

INSPECTION REPORT

**BISHOP MIDDLEHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ferryhill

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114258

Headteacher: Mr J D Atkinson

Reporting inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 247440

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Front Street
Bishop Middleham
Ferryhill
County Durham

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Alderson

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23158	M. D'Arcy	Registered Inspector	Science Art and design Music	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19374	W. Sheehan	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?
23081	C. Waine	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Educational inclusion Mathematics Information and communication technology History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11528	M. Wainwright	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average sized primary school, catering for boys and girls aged between 4 and 11. All of the school's 115 pupils attend full-time. The small size of the school means that pupils often have to be taught in classes containing more than one age group; class organisation is often subject to annual change depending on pupil numbers. At the time of the inspection, all of the reception children were being taught together in one class while Year 1 and 2 pupils made up the other infant class. In the mornings, junior pupils are taught in mixed age classes containing two consecutive year groups; in the afternoons, they are taught in single year groups. All pupils are of White UK heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including statements of special need, is below the national average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. The school is situated within the village of Bishop Middleham, which, overall, is a socially advantaged area. Most pupils remain at this school throughout their seven years of primary education. Children's attainment when they start in the reception class is generally above that which is expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Effective teaching and good quality learning experiences ensure that pupils achieve well and attain standards that are at least above average in most subjects. The school is also very successful in promoting pupils' standards of personal development. Underpinning all of the school's achievements is the very good quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and are above average in art and design, design and technology and physical education.
- Most of the teaching is good and a high proportion is very good or excellent.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well, with a clear focus on raising standards. Governors are also very effective in supporting the school and helping it to improve.
- Pupils' excellent relationships and attitudes to school, together with their very good standards of behaviour and personal development, reflect the school's high expectations and caring, family, ethos.
- A good range of interesting and motivating learning experiences is provided that develop pupils academically as well as personally. The school is particularly successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- Higher attaining junior pupils are not always challenged enough in mathematics.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in May 1997. All of the recommendations made at that time have been successfully addressed. In addition, standards in all subjects have risen. Teaching is better, with much higher proportions of good and better teaching. Improvements have also been made in areas of provision that were previously identified as strong, for example, pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

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	B	A*	A	B
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	B	C	A	A

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

Since the number of pupils in a year group often varies considerably and is sometimes very small, comparisons of pupils' performance with national data are not always reliable. However, inspection evidence supports the test results depicted in the table above. Year 6 pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Overall, pupils achieve well in these subjects, with much larger proportions of pupils than nationally reaching higher than expected levels in English and science. However, in mathematics, the proportion at the higher level is only in line with the national picture. Inspection evidence found that, although higher attaining pupils are effectively challenged in mental mathematics sessions, they are not stretched enough by the written tasks and investigations that they are given. Whilst the progress of these pupils in mathematics is satisfactory, it could be better. The school has already recognised this and is seeking ways to improve standards. Over time, Year 6 pupils' test results have improved at a similar rate to that of schools nationally. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils to achieve in the national tests. Year 1 and 2 pupils achieve well. Their test results in 2002 were very high (in the top five per cent nationally) in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics; science assessments were above average. Inspection evidence confirms these standards.

By the ends of Years 2 and 6 standards are above average in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Year 2 pupils' standards in geography and history are also above average and Year 6 pupils' standards in these subjects are average. The difference is accounted for because the impact of school's improved curriculum for geography and history has not yet had time to work its way fully through the school. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average by the ends of Years 2 and 6 and are rising rapidly. There was not enough evidence to make secure judgements on pupils' standards and achievement in music.

Reception children make good progress. By the end of the year almost all attain the levels expected for their age and many exceed them, particularly in relation to skills in personal, social and emotional development, speaking, listening, reading, and mathematics. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development are also above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and willing to participate fully in lessons. They present their work neatly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and the friendly, family atmosphere in lessons and other aspects of school life.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships is excellent. Pupils readily take on responsibility and develop a mature awareness of the needs and views of others.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual and their attendance is much better than the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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.

Teaching and learning are good. Moreover, inspectors saw a significant proportion of lessons in each of the three phases where teaching was very good; some excellent teaching was also seen in both the infants and juniors. Overall, English and mathematics are taught well and results in pupils making good gains in learning. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively in lessons and are also promoted very well in other subjects. This is also the case in ICT where teaching and learning are consistently good and often very good. Overall, teaching meets the needs of all pupils, with teachers matching work well to their different ages and attainment. The only exception is in mathematics, where higher attaining junior pupils are not always challenged enough. Teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils is seen in the interesting and challenging lessons they provide for them. Teachers are particularly effective in making relevant links between subjects, which motivates pupils, reinforces learning and promotes better understanding. Teachers' excellent relationships with pupils make them eager to work hard to please their teachers. Where teaching is less effective, though not unsatisfactory, the pace of lessons is somewhat slow. Overall, however, teaching in all year groups is good and promotes effective learning in all subjects. Support staff make a good contribution to teaching and learning, particularly for those pupils with learning difficulties.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Whilst maintaining a very good emphasis on the basics of literacy and numeracy, pupils experience a broad and interesting range of subjects. A good range of after-school activities enriches the curriculum and supports pupils' personal development very well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There are effective systems to ensure that pupils receive additional support with basic skills, which means that they are better able to tackle work in other subjects. Pupils take a full part in everything that is on offer.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect upon and appreciate the beauty of the world around them. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and are helped to see how they can influence events in their own and others' lives. A wide range of learning experiences helps pupils gain a very good understanding of their own culture and a satisfactory understanding of the multicultural nature of society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well looked after. There are good systems to check on how well they are learning and to promote and celebrate pupils' achievements.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has a very good partnership with pupils' parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads by example and provides the school with a clear direction for improvement. He is supported well by a hardworking deputy and a committed staff team. There is a good number of teachers; the number of support staff is satisfactory. The school has effective procedures for ensuring that it gets the best value from the spending and other decisions it makes.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are a committed and effective team and provide considerable support for the school. They bring expertise, experience and quality to their role of critical friend, asking the right questions at the right time. They fulfil all their legal obligations.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and governors have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and areas where improvement is needed. Effective procedures to check on the quality of teaching, coupled with good use of assessment information, ensures that the school identifies the correct priorities for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of staff, finance, time, accommodation and resources. The accommodation is good and has improved since the last inspection. Resources are also better, although there are a few shortages in geography.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Behaviour is good.• The teaching is good and children make good progress.• Staff and the headteacher are approachable.• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A greater range of activities outside of school.• A minority feel that homework is inconsistent and would like more feedback on homework tasks.• A minority feel that they do not receive enough information on how well their children are achieving.

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views. There is some justification in parents' concerns about homework, which is not set in line with the school's policy and is not always sufficiently challenging for older pupils. Similarly, there is scope for the annual written reports on pupils' progress to be more informative and consistent between classes. Inspectors disagree with parents' concerns about activities outside of school; the range provided is good and broader than in many small primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The assessments that are made of children when they begin school show that standards are generally above those expected for children of this age. This is particularly so in personal social and emotional development and mathematics. In some years, standards in communication, language and literacy have also been above those expected for children beginning the reception year, but school records show that this is not always so, with attainment in this aspect having been only average in some years and occasionally below average. Children make good progress. At the end of the reception year, standards are mostly well above average, with almost all children attaining the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning and many exceeding them. This is particularly so in relation to skills in personal, social and emotional development; speaking and listening; reading; and mathematics. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development is also above average.

