced the time for work in other subjects. All pupils have the chance to build on their skills and interests and increase their achievement. There is helpful long-term planning for all subjects. This gives teachers clear guidance. The school takes positive steps to promote and develop independent learning skills. This prepares pupils very well for their move to the next stage of education. The school works very closely with the receiving secondary school to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress in their learning. This extends to parents for example; the school runs after school classes in computer use for parents. A teacher from the secondary school leads a morning session to reinforce parents' skills. This reflects the inclusive nature of the whole curriculum and is an improvement since the previous inspection.

32 Since the school was last inspected, the good provision for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained. The school has established a comprehensive policy that is reflected in everyday provision and complies with the recommendations of the 2002 Code of Practice. There are well written individual education plans for each pupil identified as having special educational needs. The writing of individual education plans electronically has been a recent school initiative, which has resulted in an improvement in the way targets for learning are written. Crisply written targets are now evident, particularly in literacy and personal and social development, and these are used well by teachers and support staff to give clearly focused support.

33 The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes gives them a secure start to school and learning. It is firmly based on the recommended national guidelines. However, the children do not have enough chances for outdoor learning activities. This does not give these young children the chance to develop their learning across this area of the curriculum.

34 There is careful checking of planning to ensure that the work is suitably demanding for all pupils. This includes different abilities, ethnic groups and ages. The teachers use the findings effectively to group pupils in English and mathematics according to their specific needs and abilities. This has a positive effect on standards. The school meets all the requirements for the information, communication and technology curriculum. It uses pupils' skills in this area effectively across the curriculum. Pupils with English as an additional language have equal access to the full and extended curriculum (extra-curricular activities and extension work for gifted and talented pupils) with targeted support to ensure that their competence in English does not inhibit their progress, whatever their ability.

35 The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. It has successful and sensitive strategies that include pupils with learning difficulties in all school activities. The science curriculum includes a suitable and relevant health education programme. This includes sex education and the dangers of medicines and addictive drugs. The school is successful in its implementation of the national strategies for literacy. Its use of pupils' skills in writing across other subject areas is effective. It is very successful in its implementation of the national strategy for numeracy. Pupils are confident in using their mathematical skills in other subjects. The school correctly emphasises the investigative element of work in mathematics and information and communication technology. This makes a positive contribution to the development of independent learning skills. The time allocation within the curriculum for all subjects is adequate. It ensures pupils have enough time to finish their work and think about their achievement.

36 The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The activities include a wide range of sporting activities as well as performing and creative arts. The wide ranging and interesting music and dance groups are very popular. They are well attended and pupils achieve high standards in their performances. The school makes full use of the local area for work in history and geography. For example, they visit local museums and art

galleries and places such as Newcastle Quayside and the Roman settlement of Segedunum. This increases pupils' awareness of local culture and past history. The very successful photographic club makes full use of the latest technological developments. It has won several prizes, including the first prize in a competition where the pupils were the youngest! Pupils visit places of interest further afield. For example, the older pupils stay at the outdoor field study centre in Kingswood in Staffordshire. This broadens and enriches their experiences of living in a community and increasing their social skills. The contribution of the community to pupils learning is very good. Pupils enjoyed the privilege of being the first Primary school to visit the new Baltic Art Gallery and they frequently benefit from the rich variety of art galleries, museums and theatres in the Newcastle area. Visits to local Roman sites, such as Segedunum and also to the industrial open-air museum at Beamish, extend pupils' historical and geographical knowledge. There are very close links to a local sports college and the physical education curriculum benefits from expertise through coaching sessions with city rugby and football clubs. Visitors to the school, especially musicians, raise the high standard of music provision in the school. For example, during the inspection, Misericorda, an ensemble specialising in early Tudor and Mediaeval instruments and dance, visited the school as part of Year 4's scheme of work in music.

37 The school's provision for encouraging the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good overall and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement from the last inspection when provision for pupil's moral and cultural development was good, that for social development was very good and for spiritual development it was satisfactory. The school, in all its work, exemplifies the values and principles on which the school community is based. Much of this is clear to pupils in the simple but effective Ravenswood School motto: 'RPS' stands for Relationships Promoting Success and 'Ravenswood' stands for Reliability, Attainment, Valuing, Enjoyment, Nurturing, Self-confidence, Working together, Opportunities, Organisation and Discipline. The school has gained the 'Healthy School' award, confirming its commitment to encouraging the development of healthy minds and bodies.

38 The spiritual development of pupils is promoted well. The climate of the school is one in which all pupils are enabled to grow and flourish knowing that staff and other pupils will respect them just as they respect the feelings and beliefs of others. Good opportunities to explore values and beliefs are often included both within lessons and in assemblies. Pupils experience spirituality in daily lessons, for example, in geography where they are made aware from an early age that the world is a precious environment that needs caring for. In their work and discussion they show their appreciation of the natural world as they learn about mountains, rivers and rainforests. In a religious education lesson on baptism, pupils in Year 4 had a very good introduction to this difficult concept and took time to reflect on the meaning of water as a symbol for life. During an assembly for pupils in reception, Years 1 and 2 during which they considered co-operation, they listened appreciatively to the 'Wee Whistlers' - the school tin whistle group playing with guitar accompaniment - and applauded spontaneously, appreciating and in awe of the performance of others.

39 Developing aesthetic awareness is important in the teaching of music - described as the 'tingle factor'. Pupils and an inspector experienced the 'tingle' during the very high quality of the singing of 'I wish I knew how it would feel to be free' produced by the 'Singing Hinnies' at lunchtime. The sound was haunting and its message reflected concern for the feelings and beliefs of others. Pupils' ideas and contributions to lessons are valued and where they have a misconception it is sensitively accepted and gently corrected.

40 Many of the displays of pupils' work and achievements around school are uplifting and provide opportunities to understand the feelings of others and human emotions. In one such display entitled 'Dream... dream...dream', younger pupils described their reflections and dreams. For instance, I dream of: 'everyone having enough water' . . 'being invisible'. . 'going to Japan'. .

'being a black cat with fluffy fur'. Religious education is provided for all pupils. Although Christianity is the main emphasis in this subject, awareness of other religions is also taught. Visits by the vicar provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on, for example, the meaning of the story of the Prodigal Son. Opportunities for spiritual development frequently 'happen' instead of arising from specific and systematic planning. This sometimes leads to missed opportunities. Although the provision and pupils' development in this area are good, keeping track of specific opportunities could further improve the provision in, for example, ensuring that pupils have the opportunity for reflection more regularly during assemblies.

41 Provision for moral development is very good. Above all, the head teacher and all staff set very good examples of desirable conduct and attitudes. They also demonstrate very good care for pupils. The school has worked very hard as a team to establish its orderly and secure environment in which pupils are able to work unimpeded, free from harassment. Teachers provide very good examples for pupils of how to work well together. The management of behaviour is consistent across the school. There is a very clear system of rewards and sanctions and a house point system, which is intentionally designed to foster positive attitudes and to build pupils' sense of self-esteem.

42 Clear moral messages are given out in assemblies and on other occasions. For example, in a Year 5 PSHE lesson, pupils listened attentively to a story based on a family in Afghanistan followed by 'Rega's story about an Afghan refugee in Pakistan. This contributed very well to pupils' understanding of their own place in the world and the problems, difficulties and options of others, particularly the consequences of war. In assemblies, themes from world history help pupils to learn about, for instance, the holocaust and the work of Martin Luther King. Such considerations help pupils to understand the school's expectations of behaviour and the reasons for school rules. They also help pupils well in learning to control or modify their own behaviour and to understand right from wrong in a variety of situations.

43 Pupils' social development is also promoted very well. There are many opportunities provided for pupils to develop social skills. Lessons often include tasks that entail pupils working with partners or collaboratively in groups. This was especially noticeable in a Year 5 mathematics class for pupils experiencing some difficulty. Pairs were carefully organised to provide either support in skills or social development.

44 A very good range of extra-curricular activities and school visits provides opportunities for pupils to meet new friends and learn about appropriate behaviour in different situations. The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities to exercise responsibility and make decisions. These include membership of the school council - with pupils very proud to wear their school counsellor badges - routine jobs such as taking registers to the secretary and lunch boxes to the dining halls sensibly. Pupils are expected to know when to work without direct supervision, and do so very well. They learn about personal health and safety such as the avoidance of drugs and smoking.

45 In classes, twice daily registrations are civilised times where respect is shown to pupils by welcoming them politely, and pupils respond in kind. Pupils are involved well in projects in the wider community; they make a number of interesting visits out of school and enjoy a variety of visitors to school. One memorable occasion was involvement in the end of the football World Cup celebration parades in Newcastle. They also raise money for a range of charities. All of these activities foster a strong sense of community and provide very good opportunities for all pupils to exercise leadership, take responsibility and develop social skills.

46 Pupils develop an awareness of environmental issues in the locality. They show respect, care and concern as they note, for example, litter and car parking problems. Pupils in class show care

and respect for others by not interrupting when others are speaking. In music they learn to share instruments, take turns and work co-operatively in small and large group activities. The 'my turn to talk' - my turn to listen' rule is fully understood. In an assembly for pupils in reception, Years 1 and 2, for instance, with a focus on co-operation, pupils showed by their answers that they know and understand that co-operation is important in school if they are to work as a team.

