

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LAYGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108672

Head teacher: Mr M Dixon

Reporting inspector: Mr R S Moseley  
16886

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 246811

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery, infant and juniors
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Laygate Lane South Shields
Postcode:	NE33 4JJ
Telephone number:	0191 4562470
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Ogilvie
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16886	Mr R S Moseley	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Education inclusion	The School's results and pupils' achievements
				How well are pupils taught?
				What should the school do to improve further?
14083	Mr A Anderson	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?
2041	Mrs V Reid	Team inspector	Art and design	
			Music	
			Religious education	
			The Foundation Stage	
88037	Mrs P Smith	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	
			English	
			Geography	
18819	Mr J Atkinson	Team Inspector	Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
			Information and communication technology	
32133	Mrs J Elton	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

			Design and technology	
			History	
			Citizenship	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Laygate Primary School is bigger than other primary schools, with 347 pupils on roll, consisting of 189 boys and 158 girls. This includes 58 children who attend part-time in the nursery. A well above average number of pupils, 60 per cent, are entitled to a free school meal. The school serves the local area. It consists of a very high proportion of local government housing and mixed social backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the nursery is extremely low. A high proportion of pupils at present, 25 per cent, join the school from other areas. Most of these pupils are lower attaining pupils. This can alter the level of attainment in different year groups. There are 84 pupils who have ethnic minority backgrounds. Of these, 82 pupils have English as an additional language, with 68 who are at an early stage of acquiring the language. Nine pupils have refugee status. The number of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs is 48 per cent, which is well above the national average. There are two pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, which is below average.

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

This is a successful school, which is held in high esteem by its parents. It has many good and some very good features. Almost all the teaching is good or better, with a significant amount that is very good. Although standards are below average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, this represents good achievement for the majority of pupils from their very low level of attainment on entry to the school. Higher attaining pupils, however are not achieving as well as they could in these three subjects. There is a good climate for learning and pupils have developed positive attitudes to their work. There are very good relationships in the school. The school is well led. However, there is insufficient focus in clearly identifying the priorities needed to raise standards further. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good, with a significant amount that is very good and is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- The provision for children in the nursery is very good.
- Extra-curricular activities are excellent.
- Standards in music are above average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Behaviour is very good and the pupils have developed good attitudes to learning, they have very good relationships with each other and with all the staff.
- The school cares for its pupils very well and the overall provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.
- The head teacher and key staff provide good leadership.

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

- Identifying the priorities needed to raise standards further in English, mathematics and science, especially for the higher attaining pupils.
- The support given to the special educational needs co-ordinator to allow more time for her to observe, advise and monitor the provision for these pupils.

- The use of computers to enhance learning across a wide range of subjects.

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



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. It has partially addressed most of the weaknesses noted in the last report and has improved in a number of other ways. Overall, the improvement has been satisfactory. With reference to the key issues in the last report, the school has extended assessment procedures and these are now judged to be very good. A number of subject leaders have observed lessons in their subjects in order to monitor the quality of teaching. More structured time has been given to developing the different components of English and, although standards remain at a similar level, this still represents good achievement for many pupils from their very low level of attainment on entry, which is now lower than at the time of the last inspection.

In addition, there has been a number of other good developments. For example, behaviour and attendance have improved, contact with minority ethnic families has improved with the appointment of a Bangla speaking assistant, the quality of teaching has strengthened significantly and extra-curricular activities are now excellent.

## 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	E	E	B
mathematics	E	E	D	B
science	E*	C	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well below average in English and science. In mathematics they were below average. When these results are compared to similar schools with a similar number of pupils who claim a free school meal, they show above average results in English and mathematics and average results in science. The results over the last few years have been very variable, this is mainly attributed to fluctuating numbers of pupils who enter the school from other areas. These pupils are mainly lower attaining pupils, which affects the overall results considerably. Nevertheless, the trend in the school's average in all three subjects has gone up in line with the national trend. The school did not meet the challenging targets it was set in 2002. The national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 indicates very low standards in writing, putting the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools. In reading and mathematics, standards were well below average. However, when these results are compared to similar schools, they indicate higher standards. On this comparison, the results in reading were well above average.

The inspection findings indicate that for this year's pupils in Year 6, standards have been maintained at below average in mathematics, but are now below average in science and English. All these standards indicate that, from their very low attainment on entry to the nursery, pupils are achieving well by the

time they leave the school. In Year 2, standards have improved in writing to well below average. Standards are also well below average in reading. In mathematics and science they are below average. Standards in literacy and numeracy are below average by the end of Year 6. The steady improvements in standards are mainly due to better quality teaching and learning. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 50 per cent in Year 6 and 60 per cent in Year 2. This depresses the school's performance. However, higher attaining pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work so they do not always progress as well as they might.

Standards in music are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils are achieving very well, especially in singing. In all other subjects, attainment is average and pupils are generally achieving well. In religious education, attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with the requirements of the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools and pupils achieve well. The school is likely to attain the targets that have been set. These targets were appropriate. Pupils who have special educational needs and those from refugee families, make good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language and who are learning English make very good progress.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Almost all pupils are eager to learn and give of their best at all times. They are responsive and show good attitudes in all they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. This is a major strength of the school. Pupils develop a great deal of confidence and relationships are very good. Relationships at all levels are very good.
Attendance	Good. The school has worked very hard to improve the attendance since 2002 when it was below average.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. There is also a significant amount that is very good and some that is excellent. There is a very small amount of very poor teaching.

Strengths are the high level of teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and the methods and ideas that teachers use. These ensure that pupils work hard, concentrate well and persevere to the end of the lesson. Lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers' lesson planning is of good quality with clear aims for learning. These are shared with pupils so that they have a very good idea of what they are to learn. Where the planning indicates work set to meet the needs of different abilities of pupils, it is more effective. All these strengths encourage pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort,

ensuring lessons are productive. Although work is usually set for the higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics, this is not always sufficiently challenging. In addition, in science, specific work is rarely set for these pupils and this means that they do not make the progress they could. A key strength in the teaching is the very good relationship between teachers and pupils. This is warm, friendly and supportive. Teachers know their pupils very well and constantly encourage them with praise and valuable advice. The management of pupils in almost all lessons is very good. This ensures very good behaviour and the development of good attitudes. A feature of this very good management is the mutual respect that teachers show to pupils. They are encouraged to contribute to lessons and their contributions are valued so that they grow in confidence. The very small amount of very poor teaching seen was a result of a temporary breakdown in the management of pupils. Although teachers use computers to support learning, from time to time, this is underdeveloped in most subjects. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The teaching to support pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with refugee status is good. The teaching support for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in the reception classes and very good in the nursery. In the reception classes, the direct teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Teachers provide many opportunities, which are rich and challenging. The school ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. A strength is the very good support provided by classroom assistants. Most classes have a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and teachers plan to meet the needs of these pupils well. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who is also a class teacher, does not have enough time to monitor and support this area fully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils not only get good support to help them develop their English from teachers and classroom assistants, they get highly effective help on a regular basis from specialised outside help.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for spiritual development is good. That for moral and cultural development is very good. All aspects of school life develops pupils' confidence and their skills of friendship, mainly owing to the school's provision for social development, which is outstanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school cares for its pupils very well. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.

Parents have a very good regard for the school and appreciate the way their children are cared for. They have a great deal of confidence in the head teacher who is always available to discuss any problems or concerns. Communication between school and home is good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher, with the help of the deputy head teacher, has ably set the tone and ethos of the school by ensuring this is a strongly caring environment, improving pupils' self-confidence and developing good attitudes to work, very good behaviour and relationships. The identification of the priorities to raise standards further is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The chair of the governing body is very supportive and works closely with the head teacher. Other governors also serve the school well. However, it is often difficult to fill all the places on the governing body. A few items, which should be in the governors' annual report to parents and the school's prospectus, have been omitted.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has analysed how well it is doing and the school's priorities for development are good. However the school does not have a sharp enough focus on raising standards and in particular to challenge the higher attaining pupils in English, mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are adequate and used well. Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively. All money is spent wisely and carefully and the principles of getting the best value for its pupils are applied well. Accommodation is good and very well maintained.

## 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 like the school.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any queries.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very few parents felt that their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• A very few parents felt that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive views about the school. They also judged that homework was satisfactory and that extra-curricular activities were outstanding.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2002, standards in reading and mathematics were well below average. In writing they were very low, putting the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools. When these results are compared to schools with a similar number of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal, they compare more favourably. In writing, they were well below average, in mathematics below average and in reading, well above average. In science, standards when compared to all schools were below average.

2 In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, in 2002, standards in English and science were well below average and in mathematics, below average. Again, when these results are compared to similar schools, were much higher and were above average in English and mathematics.

3 The National Curriculum tests in 2002, indicated that this school is doing better than similar schools in English, mathematics and science. This is a significant achievement given that a significant minority of pupils transfer from other schools at times other than the normal intake. These pupils are usually lower attaining pupils and this factor can affect adversely the school's overall results. Nevertheless, these results indicate that by the time pupils leave the school, many pupils are achieving well when compared to their very low attainment on entry to the nursery. A close examination of the results in 2002, for pupils in Year 6, indicates that although many reach average levels, too few reach the higher levels in all three core subjects. However, the trend in the school's improvements over the last few years is broadly in line with the national trend.

4 When children enter the nursery class, their knowledge, skills and understanding are very much lower than that expected for typical three-year-olds. One in four children have significant speech difficulties, one fifth have learning, social and behavioural difficulties and a further fifth speak little or no English. Although they make very good progress by the time they enter Year 1, most children will not yet reach the levels expected for their age and will be below the standards expected across all areas of learning.

5 Inspection evidence shows that for this year's pupils, in Year 2, standards have improved in writing and in mathematics. It is well below average in reading and writing and below average in science and mathematics. For this year's pupils, in Year 6, standards have improved in English and science. They are now below average in English, mathematics and science and most pupils are achieving well. As well as the significant proportion of lower attaining pupils who transfer from other schools, there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in most classes. For example, two-thirds of pupils in the present Year 2 class and half those in the present Year 6 class have special educational needs. These factors can depress the school's performance year-on-year. The improvements since last year's tests are mainly attributed to the improvement in the quality of the teaching. These improvements have not been in place long enough to raise attainment even further by the time pupils leave the school. In addition, the higher attaining pupils are not challenged as well as they could be and this limits the progress and attainment for these pupils. The school did not fully meet the targets it was set last year. These targets were very challenging given the nature of the school's intake. This year's targets are more realistic and the school is likely to attain them.