2. The results of national tests taken by Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well above the national average in writing and mathematics and very high (in the top five percent nationally) in reading. In relation to similar schools, these results were well above average in reading and mathematics and above in writing. Teacher assessments of pupils' standards in science, speaking and listening were above average. Despite the size of year groups varying considerably, over time, pupils' performance in tests and assessments has generally been above national averages. Overall, girls perform better than boys in reading and mathematics but in writing, the difference is not particularly significant. Inspection evidence did not find any significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement.

3. The results of national tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, these results were well above average in science, above in English and average in mathematics. In English and science, a much larger proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels than in mathematics. Most pupils make good progress in all these subjects, but in mathematics, higher attainers are not challenged enough in the work that they are given to do independently. The school has recognised the need to boost the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics and this is one of their priorities. Over time, Year 6 test results are broadly in line with the national trend. In the English and science tests, girls generally perform better than boys but there is no significant difference in mathematics. Inspection evidence did not find any significant difference between boys' and girls' standards.

4. In both the infants and juniors, the size of year groups often fluctuates considerably. This means that comparisons of pupils' performance with national data and the identification of trends in performance are not always reliable, particularly when the number of pupils taking the tests is small. Nevertheless, inspection evidence confirms the test and assessment results. Overall, standards by the ends of Years 2 and 6 are well above average in English and mathematics; in science they are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Whilst recognising that the performance data is not always reliable, the school makes good use of this and other assessment information to identify areas for improvement. This has led to some determined action to raise standards. For instance, a specific emphasis is being placed on providing literature and activities to motivate boys to read and write so as to improve their performance in English tests. Similarly, in mathematics, the school is currently researching ways and finding resources to challenge higher attainers to increase the

proportion achieving the higher levels. The school makes good use of assessment data to set realistic and challenging targets for Year 6 pupils to achieve in English and mathematics.

5. The attainment of pupils with learning difficulties is mainly below that which is expected for their age. However, they too make good progress as a result of effective teaching and the very good opportunities that they have to be included in the full range of work and activities offered to others.

6. Pupils are achieving well in all subjects. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Year 2 pupils achieve above average standards in geography and history, while Year 6 pupils' standards in these subjects are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. This difference in attainment does not mean that provision or achievement is less effective in the juniors, simply that the school's revised and improved curriculum for geography and history has not yet had sufficient time to influence, to the same extent, the standard being achieved by older junior pupils. Standards in ICT are in line with what is expected for pupils' ages and are improving rapidly due to the good learning opportunities and teaching pupils receive in the subject. It is not possible to make secure judgements on standards and achievement in music because of limited evidence during the inspection. With this exception, standards of attainment in all subjects have improved since the last inspection. Those that were average are now above and those that were below average are now at least in line with what is expected for pupils' ages; in design and technology especially, they have risen from below average to above by the ends of both Years 2 and 6. The school is well placed to continue its very good improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The very good standards achieved by pupils at the time of the last inspection have improved even further. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and learning. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good, with no evidence of bullying or harassment. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent years. Children in the reception class have all settled well to school life. They contribute confidently in lessons and are already developing very good standards of behaviour. The behaviour and attitude to work and school of pupils with learning difficulties is equally as good as that of other pupils.

8. The friendly family atmosphere within the school has an excellent impact on pupils' eagerness to learn. They work purposefully in lessons, are always interested in what they are doing and are well motivated. Pupils concentrate well, listen very carefully and enjoy the challenges that they are set. For instance, in a mathematics lessons in Years 4/5, pupils worked sensibly, both individually and in pairs, and discussed their work enthusiastically. Similarly, in a Year 3 history lesson, pupils were so interested and motivated that they did not want to stop for their afternoon break. This high level of interest and enthusiasm for all aspects of school life is reflected in the good progress that pupils make.

9. Pupils' very good behaviour is evident in the calm, orderly and purposeful way that they work. In many lessons, no child had to be reprimanded, which ensured that teaching and learning progressed at a good pace. Pupils behave very well in assemblies; at lunchtime they are well mannered and sociable. Despite the junior playground being small and cramped, pupils behave very well at playtimes, which are friendly, social occasions.

10. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and adults. Children in the reception class talk enthusiastically and with great confidence to adults and visitors. Throughout the school, there is a very high level of mutual respect between pupils and teachers. This helps pupils to develop maturity and gives them considerable self-belief so that they respond and contribute very well to discussions and teachers' questions. Pupils value their school and teachers; for example, former members of the school council described their school as *'a lovely quiet small school with nice teachers who help you with your work'*. In lessons, pupils always work very well in different sized groups, discussing topics in a mature way and helping each other.

11. Pupils' personal development is very good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Each year, pupils elect two representatives from their year to the school council. These pupils take their role seriously and develop very good citizenship skills, such as considering the views of others and negotiating agreements. All pupils undertake class responsibilities appropriate to their age and older pupils are given good opportunities to become monitors. In many lessons, there are very good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and develop independent learning skills. For instance, in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson in which pupils were investigating number patterns, two Year 5 boys worked very well together to discover what would be the result of halving a quarter. In exploring the pattern further, the pair became so excited by their discovery that they wanted to tell everyone!

12. Pupils' attendance is very good, being well above the national average. Pupils arrive at school punctually so that lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good overall. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and a considerable proportion is very good or excellent.

14. Teaching for reception children is never less than satisfactory, being mostly good and sometimes very good, particularly in relation to the teaching of personal, social and emotional development. The overall quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. The teacher has very good relationships with the children and plans a wide range of relevant and practical activities that meet their needs and capture their interest. The wide variety of activities, including play, is thoughtfully organised to promote learning across a range of areas. The teacher works hard to ensure that all children have the same opportunities to experience everything that is offered. She plans well for the deployment of the part-time support assistant and volunteer helpers. Children have appropriate opportunities to make choices about their work. The teacher and other adults intervene effectively and continuously to encourage skills of speaking, listening and personal and social development. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are also constantly promoted throughout the day. The only real area for improvement is in relation to the range of opportunities for creative development in art and design. Whilst teaching and learning in this aspect is not unsatisfactory, children's creativity is stifled somewhat when the outcomes of activities are too prescribed.

15. Teaching for infant pupils in Years 1 and 2 and for junior pupils is good overall and often better. The most significant improvements since the last inspection are in relation to:

- teachers' subject knowledge;
- planning, which now clearly identifies what teachers intend pupils will learn;
- a more effective balance between the development of pupils' knowledge and skills; and
- better use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs.

16. A comprehensive programme of staff training, teachers' clear commitment to providing the best for their pupils, and the school's very good system of monitoring teaching and learning has underpinned these improvements. In many lessons, teachers' explanations, demonstrations and questioning show that they have a secure understanding of the subject. Similarly, the relevant links that they make between subjects makes learning more meaningful and interesting for pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in specific lessons and the potential of other subjects to promote these key skills is constantly exploited. ICT skills are very effectively promoted, both in specific ICT lessons in the suite and also in class lessons where use of the computer or other ICT equipment is specifically addressed in the planning for all subjects. Another strength is the way teachers plan for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each term and for each subject these elements are addressed in teachers' planning and, as a result, pupils' learning is enriched. An excellent example was seen in a science lesson where pupils sat entranced as the teacher turned out onto newspaper a cactus plant to show how the roots remained near to the surface in order for the plant to adapt to its dry and often drought-ridden habitat.