47 There are some missed opportunities in assemblies to encourage pupil participation and develop speaking skills. The pupils' experience of lunch-time as a social occasion is mixed. Although routines are orderly and understood and time is inevitably a problem in a large school, the noise levels prevent both social conversation and this part of the day being a more acceptable social occasion.

48 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language benefit equally from the schools provision in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about their own and other communities. The school capitalises on the diverse backgrounds of its pupils to enable all pupils to explore their own cultural assumptions and values and to understand the values and beliefs of others. Pupils learn about the development of many cultures through their studies in history, geography, art, literacy, music and religious education as well as through their daily contact with their peers. An assembly for pupils in reception and Years 1-2 about the Chinese New Year enthralled them with a good and clear description, using very good artefacts brought in by the local vicar. They learned about Chinese culture and traditions, that food was important in such celebrations and that red was the important colour used for decoration. Attention was drawn to the similarities of special food and decorations in other celebrations such as, Eid and Christmas. An assembly for older pupils focused on the work of Martin Luther King, providing very good opportunities to increase their understanding of racial issues. Pupils from Year 3 read out their own perceptive versions of 'I have a dream'. Pupils hear a good range of world and European music both in lessons and in assemblies, and in extra-curricular activities. In art they learn about famous world and European artists and art- work. For example, the dining halls have wonderful ethnic fabric prints as wall hangings.

49 Every opportunity is taken to celebrate the diversity of the school community. For example, pupils in Year 1 registration say 'good morning' in Japanese. Younger pupils learnt the Spanish for donkey to enhance a story told in assembly. Books in the school reflect a diversity of cultures, including those in dual language. As a result of the very good provision, all pupils have not only a high level of understanding about a diversity of cultural traditions and beliefs, but have great respect for and acknowledge the rights of all people, whatever their background. This makes a very strong contribution to the harmony in the school community.

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

50 The quality of care and support pupils receive in school has been satisfactorily sustained since the last inspection. Parents believe that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible people. Good use is made of daily assessments in the nursery and reception classes. Adults know children well and plan activities to match children's stage of development. Assessment systems are not consistent between nursery and reception classes. The co-ordinator is aware of this and, in discussion with staff, she is currently devising a system to be used in both nursery and reception classes so that children's learning can be effectively tracked.

51 The school provides good support to pupils with special educational needs. Support staff have very good relationships with pupils and use this very effectively to guide, encourage and support their academic and personal development. They have a good awareness of the personal as well as the academic needs of their pupils, helping to create a safe and secure environment for them. Links with

a range of external agencies are well established so the school makes effective use of the support available for pupils who have specific difficulties. Good support is given to the school from the Local Education Authority to work with pupils, conduct assessments and to provide learning programmes, advice and support. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs follow current school guidance and practice. Currently, these procedures do not enable the special educational needs co-ordinator to easily identify and track the progress of those pupils with individual education plans, so she is unable to monitor groups of pupils and ensure that they are achieving well against the targets set for them.

52 Child protection arrangements reflect the Local Education Authority guidelines and are supported by trained members of staff. Pupils are well cared for when they are ill or injured in school. There are very good procedures in place to record and inform parents of injuries sustained in school and the school's security arrangements are good. The governing body carries out health and safety checks regularly and the school is aware of the outstanding health and safety issues. Pupils interviewed were confident about emergency routines in school and the legal requirement of a fire drill each school term is now being met.

53 The school promotes attendance well through its awards to the highest attending pupils. Irregular attendance is checked with the help of the local education welfare officer, but there is no formal requirement of parents to notify school on the first day of absence.

54 As a result of the very good use of funding, pupils with English as an additional language are very well provided for. The head teacher is the co-ordinator and works closely with the teachers. This ensures that pupils' English language needs are identified clearly in speaking, listening and writing on entry to the school and that their progress in using English is carefully monitored and recorded against seven stages. The head teacher has a very good understanding and overview. Because of this, the school has clear priorities that make best use of provision.

55 Provision for pupils Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship (PSHCE) is particularly strong. For several years the school has timetabled lessons. A detailed scheme of work has been thoroughly prepared to ensure pupils have ample opportunity to engage in focused discussion and activities based on relevant issues. They find out about human behaviour and personal safety; they discuss safety in the home by analysing potential danger. Planned lessons are instrumental in helping them develop personally and all are encouraged to contribute fully to life in school and in the community. Pupils from each year group are represented by elected members from Year 5 and 6 who form the School Council and meet every two weeks to discuss projects and issues, such as improving the quality of playtime games. The school was the first school in the authority to receive the Gold Standard Award for smoking education and has held the Healthy School Award for several years. Pupils in Year 6 discuss issues that government officials face. Through well-planned group discussion they consider how to make policies and develop a short manifesto. Sex education is carefully planned through PSHCE and the science curriculum. Talks to raise awareness of smoking and drugs are planned and the programme prepares pupils well for life in the outside world.

56 The school has good assessment procedures and practices to guide curricular planning and monitor the academic performance of pupils. It has continued the good improvements it made at the time of the previous inspection. However, not all teachers are fully aware of how to use them to track pupils' progress and plan for future teaching. The assessment co-ordinator monitors planning and evaluation on a termly basis. There are whole school assessment procedures for English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history and geography. The remainder of the curricular areas will have whole school assessment procedures in place by the end of the academic year. A range of tests in English and mathematics are undertaken and analysed to

monitor and assess the progress of both individual and groups of pupils. This analysis is also being incorporated into the school's 'Rainbow System', which is identifying the proposed targets of what individual and groups of pupils will achieve in statutory tests in the core subjects. Marking across the school is inconsistent, better examples, take the pupils' learning forward with appropriate comments, weaker examples consist of a tick and a one or two word comment, which are not effective.

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

57 Parents regard the school highly. They are happy that high standards are achieved and that their children make good progress, especially those children who have special educational needs. Parents feel that their children have a very positive attitude to school and settle very quickly into school routines. They perceive relationships between children and staff to be excellent, especially where it influences expectations regarding behaviour and learning. A few parents would like more information about incidents that occur in school, especially where it affects the confidence and feelings of their children. Although parents comment that they feel the behaviour of pupils to be very good, and on school outings to be outstanding, the parents who are concerned about incidents of bullying in the playground, judge that they are not always well informed about how these incidents are dealt with

58 Parents have differing views on the value and content of homework, but are generally supportive of the range of work sent home. However, parents vary in their views on the accessibility of staff to speak to them on how to help their children, for example on letter formation. The school has held literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology workshops for parents. Staff appreciate it is not always easy for working parents to attend during the day and has made arrangements for evening sessions as well, but has not, as yet, been able to arrange a crèche whose safety standards would meet the school's risk assessments. Virtually all the classroom assistants in the school have made the transition from parent helpers to trained classroom assistants, and all value the support they have been given to extend their educational potential.

59 Parents are very supportive of the present leadership of the school and feel that recent staff appointments have greatly stimulated provision at the school, particularly with extra-curricular activities. Overall parents find staff very approachable and responsive, although again views differ on the speed of response to any of their concerns and how issues are dealt with, for example about the provision of fencing around the school.

60 Information to parents, especially about the progress of their children is good. Annual written reports meet statutory requirements. Regular newsletters inform parents of school events and successes, and a curriculum topic update, lets parents know what their children will be working on each half term. Home/school reading books for pupils from reception class to Year 2, allow parents an opportunity to comment on their child's reading progress, and timetabled homework opportunities from Year 3 onwards, permit parents to support the work of the children at home.

61 The involvement of parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are invited to review meetings and parents and carers have some input into the setting of individual learning or behaviour targets if this is practical. Many parents and carers take part in homework activities with their children to support specific learning or behaviour targets. Parents and carers are invited to attend, or sometimes to participate in courses designed to help them work with their children.

62 The administration office keeps a close contact with parents on a day-to-day basis, for example when receiving information about why a pupil cannot attend school. The school is open to parents to come in after the end of school. Twice weekly coffee mornings in the school's Parent Room are a focus for parents and carers, past and present, and provides a good, informal forum for

their views. The Ravenswood School Association is valued by the school for the work it puts in to enrich opportunities for pupils. For example their fund raising paid for a pantomime troupe to visit the school and is sponsoring some of the planned playground marking improvements. Although run by only a few dedicated committee members, most parents do support the associations fundraising summer and winter fairs and discos for the pupils.

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

63 The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher, with the very good support of the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. The head teacher cares very strongly about the school, the staff and the pupils. She has been very effective in creating and maintaining a harmonious staff team and school environment, which reflects most strongly the school aims. The high quality of teamwork is a key to the effectiveness of the school. All staff share a commitment to improving pupils' standards of work and behaviour. As a result, the school is a pleasant, well-ordered and happy community and a very effective learning environment. The head teacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works well with staff and governors to identify priorities for school development. This has enabled the school to deal very successfully with the weaknesses in leadership and management, which were identified in the previous inspection.

64 The school has a clear set of aims and values that are shared by pupils, staff, parents and governors. The head teacher adopts a management style which ensures that the views of all staff are heard and valued and, as a result, all staff work together well as a team and the day-to-day management of the school is effective. They are well supported by very efficient school administrative officers who make a very good contribution to the life of the school. The head teacher manages and monitors the school's finances very well. Good use is made of the Local Education Authorities financial services and the head teacher and governors work hard to get the best value for the money they spend. Grants given to the school, for example to support pupils with special educational needs are used well. The school has effectively implemented the recommendations of the most recent audit inspection by the Local Education Authority.