6 In English, standards in speaking and listening are well below average by the end of Year 2. Many pupils are hesitant speakers and rarely ask questions. By the end of Year 6, pupils have grown

in maturity and have listening skills, which are average. Their speaking skills are still less well developed and most pupils use a limited range of vocabulary and are below average. In reading, standards are well below average at the end of Year 2 but below average at the end of Year 6. A few pupils read fluently and with good expression by the time they leave the school. The allocated space for the main library for the older pupils is small, with a limited amount of books. Writing is well below average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. However, pupils do grow in confidence as independent writers as they get older. Teachers provide a wide range of writing opportunities, such as poems, stories, letters and instructions within English lessons. However, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in other areas of the curriculum. The standards of the higher attaining pupils in all areas of English are sometimes not as high as they could be. This is mainly because, although work is planned for these pupils, it is not always challenging enough to ensure good progress in all lessons.

7 In mathematics, by the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident at solving a problem involving numbers up to 20. They use mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes. The higher attaining pupils count in five's, two's and ten's and are using simple weather charts and block graphs with confidence. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils confidently add and subtract to two decimal places, construct angles and shapes of given dimensions, use co-ordinates and calculate percentages. However these pupils do not always make as good progress as they could. Lower attaining pupils are successful only with a lot of support and have difficulty with large numbers.

8 In science, pupils in Year 2 have a limited understanding of all the components of science. For example, pupils are able to list natural and manmade materials and state why they are different. They know that some materials can be changed and that sometimes the change is irreversible. By the end of Year 6, pupils are working towards an understanding of all areas. They investigate problems, with the teachers guidance, with confidence and know the difference between a fair and an unfair test. Pupils' abilities to set up and devise their own investigations, less directed by the teacher, are much weaker as they get few opportunities to do this. Higher attaining pupils usually do the same work as other pupils and consequently their progress is not as good as it could be.

9 In information and communication technology, standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils are achieving well. Pupils in Year 2 are able to log on to the school's network, have sound keyboard skills and are confident in using the computer for word processing. They communicate their ideas clearly using text and graphics. By the end of Year 6, pupils extend their word processing skills and are able to store, retrieve and amend their information. Pupils use a multi-media package and produce good presentations combining text, graphics and animation.

10 In religious education, pupils reach average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in line with the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools and they are achieving well. By Year 2, pupils know about Christianity, the church and its artefacts. Pupils are able to distinguish between 'ceremony' and 'celebration'. By the end of Year 6, pupils have deepened their knowledge about Christianity and the other main religions in the world. They know that people have different beliefs and values that affect the way they live their lives.

11 In music, standards are average at the end of Year 2 and pupils are achieving well in relation to their abilities. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving very well and standards are above average. The main strength is in singing, which is of high quality in Years 3 to 6 and especially in the school choir. The singing is lively and tuneful, showing a good grasp of pitch and tempo.

12 In all the remaining subjects, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average and pupils are achieving well in relation to their very low attainment on entry to the nursery.

13 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relational to their prior learning because they are very well supported by their class teacher and some of them get additional help from the teacher for pupils with special educational needs. Those pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress because of the very effective specialist teaching they receive in small groups. By the time they leave the school a significant number of pupils reach average standards in speaking and listening. Many of these pupils had no knowledge of English when they entered the school in the nursery class.

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

14 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are a significant strength of the school. It was a similar picture in the last inspection. Most pupils have good attitudes to the school. They arrive promptly each morning and are keen to start the day's activities. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in class. Pupils of all ages consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic, motivated and eager to learn. They are attentive to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. A large number of pupils enthusiastically join in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are offered to them. Nearly all parents agree that their children like school.

15 Overall standards of behaviour throughout the school are very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, and the majority of pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. Most pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour in the classrooms is consistently very good. However, a very small number of pupils can display inappropriate behaviour when they perceive weaknesses in class control and management. Behaviour in the playgrounds at breaks and lunchtimes is very good. There were no signs of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils. Consequently, pupils are able to work and play in an environment completely free from oppressive behaviour. There has been one fixed term exclusion in the current academic year. Most parents agree that behaviour in the school is good.

16 The relationships in the school are very good. Pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. They are polite, well mannered and very welcoming to visitors. Boys and girls of all ages work very well together in the classrooms and play happily together in the playgrounds. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully integrated in all aspects of the life and work of the school and thus enabled to play a full part in all activities.

17 The pupils' personal development is very good. They are earning a good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. In the classrooms most pupils willingly take responsibility for their own work, and in lessons many working independently. They maintain high levels of concentration and persevere with tasks given to them. Outside of lessons pupils respond maturely and sensibly to the wide range of formal responsibilities given to them. The School Council allows pupils to influence decisions that affect the way in which the school is run. Pupils go out of school on a good range of educational visits and respond very well to a wide range of visitors. The school supports local, national and international charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. The majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

18 The attendance rate at the school has improved since last year when it was below the national average. However, parents withdrawing their children for annual holidays during term time, particularly during the annual statutory assessment tests, adversely affect attendance rates towards the end of the academic year and can affect the school's performance in tests. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average.

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

19 The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good, with a significant proportion of lessons where teaching was very good and occasionally excellent. This is a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. There was very poor teaching in only one lesson. In the nursery, teaching and learning is consistently very good. In reception, the teaching



is mainly good with a significant proportion that is very good. The high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is having a positive impact upon standards, pupils' achievements and learning.

20 A spirit of teamwork and corporate approach is one of the reasons for the consistent good quality of teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good overall. The teachers manage the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. This ensures that pupils make good progress and, although standards are below average by the time they leave the school, this represents good achievement from the very low starting point of many pupils when they start school. The very good relationships that exist throughout the school and the very good management of pupils is another reason for the high proportion of effective teaching.

21 The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good, often very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers use a variety of methods to make whole-class sessions interesting for their pupils. In an outstanding lesson for pupils in Year 1, pupils developed great enthusiasm to write simple sentences related to the big book story of "The Lighthouse Keepers Lunch". The teacher used a wide variety of stimulating ideas to motivate the pupils, such as letting them eat a biscuit with a spot of mustard on. This linked well to the part of the story where the Lighthouse Keeper's wife put mustard on her husbands' sandwiches to deter the seagulls from eating them. Teachers also develop pupils' vocabulary in other subjects. A very good example was observed in a mathematics lesson, where pupils in Year 3 learned to use new words such as equivalent, similar, segment, section and whole, in a lesson on fractions. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with every moment utilised for learning. In the best lessons, the teacher's infectious enthusiasm and lively approach encourage the pupils and motivates them to acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding very effectively.

22 Children get a very good start in the foundation stage. They achieve very well because the teaching is consistently good in the reception classes and very good in the nursery. In the reception classes, the direct teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very good. The quality of the teaching and the focus has a positive impact on learning, which is good in every area of learning for these young children. Excellent assessment on entry, including home visits, leads to accurate diagnosis of need. The excellent teamwork amongst all staff is a significant strength of the teaching in the nursery and reception classes.

23 Throughout the schools, teachers' planning is thorough and well focused. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan closely to the structured frameworks. In almost all lessons, the teachers outline the aims for what pupils will learn, display them clearly on the board and return to the aims at the end, to summarise key learning points. This ensures that objectives are met. The teaching of literacy and numeracy occasionally supports learning across other subjects. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their writing skills in other subjects.

24 The very good management of pupils results in their very good behaviour and provides a calm, learning atmosphere. In just one lesson in Years 3 to 6, there was a temporary breakdown of management skills, which resulted in poor behaviour and lack of effective learning. The teachers use praise to good effect, which motivates pupils and makes lessons enjoyable. The total commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in every aspect is evident in all lessons. In addition, the teachers and support assistants all value pupils' contributions. The pupils, therefore, confidently engage in discussions in the clear understanding that they all matter individually to the staff. The very good example set by the staff has a significant impact upon the way that the pupils behave towards each other. The very strong focus on pupils' personal and social development is another contributory factor in creating a productive and supportive learning climate.

25 Teaching assistants and nursery nurses support the process of pupils' learning very well. They successfully work with groups, effectively challenge pupils' understanding through careful questioning and further explanations. They pay careful attention to pupils' errors and misunderstandings and use these constructively to take the pupils' learning further.

26 Teachers do not use information and communication technology often enough to support teaching and learning in all subjects. Opportunities are therefore missed to extend pupils' learning in this area. Teachers know the capabilities of their pupils and often support them with work that matches their need and helps them to make progress. However, in literacy and numeracy lessons, although work for the higher attaining pupils is usually included, it is not always sufficiently challenging to help these pupils progress as well as they might. In science, the teachers' lesson planning rarely contains specific work to challenge these higher attaining pupils.

27 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan individual targets for these pupils so that they achieve well. These targets are relevant and specific and support pupils in a step-by-step way. These pupils are taught well in the classroom and when withdrawn in small groups. Pupils with English as an Additional Language, including those from refugee families, are very well taught and helped to develop their English by skilled specialist teachers who support them very well. Good liaison between class teachers and specialist teachers ensures that these pupils receive the same entitlement as the rest of the class because all teachers follow the same lesson plans. Specialist teachers reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding of literacy very effectively.

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

28 The curriculum is good and together with an excellent range of extra curricular activities offers pupils a rich and varied experience. It is broad, balanced and relevant and the school meets its statutory requirements with regard to the National Curriculum and religious education. In the previous inspection curriculum was also found to be good.