17. Teachers make use of a range of methods to maintain pupils' attention, keep them motivated and make learning fun. In all lessons, there is a very good balance between direct teaching to the whole class and group work, the latter often being of a practical nature, promoting pupils' initiative and the skills of investigation very well. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and groups, thus promoting social skills and their personal development. In most subjects, teachers' expectations are high and pupils rise well to the challenge. The only exception is in mathematics in the juniors, where higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged. Weaknesses in lessons that are satisfactory overall relate to some lack of pace and the setting of learning objectives that are not always clear.

18. Throughout the school, excellent relationships between teachers and pupils are evident. Teachers clearly like pupils and treat them fairly; a good rapport was seen in all classes. This pays off in terms of the high standards noted in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the confidence that they show in explaining their work or asking questions. Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils about their work shows that they know them very well and strikes the right balance between celebrating and encouraging their efforts and giving them achievable targets and developmental points to help them improve. Marking is good in Years 1 and 2, but is fairly cursory in the juniors. Overall, however, the strengths in relationships between pupils and teachers and the good quality of verbal feedback gives pupils a good insight into how well they are learning. Similarly, the way teachers often share with pupils the objectives of lessons, involves them very much in the learning process. Homework is used satisfactorily to support the work done in class, but older pupils say that they do not feel particularly challenged by it and the tasks that are set do not always follow the school's policy.

19. Teachers are very supportive of pupils with learning difficulties. They adapt work well to allow them to achieve success while still challenging them. Frequent praise and encouragement are provided, which raises pupils' self-esteem and motivates them to try hard. When pupils are withdrawn from class for specific support they benefit from some very good teaching. Support staff are well briefed by teachers and make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning, particularly in helping pupils with learning difficulties.

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

20. The curriculum for children in the reception class and pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good and much improved since the last inspection. The school has successfully introduced a new curriculum for children in the reception class, based on national guidance. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides well for the needs and interests of all pupils. Planning of the curriculum, in particular, has improved significantly and is now good. It is effective in providing interesting, often exciting, lessons that develop pupils' skills progressively as they get older. There are policies and long-term plans for each subject that guide teachers in planning for each age group. Although the way classes are organised often changes each year, the school plans effectively to ensure that there is no repetition or omission of work. The curriculum provides well for the personal, social and health education of pupils through studies across the whole curriculum, but particularly in science and class discussion times. Religious education is provided in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

21. The curriculum for children in the reception class is based on practical experience and offers them a good balance of directed and free choice activities. Lessons are interesting and the varied activities are linked carefully to the class topic to engage children's interest. Children enjoy both the direct teaching sessions and their opportunities to choose their own activities. There is a good emphasis on developing key skills of speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum for physical development has improved since the last inspection by the provision of daily physical activities in the hall and outdoors when the weather permits. Resources have also improved to provide a greater range of experiences to develop children's physical skills. The work that children complete provides them with a good start to their education and prepares them well for beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1.

22. The school has effectively introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Lesson planning for these subjects is good and teachers also plan well for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote a report of how they made photograph frames in design and technology and then evaluated their finished product. Pupils in Year 6 made notes as they watched a video on child labour in Victorian times to help them to discuss the topic later. Very good links are also made between subjects so that pupils see how they relate. A good example was seen in Year 4 where pupils developed skills in thinking, speaking and listening alongside those in history as they enacted an Ancient Egyptian feast. Pupils are given many opportunities to think and find things out for themselves, using books, computers and artefacts. For example, in an ICT lesson with a geography focus, Year 6 pupils used the Internet to carry out research about a local river.

23. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum for ICT did not meet statutory requirements. Since then, a very good action plan has resulted in the purchase of good quality resources and a good programme of training for teachers. The new curriculum is now being taught well and ICT is being incorporated into lessons in all subjects wherever possible, sometimes as a tool for the teacher. For example, in physical education, the teacher took photographs using a digital camera to help pupils reflect on and improve their work.

24. Pupils with learning difficulties receive the same curriculum as all other pupils and are fully involved in all activities. However, the targets in the individual education plans that are produced for pupils with learning difficulties who do not have statements of special need are not always sharp enough to help teachers measure their progress. Pupils are offered similar responsibilities to others and are valued members of the school.

25. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and expert visitors, such as authors, sculptors and artists, which brings learning to life. For example, when studying the Victorians, pupils visit a nearby museum to spend a day in a Victorian classroom. A range of artists works with pupils on different aspects of art and design. For example, one artist taught pupils about the way that relationships are portrayed in paintings and another helped pupils to create felt collage images of Bishop Middleham past, present and future. There is a good range of out-of-lesson activities, such as clubs for guitar, netball, football and skiing. Residential visits are provided for older pupils, which make a good contribution to their developing social skills.

26. Good community links support learning, particularly in personal, social, citizenship and health education. For example, Year 6 pupils visit local emergency services to learn more about health and safety issues. This work is also supported by visits to a nearby quarry. Sporting clubs enhance the teaching of team games such as cricket and football. Links with the church are very good; the vicar is a regular visitor and is known to pupils. Good links with the church support learning and enable pupils to take part in church community events, such as when they presented a display of their artwork at a Baptism ceremony. Pupils also take part in village activities, such as the Golden Jubilee celebration.

27. Beneficial links have been established with nearby schools, providing pupils with opportunities to work with pupils in a different setting. For example, they have worked with profoundly deaf pupils from two other schools, which has raised their awareness of the successes, as well as the difficulties, experienced by these pupils. They have also established an e-mail link with a school in a nearby village to compare life in the two places; this resulted in a day spent with pupils from the link school. Relationships with the secondary school are good, easing the transition for pupils in Year 6 and providing for some teacher training, such as in dance.

28. As at the time of the last inspection, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength that results in high standards of behaviour and excellent relationships. Moreover, the close attention to planning for developing pupils' understanding of these aspects through all subjects has resulted in an improvement since 1997.

29. Spiritual development is very good. Whole school acts of worship provide very good opportunities for pupils to gain spiritual understanding. There are many opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop a growing sense of the wonder of the world. For example, in an art and design lesson, the teacher created a sense of wonder as she slowly revealed sections of a picture; pupils expressed amazement at each stage. Pupils develop respect for the feelings, beliefs and values of others, and for themselves, because the school is effective in showing them that they are all valued as individuals. Success is constantly celebrated in numerous ways. Weekly personal, social and health education lessons are used very well to allow pupils to discuss issues that affect their lives and to help them understand the role that they play in events.

30. The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development makes a strong contribution to community harmony. A strong moral code underpins the school's behaviour policy; pupils understand the school rules and know what is expected of them. The positive and relaxed way in which teachers manage pupils promotes mutual respect and very good attitudes to school. Pupils become increasingly aware of their personal and social responsibilities and relate to each other in a mature way. Older ones accept responsibility for a range of activities and have responded very well to the increased opportunities to work collaboratively and show initiative in their learning. Pupils accept responsibility for others less fortunate than themselves through a programme of charity work. For example, they raise

money to improve life for children other countries through Christian Aid collections. A school council allows pupils in all year groups to have a say in what happens in their school. For example, the council suggested that they needed a greater range of playground equipment and the school responded by allowing each year to select their own to a set budget.