65 Governors are very interested in, and supportive of, the school. An effective committee structure is in place and some governors have specific curriculum support responsibilities, for example in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and the teaching of special educational needs. The governors are fully involved in the construction of the school development plan and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

66 The school development plan provides a useful framework for managing improvements and is based on an accurate analysis of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. The priorities are clearly identified and are monitored regularly to ensure that targets are met. The head teacher gives a very high degree of responsibility to the subject leaders and this ensures that they make a very effective contribution to school management. The school has developed very good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators. All co-ordinators have well structured, regular opportunities to visit all classes, improve their knowledge and understanding of what is happening in their subject and to support colleagues in teaching and learning. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection.

67 The head teacher also monitors the work of teachers on a regular basis and therefore has a clear picture of what is working and where additional support is needed to secure improvements. This, together with the analysis of the results of school based and national tests, is enabling the school to begin to more effectively track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and to set realistic but challenging targets in English and mathematics. As a result standards are improving but the school is



able to pinpoint areas for further development, for example in the use of information and communication technology in the curriculum. In addition, there have been significant improvements to teaching and learning and the development of a shared commitment to raising standards.

68 The management of the provision for, and support of, pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The head teacher is the co-ordinator and works closely with the teacher. The school uses the specific grant to provide time with the teacher as the main resource for these pupils - that is a specialist teacher for 13 hours a week - from the LEA EMTRAS (Ethnic Minority, Traveller and Refugee Achievement Service). The teacher also has access to additional resources that can be brought in appropriate to the changing needs of the pupils. Other school funding provides appropriate learning resources - such as dual language books. There is an action plan to ensure that grant funding is used appropriately. The plan has key objectives that include identification of specific support needs, additional targeted support, monitoring, involvement of parents, valuing cultural diversity and encouraging racial harmony. Actions are clear and costed. There is sufficient detail to allow the outcomes to be evaluated effectively. Reports to governors are regular and keep them well informed.

69 Financial planning is very good and is closely linked to the educational priorities identified in the school development plan. Financial control and day-to-day administration of the school are good and the school makes effective use of new technology. The head teacher and governors are keen to get the best value for pupils in all resources and services and gather information before financial decisions are taken. Given the low attainment of many children on intake, the very good teaching and the high quality learning opportunities, the very good progress made by pupils and the improving standards, the school provides very good value for money.

70 The school is well staffed, with a good spread of qualifications. As found at the previous inspection, there is a good balance of age and experience and this means that staff are mutually supportive. There is a good range of skills and staff have been very positive in their continued commitment to professional training and as a result, teachers have very good subject knowledge.

71 Procedures for training both teaching and non-teaching staff have been improved since the previous inspection. The school now has good procedures for assessing the impact of staff training on the quality of education the school provides and on the standards the pupils achieve. A good example of this has been the school's approach to the training of teachers in music. A staff audit highlighted that some staff were not confident teaching music, but this has been fully tackled through training and the quality of music teaching throughout the school is now leading to high standards being achieved by all pupils. Where necessary, the option of buying in expertise to specifically match training needs is taken, as part of the school's approach to the principles of best value for money.

72 All staff new to the school, whatever their level of experience in other schools, are given good induction procedures, a very friendly welcome and benefit from having a personal mentor. Performance management systems are well established. Targets identified are effectively linked to academic, management and personal aspects of development.

73 Of special value to the school are the qualifications and commitment of learning support staff. These staff make a valuable contribution to learning and school life generally. A good improvement since the previous inspection has been the use of learning support staff. The support is now more evenly balanced between mathematics and English lessons and is provided in both the infant and junior classes throughout the school. As a result of this, whilst the standards achieved by pupils in mathematics is still higher than those achieved in English, the gap is narrower and this is still being closely monitored by the school. The increase in the number of pupils with English as an additional language has, in fact, improved the staffing and resources provision. From having one teacher for one

day, the school now has one for two and a half days. The teacher, from the LEA EMTRAS is well qualified, experienced and successful in ensuring that all pupils make good progress.

74 The accommodation is good and has been well adopted for the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school buildings are well maintained by the school caretaker and cleaning staff. Displays in classrooms and the shared areas of the school are colourful, informative and conducive to learning. The school uses the accommodation well and is adequate for the number on roll and the age of pupils. Classrooms support both teaching and learning well. The two halls are used effectively for collective worship, drama and physical education. Several rooms are dedicated for group teaching in curricular areas such as music and cookery, and there is a room set-aside for parents to use. The school also has extensive and well-maintained grassed and hard surfaces for sporting and athletic activities. However, the outdoor play area for under fives is inadequate.

75 Learning resources are good overall. For mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education and music, they are very good. In each subject they are used well in the teaching and organisation of the curriculum and very well in physical education, information and communication technology, mathematics and music in helping pupils to learn effectively. As a result, pupils of different abilities have work of sufficient and appropriate challenge that keeps their interest in learning and gives good opportunities to practice skills.

76 The library is situated centrally and is well organised with a clearly labelled guide for pupils using “Melville the Millennium Bug” to find information. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The range of fiction and non-fiction books, though not extensive, is sufficient, but much of the stock is old and in need of up dating. The quality of books taken home by younger pupils for reading practice are not satisfactory.

77 The school has a very well equipped information and communication technology suite and a small, separate music room for instrumental tuition. In both these subjects, and in physical education, the quality and range of the resources enhances learning and pupils achieve well and often attain higher than the expected standards. For example, in music lessons the ease of access to good resources ensures that pupils build on their knowledge systematically. They always have the necessary instruments to learn practically about different types of sounds and how to handle different percussion instruments correctly.

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

78 In order to further improve the school, the head teacher, staff and governing body should:

- \* make better use of the outdoor play area in order to provide a balanced curriculum for children under five  
(paragraphs 30, 33, 79)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	84

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	33	34	4	0	0	0
Percentage	11	41	42	5	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.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	505
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		75

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	37

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	68

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	94.4
National comparative data	94.1

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	33	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	29
	Girls	36	36	36
	Total	61	61	65
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	86% (96%)	86% (96%)	92% (100%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	25
	Girls	35	36	34
	Total	60	63	59
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	85% (97%)	89% (99%)	80% (100%)
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	37	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	33	36
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	55	61	65
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	81% (87%)	90% (74%)	96% (92%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	33	36
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	55	61	65
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	81% (88%)	90% (75%)	96% (92%)
	National	73% (72%)	74% (74%)	82% (82%)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	428	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	37	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	9	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	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***

### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	26.6

### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	181

### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.6
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	1027294
Total expenditure	901134
Expenditure per pupil	1795
Balance brought forward from previous year	26561
Balance carried forward to next year	126160

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	563
Number of questionnaires returned	248

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	55	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	57	4	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	60	11	2	8
The teaching is good.	44	52	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	55	20	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	46	1	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	22	49	19	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	31	52	9	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	58	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	44	13	4	21



## **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**

79 The school admits children to part-time places in the nursery in September in the academic year in which they will be four years of age. They transfer to reception classes in the following September. At the time of the inspection there were 58 children in the nursery and 75 in three reception classes. The majority of children begin nursery with standards below those expected for their age. Throughout the nursery and reception classes the teaching is good and children make good progress. An increasing number of children do not speak English at home, but they are well supported and make good progress. Children enter Year 1 with average standards of attainment in communication, language and literacy. Standards in mathematical development are above average. The co-ordinator is new in post and has worked hard to improve planning, using national guidelines, to ensure that children build on what they already know. The indoor curriculum is well balanced across all six areas of learning, however the outdoor curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is because the outdoor area is not sufficiently developed. The school has rightly identified that children have too few opportunities for learning outdoors.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

80 Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is at least good and contributes to the positive attitude children have to their work. The majority work in small groups with limited adult support. Staff welcome parents and carers with their children into the nursery each day, so children quickly choose an activity and settle to play. Children work with different adults during the day; they are confident and easily engage adults into conversation. Teachers encourage children to talk about their weekend; birthdays are well celebrated. These activities help each child to feel special. Through good example from staff, children begin to establish good relationships and friendships with others, as they play together. Teachers are consistent in the way they handle children. They explain clearly so children are aware of right and wrong. One child in the nursery explained to another that 'You have to share because it is nice'. Teachers' expectations are high and behaviour is very good. Children line up sensibly when moving around the building; they look after equipment by helping to tidy away. Children have jobs to do each day, including taking the registers to the school office. Planning in both nursery and reception classes is well balanced so that the teachers direct children for some activities and support them to make choices about what they want to do. The range of activities is good in reception classes, however the lack of storage equipment in the nursery means that sometimes the range is not as good as it could be. Children have good opportunities to respond to religious and cultural events as they occur throughout the year. Reception children perform a lion dance to celebrate Chinese New Year and invite nursery children to watch. Children are fortunate to work and play alongside those of many differing cultures and beliefs; staff are good role models and encourage all children to become aware and respectful of the needs of others. Children are encouraged to care for nature. They feed fish and nurture bulbs and seeds they have planted. Staff take time to teach children to become personally independent. They learn to remove and put on their coats in the nursery and successfully undress and dress themselves for physical activity in reception classes.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