29 The curriculum reflects the aims of the school and provides a secure, caring and stimulating environment in which most pupils can reach their potential. This has a very positive effect on pupils' personal and social development and promotes their self-esteem. The school is currently working towards its healthy school award and is reviewing its drugs and sex education policy. There is a wide range of educational visits and visitors and regular involvement with a good range of community projects to extend pupils' experiences and develop them well as future citizens. For example, pupils visit a church and a mosque to develop their work in religious education and attend the local Remembrance Day service to extend their understanding of history. The curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good.

30 The curriculum is well planned and effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are in place. There are clear policies for all subjects and cross-curricular links are developed so that learning is more meaningful to pupils.

31 The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when provision was judged to be good.

32 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is well supported in assemblies where reflection is achieved through prayer, moral and spiritual themes and music. Pupils acquire from the curriculum a set of values and beliefs and the ability to reflect on life, relationships and their own

patterns of behaviour. Their appreciation of beauty and form is enhanced in the cultivation of plants in and around the school and the attractive outdoor environment. In lessons such as music they experience the joy of singing and in art and design they explore a wide range of materials and techniques inspired by the work of visiting artists. Residential experiences in the Lake District provide the exhilaration of outdoor pursuits and companionship. Pupils are also taught to respect and appreciate the importance of the beliefs associated with different religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.

33 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Each classroom displays the school rules, the rewards and punishments. The policy is clear and encompasses the basic principles of courtesy, care and respect. In discussion lessons called 'Circle-time' where pupils sit around the teacher to share views and information, pupils are encouraged to be honest and open about their feelings and relationships. Teachers act as sympathetic listeners and counsellors discussing possible solutions to conflict. In one such lesson the teacher brought in 'Bagpuss', a soft toy that she passed round so that pupils were encouraged to talk about their pets. The teacher stressed the importance of care and contributed her own experiences of looking after a cat. She showed some of her pet's toys. This established a calm, caring and warm atmosphere and pupils followed her example, highlighting the responsibilities of ownership. The school has an anti-racist policy and promotes the values of the multi-cultural society in which we live, teaching pupils to be tolerant and caring. On one of the corridors is a poster, which reads, "We all smile in the same language."

34 The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The school educates its pupils for life and to become active citizens. There is much collaborative work in lessons and pupils work together with ease. Teachers set great store by social education and frequently describe the high standards of behaviour they expect. In one history lesson the teacher assessed pupils' ability to support one another, to negotiate responsibilities and to arrive at democratic and corporate decisions. The School Council is thriving. The Council has been democratically elected; it listens to pupils' concerns and manages its own budget. It is currently raising money for the local hospice. The school has raised money for a variety of other charities and the immediate community. Participation in community events is encouraged well. For example, pupils sing carols at sheltered accommodation, visit the local church at Christmas and join the local residents in the annual street festival. Business links have been established with Asda, the local firm of VA Tech Reyrolle and Northumbria water. These develop pupils understanding of commerce. The pupils are also taught to be environmentally active and are contributing to recycling projects such as the local "Compost Initiative." The large number of extra-curricular activities not only extends curricular provision but also encourages further social interaction. In one evening, 57 pupils from all age groups attended five activities involving six teachers, one parent and one visitor. These activities included football, first aid, craft, dance and art. There are other opportunities on other nights and where funding has permitted, additional expertise has been purchased to help and compliment that of the staff.

35 The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school celebrates the cultural diversity of its pupils and community and pupils share in a variety of celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year. Recently it joined other schools and groups for a very successful Eid party sponsored by a local company who gave the pupils Eid clothes and jewellery. Pupils also visit the Aal-Azhar Mosque. In geography pupils study contrasting areas such as the mythical Scottish island of Struay. They learn about places 'Barnaby Bear' has visited, as well as pupils' own countries of origin. The pupils study their own local culture through the ages and have regular contacts with other primary and secondary schools. They visit the Customs House for concerts and Durham Pantomime. Visitors to the school include the Community Police, St. Johns Ambulance, the local M.P, the Eagles Basketball team, local artists and the Carers Association. All pupils are developing a good understanding of the culture and ethnic diversity of British Society.

36 Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for in the curriculum. Teachers plan lessons so that tasks match their ability and allow them to make good progress. All pupils have good individual education plans in place. Those pupils with English as an additional language, including pupils from refugee families, have specific and very relevant individual educational plans. Groups are withdrawn regularly but this does not jeopardise their curriculum entitlement. Provision within the classroom is sensitive to their needs.

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

37 The school provides very effective care for its pupils. The head teacher places a very high priority on pastoral care and provides very good leadership in this aspect. All members of staff are very caring, dedicated and totally committed to the welfare of the pupils in their charge. They are very approachable and supportive. The non-teaching staff are very effectively deployed and give very good support for both teachers and pupils, particularly those pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language. The school makes very good use of external support agencies. This has a positive impact on the progress these pupils are making and the standards they achieve. The school provides breakfast and after school clubs where children can relax and play in a safe and caring atmosphere.

38 Very good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are securely in place and fully understood by all staff. Pastoral care and the arrangements for first aid and dealing with minor injuries are very good. The governing body and the head teacher take their health and safety responsibilities seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including risk assessments, are systematically carried out and formally recorded. Conscientious teachers and teaching assistants, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils well at break times. The standard of supervision by experienced and well-trained midday supervisors at lunchtimes is high. However, due to construction work within the school site, the temporary access through the car park presents a potential danger to pedestrians, particularly when vehicles are manoeuvring at the start and end of the school day. The school is well aware of this problem and strives to ensure the pupils' safety at all times.

39 The school has very good arrangements for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. This has a positive impact on the high standards of behaviour consistently maintained throughout the school. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are also very good. Registers are completed accurately and unexplained absences are quickly and rigorously followed up. This has led to a recent improvement in attendance.

40 The head teacher, class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. All members of staff demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the pupils' personal circumstances and consequently, every pupil in the school is treated as an individual and their personal needs are catered for very well.

41 The school's procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school rigorously analyses the results of previous national tests and uses this information to identify areas of the curriculum that need further support, development, training and resources. The school implements systematic procedures to assess and track the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science. Teachers assess the standards of attainment that pupils achieve on a regular basis and set specific targets for individuals and groups of pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments are accurate and this enables teachers to plan what pupils need to do next to reach their targets. This is making an effective contribution to the raising of standards despite the difficulties that teachers face

when working with a large number of pupils who join the school at different points during the year. However, sometimes the work set in English and mathematics for the higher attaining pupils is not challenging enough and therefore these pupils do not progress as well as they might. Teachers evaluate their lessons thoroughly and make effective use of their assessments when planning the next set of activities. This means that the learning needs of most groups, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, are well met.

42 Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and their needs assessed carefully. Teachers plan a programme of work especially for them. They are regularly assessed against these targets before new targets are given. Those pupils who are withdrawn are assessed very regularly and precisely and gain a sense of achievement by their success. Pupils with English as an additional language are also assessed regularly and precisely against their individual plans together with more complex assessment relating to their acquisition of English.

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

43 This is a school that is held in high regard by its parents. The head teacher and his staff are very welcoming and approachable and the school tries very hard to promote positive links with the parents. A few parents are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home. For example, they fully support homework and home reading, but others make only a small contribution to their children's education. There is a small but committed number of parents who regularly help in the classrooms and accompany the children on out-of-school trips. There is an active Parents and Friends Association, organised and run by members of the school staff, that raises considerable funds for the school. Fund raising is generally well supported by the parents. The school hosts 'Partners in Education' courses for parents, for example, in numeracy, which are reasonably well attended. The majority of parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school. A small number of parents disagree that their children get the right amount of work to do at home and that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence does not support these parents' views, and the use of homework throughout the school is judged to be satisfactory, and the provision for extra-curricular activities is judged to be excellent.

44 Communication between the school and home is good. The school sends out regular, informative newsletters and letters about specific events and activities. Important letters are translated into Arabic and Bengali for non-English speaking parents. Parents are informed about topic and curriculum information at the start of each term. The school publishes an attractive, comprehensive and informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish a useful annual report. However, the latest prospectus and report omit some statutory required information, for example, details about teachers' professional development and rates of authorised and unauthorised absence. When this was brought to the attention of the head teacher, these items were immediately drafted into the new prospectus and latest governors' report. Pupils' annual progress reports are clear, straightforward, give all the required information and are much appreciated by parents. Parents are offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to talk to staff informally at the start and end of each school day.

45 The school involves parents of pupils with special educational needs well. Most parents attend meetings to review their children's progress. The school is fortunate to have the services of a bi-lingual classroom assistant to help communicate to parents of the Bangladeshi Community. There are now 16 different languages spoken by parents many of whom who have little grasp of English. Communication is not easy, but teachers works hard to overcome difficulties, sometimes with the help of an interpreter.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 Overall, the leadership and management by the head teacher and key staff is good. It was a similar picture in the last report.

47 The head teacher provides good leadership in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and their personal development is well provided for. He is very successful in establishing a school that is responsive to the diverse needs of pupils, many of whom are recent arrivals to the area. He fosters a strong sense of community in the school and has the support of parents and carers in enabling a harmonious and calm ethos to be sustained. By making the school an important and central part of the community he has gained the confidence and trust of parents and carers who are increasingly prepared to become involved in the life of the school. This has led to a strong and committed approach to promoting pupils' personal development so that pupils are very well behaved, enthusiastic towards school and respect and celebrate each other's backgrounds. However, there is insufficient focus on identifying the priorities to raise standards, especially for the higher attaining pupils in English, mathematics and science. Leadership in this area therefore has only been satisfactory.

48 The deputy head teacher provides good management in a number of key areas and in her short time in this role has introduced important initiatives that are beginning to impact positively on standards and monitoring. For example, she has introduced new procedures for assessment and this has led to teachers being more focused on setting targets for pupils to reach higher standards. The co-ordinators of mathematics and English are at the hub of raising standards across the whole school. They are effective in monitoring the standards pupils achieve and provide good leadership in developing teachers' skills through very appropriate professional development and support. This has resulted in harnessing the loyalty of all staff and developing a shared commitment to ensuring that the school is striving to improve many aspects of its work.