31. Cultural development is good. A range of visitors enriches learning experiences and raises pupils' awareness. For example, a storyteller told a variety of South African stories, incorporating African drums to enhance the experience. Many visits are made to local centres, such as Durham and Beamish museums; younger pupils visit the site of The Angel of the North, which inspires them to produce their own clay sculptures of this landmark. Pupils have had some contacts with pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in a nearby town and have visited a synagogue. However, whilst the provision for learning about other cultures is satisfactory, it is not as strong as the provision for pupils' understanding of their own culture, which is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Provision in this aspect has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school has succeeded very well in creating the caring community, which is identified in its mission statement. Pupils flourish and develop in this atmosphere, which supports and develops all as valued individuals. All adults are very good role models. Teachers know pupils well; in lessons, particularly personal, social and health education sessions, they show very good understanding of the motivation of each pupil. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. All staff are aware of these through guidance in the staff handbook. The headteacher, as named person responsible, has received up-to-date training.

33. Concerns about various health and safety aspects raised by the last inspection have been dealt with. The governing body is actively involved in termly inspections of the premises and risk assessments are regularly conducted. The school has a satisfactory policy for health and safety, although this does not provide information on where individual responsibilities lie. Appropriate procedures exist to record and monitor accidents, but only one member of staff is trained to administer first aid, which is insufficient. Through the science and the personal, social and health education curriculum pupils are given very good opportunities to develop safety awareness, for example, about the dangers of drugs and rules to stay safe. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils attended a half-day emergency services awareness programme reflecting the emphasis the school gives to developing pupils' understanding of these issues. Whilst there is awareness among staff of the need to be careful about use of the Internet, the school does not have an agreed statement on Internet safety.

34. The school has very good arrangements for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour. Whilst, compared with many primary schools, there are very few rules or reward schemes teachers are consistent in their provision of praise, rewards and sanctions to individuals, which are immediate and very effective. A similarly personal approach is applied to any concerns pupils may have about bullying. In discussion, pupils explained that they knew they should discuss such issues with a teacher and felt that these would be taken seriously and resolved. The excellent relationships that staff have with pupils support very good monitoring and promoting of pupils' personal development. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating achievement as it occurs, which leads to pupils developing into mature, polite, young people.

35. There are good procedures for monitoring and analysing attendance. The computerised system is used very effectively, for example, to follow up any unexplained absences and analyse trends. Noting a slight fall recently, the school has introduced a weekly celebration of 'highest class attendance' to maintain pupils' motivation. Day-to-day procedures, for example, the system of notifying teachers of pupils' absences following a telephone message from parents, are carried out predominantly through verbal communication; the school has recognised the need to formalise these procedures.

36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils are tested regularly, particularly in English and mathematics, and there are effective systems to assess learning in all other subjects. The information from English and mathematics tests is used well to identify priorities for improving standards, such as improving boys' writing, and to forecast future attainment levels for individuals. Assessment information is also used to identify pupils who will benefit from more challenging work or additional help, either individually or in small groups, or to set targets to address any learning difficulties. Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties are identified early and action is taken to support them. Outside specialists are involved as necessary. The annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational needs are carried out correctly, with the involvement of parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school has continued to maintain its good relationships with parents, who have very positive views about most aspects of the school.

38. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and home. Reading diaries provide a useful vehicle for dialogue between teachers and parents and show that many parents read regularly with their children. The majority of parents attend the consultation evenings provided by the school to discuss their children's progress. In addition, social opportunities, occurring through organised events by the parents' association, strengthen the partnership between home and school. Parents raise large amounts of money to support the school, which are spent on ongoing activities as well as supporting capital projects, including the new ICT suite and the purchase of an interactive whiteboard.

39. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents is variable but good overall. There are regular termly opportunities for parents to meet teachers and day-to-day contact is good. The parents of pupils with learning difficulties are kept well informed about their progress. The quality of the annual written reports on pupils' progress is inconsistent between classes. The better reports clearly reflect the strengths and areas for improvement of individual children whereas others make too widespread use of exactly the same statements for many pupils. In too many reports, improvement targets are vague and do not provide enough guidance for parents or pupils. The school prospectus is a very clearly written and informative document that is easy to read. The governors' annual report to parents meets all statutory requirements but gives little information about how the governing body fulfils its duties. Newsletters are written in a clear style informing parents and celebrating events and activities occurring in school.

40. The school has recently prepared a very detailed curriculum overview for parents to inform them of what is being taught in each term. Another useful communication tool has been the development of the school's own web site, which also provides a good range of information about the curriculum and school activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The quality of leadership and management has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The headteacher leads by example and is well liked and respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and a highly committed governing body. Very good relationships and teamwork between staff are another strength that provides support for the way the school is led and managed. This corporate approach has moved the school forward very well since its last inspection and is steering it effectively toward continued improvements. The headteacher's commitment to providing a very caring ethos, coupled with a vision that has raising standards and the success of pupils at its heart, underpins this school's work.

42. A very effective system for checking on pupils' standards and progress and on the quality of teaching and learning has been implemented since the last inspection. The headteacher regularly observes teaching and learning in classes and co-ordinators' involvement in looking at colleagues' planning, pupils' work and observing teaching has increased considerably. This has given co-ordinators a much more informed view of standards in their subjects, thus allowing them to plan more effectively for improvement and inform governors of developments in their subjects and areas of responsibility. The effective systems for monitoring the school's provision and pupils' performance in tests and assessments has led to the school identifying the right priorities for improvement. These are contained in a clear and appropriately detailed school improvement plan. A new co-ordinator for special educational needs has recently been appointed, but does not have any specific time to carry out this role as required by the special educational needs Code of Practice.

43. Governors are an effective team who fulfil all their statutory duties. Their roles have developed well since the last inspection and they now play a central part in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and shaping its development. Governors are regular visitors to the school, have undergone comprehensive training and are well informed. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and of areas where improvement is needed. Governors work hard to ensure that the principles of 'best value' are applied in all aspects of the school's work. For example, pupils and their parents have been consulted about different aspects of school life and the school has analysed assessment results to make comparisons between its performance and that of other schools. The quality of financial management is good; additional funding, such as that for staff training and pupils with learning difficulties is used very well.

44. There is a good number of experienced teachers to meet pupils' needs. Whilst the number of support staff is small they are deployed effectively to meet the changing needs of the school. The school secretary provides a welcoming first contact for parents and visitors and good support for day-to-day administration. She also provides good support for other aspects of the school's development, such as the reorganisation of the library and the creation of the school's web site.

45. The accommodation is good. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant redecoration programme to improve the junior classrooms, library and hall, resulting in an attractive, bright and comfortable learning environment. A similar project for the infant area is planned when funds allow. There are good facilities for indoor physical education lessons, but the outdoor play area is severely limited in the winter months when access to the waterlogged field is impossible. This means that at playtimes, junior pupils have very limited space to run around. The premises are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness. Good quality displays in classrooms and corridors enhance the accommodation, striking the right balance between stimulating pupils' interest and celebrating their work.