81 Teaching and progress in communication, language and literacy are good. Staff in the nursery are good role models and work very well with small groups of children to support their speaking and listening skills especially during circle time. Some children talk extensively about their

news, others use short phrases to express their ideas. In reception classes, teachers challenge children to explain what they are doing. All children are confident enough to speak in front of a group of friends. There is a good range of activities available for children to practise and improve their vocabulary. For example, role-play in both reception and nursery is varied over the year and there is a finger puppet theatre to support language development. There are well-planned sessions for children to enjoy and share books with adults in reception classes. A parent regularly helps in the nursery and reads stories to children. The book area is popular. All children show genuine interest in stories, have good access to books, and know how to handle them correctly. However, the range of books used in reception classes to teach reading is limited; some are in poor condition. The scheme lacks inspiration and does not offer children chances to predict what might happen next or to use picture clues to guess what is happening. When a reception child was asked if he liked the reading scheme book he said 'No it's just a reading book'. Staff read interesting stories to children on a daily basis and this helps improve their vocabulary. Most children recognise their name and have the opportunity to self-register each day. In reception classes most write their name from memory. Reception teachers give good emphasis to the teaching of letter sounds and simple words. They make learning interesting by planning games for children to play, so many recognise first and last sounds in words. Some write their news and greetings cards, showing clear letter formation. Nursery children are familiar with several songs and rhymes and teachers give clear emphasis to the recognition of patterns and syllables in words to help with early reading skills. In the nursery children learn to express their ideas through painting and mark making. Throughout the nursery and reception classes early writing skills are well included into play activities to fully consolidate learning

## **Mathematics**

82 In mathematics teaching is good and this affects the good progress children make. Teachers in the nursery make good use of rhymes and songs to help children become aware of numbers increasing and decreasing; for example they sing songs about elephants, reaching up to 10 in number. In reception classes teachers give children ideas about how to count back from a given number and how to count on from any number up to 21. They hold up fingers on both hands, stick them together and count how many now. Activities provided are very practical, so learning is fun and children's understanding is deepened. For example, they count animals in two sets of transparent bags and find out how many there are altogether. They use dough to put the correct number of spots on ladybirds. Children learn to write numbers and find the total. Some children solve problems by finding two sets of animals which total 5. Most write their answers showing good number formation. In the nursery children learn about size through well-planned role-play based on the story of The Three Bears. They learn to recognise differences in shapes and to sort and match objects. Children understand positional vocabulary and can place a toy above or below a table on request. Children in reception classes make and repeat mathematical patterns and consolidate their learning into workbooks. They recognise and name flat shapes.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

83 Children make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers plan activities such as planting bulbs and seeds indoors and in the garden so children become aware of changes in plant life through direct observation. Staff encourage nursery children to talk about the hyacinth during snack time. The wonderful smell permeates the room. Children play with sand and seashells; in the water tray they use water wheels and know what makes them turn. Nursery children make porridge for the Three Bears and see what happens when oats are exposed to heat. In reception classes they experiment with raindrops to see how the ripples react in puddles. They fill balloons with water and freeze them to find out what happens. Children enjoy building; they make a farmyard for animals and models with junk materials. They learn to cut shapes, spread glue and

choose the right type of materials and shapes for their models. Children use computers everyday and games focus on painting, reading and numbers. In an excellent lesson in a reception class, the teacher used cards with computer symbols to teach the whole class how to use a new game. The method of demonstrating clearly and asking children to help at each stage resulted in children knowing exactly what to do by the end of the session. Staff know children well and discuss events and people from home. Birthdays are celebrated and photos of how children looked as babies help nursery children recognise the passing of time in their lives. Children become aware of the environment in which they work and play. Nursery children make good use of the school grounds and the hall for some assemblies. Reception children visit Jesmond Dene, Warkworth Castle and the beach. They find out about the weather and how it affects them through well-planned topics. Children have a good chance to consider cultural differences in their own community as they celebrate Chinese New Year by making lion puppets.

### **Physical development**

84 In physical development children make good progress. Children in reception classes move spontaneously in a large area and develop an awareness of their space and the space of others. In a very good lesson, the teacher made good use of a drum to encourage children to move at different speeds and improve body control. Teachers make very good use of small equipment to teach children to balance objects on different parts of the body. Nursery children use a range of wheeled apparatus and they learn to use their feet to push and pull and to negotiate around others. However the area outside is narrow and this creates a traffic jam if children pedal at different speeds. Children develop fine finger skills by using the range of tools and equipment. They have access to commercial construction equipment and learn to push and pull to join two pieces together. Most children make good progress in the way they handle paintbrushes, scissors and pencils. They manipulate malleable materials, such as dough as they play. The school is a Healthy School and teachers prepare fruit snacks and milk for nursery children. All children learn the importance of having regular exercise.

### **Creative development**

85 Children make good progress in creative development. They explore colour as they paint and create pictures using a variety of textures. The teaching of music is particularly strong and children beat complicated rhythms using chopsticks and instruments when dancing the lion dance. They learn to create and change sounds to match movements. Staff encourage children in their creativity and show how much they value their efforts by displaying their work well and by arranging for children to perform in assemblies. There is a broad range of instruments available for children. There are a good variety of activities planned to encourage imaginative play, such as the home of the Three Bears in the nursery and the tents in reception classes. Planned activities, such as making porridge help children develop an awareness of their senses as they smell and taste their produce.

## **ENGLISH**

86 By the age of seven, standards meet national expectations in speaking and listening and reading and broadly match national expectations in writing, although standards in writing are weaker. This represents good achievement for these pupils from when they first enter school. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are similar to those found at the previous inspection, but the progress pupils make is better, particularly in reading.

87 By the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening meet national expectations and are above national expectations in both reading and writing. This represents very good achievement against prior attainment. Standards have been improved since the previous inspection and pupils now

achieve much better standards in their reading. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress against the targets set for them.

88 Standards are good because of the consistently good and often very good quality of teaching English. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, very good relationships with pupils and have very good pupil management skills. Classrooms are well organised and teachers and learning support staff promote very good learning attitudes. Such consistency throughout the school ensures pupils of all abilities are taught basic skills thoroughly and this has a very positive effect on their learning.

89 The school has tackled issues from the previous inspection well. The quality of teaching ensures that all pupils make good progress. Standards in reading are much improved. Weaknesses in the school library have been overcome and the school now has a well-organised and frequently used library, which pupils use to support their learning using a good range of research skills. The school has made good strides in improving the quality and quantity of books used in literacy lessons throughout the school, but many of the reading books which pupils take home are old and uninspiring.

90 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are similar to those typically found. The school has addressed the issue from the previous inspection, when it was judged that not enough lesson time was given to speaking and listening. The teaching of speaking and listening skills is now consistently good and often very good. The initial part of each lesson is used well to extend the vocabulary of pupils and to give them an opportunity to explain their thoughts. Good examples of this are seen in each year group, for example in Year 1, one teacher used questions to target specific pupils who were less confident. In this lesson, showing the good liaison between teaching staff and learning support staff, those pupils with special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language were well supported by the learning support teacher. This ensured that all pupils were well provided for and made equally good progress. Teachers do not rush pupils when they attempt to answer questions, but help and guide them to use correct vocabulary and expressions. Younger pupils show good listening skills when listening to a story or when listening to the views and opinions of others. This represents good development of personal and social skills as pupils learn to respect the views of others.

91 Older pupils are confident in their use of oral skills to explain their thoughts. For example higher attaining pupils in Year 5 gave an effective oral synopsis of “The Highwayman” poem, with many pupils confidently taking part in a question and answer exercise to dramatically improvise the Highwayman questioning the ostler at the inn about the death of Bess. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 are given confidence to develop speaking and listening skills by their teacher. He uses a good range of strategies to engage their interest and gives them confidence to use more challenging vocabulary.

92 By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are similar to those typically found, but higher attaining pupils do well and many achieve the higher levels in national tests. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their reading and as a result, make good progress against the individual targets set for them. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported well by support staff. Their progress is carefully monitored to ensure the development of technical reading skills and comprehension skills. By the end of Year 6, standards are better than those found normally. Pupils in Year 6 confidently identify a favourite author and correctly use the term “genre” when identifying their favourite types of stories. They discuss their reading intelligently and have good skills when reading unfamiliar words. Many pupils are members of a local library and go frequently with family members. The school makes effective use of the local library for Year 3 pupils, who visit the library frequently and are taught library skills by the library staff. All pupils are confident in choosing books from the school library, with older pupils clearly explaining how the library is organised using the Dewey number system.

93 The teaching of basic skills in reading during literacy lessons is usually very good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use a good range of literature in the classroom to promote a love of reading and good technical skills. In a Year 5 class of higher attaining pupils, their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of authors is impressive. Many pupils in the school show appreciation of poetry, showing a good depth of knowledge in the differences between haiku, limericks and narrative poetry. Reading records are thorough in that they give teachers sound knowledge of what pupils have read, but they are currently not used well enough to set individual reading targets.

94 By the age of seven, standards in writing are satisfactory, but even higher attaining pupils do not achieve the higher levels in national tests and do less well overall than they do in reading. The school has recognised this weakness and has introduced new resources and new strategies to tackle the problem. Teachers provide a good range of writing experiences for younger pupils and show them, by good examples, how to sequence a story correctly. In many lessons, this was seen to be effective and pupils made good progress. Teachers are using information and communication technology skills well to promote writing skills, for example in one Year 2 class, pupils used an interactive smartboard to write text and choose graphics to increase their understanding of story writing.