49 The school leadership has responded satisfactorily from the last inspection to the three key issues. The progress in reading in Key Stage 1 is now good but there is still a need to raise the standards of writing. The school's assessment procedures are now very good in English, mathematics and science. Teachers are using regular evaluations of pupils' progress to help them modify their planning so that lessons are suitably matched to the pupils' abilities, although the planning for the higher attaining pupils is not as consistently well done. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is being monitored and this is beginning to help the school to focus on raising standards. However the monitoring in other subjects is limited.

50 The senior management team has constructed a comprehensive school improvement plan for a five year period. The impact of the action taken is not yet critically evaluated well enough to ensure that annual school improvement plans are more sharply focused on raising standards. The deputy head teacher is an effective partner in the leadership of the school. She is leading the school forward by linking subject improvement plans to the teachers' professional development and beginning to evaluate its impact on the achievements of the pupils.

51 The governing body are committed to helping the school in serving the needs of a diverse and, at times, challenging community that faces high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. The governing body is representative of the community and very supportive of all the school's initiatives. However the governing body is very much led by the head teacher and their understanding of performance data in relation to the standards that pupils achieve is limited. Therefore they are not as aware as they could be of how to push the school forward. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and are regular visitors. The school's aims are clearly expressed and have been

collaboratively developed and agreed and are fully met. It has also proved difficult at times to get the required numbers of governors. The governing body is not yet sufficiently focused on analysing how successful the schools is in raising standards and how this can be consistently tackled to ensure that the recent progress is built on. The governing body does not meet all its statutory duties in providing the prospectus or its annual report to parents as a few items are missing. These have been pointed out to the school. During the inspection there was no clear evidence that the school currently offers every pupil the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship.

52 The school is very efficient in its strategic use of resources. Financial planning and control are very good. The head teacher and the governing body takes responsibility for the monitoring of the school budget with the head teacher effectively exercising day-to-day financial control within agreed limits. The governing body discusses the school's budget proposals and after careful examination and evaluation approves the full budget recommendations linking spending to the priorities laid down in the school development plan. The day-to-day financial controls, procedures and administration of money are very good. There are comprehensive methods for accounting for monies collected, checking invoices and ensuring that unauthorised expenditure does not occur. These systems are very effectively managed by the administrative assistant in conjunction with the head teacher. The last report identified many aspects of good practice and outlined a number of recommendations, which were quickly acted upon. A particular strength of the school's financial arrangements is its constant search for achieving its services at the best possible cost. For example, the school has considerably reduced the cost of its cleansing services through the use of contractors.

53 The school has a good team of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum, including areas of learning for the children under five. The teaching staff are well deployed and have been well trained in the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Educational support staff are well qualified, committed and work well with class teachers in the best interests of the pupils. Detailed job descriptions are not yet fully in place. The school is clean and is well maintained and reflects the school's pride in itself. There are effective procedure for the induction of new staff. The accommodation is good and spacious and meets the needs of the current school population. Displays of information and pupils' work are used to celebrate achievement and this raises their self-esteem and supports their personal development. Resources are adequate in all subjects.

54 The special educational needs co-ordinator has almost completed her first year in the role. She has managed what she has been given to do satisfactorily. The profile of the co-ordinator, however, is too low in this school with such a high population of special educational needs pupils and such a mobile population. There is no clear understanding of the role because she has no job description, and as a result the role is partially underdeveloped. She does not have enough non-class based time in which to advise and support colleagues, to monitor the teaching and learning, to communicate with parents and external agencies, and to fulfil administrative responsibilities.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55 To maintain the quality of education and provide further development, the governing body, head teacher and staff should:

- (1)
  - identify more clearly the priorities needed to raise pupils' standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that higher attaining pupils are challenged at a level appropriate to their ability;
  - in addition, ensure that every opportunity is taken to develop and practise writing skills in English and across all other subjects where appropriate;  
(identified in paragraphs 6, 23, 47, 51, 73, 78, 87, 93, 110)
- (2) increase the support given to the special educational needs co-ordinator to allow her more time for her to observe, advise and monitor the provision given to these pupils. (identified in paragraph 54)
- (3) extend the use of computers to support learning across all subjects.  
(identified in paragraphs 26, 81, 120)

56 In addition to the above issues, the following more minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- ensure that the governors annual report to parents and the schools prospectus always contains the required information.
- ensure that there is an act of collective worship daily.  
(identified in paragraphs 44, 51)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	24	29	13	0	0	1
Percentage	9	33	39	18	0	0	1

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	289
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26	190

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	33	133

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	68

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	58
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	29	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	13
	Girls	25	20	25
	Total	37	30	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82% (78%)	67% (78%)	84% (84%)
	National	84% (84%)	86% (86%)	90% (91%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	15
	Girls	23	24	26
	Total	35	38	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78% (78%)	84% (82%)	91% (76%)
	National	85% (85%)	89% (89%)	89% (89%)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	20	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	25
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	30	31	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59% (55%)	61% (55%)	75% (88%)
	National	75% (75%)	73% (71%)	86% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	24
	Girls	13	10	12
	Total	30	30	36

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59% (55%)	59% (56%)	71% (90%)
	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**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	200	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	21	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	27	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	12	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

### *Financial information*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	22

Financial year	2002-2003
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	£
Total income	1,028,156

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	117

**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	97.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Total expenditure	982,707
Expenditure per pupil	2,848
Balance brought forward from previous year	85,837
Balance carried forward to next year	45,449

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	345
Number of questionnaires returned	70

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	0	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	26	6	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	31	1	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	51	6	6	4
The teaching is good.	60	36	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	31	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	1	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	33	6	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	26	3	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	20	6	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	23	9	1	1

## **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**

57 Fifty-eight children attend part time in the nursery and 43 children attend full time in the two reception classes. When children start in the nursery, their knowledge, skills and understanding are very much lower than expected for their age. There are three pupils who's families have refugee status and altogether 16 languages other than English are spoken at home, with four different religions represented. For a variety of reasons, around half of the children arrive or leave other than at the usual times of admission or transfer to older classes. All these factors mean that most children take considerable time to begin to achieve the first of the steps towards reaching the learning goals expected by the end of the reception year. The few children who enter with average attainment make good progress and have already reached the goals expected of them, by the time they enter Year 1. Although they make very good progress and achieve very well from their very low levels of attainment on entry, by the end of the reception year, overall, most children will not reach the levels expected. Children's lack of communication skills and early experiences means that only a few attain what is normally expected of children of this age. Their best achievements are in personal and social development and in the movement aspects of physical development.

58 Children get a very good start. They achieve very well because the teaching is consistently good in the reception classes and very good in the nursery. In the reception classes, the direct teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good. The quality of the teaching and the focus has a positive impact on learning which is good in every area. The teaching provides well-planned, structured play and direct teaching with a clear focus. Learning is based on themes, for example, 'The Seashore' and is used well to develop key skills. This helps children to see the purpose in their learning, for example, in learning words and sounds associated with their visit to the beach. Support staff are very effective. No opportunity is missed to help children acquire language and social skills. There is very good support for children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Excellent assessment on entry, including home visits, leads to accurate diagnosis of need. Action to meet these is rapid. The excellent teamwork amongst all staff is a significant strength of the teaching.

59 The curriculum includes all the six areas of learning. Thorough planning and excellent assessment ensures that good provision, indoor and outdoor, is made for the children. Resources, apart from in information and communication technology, are good. The design of the building does not make it possible for children to select activities outdoors unless adults take them out in groups, although this does not affect their learning. Children of different ages and abilities have equal access to activities and so an equal chance to make progress. There is a good range of activities that emphasise independence. These are always available and are easy for children to select. A very impressive range of visits and visitors succeed in building up children's experiences of the world around them. Information for parents is good. Although the team of teachers and assistants work very well together, there is no overall leader of Early Years education.

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

60 Much thought and effort is put into developing children's personal and social skills. The warm supportive environment, the clear routines and the very good relationships, ensures that children try hard and behave very well. Teachers and support staff observe children closely and encourage them to join in and to persevere with activities. The very good teaching, high expectations and care,

means that children are happy to initiate ideas and confident to share these in large and small groups. Many children reach the levels expected of them by the time they leave the reception classes.

61 Children are welcomed warmly at the start of sessions. Daily routines are quickly established and because these are consistent in the three classes, children feel secure and know what is expected of them. They anticipate what the next activity will be and settle quickly to learning; they plan their independent activities and record their choices in their planning books. Children are patiently encouraged to take care of their own needs, to take turns, listen to each other, concentrate and persevere. Many children, however, need constant adult support to achieve this. Some children remain involved in activities for a good length of time when an adult is present to support them, but quickly lose interest if the adult moves away. Adults in the nursery are designated as 'play partners' and this is successful in extending the learning. Taped music has a calming effect on the learning environment.

62 Children learn to discuss feelings, such as being happy, cross or sad. They begin to understand right from wrong. For example, they know how many children can be involved in an activity, such as, water play when they all need an apron. Reception children know that sitting in a circle is for listening carefully and offering their ideas. They have an interesting variety of snacks and adults sit with the children to encourage discussion and to help extend their experiences of shopping and eating different foods.

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

63 Many children have very little spoken language when they begin school. From this very low starting point, children achieve well because of the high quality teaching and extra support, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening. Despite this good progress, children are well below the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. Learning to speak, listen, read and write is a very slow process for these children, many of whom have learning difficulties or who are learning English as an additional language. A rich range of experiences, including visits to the local library, is provided for children. A high priority is given to developing children's spoken language and listening skills. As a result, they join in happily with rhymes and songs they have learned. They learn to listen closely to stories that are told very well. They listen to sounds carefully and say which sound is at the beginning, middle or end of a word. Children play listening games, 'pass the sound' in circle time and go on listening walks with adults encouraging them to describe what they hear. 'Big Books' link to a theme and give children the experience of texts with actions and objects that excite their attention. Such activities are very effective in enabling children to begin to see the links between reading and writing and to learn to enjoy stories and rhymes.