46. Resources are at least satisfactory in most subjects, but there are some shortages in geography. Overall, resources are sufficient in range and number and suitably matched to

pupils' age and needs. Resources are particularly good in ICT where a new suite is well supplied with a good number of up-to-date multimedia machines. The suite is already being used effectively to raise pupils' standards. A good range of resources effectively supports the learning of pupils with learning difficulties; the library contains a satisfactory range of books.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The headteacher and governors should now:

- (1) Improve the progress of higher attaining pupils in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - making better use of assessment information in planning lessons;
 - providing pupils with appropriately challenging tasks and activities, such as investigations, to enable them to use and apply their mathematical knowledge; and
 - setting targets for improvement for individual pupils.(Paragraphs: 65-71)

In addition to the key issues above, governors should consider the following less important issues for inclusion in their action plan:

- Improve the quality of information in annual progress reports to pupils' parents (39)
- Provide more specific targets in pupils individual education plans (Paragraph: 24)
- Improve learning resources in geography (Paragraph: 46)
- Ensure homework is sufficiently challenging, in line with the school's policy, and that pupils and parents receive feedback on the tasks completed (Paragraph: 18)
- Increase the number of adults able to administer first-aid and produce an agreed statement on safe use of the Internet (Paragraph: 33)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	14	17	7	0	0	0
Percentage	7	34	42	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	115
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	84 (96)	92 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (93)	92 (93)	92 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported

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			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (100)	94 (92)	94 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (83)	94 (92)	94 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported

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	115	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	299 318
Total expenditure	299 404
Expenditure per pupil	2 516
Balance brought forward from previous year	13 330
Balance carried forward to next year	13 244

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate:

Number of questionnaires sent out	115
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	47	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	59	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	47	14	0	0
The teaching is good.	67	29	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	51	14	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	16	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	53	16	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	2	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	49	4	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	33	27	4	8

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

48. Children enter the reception class at the start of the year in which they are five. Most have attended a nursery or playgroup prior to beginning school. Depending on the number of children being admitted, the size of the reception class varies significantly from year to year and sometimes includes pupils from other year groups. At the time of the inspection, however, the 16 reception-aged children were being taught together in a single age class.

49. At the time of the last inspection, provision was unsatisfactory, but it is now good. Children make good progress and achieve well. By the end of the reception year, almost all attain the levels expected for their age in all six areas of learning and many exceed them. The school has also made significant improvements to the curriculum and resources since the last inspection. Although children still do not have ongoing access to a secure outdoor play area, the school ensures that they have daily opportunities to take part in good quality physical activities. Teaching has also improved considerably. It is now good and sometimes very good, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy. The small size of classes means that there is no full-time support staff member. However, when support is available it is used well to help groups and in particular to support the development of children's ICT skills. Volunteers, such as parents and former staff, also make a valuable contribution to supporting teaching and learning. Adults have excellent relationships with children and manage their behaviour very well. The quality of planning is good and meets children's individual needs. Although there are no children with learning difficulties, staff keep a close watch on any who occasionally cause concern.

50. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Effective use is made of the national guidance for children this age to organise children into teaching groups and to set them work appropriate to their needs particularly in literacy and numeracy. Ongoing records of children's achievements are maintained enabling the teacher to check that they are making sufficient progress towards their learning targets. There are good arrangements for introducing parents and children to the school and beneficial relationships are formed with parents.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. Teaching in this area is very good. Adults promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively. The warm and caring atmosphere gives children a sense of security. Staff constantly raise children's self esteem by praising their efforts and achievements. Staff value what children have to say, listening with interest so that they develop confidence and trust in them. They set a good example of co-operation for children to follow and children make good progress in learning to work and play together constructively. Children learn that some actions are right, others are wrong, and that their actions affect other people. Their behaviour is very good and they work together as friends, sharing equipment and waiting patiently for their turn in activities. Most concentrate well and enjoy taking responsibility, for example when choosing their own activities or organising their friends in large play activities. Children take care of their own physical needs competently, such as when dressing and undressing themselves independently for physical education lessons.

Communication, language and literacy

52. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good. For example, children quickly learn letter sounds because of the lively and active approach used, which is reinforced with appropriate homework tasks. They enjoy books and have a good understanding about how to read them. For example, they hold them correctly, read from front to back and left to right and know that the print carries the meaning. Most children read books confidently and recognise quite a lot of common words; again this work is consolidated at home. Average and higher attainers sound-out unfamiliar words and lower attainers look for clues in the pictures. Children also use their good knowledge of letter sounds when writing words or short phrases. They listen carefully to adults and each other and are happy to speak aloud in whole class sessions, using a good range of vocabulary. They listen to stories with enjoyment, joining in with those that they know. Staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation whilst they work and play, using correct technical vocabulary to help children develop their own range of language further.

Mathematical development

53. Teaching is good. Children make good progress in developing mathematical skills and understanding because of the practical approach used. For instance, there are many opportunities for children to use equipment in counting, ordering and comparing activities, such as counting how many small bottles of water are needed to fill a large one. By the end of the year, higher attaining children count accurately to 20 and begin to add and subtract numbers to this amount. Average attainers count to 10, correctly identifying the numerals and recording simple calculations. Lower attainers are gaining confidence in working with numbers to 10. Children know and understand simple properties of shapes and use them to create pictures. They also work together to collect numerical information, which they are helped to present on a pictorial graph. For example, when learning about foods, each child enters the name of their favourite food into a database.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54. Teaching is good; interesting lessons deepen children's understanding of their world. Children develop a sense of place and time through studies of their environment and their own lives. For example, they compare how they looked as babies and how much they have grown and changed. They know that the toys that their parents and grandparents played with are different from their own. They plant seeds and watch them grow and learn to love and care for their world. Children explore the use of dry and wet sand and water. They are taught good skills in using computers by the specialist classroom assistant and learn to write their names and draw pictures on the computer. For instance, linked to their literacy work about *'The Three Little Pigs'*, children used a painting program to draw and colour a picture of the pigs. They learn how to use the 'brush' and 'fill' tools on the program to alter the thickness of their lines and make immediate changes to the colour of their pictures. Children also learn to control the movement of a robotic toy, making it move in different directions and for different distances. They make simple models, such as puppets, although this work is sometimes too directed to allow the children independence in making choices about their design or the materials that they will use. Children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world is deepened by a sound range of visits, such as that to a nearby farm. In religious education, they study their own and other religions and celebrate the festivals and cultures of other people.

Physical development

55. Provision has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. There are good opportunities for children to manipulate simple tools and toys and the development of children's finer movements is effectively catered for in activities such as writing, drawing and cutting. Children make good progress in physical education lessons, learning to control their bodies and develop an awareness of the space and others around them. Twice a week, they play outdoors (or indoors if the weather is inclement) with large equipment, such as balls, wheeled vehicles, climbing, crawling and balancing equipment to develop these skills further. Children are enthusiastic about these experiences. However, some activities could be structured better to provide more challenge, for example, by providing children with a course to follow with their tricycles rather than simply riding round and round, at which they are quite skilled.

Creative development

56. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In the best lessons, planning is well thought through to develop children's skills and creativity. For example, when painting pictures of their families, the idea of proportion is taught when children's attention is drawn to the difference in size between family members. Their paintings reflected this developing understanding, which was also evident in the good standard of the paintings they did of their favourite toys. While children use a variety of materials to create collage pictures, these activities are sometimes too directed. For instance, when they have no choice in the tools or materials that they use. When making pig puppets, for example, the children were given a paper plate and pink tissue paper to produce a model exactly like the one done by the teacher.