95 By the age of 11, very good progress has been made and standards are above those typically found. The consistent quality of good and very good teaching, the use of interesting resources, the developing effective use of information and communication technology skills are all making a very positive impact on the writing skills pupils display. In Year 3, for example, in a class of higher attaining pupils, the teacher took time and involved all pupils in writing a traditional folk tale. Pupils were taught good sentence construction, ways to manipulate words to add effect and how to choose adjectives to enliven their writing. Pupils were engrossed in this exercise and produced good quality writing by the end of the lesson. In Year 6, a class of lower attaining pupils, although they had weak handwriting skills, constructed a story opening with interesting characters, using an interactive smart-board. Some effective, imaginative writing had emerged by the end of the lesson. Weaknesses in handwriting skills are present throughout the school and the subject co-ordinator is tackling this weakness by the introduction of a new handwriting scheme, but this will take time to show effects.

96 All teachers are skilful in developing good literacy skills through other subjects and this can be seen particularly well in the writing of reports and accounts in history and geography. Work is generally presented well, with good attention to correct spelling and punctuation. The use of information and communication technology skills to support learning in English is good and developing rapidly. Most teachers are confident in their skills and are using new resources to engage the interest of pupils, challenge higher attaining pupils and support those pupils who have special educational needs.

97 The quality of marking is satisfactory, but in some instances, work is marked too positively with just a tick or “good” and this gives no indication to the pupil what they do well and what they must do to improve their work. Some individual writing targets are given, but there is no whole school approach to this, so their effect is not as good as it could be.

98 An experienced teacher, who has a good grasp of the standards being attained throughout the school, leads the subject effectively. As a result of good leadership and teaching, the issues raised in the previous inspection have been tackled well. Very good systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and this has ensured that all staff teach English well. The quality of training, for both teaching and non-teaching staff is good and this has resulted in teachers being very skilful in teaching English during the literacy hour. They use good

opportunities in other subjects to extend literacy skills. Teachers use a good range of standardised tests to assess progress and it is clear that teachers know their pupils very well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

99 Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is very good. Improvements in standards, teaching, leadership and management since the last inspection are good.

100 Standards in mathematics are consistently high across the school. All pupils do as well as they can. Pupils in each year group, from Year 1 to Year 6, including the majority of those with special educational needs, attain at least the expected standard for their age. Those pupils with English as an additional language generally achieve as well as other pupils. Boys and girls perform equally well. Those pupils gifted in mathematics are appropriately challenged and attain very high standards. Performance in national tests reflects the standard of the work seen.

101 Pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Very effective teaching boosts pupils' confidence during short, daily sessions of mental work, conducted at a very brisk pace and pupils learn thoroughly basic skills and knowledge of the subject. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils achieve the standard expected of seven year olds and a significant number of them achieve above it.

102 In Year 2, most pupils have a thorough understanding of numbers to 100, and higher. They use successful methods of mental calculation when adding and subtracting numbers. During a lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils confidently devised methods to find pairs of numbers that add up to 20, 50 or 100. Equally, in another class of Year 2 pupils, they readily add and subtract using units of analogue and digital time and calculate which month or day it will be in, for instance, six days or five months time. They know multiples of numbers 2 and 5, and swiftly recall the multiplication tables of the numbers. Metres and centimetres are chosen appropriately and confidently to measure items in the classroom and themselves. Work in mental mathematics is completed with very good levels of accuracy. Most pupils use a range of mathematical terms, such as, 'minus' and 'subtract' confidently. They represent neatly, on simple graphs, data they have collected and recorded in tally charts. They know the names of common shapes in both two and three dimensions, and describe well some of their basic properties.

103 By working through carefully structured practical activities and frequent, very well-paced discussion, pupils in Year 1 effectively build on what they learned in the reception class. Systematic and thorough teaching enables pupils to acquire a firm understanding of counting and ordering appropriate ranges of numbers. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils were challenged well and acquired very good mental strategies for accurate calculations. They listened well to their teacher and explained their answers clearly. The engaging, fun way of teaching difficult ideas works extremely well and, as a result, all pupils make excellent progress in confidently arranging and using numbers up to a 100. This exceeds what is normally expected of pupils of this age.

104 Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Through skilful teaching they acquire overall very good levels of confidence and accuracy in much of what they do. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learn to draw and measure angles. They are familiar with the names and basic properties of some common shapes and recognise them in every day situations. Whereas, in Year 5 for instance, pupils know that a square has four lines of symmetry.

105 By Year 6, pupils' overall attainment is well above the standard expected of 11 year olds. A significant number of pupils achieve very high standards in Years 5 and 6. Very good planning together with highly effective application of the National Numeracy Strategy ensures that pupils of all abilities always have work that challenges them. Learning is systematic and pupils acquire a suitable

range of skills and knowledge in arithmetic, geometry and data-handling. They have a very good grasp of arithmetical processes. For example, they understand the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages. Higher attainers make accurate inequality statements, such as,  $\frac{4}{5} > \frac{3}{4}$  and give reasons. They can multiply two digits by two digits accurately and do two step calculations, for example  $(48 \div 8) \times 7$ . Pupils gain a secure grasp of elementary geometry. For example, 'a quadrilateral with equal diagonals is a rectangle'. They know effective ways of recording and interpreting data in graphs. Pupils solve appropriate problems in everyday contexts, for example, currency values and exchange rates. Higher attaining pupils are challenged exceptionally well by teachers who suitably extend the work being done by their classmates, and by working with a regular visitor to the school who holds two separate sessions a week for ten pupils in Year 5 and ten in Year 6. They learned about ancient Greek mathematicians and the need to look at structures in patterns. A very well constructed lesson led to pupils organising their thinking logically as they worked through the session. By the end of the lesson, they realised that they could save time by 'sifting' information rapidly to find patterns and concluded that prime numbers - apart from the number 2 - are always odd. The teaching encouraged a fascination for mathematics, inspired the pupils and was an excellent opportunity to feed their appetite for mathematics.

106 Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress as a result of detailed planning by teachers that matches well pupils' needs and ensures support assistants and the English as an Additional Language teacher have a clear and meaningful role. This enables such pupils to do work that is similar to that of their classmates.

107 Teaching is very good overall. Around a third is excellent. In the best lessons, very good subject knowledge, combined with very high expectations of what pupils can do and exceptionally effective teaching methods motivate pupils and enables them to thoroughly acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. No time is lost from the swift start to the end of lessons. No opportunity is lost to challenge pupils of all abilities - or to make the subject fun. The underlying strength of all the teaching is in the thorough and systematic teaching of mental methods of calculation and the swift recall of number facts. Teachers quickly identify errors and deal effectively with misunderstandings or half-remembered learning. The direct teaching of problem solving is good and is very good with older pupils in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils' work shows progression from mental calculation to informal and standard written methods. Pupils learn to approximate and estimate effectively, thereby gaining a good feel for the likely answer. For example, in a Year 6 upper set, during a session of mental mathematics, pupils used these skills to rapidly provide an 'about right answer', and to explain their methods.

108 Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to ask excellent questions to probe pupils' learning and to provide alternative methods to help pupils' understanding. Particular care is taken to ensure pupils understand the meaning of the subject vocabulary. Pupils' understanding is further reinforced by successfully linking associated ideas, such as, the equivalence of fractions, percentages, decimals, and in relating such ideas to everyday situations. For example, using world and local weather forecasts, charts and the meteorology site on the computer, pupils learned to add and subtract negative and positive numbers by relating them to temperature scales in degrees Celsius. Plenary sessions invariably provide an excellent recap and consolidation of the intended learning.

109 Information and communication technology is used successfully to enhance learning, notably in developing pupils' skill in handling data and in improving their understanding of geometry. Pupils use mathematics well in other subjects such as in science and in design and technology, particularly in measurements and handling data. Homework is used well, regularly and flexibly to enhance and consolidate pupils' learning. Pupils see the purpose and complete homework well. For example, in a

Year 5 lower attainers set, homework is often based on real life situations and directly related to work for the following day. Pupils were asked to find information about local and national temperatures from newspapers before their lesson on adding and subtracting negative and positive numbers.

110 Pupils' response to the teaching they receive is very good. They have very positive attitudes, enjoy mathematics and learn to work like mathematicians. Because of the skill and enthusiasm evident in the teaching, pupils are always eager to work hard, complete tasks set, answer questions and want to know more. Thorough teaching builds on pupils' prior knowledge so that they are very aware of what they know, understand and can do and why. They match - and love - the very brisk pace in lessons set by teachers. Most present their written work very neatly and can clearly explain their ways of working out mental calculations. In doing so, they use mathematical terms accurately. Teachers have calm and effective ways of managing the behaviour of pupils very successfully. Praise and rewards are used effectively - often more maths is the reward! As a result, behaviour in lessons is very good overall. Relationships are excellent. This is exceptional as all pupils from Years 2 to 6 work in ability sets and so are with different classmates and teachers. Pupils enjoy sharing humour with teachers. They work very well independently, in pairs and in small and whole class groups.

111 The leadership and management of mathematics are very good. Monitoring of standards and of teaching is thorough. Information is fed back to teachers and leads to further guidance in problem solving, for example. Teachers know their pupils very well. The assessment of pupils' progress is done in a variety of helpful ways, and marking is thorough and constructive. Assessments are used well to influence planning and provide teaching and learning targets. Class assistants are involved in planning work and are clear of the starting point and the expected outcomes. The subject has a very good range of well-organised resources.