64 Children make good progress in learning to read. In the nursery, some children recognise their own name and find letters that are the same as those at the start of their name. Older children know the title page and back cover of books, and know that print carries meaning. A few know that the author is the one who writes the stories. They use speech bubbles well to guess what is being said. They learn the main elements of a story, the characters and sequence of events and try to predict what might happen next. Children are encouraged to take simple reading books home to share with their parents. There are many opportunities for children to write on their own for different purposes, such as telling news, making lists and writing postcards. They very slowly gain confidence. Adults help them to understand that in writing, spaces are needed between words and that letters must be formed correctly. Only a very few children write independently.

### **Mathematical development**

65 The teaching of number skills is very good. Good and varied opportunities are provided for children to practise counting. For example, they count the number of children present each day and note this on a number line. Teachers plan and match work carefully to children's different learning needs. Although the children make good progress, they start from a very low level and, by the end of the reception year their attainment is below that of most children of a similar age. In counting and recognising numbers and number names, about three quarters of the children in the reception classes attain the expected level, but most children do not have sufficient language skills to explain what they know and understand and many struggle with simple practical addition. Higher attaining children confidently count, recognise and talk about numbers to ten. Around a half, with help, count to and back from 20. Children learn to recognise symmetry by making 'blob' patterns and by using simple shapes to repeat patterns. In this way they learn and use key vocabulary such as 'same' and 'side'. 'It's a symmetrical pattern – it's the same on both sides', was a gleeful comment from one boy about the pattern he had made. Many children across the nursery and reception classes, recognise and name triangles, squares and circles. In the nursery, children 'mend the octopus' by adding legs, matching dots to numbers up to 20. They enjoy singing number rhymes, such as, 'One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive' whilst catching toy fish and counting the dots. Many also offer comparative words accurately, such as, 'full and empty' when pouring water into different containers. In the reception classes, higher attaining children are confident in stating numbers in the correct sequence from first to fifth children. All thoroughly enjoy action rhymes and songs about numbers and join in with gusto.

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

66 The quality of teaching in this area is very good. Many children have had a very limited experience of the world around them. They are beginning to have a firm foundation on which to build the later subjects of science, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography and history. By the end of the reception year, although attainment in this area is below the expected level for children of this age, they achieve well and make good progress. This is because teachers plan a range of interesting activities, including visitors in and visits out of school, to enable the children to explore and widen their experiences. For example, they visit parks, seashore and woodland. Children use all their senses in everyday activities tasting different snacks, feeling the textures of natural objects, and use mirrors, torches and kaleidoscopes to explore reflections, light and shadows. Each day children check and find words to describe the weather. They watch in wonder and delight as they follow the life cycle of a tadpole becoming a frog, and observe a variety of plants growing. They begin to learn that plants need light, food and water to grow. Seaweed they have collected gives the smell and feel of the seashore in their water play. Children decide on the smell and colour of the play-dough for the week, and then make it. They talk about then and now when looking at the differences in South Shields, present and past, using photographs and posters. Children gain an awareness of other cultures by, for instance, eating Eid food.

67 Children begin to develop fine control skills when cutting or sticking or when using construction apparatus to make recognisable models or collages using a variety of materials and fastenings to make model lifeboats and lighthouses. A few children confidently use the mouse to operate computer programs, improving their hand-eye co-ordination. This is a weaker area that needs more resources and greater staff confidence to allow children to make greater gains in learning.

### **Physical development**

68 Teaching is very good and children make good progress in this area of learning. Most of them achieve the goal expected by the end of the reception class with regard to larger body movements. Children experience a good range of equipment outdoors everyday, and use the hall for



movement. They show good control as they steer, ride, push and pull wheeled ‘vehicles’ and avoid obstacles and they move well in a variety of ways through tunnels, up ladders and down slides. In the hall they learn the importance of warming up and cooling down before physical activity and move expressively and energetically in response to music or the sound of the teacher’s tambourine. Adults join in enthusiastically and this supports children’s learning very well. Each day children have valuable, and much needed opportunities to use classroom equipment that helps them to slowly improve their control of the finer movements needed to use resources, such as, scissors, pens, pencils, paintbrushes and glue.

### **Creative development**

69 Children start from a very low level of skills. Very good teaching and provision ensures that children make good progress and by the end of the reception year, many children reach the levels expected for their age. In the nursery, children become engrossed in drawing, painting, making collages, pictures, printing and experimenting with textures and techniques. They make shapes in dough by pulling, pinching and rolling. In nursery they make decisions about the dough, make it, decide on colour, smell and texture. They play in the home corner, for instance, in preparing and eating food and looking after the dolls, but rarely extend the play imaginatively, or with talk, unless an adult is alongside. Very effective support helps children well by showing them not only to use tools and techniques effectively, but also to develop their language and descriptive powers. For example, when investigating what happens to paint on wet paper, making model tadpoles using wood and straws or when choosing the fillings when making sandwiches for a picnic. Children delight in dressing up and this effectively extends their imagination and language. Children of all ages in the nursery and reception classes enjoy and join in with songs, make music with tuned and un-tuned percussion instrument by tapping, scraping and shaking, and they enjoy the music played throughout the day.

### **ENGLISH**

70 By the end of Year 2 standards are well below average and by the end of Year 6 standards are below average. Whilst it would appear that standards have fallen since the previous inspection this is not the case. There are several reasons why standards are so low. The school community has changed since the time of the last inspection because there is an increase in pupil mobility and some pupils have been to several schools previously and this has slowed their progress. There is an above average number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and a significant minority have English as an additional language many of whom are in the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry to the nursery is now very low, lower than it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards well below average and although they make good achievements through broad and rich experiences this does not have an impact on standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils build on to previous learning in a step by step way and again make good achievements but standards are below the level expected by the age of 11. Inspection evidence finds standards to be below average in reading and writing by the time pupils leave the school. The broader picture shows that pupils have developed average listening skills by the age of 11 but still below average skills in speaking.

71 Those pupils who have English as an additional language and pupils who’s parents have refugee status, make very good progress because of the very good support they get from highly skilled specialist teachers as well as the support they get from their own teachers. A small number of these pupils reach average standards by the age of 11 and this is a remarkable achievement considering they entered the nursery class with little or no knowledge of English. Some pupils do not quite reach the average standard in tests but they produce work of good quality. For example, when writing poetry in the style of William Wordsworth, one pupil wrote, “The daffodils burst open like millions of shining

lights” another wrote, “They look like fields of precious gold.” Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior achievements because teachers plan targets for them, which are specific and achievable.

72 All pupils have the same entitlement to the curriculum because teachers liaise closely with each other to ensure they follow the same planning when pupils are withdrawn from class for specialised teaching. In the classroom teachers make sure that all pupils have the same opportunities extended to them. Texts used in English lessons appeal to both boys and girls.

73 Since the last inspection the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented and this guides teachers planning very well. The curriculum is now well structured and balanced, and this addresses a criticism made in the last report. The National Literacy Strategy has had a powerful impact on the quality of teaching and this has been raised considerably since the last inspection and is overall very good. As a result pupils make good progress. Teachers plan lessons well to take account of the learning needs of pupils. They share targets with pupils at the start of lessons but opportunities are sometimes missed to extend all of the higher achieving pupils. For instance targets are based on what pupils “need to do, might do or could do” and this suggests that pupils have an option. Work set for these pupils is not always challenging enough and these pupils do not always make the progress they could.

74 Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it effectively to capture the interest of their pupils and motivate them to learn very well. Teachers work very hard to extend concentration skills, so that pupils become active listeners. Year 2 pupils enjoyed role-play with their teacher; all pupils listened carefully because it was exciting. Teachers take every opportunity to enrich vocabulary, which they reinforce effectively during the course of lessons. Year 6 pupils understood “biased” and “unbiased” during their English lesson and by the end of the lesson used them correctly during their discussion. Similarly they met the word “protagonist” which they looked up in dictionaries to understand the meaning. When they meet new words when reading independently, however, lower attaining pupils do not readily find out what a word means. Pupils rarely ask questions about the text, although they readily ask questions if they do not understand the activity.

75 Teachers are skilled at asking questions to check on understanding. The Year 2 teacher asked pupils what they thought pirates would have for breakfast. She probed further after the initial answer, “toast” until pupils used better reasoning skills to suggest, “crab.” Similarly in Year 5 the teachers skilfully continued to ask probing questions so that pupils understood the text at a more in-depth level. As a result pupils used the terms “respect”, “empathy” and “patient” in their response. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have grown in maturity and with high teacher expectations, listening skills have developed very well and most pupils reach average standards for their age. Speaking skills are less well developed in Year 6 despite the richness of the curriculum; most pupils use a limited range of vocabulary, despite constant reminders to use a wider range of words.

76 Teachers work hard to share their love of literature with pupils. They all have books on display and good classroom libraries to encourage pupils to read. Pupils regularly write book reviews about the books they have read in school. The allocated space for the main library for the older pupils is small with a limited stock of books.

77 Teachers read to their pupils very well and as a result most pupils read expressively. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read confidently. They recall the story well, predict what might happen next and discuss their favourite books recalling the storyline enthusiastically. They use the index and alphabetical order appropriately to find information from books and dictionaries. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils are less fluent and have not yet

developed effective methods to help them to read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 6 higher attaining pupils have reached above average standards because their reading is so fluent and expressive. They have a more in-depth knowledge of the story and discuss characters and events enthusiastically and with sound reasoning. Lower attaining pupils, are more hesitant in their independent reading, they do not always apply what they have been taught during lessons to their personal reading.

78 The school has already identified writing as the weakest element of the subject and are trying to raise standards by giving pupils more opportunities to write across all curriculum areas. This initiative is developing, but has not yet had an impact on standards and remains an area for urgent development. Teachers provide a wide range of writing opportunities for pupils and as a result pupils develop a growing awareness of the reader. Pupils are taught to adapt their style of writing to suit the purpose. Pupils in Year 5 wrote very personal letters to “Dear Claire” whilst pupils in Year 2 wrote more factual letters describing their local area. Poetry is well written and a good emphasis is placed on the descriptive quality of writing.

79 Pupils grow in confidence as independent writers in a step by step way because basic skills are taught systematically and well. Spelling is further reinforced through regular handwriting lessons. Pupils start learning to join up their writing in Year 2 and this develops well throughout the school. The exception to this is Year 6 where most pupils adopt a print style of writing rather than the joined up style, which they have been taught, and this has not been corrected. Many pupils have not progressed to writing in pen, which contradicts the handwriting policy.