## **SCIENCE**

112 Pupils' attainment in Year 2 match national expectations and in Year 6 it is above the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well. It was a similar picture at the time of the last inspection. However, since the previous inspection there have been good improvements made in teaching and approaches to learning in science. There is now an emphasis in all lessons seen on an investigative approach, which allows pupils' to learn from direct first hand experiences in a practical and scientific way. Pupils apply the skills of scientific enquiry to gain knowledge about life processes and living things, about materials and their properties, and about physical forces. Since the start of this academic year, there are now whole school assessment procedures in place, which track both individual and groups of pupils' progress and assists with planning. The co-ordinator also monitors planning and teaching each term to ensure continuity and progression. In addition, Year 6 teachers undertake an analysis of statutory test papers, to identify strength and weaknesses of how well pupils have performed. The school has made effective improvements since the last inspection, and has successfully addressed all the issues raised.

113 By the age of seven, pupils have good scientific knowledge and understanding. They are aware of the characteristics of a fair test. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils realised that different materials have different properties, which allows them to be squashed, bent and stretched, and you need to observe closely to understand and record the reason why. Higher attaining pupils in the class could confidently classify materials under the correct heading, whilst lower attaining pupils needed some adult guidance when arriving at their decisions. Pupils in this age-range are also confident at handling equipment and undertaking investigations independently. This was seen in a



Year 2 lesson, when pupils handled battery holders, bulb holders and crocodile clips confidently to see if they could make a bulb light and create a circuit. Higher attaining pupils in the class could make two bulbs light, and explain reason why the brightness of the two bulbs were dimmer than just using one bulb.

114 In the Year 3 to Year 6 age-range, pupils develop their scientific understanding of predicting, observing and recording well as they move through the phase. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson could explain why when more sugar is added to water it will not dissolve. High attaining pupils in the class could record and explain what was happening in their test tube when more sugar and water was added and shaken, whilst lower attaining pupils needed adult prompts to make connections between the amount of water in a test tube when more sugar was added. Most of the pupils in the class could apply their previous knowledge of working in materials and were confident in handling the equipment in the experiment. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils knew how to conduct a fair test on air resistance by investigating and recording how long it took for a parachute to land. Pupils realised that all the variables such as dropping the parachute from a desk top, needed to be timed accurately to give a meaningful reading in their particular group investigation.

115 All the pupils in the school have very positive attitudes towards their work in science. In all lessons seen pupils were well behaved and keen to participate in lessons offered to them, for example, pupils in a Year 5 class investigating the rotation of the earth around the sun to create night and day. Pupils also co-operate well in group activities, for example pupils in a Year 3 lesson classifying whether metals were magnetic or non-magnetic. The development of scientific vocabulary such as 'circuit', 'resistance' and 'rotate' and speaking and listening skills makes a significant contribution to the development of literacy skills. Also pupils' working in group investigations helps in their social development.

116 The overall quality of teaching seen is good. The main strengths of the teaching are based on good direct teaching based on secure subject knowledge. This engages all the pupils in discussions of the ideas being taught so that they are fully aware of what they are learning. All teachers ensure that pupils are engaged in scientific investigations which take their learning forward. In all lessons seen there was good rapport between staff and pupils', which allows lessons to proceed smoothly and all pupils achieve well. Another good feature seen in all lessons is the good use of resources in experiments, for example use of different materials in a Year 1 lesson. Teachers also use questioning and intervention well to gauge the extent of the pupils' understanding and knowledge. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils identified the position of Newcastle in summer and winter on a globe using a torch beam, and were asked why it is hotter in the summer. Although information and communication technology is used to support learning, for example, in Year 2 and Year 5, it is not used consistently across the school. Marking of pupils work is generally well developed, with the better examples taking pupils' learning forward.

117 The leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and committed to raising pupils' attainment and the school's performance in the subject. Resources for the subject are adequate and are stored centrally and are accessible to all staff. There are effective links with the local high school, and there are good links with a local company, which provides the school with detergents when pupils work on stains and materials. Displays around the school help maintain interest in science, such as one on electricity in a Year 2 classroom.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

118 Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve steadily, including those with special educational needs

and those who do not speak English at home. Pupils behave well in all lessons and the subject encourages their personal development very well. In lessons pupils are often given the chance to evaluate their art work and the work of others. The feed-back given by the class is encouraging; sometimes they clap in appreciation. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning as they gain in confidence. Pupils say they enjoy art and feel pleased with themselves when they have completed a piece of work. In lessons they readily discuss their ideas and show pride in what they have produced. Sketchbooks are developing and these enable pupils to plan and reflect on their work and the subject is being influenced more by new technology. Teaching is good overall and teachers effectively plan lessons together for pupils of the same year group who are in different classes. This ensures all pupils have equality of opportunity. Teachers share their expertise and reflect upon what worked well in the previous lesson and what could be improved in future lessons.

119 Pupils' make steady progress as they move through the school. Infant pupils examine a good range of natural objects and discuss different viewpoints before sketches are attempted. They use a good variety of textures and techniques to illustrate buildings. They learn the techniques needed and the way to use tools when working with clay. They make plaques with patterns that are well designed to match the individual shape. Junior pupils examine relationships and copy the work of famous artists using different media, including pencil line and charcoal. Pupils choose an interesting character and design a special chair for that person. They mix and blend colour using chalk and draw detailed portraits. By Year 6 pupils begin to get the proportions right when drawing the human figure in motion, such as running.

120 A strength of the teaching is the way teachers are well prepared for their lessons. This means that pupils move smoothly from the lesson introduction to their work, with no time being wasted. For example in Year 2 teachers had fruit set out ready for pupils to draw. Teachers encourage pupils to look closely through magnifying glasses before they begin their work. This helps pupils develop observational skills to get the proportions right in their drawings. In good lessons teachers demonstrate techniques of hatching, smudging and using fine and broad lines with charcoal, so pupils produce work of a good standard showing shading and depth. Teachers show pupils' designs and sketches to encourage discussions. This helps pupils consider their own work and how they might improve or modify previous attempts. In all lessons teachers give good advice to individuals and monitor their work effectively. Pupils' learning benefits from the way teachers link art with other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 say that they use art when making Power Point presentations and when making artefacts in the style of the Ancient Greeks. They draw pictures to depict how they view God and make dams and reservoirs, using clay. A weakness in teaching is that teachers do not always make enough use of the work of artists to use as examples and to illicit discussion.

121 The subject is soundly co-ordinated. The new scheme of work has been piloted in the school and the co-ordinator is making adjustments in light of staff discussions. She observes teaching and identifies gaps as points for development in the subject. The profile of the subject is being improved and pupils have visited the newly opened Baltic Art Centre and a local gallery. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to improve assessment of what pupils achieve at the end of a series of lessons. There is scope to improve the use of sketchbooks to track pupils' achievements by ensuring that pupils' consistently date their work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122 Due to timetabling arrangements during the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology. However, evidence to make a judgement on pupils' attainment was made available through an analysis of pupils' previously completed work, teacher's planning, and an evaluation of classroom displays and discussions with pupils and teachers. All the

evidence indicates that by the age of seven and 11 pupils are working at a level that is expected for their ages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are achieving well. This maintains the standards identified in the previous report.

123 Teachers' have good subject knowledge. They know and understand what is meant by the cycle of designing and making for a purpose, and then ensuring pupils' evaluate whether they have been successful. This was demonstrated by Year 2 pupils when they designed and made puppets using different materials and techniques. They had identified the materials they would need and sequenced the order in which they would construct their puppets. On completion they evaluated whether they had been successful and included comments in their evaluations such as "When I made the dress it did not work, but when I decorated it with hearts it came out brilliant." As pupils move through into the Year 3 and Year 6 age range, they build and develop on their skills and techniques already learnt. For example, in Year 4 pupils used their history topic as a stimulus to design and make Tudor purses. Pupils made a template from which they cut round material to make their purse the shape they wanted. They used the 'back stitch' method of stitching to hold their purses together. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and are always looking for ways to improve their models and acquire new skills. For instance, a pupil in a Year 6 class recoded in his evaluation that "diagonally placed pieces of card helps strengthen the shelter". Pupils also experience food technology, with Year 1 pupils producing face sandwich designs, and Year 3 pupils have designed and made sandwiches as part of their food technology project.

124 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors planning and observes colleagues teach on a termly basis. She also ensures that pupils' completed work including photographic evidence is compiled into a folder to show that pupils make progress as they move through the school. There is a policy, and planning follows national guidance. There are currently no whole school assessment procedures in place. Resources for the subject are good, they are stored centrally and are accessible to all staff. The co-ordinator is building up a stock of construction kits to use with pupils in Years 1 to 3 with which to develop their designing and making skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125 By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils reach standards expected for their age, they make good progress and achieve well from when they first enter school. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, but the school has improved the progress pupils make in both the infants and the juniors. This is because the quality of teaching is now consistently good. Those pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make similar good progress. The school plans the geography curriculum following national guidance and underpins this by providing a good range of visits. These visits use the local area well, providing pupils of all ages with an enriched curriculum, which extends their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. In lessons, pupils show good attitudes to learning, they are attentive, polite and their behaviour is usually good and often very good.

126 Teachers make effective links with other subjects where possible, for example good use is made of literacy skills as the pupils are encouraged to write notes and reports and present them well. Numeracy and information and communication technology skills are developed as pupils carry out local environmental surveys and record the data in a variety of ways. Pupils are encouraged to think in depth about local and wider environmental issues and their work shows a good depth of understanding. This has a positive effect on their social, moral and personal development.

127 The quality of teaching is good. Only two lessons were seen, but the work in pupils' books, in classrooms and around the school, show that pupils are taught a good range of geographical skills. For example, younger pupils in Year 2 learn about a Scottish island by using photographs, books, maps and atlases. They compare and contrast the housing, landscape and traffic in Newcastle to the island of Struay. In the two lessons seen in Year 4, teachers' good subject knowledge ensured that pupils learnt about a village in India in an interesting way. In discussion, pupils were able to show that they could use a large world map to locate the continent of India and then show on a smaller map, the location of the village of Chembakolli. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the lifestyle of the villages and can confidently talk about the similarities and differences between the children in India and their own experiences. Teachers plan their work well and in an improvement to the planning found in the previous inspection, provide good extension activities for higher attaining pupils. In some lessons however, activities are not so carefully planned for those pupils with special educational needs.

128 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator samples pupils' work throughout the school and monitors the quality of teaching and lesson planning. As a result, he has a clear view of the standards achieved by pupils in each year group. There are no formal assessment procedures in place and this was an issue for the school to develop at the previous inspection, but assessment procedures introduced by the Local Education Authority are presently under trial. Resources for the subject are good overall, but information and communication technology based geographical resources are not sufficient to support learning.

## **HISTORY**

129 Pupils' standards in history are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The standards are higher because the work is closely matched to pupils' different abilities. The careful checking in each class of how well pupils achieve helps in planning suitably demanding work. There is, however, no clear picture of achievement across the school. This does not help in planning work from year to year. The school has plans to implement a structured system to show the level of achievement throughout the school. All teachers build firmly on the foundations put down in the nursery and reception classes. This gives the pupils a secure historical base of knowledge and understanding. Teachers' marking tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work. This results in increased knowledge of historical facts and neat work. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She shares this enthusiasm with colleagues and pupils and makes history vibrant and interesting. The curriculum is interesting, rich and varied. The school makes very good use of local history; for example, pupils study the past and present history of Newcastle. They also have chances to see living history; for example, two musicians dressed as Tudors and played Tudor music during the week of the inspection. These, and many other, experiences further enrich the history curriculum.

130 All teachers make sure that all pupils have equal access to the history curriculum. They give unobtrusive and sensitive support to pupils who have English as an additional language. This ensures that the pupils understand what they are expected to learn and achieve standards similar to their classmates. Classroom support assistants work closely with the teachers. This ensures that, where they are assigned to a particular group of pupils such as pupils with special educational needs, the pupils make good progress in their learning. The teachers take care to include all pupils in question and discussion sessions; this increases pupils' ability to debate their own point of view.

131 By Year 2 most pupils make good progress in learning about, and understanding, past events. For example, a Year 2 pupil looks for reasons why Princess Elizabeth, later Queen Elizabeth 1, was crying. 'She loved to listen to music, ride her horse and read books. She couldn't because she was locked up in the Tower of London all by herself'. Careful questioning and the use of information and

communication technology reinforce and extend pupils' learning. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson. The teacher provided a range of books and a computer program for pupils to research the great fire of London. The summing up at the end of the lesson showed how well the pupils understood why the fire started. They also showed a good level of understanding why the houses were not re-built in wood. All the pupils were very interested in this work. They engaged in much animated discussion about the dangers of fire and its usefulness. This deepened their knowledge and understanding of safety issues as well as historical knowledge. The analysis of work shows that pupils of all abilities carry out independent research from first hand experience, books and information and communication technology. The higher attaining pupils have a very clear understanding of the problems Florence Nightingale had to overcome to be a nurse. They present clear accounts of the events leading up to the imprisonment of Princess Elizabeth. The lower ability pupils understand why Florence Nightingale wanted to be a nurse. 'To help poorer people'. All pupils make good progress in their learning. This reflects the consistently good quality of teaching. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection.

132 As pupils move into Year 3 their rate of progress is consistently good. This continues through into Year 6 and makes a positive contribution to the standards pupils achieve. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is consistent and gives clear information to help them improve. Careful teaching and the use of first hand experiences increases pupils' understanding of how past events influence the present. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn to understand the social and cultural issues of different times. Carefully structured and enthusiastic teaching grips the pupils' imagination and makes them want to learn. They use the previous week's experience of life in Victorian times to investigate the working conditions of children. The teacher's careful preparation of interesting and relevant resources makes the pupils want to find out why children had to work so hard. Pupils enjoy the discussions about moral issues for example, why managers falsified results. They are fascinated by the links with science; for example, why air shafts were needed in mines. The high standards that pupils achieve are the direct result of very skilful teaching. This good rate of learning continues in Year 6. Here, pupils engage in lively debate about the rights and wrongs of the battle of Salamis. The teacher uses questions very effectively to get pupils to see events from different points of view. This makes a positive contribution to the pupils' moral development.

133 The teacher makes very effective use of books and information and communication technology for pupils to carry out independent research. This increases the pupils understanding of how to find information. A notable factor of this good quality teaching is the relationships the teacher has with pupils. For example, 'You can sit at my desk' enables a disturbed pupil to work well and complete his work. The positive attitudes that all pupils have to their learning are a direct result of the good quality teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

134 Standards in information and communication technology exceed those expected for most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when standards by Year 2 and Year 6 were judged to be satisfactory. Progress since the previous inspection is very good. There is a significant improvement in the facilities and provision available to all pupils. The improved level of provision and increased teacher confidence is having a significant impact on standards. The improved teacher confidence is a direct result of the knowledge and enthusiasm of the subject leader. This is shared with all members of staff. Teachers and pupils share a vibrant excitement about the subject. This shows clearly in the very positive attitudes pupils of all abilities have to their work. All teachers are fully involved in the direct teaching of information and communication technology. They have a very good level of help from the subject leader and have also benefited from the government-funded training. The school has regular assistance from an information

and communication technician. This increases the teachers' confidence and expertise in using the machines. All teachers are confident in using Smartboards and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. There is an enthusiasm and commitment to improve standards in the subject from all staff.

135 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident and competent in the use of information and communication technology. They use the mouse and keyboard with confidence for a range of purposes, such as changing font and colour when writing stories or making pictures. All pupils, by Year 2, print out their own work independently and explain how to do it. They work well with a range of software and enjoy using their skills in other subjects such as history and art. The teachers make sure that pupils build on their skills. For example, in Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of vertical and horizontal lines to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. They know how to use the paint tool and quickly learn how to flood fill shapes. Skilful teaching and questioning involves all pupils and ensures they understand what they are doing.

136 Pupils continue to build on their skills as they move through the school. Very skilful teaching ensures that pupils understand what a clipboard is and how to cut and paste. Pupils use this in Year 4 to insert text to create posters. Careful teaching helps pupils to use sensing equipment accurately. One class has set up its own website, with sound, and is planning to provide animation. By Year 6 pupils enter data and use information well to produce charts and graphs and to interrogate their findings. They are confident in inserting text to create posters, booklets and newspapers. All pupils use the Internet to download information to support their work in other subjects. They are confident users of information and communication technology. Higher attaining pupils have above average skills in multimedia work and are adept at combining a range of information from differing sources.

137 All pupils have regular access to the computer suite and make rapid progress in developing their skills and techniques. The school gives all pupils regular time tabled information and communication technology lessons. These enable the pupils to increase their confidence, skills and techniques. The very good quality teaching, from Year 1 to Year 6, makes a positive contribution to the pupils' achievements and enthusiasm. Lesson planning is good and all teachers give pupils clear instructions in order to achieve the lesson objectives. This is a result of the training, help and guidance they receive from the subject leader. There is a good level of subject knowledge throughout the school and teachers have enough confidence to increase pupils' learning. All pupils are able to log on, save and print their work. Use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is developing rapidly. The purchase of additional Smartboards is a valuable addition to this development.

138 Progress is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The enthusiastic teaching ensures that all pupils are highly motivated to learn. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills effectively as they help and advise each other. They are eager to use the equipment and work well independently. Their ability to share equipment and work co-operatively is good, even if a member of staff is not near by. The subject leader checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly. This ensures that there is consistency across the school. Pupils' progress is checked systematically and each pupil has a portfolio of work showing achievement. This helps to plan future work. There is, however, no clear picture of achievement across the school. The school has plans to introduce a system of assessment to meet this need. Leadership and management of the subject are a high priority for the school. The subject improvement plan clearly focuses on improving information and communication technology provision and correctly identifies strengths in the subject and areas for development.

## **MUSIC**

139 Overall, the quality of provision in music is very good. Improvements in standards, teaching, leadership and management since the last inspection are good.

140 Pupils achieve well because of the high quality of learning opportunities provided for them. The success in this subject is because of the active commitment to providing extra and extended work out of class alongside the regular, systematic and thorough lessons taught by class teachers. As a result, most pupils from the ages of seven to 11 attain higher than expected standards. Pupils with talent in music are identified and given challenging work. Overall, younger pupils, those with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs, achieve well. Older pupils achieve very well because of their response to the high quality of opportunities provided for them.