80 Teachers manage pupils’ behaviour very well. Teachers relate very well to pupils and treat them with courtesy and respect, as a result most pupils work hard for their teachers and try to please them. Pupils are interested in lessons and participate well. Most of them are keen to make a contribution and take their turns to speak. In group activities all pupils support each other well helping each other and sharing ideas harmoniously. Teachers’ value pupils work and make good use of praise. Pupils appreciate the efforts of others. Pupils applauded each other when they have done well. A Year 4 lesson ended very well when pupils sensitively and effectively evaluated each other’s poems commenting on the quality of the rhyme and rhythm.

81 A new enthusiastic co-ordinator, who is leading the subject well, has just been appointed and she takes over a very actively managed subject. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has led colleagues in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The subject is monitored through looking at planning and observing the teaching and learning. Teachers have a shared understanding of National Curriculum levels because they discuss pupils’ writing and collect examples in a Literacy Portfolio. Formal and informal assessments procedures are in place and these are used effectively to inform future planning. The policy for English is in need of review to include further development of information and communication technology because currently computers are under used in classrooms to support English teaching.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82 Overall, the standard of work at the end of Years 2 and 6 is below the standards expected nationally. However, pupils including those with special educational needs, achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils with English as an additional language, including those from refugee families, achieve very well because of the extra outside support. In the previous inspection standards were in line with national expectations. However, the profile of the school has changed since that time, with a lower attainment on entry to the nursery and a high proportion of pupils who transfer from other schools.

83 By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident at solving a problem involving one operation of addition or subtraction to 20. Few can succeed with two operations. They use mathematical names for common two and three dimensional shapes and the majority of pupils are becoming familiar with everyday words to describe position such as 'besides' and 'between.' A significant number of lower attaining pupils need support when using these words. These pupils also need a lot of practical equipment and additional help with all other aspects of mathematics. The higher attaining and average pupils are becoming familiar with the terms such as 'odd' and 'even', they count in five's, two's and ten's and are using simple weather charts, and block graphs with confidence.

84 By the end of Year 6 the higher attaining pupils confidently add and subtract to two decimal places, construct angles and shapes of given dimensions, use first quadrant co-ordinates and calculate percentages. The average ability pupils tackle the same concepts but less confidently and less quickly. The lower attaining pupils are successful only with a lot of support particularly in number and number problems.

85 The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall. This is an improvement on the previous report, which described teaching as satisfactory overall and often good. Where teaching is particularly effective, there is a level of interactive teaching where pupils are consistently engaged in mathematical thinking and are required to explain their mathematical strategies. For example in a lesson for pupils in Year 4 on multiples, pupils used their knowledge of number endings to answer in a quick mental session whether a number was a multiple of two, four, five or ten. They then worked individually and completed a chart about multiples and factors, some choosing 'easier' numbers whilst others chose 25, 57, and 80. At the end of the lesson, pupils identified that one, seven, 11, 13, 17 cannot be divided by any other number but one and the class teacher introduced them to the vocabulary of 'prime numbers'.

86 Pupils have high levels of concentration and effort when they are given very challenging, varied and interesting activities and resources, often related to cross-curricular themes such as pirates and the geography topic of the island of Struay. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively and the recent unit plans are having a positive impact on teaching, learning and attainment since their introduction into the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge, share their aims for the lesson with the pupils, and make good use of projectors and interactive white boards to clarify their instruction. Pupils of lower abilities are well supported in lessons and teachers alter their language to suit individual pupils. They are constantly reinforcing mathematical vocabulary and have the necessary management and relationship skills to free as much time as possible for individual monitoring and support.

87 However, in a few lessons there is a lack of independent work and the teacher completely controls the pupils' pace of working. This has negative effect because the average and lower attaining pupils do not have enough time to complete everything before the activity is changed. Also where pupils work on activities there is often a lack of work particularly planned to challenge the higher attaining pupils and they rarely get extension work to take their learning further. Such pupils do not make as much progress as they could. They rarely do tasks matched to their ability just more of the same. There is also little evidence of pupils developing their mathematical skills through the use of information and communication technology.

88 Leadership and management of this subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a thorough grasp of the issues involved and has a clear picture of the necessary improvements to be made. Resources are good and have been targeted to meet pupils' needs. Various strategies have been put in place to improve results and these include systematic monitoring of planning, teaching, pupils' work and

pupils' targets. Assessment now involves the tracking of pupils throughout their school life. Teachers' response to every day lesson assessments is good and they intervene quickly to prevent lack of understanding. They also note ongoing assessments in their planning files and highlight when this has informed learning. This assessment information is not yet matched closely enough to individual needs and especially to the needs of higher attaining pupils to plan more appropriate work in lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

89 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are below average. Nevertheless, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are achieving very well from their level of attainment on entry to the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards were higher in science. However, comparisons are difficult to make as the profile of the pupils in the school has changed with a lower level of attainment on entry, and a high proportion, mainly lower attaining pupils, who transfer from other schools.

90 By the end of Year 2, most pupils have some knowledge of all the components of science. For example, within materials and their properties, pupils are able to make lists of man-made and natural materials and can explain the differences. They investigate how materials change and know that a carrot is hard when cold but soft when heated and cooked. In their study of living things they were able to describe the natural habitats of five animals and five plants they discovered in the school grounds.

91 By the end of Year 6, pupils are working towards a sound knowledge of materials and their properties, life processes and living things and physical processes. For example, they have an understanding of gravity and how it can be counteracted by an upward force, such as when a bird moves its wings, a forward motion of a car and the effect of swimming strokes on a floating body. Pupils get plenty of opportunities to develop their scientific enquiry skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 investigated the air spaces in soil by setting up a jar full of marbles to represent the particles of soil. They were able to show the large amount of air there is between the marbles by filling the jar with water. They appreciated the importance of air to the roots of a plant and the drawbacks of waterlogged soil. This was a whole class experiment and was done well. However, pupils' ability to set up and devise their own individual experiments, with less direction from the teacher, is weak as they get no opportunity to do this.

92 The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good, with some that is very good. Teachers are well supported by a good scheme of work, which ensures that lessons are interesting with some well thought out ideas, which motivates pupils and keeps their interest to the end of the lesson. Particular strengths are found in the way teachers ensure that the subject matter of the lesson is closely linked to pupils' own lives. For example, in a lesson on tooth decay and tooth care, the visiting teacher was able to show the large amount of plaque that clings to the teeth and how brushing regularly removes this and the bacteria that eventually will rot the teeth. This lesson was dramatic, visual and stimulating and linked very closely to pupils' own lives and the need to maintain healthy teeth. Teachers have very good management skills and very high expectations of behaviour. This ensures that pupils bring good attitudes to their work and behave very well. Teachers also provide many opportunities to reinforce number skills through measuring opportunities and the use of graphs. A good scientific vocabulary is being built up and most lessons display a word bank of new words.

93 Teachers' planning is good with clear aims for learning, which are shared with the pupils. However, although teachers use good assessment procedures to identify what pupils know, understand and can do, they rarely use this information to plan work that challenges the higher attaining pupils in the class. Most lessons are planned to meet the needs of the majority in the class, which consists of

the average and lower attaining pupils. This results in the higher attainers not making as much progress as they could. Computers are used on occasion to support learning in science but the use of information and communication technology is not planned on a systematic basis. Pupils therefore not only miss opportunities to extend their learning in science, they get fewer opportunities to develop computer skills.

94 The co-ordinator, who has only had the post since September, is beginning to support the subject well. Together, with the previous co-ordinator who still works in the school, she has observed lessons, developed good assessment procedures and set up some training events for the teachers. Both co-ordinators have analysed teachers' planning and the very good assessment procedures. As a result, they have identified areas of the science curriculum that have need of further development and support. They have analysed the National Curriculum tests in science and identified that, although they get a high proportion of pupils to the expected standards by the end of Year 6, very few reach the higher levels. The co-ordinators recognise that this is mainly due to a lack of specifically planned work to challenge the higher attaining pupils. Resources in science are good and the subject is enhanced by visits to the Lake District and the Sellafield Nuclear Power Station. The school grounds are used well as a science resource for learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

95 One lesson was seen during the inspection. This, with pupils' sketchbooks from each class, scrutiny of a considerable amount on display and discussion with Year 6 pupils make it possible to make firm judgements. Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well and make good progress as they move through school. Since the last inspection, standards for seven-year-olds have been maintained. Those for 11-year-olds are now average and these were judged to be above average at the last inspection. Standards for the 30 older pupils from Years 5 and 6 involved in the after school Art Club, however, are well above average. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well.

96 Work in Year 2, inspired by a visit to a local mosque, contributed very well to art and design. Pupils made detailed observational line drawings of the building and used their knowledge of patterns to design a panel using shape and decoration. Pupils learn techniques well and use them in improving their work. In Year 1, excellent teaching absorbed pupils and they gained a very good grasp of design using a variety of weaving techniques. Pupils used their previous knowledge of materials and patterns very well. They learned new techniques, for example, when curling ribbon. Pupils' exploration and their ability to share their ideas, talking clearly about how they may improve their carpet designs was above average. Pupils in Year 6 speak clearly about what they know about the work of a range of artists from different times and cultures, for example, Monet and Van Gogh and they use this knowledge to improve their use of colour-shades, blending and brush strokes. They know the work of sculptors such as Andy Goldsworthy and have firm views on the 'Angel of the North' by Anthony Gormley having made a visit and made sketches on site. "It's a good strong design, then he used art to build it". One boy recalled his thinking about light, shade and tone. "We used a light source at one corner to know where to shade in the darker bits when we were drawing a cube".