141 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for this age group. They gain a satisfactory understanding of the main aspects of the subject. For example, pupils know the names of the percussion instruments and play them with good control. They understand pulse, rhythm and patterns of sounds, and they use simple graphic notation to compose and perform. Vocal sounds are used expressively to illustrate the story of the 'Hairy, Scary Castle' in Year 2, for example. They sing tunefully with a sense of shape and melody and sustain notes well. They choose sounds, and order and reorder them to improve compositions, reading their own notations. For example, Year 1 pupils competently show an understanding of duration of sounds and can select percussion instruments to show short and sustained sounds.

142 Throughout Years 3-6 pupils gain a very good knowledge of the names and sounds of a variety of instruments and can identify them in listening to pre-recorded music. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were wholly engrossed listening to live music played by the Local Education Authorities music service and consolidated their knowledge of instruments and duration 'It's how long or short a sound lasts'. The quality of the singing from the 'Singing Hinnies' (pupils from Years 3-5) is exceptionally high, reaching a level that Year 10 pupils would be proud of. Very good understanding of diction, posture, phrasing and breathing led to expressive and haunting singing. They appreciate that, for example, 'Your voice sounds rounder when you smile'.

143 Overall, attainment by the end of Year 6 is above the expected level in lessons and often well above this in extra and extended music sessions. In a Year 6 lesson, for instance, pupils explored musical processes using information and communication technology, with a CD linked to a Smartboard. These resources enhanced the lesson and enabled the pupils to have a clear understanding. Pupils' work purposefully and maturely and attain high standards. They have a clear understanding of how sound is layered to create effect and moods and can use graphic notation to relate this to their own compositions. They listened intently to Britten's 'Storm Interlude', for example, and described images very well: 'It's like bad dreams'. 'Sieges in castles'. 'It's like the eye of a storm - that bit in the middle'. Pupils have a very good knowledge of, and familiarity with, different types and styles of music from both their own and different world heritages.

144 The teaching of music is impressive. It is thoroughly taught by class teachers, guided by a national scheme, and by the use of excellent resources. This allows all teachers to have confidence, whatever their personal expertise. Specialist teachers from a range of outside providers make distinctive contributions in helping the school to improve the quality and standards of music. Visiting performers complement the teaching and add to the range of genres and styles including rock, early and classical music. A small, but very well equipped and organised, music room holds some good resources and is used for instrumental tuition. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use the information and communication technology suite very well for music. Trolleys are well organised to provide teachers with all they need for lessons - essential in this large school. All lessons seen were practical, demanding and motivating. The confidence, knowledge and enthusiasm of teachers generate a very

good response from pupils across the school. In all lessons children and pupils consolidated their skills, gained more understanding of the subject and were ready to move to the next stage of learning.

145 The impact of the teaching is reflected in pupils' high levels of learning, particularly in Years 3-6. Thorough teaching in Years 1 and 2 gives a good grounding for the very good standards attained by most older pupils. The well-planned curriculum ensures that all pupils take part in a regular programme of very good musical opportunities. Visiting specialist teachers for pupils aged seven to 11 enhance and extend both learning and attainment through instrumental tuition for violin, flute, clarinet, trombone, baritone, guitar, keyboard and whistle. Pupils listen to, appreciate, enjoy, explore and perform a wide range of music including that of many different cultures. During class and extra lessons many pupils are always actively involved in creating music, listening to, and improving their performance. Pupils' attitudes to music lessons are very positive. They expect to work hard and seriously. They behave very well, maintain good concentration and retain a fair amount of what they are taught. Older pupils show increasing maturity in the way they approach their lessons and respond to questions and suggestions, are eager to improve and they attain high standards. A striking indication of their attitudes is that 72 per cent of pupils in Years 2-6 opt to be involved in an impressive range of out of class music sessions.

146 Management and leadership of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is rightly proud of the school's achievements in music. She is hard working, enthusiastic, well - qualified, talented and confident and has clear plans for the continued development of the subject. In addition, there are other members of staff with expertise. Resources are very good and very well organised. Although pupils with an aptitude or a talent are carefully identified and are provided with good opportunities to extend their competence further, there is insufficient rigour in the assessment, monitoring and recording of what pupils know, understand and can do to give teachers an accurate base on which to plan lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147 The school has maintained the good standards in physical education since the last inspection. The broad range of physical activities on offer to pupils is a strength of the school.

148 In a Year 1 class pupils work well when they show wide, narrow and spiky body shapes. They are able to work independently and with a partner and have good opportunities to reflect and offer views on their own and others' performance to move the work forward. All lessons begin with a brisk warm-up and end with a cool-down and pupils are able to explain why it is so important to do this. For example, pupils in the Year 1 class explain that they feel warmer and can feel their heart beating faster after the warm-up.

149 Good progress is maintained in the juniors. Year 3 pupils swim at the local pool and many swim confidently and well showing a range of swimming strokes. However, by the age of 11, a minority of pupils have not attained the expected standard. Year 5 pupils show very good skills when they develop individual balances before they intertwine with a partner to create new balances. By skilfully using demonstration and structuring the lesson so that the pupils faced increasing challenges, the teaching ensured that the pupils were working at the full extent of their capabilities. Pupils speak confidently about what they are doing and offer each other helpful criticism, which is used to make effective improvements. Teachers have very good organisational skills and enjoy very positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their physical educational lessons and respond well to instruction and praise to improve their performance. For instance, in a Year 6 basketball lesson, pupils showed great awareness of tactical play when they discussed their positioning for defence or attack.



150 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers focus very clearly on the skills to be taught and developed and ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and supported. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good and they manage pupils well. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond very well to them. Lessons are rigorous and provide a good range of activities. Particular strengths are teachers' enthusiasm and lively approach, which ensures that lessons move with very good pace. As a result, pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They clearly enjoy the activities planned for them and respond with enthusiasm. They co-operate very well with each other and follow teachers' instructions carefully. Pupils are very keen to demonstrate their skills and sensitively appraise each other's performance in order to improve it. In addition, they are encouraged to praise and respect good performance from other pupils.

151 The deputy head teacher, as co-ordinator gives very good leadership to the subject. He sets an excellent example and is extremely well supported by colleagues in providing an extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities. These include badminton, soccer, netball, rugby, cricket, athletics and swimming. In addition, the school benefits from the excellent links with its feeder secondary school when a physical education teacher visits one afternoon each week to work with pupils and staff. The school has recently been successful in gaining the Activemark award. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to acquire additional skills in outdoor educational activities during a residential visit to the Lake District. The work of the co-ordinator has had a significant impact upon the skills and knowledge of the pupils and the enthusiasm of staff and pupils for sporting activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

152 Standards in religious education have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils reach levels above those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus when compared with pupils of seven and 11. This is because teaching is good in all classes. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and those with special educational needs and pupils who do not speak English at home are supported well and make good progress. The school follows Newcastle-upon-Tyne's Agreed Syllabus and uses additional ideas from various sources. Planning has improved and schemes of work have been updated. These show teachers exactly what to teach in each year group ensuring that pupils improve their knowledge and understanding as they move up the school.

153 In the infant classes, religious education helps pupils to make sense of their own experiences. For example, when learning about Moses, pupils think about special jobs they have to do and compare it with the special job he had. They learn about symbolism in faiths such as the Seder Meal. In junior classes pupils find out about human qualities through the lives of Mother Teresa and Gandhi. They learn about major faiths including Judaism and Islam and the importance of holy books including the Qu'ran. Pupils' work is neatly presented with good illustrations to help their knowledge improve. Very good emphasis is given to discussion. This helps pupils develop their understanding about the way in which people are influenced by faith to lead better lives.

154 A strength of the teaching is the way pupils are encouraged to discuss faith and spiritual issues and relate these to their everyday experiences. In Year 4 the teacher challenges children to think about the symbolism of water as a cleanser of body, mind and spirit. One pupil suggested that, 'baptism gives you another chance'. The teacher's very good knowledge about Judaism helps pupils in Year 2 to understand difficult ideas about the life of Esther. Pupils make very clear comparisons about good people and evil people in the Old Testament and one pupil said that, 'Hamman was evil to Esther as Pharaoh was to Moses.' They develop a good understanding of the symbolism around Purim. Teachers in Year 5 are good at encouraging pupils to consider how Jesus influenced and inspired people in his day. They consider the methods he used, based on the fact that most could not

read at that time. Pupils discuss and record ways in which Jesus would have worked if he lived today. Their ideas vary from vans carrying adverts to sending text messages.

155 The school is well supported by Vicar Michael who visits regularly to work with pupils in different age groups and to lead assemblies. A planned session in Year 6 offered pupils the chance to pose soul-searching questions for the Vicar based on the teachings of Jesus. For example they ask him explain what an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth means. His responses relate very clearly to the way they conduct their lives and give them much food for thought. The school takes pupils to visit places of worship including the Baptist Church and St Gabriel's Church. The co-ordinator has made a very good contact with the local mosque and some pupils have been fortunate enough to visit.

156 The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and offers good guidance to all staff. She monitors the subject by observing teaching and looking at pupils work. Gaps in provision are discussed and incorporated into future developments for the subject. The co-ordinator has rightly identified as a priority, the need to develop assessments and has devised a system to be introduced into the school.