97 The curriculum is well balanced and allows pupils to use a wide range of media, such as, pencils, pastels, charcoal, paint and collage, with growing confidence. They draw objects from nature, for example daffodils and quill feathers, and use lenses and viewfinders to improve their observations. Pupils begin to understand design by, for example, looking carefully at Roman mosaics and by designing a storyboard. Their work shows a growing understanding of colour, line, tone, shape, pattern and form. Pupils learn to work in three dimensions, for example when they design and make

sculptures from recycled materials. Very good use is made of visits outside school, such as to the Boldon Sculpture Park. An excellent range of visiting artists makes a key contribution to the standards attained. For example, following a visit to see 'Dan Dare-the Musical', pupils worked with an artist and musician to produce short animated films of exceptional quality. Other outstanding work is displayed around public places in the locality with some currently on display in Paris. The teaching is good and goes beyond just teaching technique and has a profound impact on the learning. To use one pupil's words: "I was inspired at the thought of being in a club full of artists. I think that people that think they can't draw should think again because it doesn't come from the brain it comes from the heart".

98 The quality of teaching is at least good. Strengths lie in good subject knowledge, interest and enthusiasm leading to clear planning. This ensures that pupils' learning is good as they learn techniques and build on previous skills, knowledge and understanding. Computer programs, such as 'Colour Magic' are used occasionally to enhance the design process. Pupils have very positive attitudes; they enjoy the work and feel successful. The weakness in class lessons is the lack of time given to allowing pupils to make a personal response using their knowledge, skills and understanding to make choices. This is where the extra curricular work excels and shows that these pupils can attain very high standards. Leadership and Management are satisfactory. Planning is very thorough. There is some attempt to monitor the work, but clear assessment procedures to track pupils' progress is not yet in place.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99 Attainment in design and technology is average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. It was a similar picture in the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. By the end of Year 2 pupils design a project and use a variety of materials soundly, such as wheels, rope, fabric, paper and electrical circuitry to make artefacts. These include Joseph's coat of many colours, puppets, jewellery and go-karts. Pupils write an evaluation of their products on completion. By the end of Year 6, pupils have progressed by using computers to make their designs, also by using a wider range of materials including wood.

100 The response of pupils in design and technology is always enthusiastic and they concentrate well in class, listening to instructions and heeding safety advice. They collaborate well with each other and share knowledge, materials and ideas.

101 Teaching is good throughout and all pupils make good progress during lessons because projects offer opportunities for different levels of performance and teachers and classroom assistants continuously monitor to ensure individual success. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 but an analysis of products and of written plans and designs enable a judgement to be made. Teachers instruct pupils about food safety and enable pupils to construct a healthy meal using the different categories of foodstuff. They teach pupils how to measure accurately, mark out and cut clothing to fit small cardboard figures. Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to explore the sensory qualities of materials and by their comments give pointers to improve the appearance and usage of products by employing simple finishing techniques.

102 In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good, planning is detailed and the appropriate resources are prepared. Teachers give clear instructions, have good classroom management skills and ask appropriate questions to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding and to prompt pupils' thinking. Teachers give good demonstrations and pupils are taught how to measure and saw wood accurately and safely in order to construct simple frames for artefacts and vehicles. After teaching these skills, teachers encourage pupils to use their own ideas to develop the basic structure into something more

original and individual. In one class pupils designed their own vehicles to fit on the top of a frame, using their own choice of finish, for example one pupil designed a working model of a bus. Teachers provide useful resources such as grids, to help pupils and give individual practical help to improve techniques. Teachers and classroom assistants are enthusiastic about this subject and motivate their pupils, keeping their attention and interest focused throughout the lesson.

103 The expertise of classroom assistants in a food technology lesson was crucial to the outcome of the lesson. They ensured pupils were careful to wash their hands before touching a variety of sandwiches, they interpreted the food contents to ensure religious laws were not broken for particular pupils and helped groups of pupils to record their findings about the sandwiches on the teacher's grid.

104 Currently, the school is without a co-ordinator for this subject because of a very recent staff promotion and so there can be no judgement on management. However, the scheme of work continues to cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum and there is obvious progression from the art straw models of a playground in reception through to the large solar powered constructions at Year 6. Resources are also varied and satisfactory. Assessment procedures are limited and lessons are not rigorously monitored at present, which means that the school does not have a clear picture of the progress pupils are making.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105 By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils reach average standards. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.

106 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is mostly good. This is partly due to the successful implementation of new national guidelines, which supports teachers effectively in the planning of topics and lessons. Teachers focus clearly on what they want pupils to learn and ensure that the methods they use capture pupils' interest at a level that matches their ability and understanding. As a result pupils learn well. Pupils in Year 1 follow the journey of "Barnaby Bear" to Denmark. This is particularly relevant as pupils see the ferry leaving the mouth of the River Tyne from the local area and this helps them to understand how places are linked. Barnaby's journey is further enhanced because pupils follow his travels through Internet images. Pupils use maps and globes to help them to understand the route.

107 Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. In a lesson seen in Year 6 pupils developed their geographical skills very well because of the high expectation of the teacher. Pupils used a wide range of maps of various scales, aerial photographs and the Internet in order to meet the different challenges. For example they used the Internet to find the shortest distance by road between Newcastle and London, and they identified coastal and river features shown on maps and aerial photographs using a six-figure grid reference. All pupils found this work highly motivating and as a result worked enthusiastically together, learning new skills very well.

108 Teachers use resources well and at times very well. Pupils in Year 3 were highly motivated to find out more about a possible location for their holiday because they were given artefacts, which would be packed in their suitcase. These included climbing boots, snorkelling equipment, and beachwear. Pupils used holiday brochures for research, and linked artefacts to places accurately as they discussed climate and physical features.

109 Teachers plan lessons to link with other areas of the curriculum in a meaningful and appropriate way. A good example is in Year 2, where geographical skills, knowledge and



understanding are taught very effectively through the story of Katie Morag who lives on a Scottish island. Pupils understand that mountains, seas, rivers and bays are physical features and identify them on a simple map. They identify some of the human features of the Scottish Island. The work is interesting because Katie Morag, a character from a book studied in literacy, lives there. Pupils in Year 6 reinforce numeracy skills when they identify and calculate the differences in time zones of places around the world.

110 Pupils are interested and enjoy the subject. Behaviour is mostly good, however excellent behaviour was seen in Year 1 because of the very high expectation of the teacher. Pupils work well together. They share equipment and help each other. In Year 6 pupils using the Internet, supported and advised each other well. Year 1 pupils clapped in appreciation of each other's efforts. Pupils take a pride in their work and present it well. However, pupils get very few opportunities to write at length or in depth in geography, or to practise the skills they have learned in English lessons.

111 The leadership and management of the subject have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now good. The co-ordinator has worked with colleagues to implement the new guidance for the curriculum and she manages her own budget appropriately. She has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas in need of development. Opportunities are missed to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom, but teachers keep a useful portfolio of pupils' work to illustrate standards in geography. Teachers monitor pupils' work informally through evaluation and there is a procedure to formally assess pupils' work, in the process of being introduced.

## **HISTORY**

112 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are achieving well. It was a similar picture at the last inspection.

113 By the end of Year 2, most pupils have good factual knowledge of the topics they have studied for example toys and homes through the ages, Florence Nightingale, Remembrance Day and the Great Fire of London. They appreciate that some events took place in the recent past whereas others took place in more distant times. Pupils know that history is compiled from a variety of sources such as diaries, peoples' memories, documents, film and artefacts and know that there is no one single viewpoint on history. They communicate their findings in a variety of ways such as orally, written form, artwork and role-play.

114 Pupils at the end of Year 6 have good understanding of the passage of time. They appreciate different viewpoints, for example in a study of the Victorians, they know that rich and poor had a different view of society. Their factual knowledge is sound in the particular aspects studied and they are also enthusiastic about the role-play and pictures they have completed in lessons.

115 Sometimes, however, owing to time pressures on this subject the lack of depth produces a one-dimensional view of events and people. For example, pupils in Year 6 restricted their descriptions of the Vikings to, 'the wild and fierce.' Also, opportunities for writing are often limited to worksheets. Variety, purpose and extension of tasks are not fully utilised to improve the pupils' written work. Also there is little evidence of research materials being used, particularly in local studies.

116 Pupils' attitudes to this subject are good. They still speak with enthusiasm about projects they studied both recently and a long time ago and visits they made to the Remembrance Day service, to the Whitburn lighthouse, to Hadrian's Wall and South Shields Fort. They also enjoy having visitors to the

school, who share their memories, such as parents and grandparents. This brings their history lessons alive and relevant to their own lives.

117 No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. However, from work analysis and discussions with pupils it is possible to make a judgement that the teaching is good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use artefacts effectively and encourage all pupils to observe, analyse and consider what they can find out. They teach all pupils how to share their own pictures, photographs and tapes in order to plot their own family history and that of their parents and grandparents. They teach this subject enthusiastically and by questioning encourage all pupils to think about change and the many reasons for it. Teachers' knowledge is good and pupils of all abilities remember interesting details from periods they have studied.

118 In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is also good. Again this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Evidence was taken from a small number of lessons, discussions with pupils and work scrutiny. Lessons are well planned and good resources are prepared. Aims for what will be learned in lessons are clear and shared with the pupils. Books and documents are utilised and pupils consult the Internet to access information. When lessons are excellent teachers present their themes in an original and imaginative way. They use very good resources, support pupils with special educational needs well, differentiate work to extend all abilities, plan for the development of independent learning and pupil collaboration, encourage a diversity of viewpoints and provide real purpose, audience and variety for communication. In one such lesson, pupils worked in groups to make a museum display to illustrate a post-war decade. Whilst this was in progress, the teacher gave support and encouragement for collaboration, negotiation and democratic decision-making within the groups. At the end, pupils gave a highly confident and interactive display based on the period studied, which included dance, music, artefacts and role-play. In another well-taught lesson, pupils took on the role of archaeologist as they dug for artefacts in the Egyptian sand! This lesson was particularly powerful because the teacher created an atmosphere of excitement and suspense by dressing in Egyptian clothing and by organising pupils to sit and lounge around 'camel stools' and 'precious carpets'. Pupils were thus highly motivated and receptive to learning and were able to feel some of the excitement, which occurred when Howard Carter opened the tomb of Tutankamun.

119 Resources for this subject are satisfactory but there is a need for more software so that pupils can regularly use information and communication technology. Staff assess individually but not formally at the end of the programmes of study. The subject is soundly led and managed. The subject is enhanced by many visits out and the many visitors in who share their experiences.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120 By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are achieving well. The school's resources are good and a significant improvement since the last inspection. The effective staff development has been well planned and supported by the co-ordinator. This leads to good teaching with pupils having good basic skills and an enthusiasm for and confidence in information and communication technology. The use of information and communication technology in the teaching of other subjects of the curriculum is limited and hampering the rate of progress that pupils are capable of.

121 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their learning. They are able to log on to the school's network, have sound keyboard skills and are confident in using the computer for word processing. Pupils learn the basic skills of how to move the mouse and choose options on the screen. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to communicate their ideas using text and graphics and able to

enter, store, retrieve and print their work. Pupils use a programmable toy to sequence instructions and predict the accuracy of their instructions. As a result they develop their numeracy skills in estimating the distance between two objects and the directions that need to be taken.

122 Pupils in Years 3 to 6, continue to make good progress and achieve well. In Year 6 there is a small number of pupils attaining above the national expectation. All pupils extend their skills in word processing and are able to store, retrieve and amend data, enter sequences of instructions and use a multi media package to produce a presentation about their memories of the time at primary school. In this presentation they combined text, graphics and animation with good skill and considerable imagination. In Year 5 pupils create a database on a spreadsheet, analyse the information and draw valid conclusions from the information. Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of computer simulation work and become increasingly accurate in amending the data in the simulation exercise to achieve the desired outcome. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident in the use and application of a range of technologies, including, for example, the digital camera.

123 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of information and communication technology. Teachers and the support assistants work very well as a team, have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and provide good levels of individual support to ensure that they do. As a result pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English make good progress. All pupils have positive attitudes, are enthusiastic about the tasks that they are asked to do and are able to work independently and in pairs. Teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly and always explain carefully to pupils what they will be learning in the lesson. This leads to pupils working hard, concentrating well and being enthusiastic to further their skills. They listen to instructions carefully, treat equipment with absolute respect and are eager to improve. Teachers have established effective routines of working that lead to time being used well and pupils working independently with minimal supervision.

124 The leadership and management of the information and communication technology curriculum are good. The co-ordinator is very aware of the need to raise standards and the planned introduction of a new system for assessing pupils' progress has the potential to be helpful in achieving this aim. The school has good procedures to ensure safeguards when pupils use the Internet. Pupils are being well prepared for the technological challenges that they will face later on in their education and they have a desire for further knowledge and to gain more skills.

## **MUSIC**

125 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is average. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The strength is in singing, which is of high quality by the end of Year 6 and especially in the school choir.

126 By the end of Year 6, attainment is good and choral work is often well above average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve very well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress and their quality of learning is good. The choir produces a lively, tuneful sound, showing a good grasp of the different dimensions of pitch, tempo and duration. Pupils can hold their tune in a five part round. When developing an accompaniment for a round using tuned percussion instruments, they understand that they need to keep the same tempo. One pupil said, "harmony is when the notes fit together and sound pleasant and that disharmony is discordant and sounds awful". Almost all pupils discriminate well between different pitches. They appraise others' performance by listening carefully and offering comments.

127 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress and have a good quality of learning. In Year 4 they sing well in unison and improve their performance by improving their diction and emphasis of rhyme. They know this helps to add 'polish'. Pupils in Year 3 create and repeat rhythm to accompany songs on the theme of 'The Fairground'.

128 By Year 2, attainment is average in music generally and again above average in singing. Pupils know the names of the percussion instruments and use them with reasonable control. Most pupils keep a steady pulse, for example, when chanting different words, using syllables well to keep the rhythm and holding the shape of 'Drunken Sailor', and their part, with adult support. They sing in tune and with a great deal of energy. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and the quality of their learning is satisfactory. In a Year 1 lesson about using music to create moods, they tried hard to describe feelings using words such as 'jolly' and 'calm'. Listening carefully to classical pieces they note how the music goes up, down, faster and slower, and are beginning to learn about the dynamics and tempo.

129 Pupils' attitudes to music lessons are very good. They behave very well, maintain good concentration and retain a fair amount of what they are taught. Those who are in the choir retain knowledge very well. Most of the oldest pupils show increasing maturity in the way they work in lessons and polish their work to performance level. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, take part in all lessons on equal terms with their peers, concentrate hard and make similar progress. Pupils who are showing particular talent are encouraged to take part in music other than at school.

130 Teaching is good overall and is very good in Years 5 and 6. This shows an improvement from the last inspection. The best teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge, enthusiasm, high expectations and very clear explanations and demonstration. Most teachers and support assistants are confident in using their voices and in approaching musical tasks in which they themselves may not be skilled. Very good use is made of the skills of an excellent visiting pianist. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and skilfully organised. Pupils are managed very well. Teachers' deliberately use correct musical terminology to reinforce pupils' understanding of these terms. The use of information and communication technology, other than recorded music, is not a regular feature of lessons. Assessment does not give a clear enough picture on progress in the three main elements of music, so that teachers do not have a clear understanding of progress.

131 The co-ordinator has recently taken on the role of literacy co-ordinator. The school intends the position will be filled by September. Whilst the policy and guidelines are good the scheme of work does not give sufficient support to, for example, composition in class lessons. Extra curricular activities enhance the learning. Music is used regularly in assemblies and introduces pupils to a wide range of recorded music from different cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132 By the ages of seven and 11, pupils are reaching standards that are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well. The breadth of the curriculum enables pupils to participate in a wide range of games, including football, tennis, hockey and basketball. The use of community involvement extends the opportunities that are available to pupils.

133 By the end of Year 6, pupils have sound levels of co-ordination and are agile and balanced in their movements. In rounders, for example, Year 6 pupils are able to throw, catch and strike balls with accuracy. Strengths are that pupils are able to make evaluations of their performances and give

encouragement to each other to improve. Pupils have swimming lessons and the standard of teaching is good with the vast majority of pupils being able to swim 25 metres by the age of 11. Older pupils have good opportunities to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in a residential week where they have opportunities to go canoeing, fell walking and orienteering. This is very helpful in promoting pupils' personal and social development and building good attitudes towards team work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 play games with enthusiasm and by the end of Year 2 are good at throwing and catching balls and bean bags. Year 2 pupils go swimming and are becoming increasingly confident when in the water. In dance they are able to put together a sequence of movements to music and pay sound attention to starting and finishing positions.

134 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, effective use is made of pupil demonstrations and expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. This leads to enthusiastic responses from pupils, good standards of concentration and positive attitudes to their work. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and use praise appropriately to motivate them. Teachers place a good emphasis on the practising of skills and this leads to pupils becoming more confident and making good progress. A strength of the teaching is its impact on pupils' personal development since it promotes their self-esteem and ability to work collaboratively. Teachers understand the importance of warming up and relaxing after exercise and this is a consistent feature of all lessons. Teaching is enhanced by the use of experienced coaches in a number of sports such as tennis, hockey, basketball and swimming to give pupils high quality coaching and training.

135 The curriculum co-ordinator provides good leadership and management because of the effective procedures for supporting teachers and planning the curriculum. Her commitment to ensuring that pupils receive a good range of physical activities leads to good progress in pupils' personal development. As a result physical education makes a good contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of the pupils by promoting the importance of team-work, problem solving and fair play.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

136 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils reach the average standards outlined in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. The previous inspection judged that standards were average and that the school met requirements for collective worship.

137 All pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve well in religious education. They learn about different religions, which helps them in forming their own values and beliefs. By the end of Year 6, pupils receive a good grounding in different world religions and faiths, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and in the Muslim faith. Pupils learn and understand the significance and preciousness of sacred books, such as The Bible, The Qur'an and The Torah. They reflect on important human values such as respect, sharing and caring. The emphasis on celebrating pupil's own different experiences, and the religions and faiths in the local community is very appropriate for the pupils in this school. For instance, the Spanish translation of The Bible was on hand to support newly arrived refugees from Columbia. Pupils are encouraged to think in lessons, to reflect on and share their ideas and so the subject effectively contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

138 Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils have deepened their understanding of Christianity and some of the major religions of the world. They know that people have different beliefs and values that affect the way they live their life. For example, pupils know a variety of places of worship and that prayer is common to all religions and that there are different

ways of praying. Pupils in Year 5 explore and have a very mature debate about prayer in the Muslim religion. They know it is called Salah and compare what non-Muslims would be doing at those five times a day. They know that the Qur'an is the Holy Book and why it came to be written. In this way they are able to compare and discuss, respect and value differences. When comparing different styles of prayer, one pupil knew immediately that Christians put their hands together as a 'sign of respect'. Pupils in Year 4 know many stories told by Jesus and know they are called parables. They know a variety of prayer and naming ceremonies in different religions. They gather evidence about religions represented in the community systematically and record their findings clearly. Year 3 pupils know a range of religious signs and symbols.

139 By Year 2, pupils know about Christianity, the Church and its artefacts, for instance the use of the altar, lectern, and organ. They know how Christians pray and use hymns and prayers to worship. In a very good lesson, following learning about different naming ceremonies, they learned about the Christian ceremony of marriage. Pupils learned to distinguish between 'ceremony' and 'celebration'. They discussed love and perseverance – one child offered, "It means it keeps going and going". In Year 1, pupils extend their knowledge about religious buildings by discussing the rites, traditions, symbolism and activities held in a church.

140 Teaching is very good overall because it is very sensitively taught. Lessons are well prepared and resources are used effectively. Clear explanations, the use of real artefacts and very good questioning effectively deepen pupils' learning. Pupils know that teachers are very interested in what they teach. This encourages them to ask questions and share their ideas. For example, in a Year 5 class, Muslim pupils offered their knowledge and in a Year 4 lesson excellent teaching led pupils to write prayers in their own languages, based on different faiths to understand the universality of prayer. Pupils enjoy discussions and have good attitudes to learning. They understand the reasons for prayer and respond well to prayer, when offered during collective worship.

141 Good subject leadership and management have helped to ensure effective planning by the teachers. Resources support teaching and learning well. Computers are not yet used regularly to support teaching and learning in religious education.