57. There was no opportunity to observe music lessons but children joined in happily with action songs and rhymes in the classroom and hymns in the hall. Some good use is made of role-play, for example, when sharing the story of *The Three Little Pigs* in a literacy lesson, children took part in the telling, using puppets and applying good expression in their voices.

ENGLISH

58. Pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are well above average by the ends of Years 2 and 6.

59. Year 2 pupils are very confident speakers. They talk clearly and enthusiastically about many aspects of their work, such as explaining the difference between terraced and detached houses. They listen carefully and politely as others show and explain their routes from home to school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about all the books that they have read and are keen to show what confident readers they are. When asked, they give very clear and comprehensive accounts of stories that reflect very good understanding of what they have read. They blend letter sounds to read unknown words and know that longer words can be divided if necessary to help read the whole word. Books are taken home frequently and most parents provide good support for their children by listening to them read and by writing comments in their reading diaries. Good progress is seen in pupils' writing. Even at this early stage in the year they are making correct use of basic punctuation and including more complex punctuation such as speech marks. Handwriting is neat and most pupils are using a cursive script before the end of the year. Spelling skills are good and pupils are confident in attempting new words. A good example was seen where a pupil with learning difficulties wrote, unaided, *'The hare has curly hair'*. When pupils write imaginatively, they use mature and interesting expressions; for example, one pupil wrote *'He danced for joy'*.

60. Throughout the school, pupils are given many opportunities to develop speaking skills. They speak clearly and fluently, explaining themselves well, while others listen respectfully. A good example was seen during collective worship where two Year 6 pupils spoke confidently and clearly about memories associated with some of their personal possessions. Standards in reading are very good. By Year 6, pupils discuss the works of a wide range of authors. They enjoy reading and have clear preferences; one pupil explains how good it was *'to curl up with a good book'*. Pupils are familiar with how a library works and know how to find fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils write with imagination and confidence. They have good opportunities to engage in a wide range of writing styles, for different audiences; during one lesson, many Year 5 and 6 pupils produced high quality poetry. After studying some of the works of Charles Dickens, pupils analyse passages from *Great Expectations* then write about Pip's feelings. Their understanding of language and how it has changed over time is enhanced as they compile a glossary of Dickensian vocabulary such as *'comforter'*, *'kerchief'* and *'countenance'*. Pupils show maturity in their use of vocabulary. For example, one writes, *"I felt a strange tingling sensation from head to toe"*. Whilst the number of lower attainers has a more limited vocabulary, they too make good progress in all aspects of the subject.

61. Teaching is good. Teachers not only succeed in maintaining the progress of the pupils who are real enthusiasts, they successfully motivate all pupils. For example, before writing poems about apples, Year 3 pupils were required to use their senses to feel, smell and taste the fruit. Similarly, in an outstanding lesson with Year 5 and 6 pupils, a wide range of challenging activities was planned to support the writing of poems. Pupils were given the choice of working alone or collaboratively; those who worked with partners were very helpful to each other and the behaviour and application of all was excellent. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and lively presentation maintained pupils' interest and promoted a very good pace of learning. Tasks were matched to pupils' different attainment so that all were able to achieve successfully. Lower attainers, including those with learning difficulties, were given good support and praise to enable them to produce poems of which they were proud.

62. Throughout the school, teachers involve all pupils fully in lessons. For example, in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used praise effectively to encourage less confident pupils to read out their examples of words that sound the same but have a different meaning or spelling. Other, whole-school strengths include the way in which teachers promote literacy skills in subjects other than English and their very good promotion of vocabulary. For example, in many subjects, pupils research information and write for different purposes and their high level of attainment and understanding of complex vocabulary was clearly evident in one lesson where a Year 6 pupil pointed out: *'that was a rhetorical question'*. Teachers make some good use of ICT to allow pupils to present their work, after drafting and editing, and to make comparisons between using ICT and books to conduct research. Areas for improvement in lessons that are satisfactory overall focus on some lack of pace resulting from the provision of work that is not quite as challenging as it could be.

63. Teachers expect work to be presented neatly and it is. All pupils are set regular writing assessments. These not only provide opportunities for them to write at length but for teachers to assess levels of attainment and note any consistent errors. The marking of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is exemplary, informing pupils of their strengths, weaknesses and new targets. Elsewhere marking is regular, but not as thorough. Generally, marking acknowledges pupils' success and corrects some of their mistakes.

64. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. Regular checks are made on standards, teaching and learning, which enable weaknesses to be noted and action taken to improve things. A good example is the focus that is being placed on raising boys' standards through providing resources that appeal to their interests. In all classes, resources such as

dictionaries and thesauruses are readily available and used. Classrooms provide helpful displays such as information about the key features of writing play scripts.

MATHEMATICS

65. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are well above average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in all areas of mathematics and have very good opportunities to investigate for themselves. In Years 3 to 6, average and lower attaining pupils achieve well, but for higher attainers achievement is generally only satisfactory. Too few pupils are working at the higher levels; far fewer than do so in English and science, which has resulted in a slower rate of improvement than in those subjects. While higher attainers make good progress in whole class sessions, because of teachers' high expectations and skilled questioning, there is often a lack of challenge in the work that these pupils complete independently. As at the time of the last inspection, this work is based largely on commercially produced exercises, with pupils not having enough opportunities to investigate for themselves. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because teachers' knowledge and expertise has been enhanced by training and the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.

66. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, they have a good understanding of the number system and of the four methods of calculation addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They quickly recall number facts in mental arithmetic sessions and apply their skills well in solving simple problems. Lower attainers work with numbers to 100, whilst average and higher attainers work confidently with larger numbers. All make a good start on learning tables and use this information well in calculations. Pupils collect data and present it in the form of simple graphs. They apply these skills well in other subjects, such as when they collect and present information in scientific investigations. Pupils begin to identify pattern in numbers and higher attainers draw conclusions about why some occur. They have good knowledge of the properties of a range of shapes and measure accurately, such as when telling the time and measuring in centimetres.

67. Overall, during Years 3 to 6, progress for all but the higher attainers is good. Almost all pupils attain the level expected by the end of Year 6. At this point, pupils have a good understanding of number and apply their knowledge well in calculations, including fractions, percentages, decimals and negative numbers. They know their tables very well and have very quick recall of mathematical facts, which they apply effectively to answer challenging questions during oral/mental arithmetic sessions. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in similarly challenging independent investigations, which particularly restricts the achievement of higher attainers. Pupils have good understanding of shapes and angles and use what they know about these to identify more complex shapes and to measure sides and angles accurately. They collect data and enter it into a database, presenting their information in graphs. This skill is also developed and applied well in other subjects, such as when Year 6 collect measurements of shoe sizes and heights in science to examine whether there is any correlation.

68. Teaching is good overall, and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 it is very good. Here there are consistently high expectations of pupils and work is very well matched to their needs, so that all are suitably challenged. Pupils now have individual targets in their books so that they know how to improve. Interesting lessons are conducted at a very lively pace and often inspire pupils to work hard. For example, Year 2 pupils were highly motivated when working in pairs to identify the frequency with which certain scores occur when rolling two dice. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and sometimes very good. Strengths are in whole class sessions based on mental work and the direct teaching of skills and knowledge.

69. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 have high expectations of pupils, but do not use assessment information as well as in Years 1 and 2 to plan independent work or set individual targets for improvement. This results in some lack of challenge for higher attainers who often work on the same tasks and at the same level as average attainers, the only difference being the amount of work completed. Pupils are kept well informed about how well they are succeeding and how they could improve through good quality verbal feedback, but marking is less effective in informing pupils, usually being limited to a tick or congratulatory comment. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is effective in allowing them to take a full part in lessons, working on the same topic as others, but at their own level. Occasionally they are withdrawn to work in the computer suite on suitable mathematics programs, including some on the Internet. These pupils make good progress towards their personal targets.

70. Throughout the school, teachers organise and manage their classes very well. They question skilfully to make pupils think hard and they challenge them to explain their reasoning. Excellent relationships create a very positive learning environment and teachers value pupils' contributions so that all are confident in offering answers and explaining them to the class. Resources are used well for the younger pupils, but less so for juniors where commercial texts too often restrict the quality of independent work. The use of time in lessons is much improved since the last inspection. Older pupils now accept a degree of responsibility for marking their own work during lessons, which teachers check later. Teachers make very good links with other subjects to develop numeracy skills in real situations, such as by collecting weather data in geography. Computers are sometimes used in lessons and there is an action plan to hold weekly numeracy lessons in the computer suite once operational teething problems are resolved.

71. The subject is well led. Good improvements to the curriculum have been made since the last inspection. Good management systems are in place, which have improved the quality of teaching and learning and highlighted appropriate areas for development.

SCIENCE

72. All pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average and by the end of Year 6 they are well above. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum and teaching have also improved; pupils now have considerably more opportunities to be involved in practical work and to learn the skills of experimental and investigative science.

73. By the end of Year 2, pupils have received a very good range of learning experiences. These have included learning about materials and their properties, such as what happens to chocolate and bread when they are heated, and learning about different light sources and electricity, for example, pupils constructed a circuit that included a buzzer. The development of pupils' knowledge of these aspects has occurred within activities that effectively promoted investigative skills. For instance, in a practical experiment, pupils predicted which of four candles of different sizes would burn fastest/slowest and gave reasons for their predictions. In their current work on healthy eating, pupils have learned that humans need water and food to stay alive and that there are many different types of food. During a good lesson on this aspect, pupils learned to categorise food into different groups, such as meat, fruit, vegetables, dairy products and cereals, and to record their knowledge in simple charts.

74. By the end of Year 6, pupils have covered, in depth, a comprehensive range of scientific learning experiences and developed very good experimental and investigative skills. They record work in a scientific way making good use of charts, tables, graphs and labelled diagrams to communicate what they have found. Pupils' work shows that they look for patterns in results and reflect on how they might improve their investigations to make them fairer. Their written work shows good development of scientific vocabulary, for example, they used words like *solution*, *saturation*, *volume* and *mass* when recording, individually, their experiment about separating mixtures.

75. Teaching and learning are at least good. In a particularly effective lesson, excellent teaching resulted in Year 5 pupils learning a great deal about the scientific idea of variation and classification and of how plants and animals adapt to their habitat. The lesson was very well planned, with clear learning objectives that were shared with the pupils and achieved through an excellent balance of direct teaching and practical work. The provision of a wide range of plant resources really captured pupils' interest and visibly reinforced the idea of variance. Another effective lesson in the infants ensured that the tasks provided for Year 1 and 2 pupils were adapted and matched to their needs, allowing all to make good progress in learning how to define different food groups.

76. Lessons and pupils' work shows that teachers make very effective links with other subjects to make learning more relevant. A good example was seen in the Year 1 and 2 lesson where pupils remembered that in their history work they had learned that Captain Cook's crew developed scurvy because they were not getting enough vitamins through lack of access to fruit. Literacy skills are regularly reinforced, as when pupils research information, learn to spell scientific vocabulary and record work in different ways, such as full accounts or brief notes. Similarly, when pupils take measurements and record these in graphs and tables, numeracy skills are consolidated. Good use is made of ICT, for example to create graphs or to monitor external changes, such as temperature. Pupils enjoy science and apply themselves well in lessons; work is presented neatly. Work is marked regularly, though not in depth, but teachers give pupils good verbal feedback on their strengths and weaknesses, which gives them a good insight into their learning.

77. The subject is being led and managed effectively, with regular checks by the co-ordinator on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' test results being analysed to determine strengths and areas for improvement. Assessment is good and supports the tracking of individual pupils' progress. A good range of visits, such as to a local quarry, farm, rock pools and museums enhance learning experiences. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, many opportunities are provided for pupils to work in groups, negotiating roles and sharing their ideas. When measuring plants, pupils were reminded that these were living things that had to be handled carefully and with respect.

ART AND DESIGN

78. All pupils make good progress and most achieve above average standards by the ends of Years 2 and 6. The school uses national guidance to support its curriculum planning and this is ensuring that pupils experience the full range of learning experiences. Standards and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection.

79. Year 2 pupils have good observational skills. For example, in an introductory session for the whole class, the teacher gradually revealed sections of a picture and encouraged pupils to describe what they saw. Pupils noticed the shadow under the subject's eye and how the skin tone between the two girls in the picture was different. This session was also very effective in helping pupils to develop skills in evaluation and prepared them well for the

practical task of drawing a portrait of a classmate. Many pupils produced good representations of their friend, including detail, for example, of hairstyles. Good use was made of the paper space and skills of blending charcoal and oil pastels to create different effects were practised. A good example was where one pupil blended charcoal to depict shadow inside the ears. Year 6 pupils learned how to communicate the effect of movement in their drawings. They worked with a partner, breaking down the sequence of running into four stages and taking turns to demonstrate and sketch each stage.

80. Progress is good. Pupils work with a wide range of media and learn a variety of techniques. Good links are made with other subjects, For instance, linked to their history topic on the Egyptians, Year 4 pupils made individual choices about their artwork; one used Modrock to create a sarcophagus, another made clay scarabs and another an intricate reed boat. In each case, the work was finished to a high standard, as were the jewellery collars and fans made by other pupils in the same year.

81. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Although some teachers feel that they lack subject expertise, they are committed to providing pupils with quality learning experiences and actively seek advice from the co-ordinator to support their understanding of the learning objectives in the national guidance that is used. As a result, pupils gain good skills in drawing, painting, colour mixing, printing, collage, sculpture, jewellery making and work with textiles such as embroidery, yarn wrapping and silk painting. Thought is given as to how ICT can be incorporated into lessons, with good use being made of art software, digital cameras and the Internet. The teaching of skills is well balanced with the teaching of knowledge and understanding, for example, of the work and styles of known artists, craftspeople and designers. Throughout the school, pupils study the work of a range of artists and incorporate their distinctive styles in their own work. For instance, pupils used sticks, grasses, moss and stones to produce 'natural sculptures' in the style of Andy Goldsworthy and thought up creative names for their works, such as *'the circle of life'*, *'swans nest'* and *'rattlesnake'*.

82. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has good expertise and monitors pupils' work in progress and on display. An assessment of pupils' skills in portrait drawing is made annually and pupils are assessed against learning objectives in national guidance materials. Pupils have benefited from visits from professional artists who have worked with them on various projects, such as the one where they made felt then used it to create pictures of Bishop Middleham. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. All pupils are achieving well and by the ends of Years 2 and Year 6 standards are above average. This reflects very good improvement since the last inspection. While it was not possible to see any lessons, it is evident from the range of work seen that teachers set and expect high standards and pupils do not disappoint them.

84. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 construct model houses. They look at different types and proceed to design their own, using labelled drawings. They practise making hinges for the doors so that the resulting constructions function well. The houses are soundly put together and have a high-quality finish. Pupils make sensible evaluations of their work, with suggestions for improvements such as using plastic for the windows. When pupils make puppets, they learn to use templates, measuring and marking the materials carefully, and developing skills in cutting and sewing. Before making model vehicles, pupils use construction kits to gain some insight into mechanisms. They select their own materials for the models and then test how well they perform by racing them.

85. Work in the juniors is underpinned by initial research. For example, in Year 3 pupils studied commercial photograph frames before designing and making their own attractive frames. Some tasks are effectively linked to other subjects. For instance, in connection with their history work, Year 5 and 6 pupils use books and the Internet to conduct research about the design and structure of Greek buildings. Working co-operatively in teams, they then conduct tests on different structures evaluating their own and others' work to see how improvements could be made. Their designs are detailed, incorporating measurements and views of different elevations. Similarly, skills and knowledge gained from science lessons enable pupils to use their knowledge of electrical circuits to power the model vehicles that they construct.

86. Pupils in Year 6 speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the subject. They understand and explain very clearly the procedures that they employ when set a task. Occasionally they use computers when designing, but not as often as they could and this is an area for development. Teachers make the subject interesting and relevant to work in other subjects. For example, after writing short poems about a rabbit or a dog, Year 4 pupils then constructed some excellent pop-up books to match their poems.

87. Pupils' and teachers' pride in what is achieved is reflected in some excellent displays and photographs of pupils at work or of their finished products. A very good example is the series of photographs and information showing how Year 5 pupils responded to the challenge of making their own biscuits. The subject is led and managed well and this has underpinned the very good improvement that has occurred since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

88. Good improvement has occurred since the last inspection. Standards have risen and are now above average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Progress is good during Years 1 and 2 and, over time, has been satisfactory during Years 3 to 6. The difference in these judgments does not reflect weaker provision in the juniors, simply that the revised and improved curriculum has had less time to influence standards higher up the school.

89. Year 2 pupils draw maps of their journeys from home to school, using symbols to mark significant features. Following the teacher's instructions, they correctly add features to maps of an imaginary island; for instance, they *"draw trees on the west slope of the hills"*. They understand and use vocabulary such as *'jetty'*, *'harbour'* and *'mainland'* knowledgeably. Pupils use good observational skills to compare features of the weather in different seasons.

90. By the end of Year 6, pupils know and contrast different areas of the world, showing awareness of the implications of natural disasters, such as drought and flooding. Pupils have a clear understanding of settlements, for example, of their origin and the reasons for some changes, and they know about the effect that humans have on the environment. However, Year 5 and 6 pupils still have some misconceptions about the world and lack a firm grasp of time and distance, such as, how far it is to Greece and how long it might take to travel there. Similarly, pupils' knowledge of Bangor in North Wales, which is the focus of their study of a contrasting area, is somewhat sketchy.

91. Teaching is good overall and occasionally very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are effective in linking the learning of geographical skills to knowledge and understanding. Vocabulary specific to geography is promoted well. Unexpected teaching and learning opportunities that present themselves are grasped. For example, when bee-eating birds spent a summer in the locality, Year 4 pupils learned a great deal about the habits of these birds and gained an understanding of their migratory route and the countries along it. In

the most successful lessons, planning is thorough and effectively links the development of new knowledge and skills to what pupils have learned previously. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, linked to recent field-studies of a local river, pupils looked at maps of different scales, which they then matched to aerial and other photographs. The mix of oral and written activities in this lesson was well balanced, resulting in a very good pace of learning. A pupil with learning difficulties showed particular interest and knowledge, upon which the teacher capitalised, providing encouragement and praise, which raised the pupil's self-esteem and allowed the pupil to 'shine'.

92. Pupils show good interest in lessons, participate fully and behave very well. They take pride in their work and present it neatly. Of note is the attractive booklet about the 'bee-eaters' produced by a pupil with a statement of special need. Some excellent displays, focusing on aspects such as '*Barnaby Bear's Travels*', '*The Weather*', and '*The Water Cycle*' both stimulate and celebrate learning.

93. A new co-ordinator has already gained a good insight into strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Resources, for example, are known to be unsatisfactory, with a shortage of maps of various scales and aerial photographs. However, teachers use what there is well and make particularly good use of ICT. For instance, pupils research information and use databases to answer questions about aspects of climate in other countries. Older pupils' understanding of the greater needs of people in poorer countries reflects the school's ethos of caring and sharing. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HISTORY

94. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and achieve above average standards by the end of Year 2. Over time, junior pupils' progress is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6, standards are average. The difference in standards and overall progress between infant and junior pupils does not reflect any decline in provision during the junior years. Rather, the impact of the revised curriculum two years ago has yet to be fully realised. Standards are rising. Currently, learning in lessons in Years 3 to 6 is good and should lead to better standards being achieved by Year 6 pupils in the future.

95. At the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of life in different eras in the past. They know that they can find evidence of how people lived in the past by examining photographs and items from the period as well as using books and computers for research. Pupils know that things change over time and compare things in their own lives, such as toys, with those in the past. Good skills of empathy are being developed. For instance, in a study on the explorations of Captain Cook, Year 1 and 2 pupils learned how life on board ship affected peoples' health and expressed feelings of sympathy for the sailors with scurvy.

96. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build well on this work and continue to compare past eras with the present day. They develop good skills in finding information from various evidence sources, including the Internet. Pupils determine the information that they need, and know that when it has been acquired it has to be checked against other sources to ensure its accuracy. They understand how difficult life was for some people in the past, such as soldiers from different periods and the Victorian child labourers, and empathise with their experiences. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good breadth of historical knowledge, but are less sure about how this affects the life we lead today. For example, they know that the Greeks developed a system of democracy, but do not link this to our own system of democracy; similarly, whilst they know that Henry VIII had a disagreement with the Pope, they are not aware that he founded the Church of England.

97. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good and firmly based on a lively and practical approach to learning rather than being dominated by worksheets. All teachers plan interesting and lively lessons, providing many opportunities for pupils to discover about the past for themselves, through research and a good programme of visits to local historical sites and museums. For example, when studying the Vikings, pupils visit the Yorvik Museum at York and take part in a Viking Day. Good preparation occurs before visits so that pupils can make the most of their time there. For example, Year 5 pupils undertook research on Victorian schools from photographs, books and artefacts before visiting Beamish museum to take part in a Victorian school day. Teachers also bring learning to life through opportunities for role-play. For example, during the inspection, Year 4 pupils dressed up as Ancient Egyptians, making their costumes at home and taking part enthusiastically in a Pharaoh's Feast held in the classroom. They wrote an invitation, in hieroglyphs, to Year 3 pupils, to share their food and the occasion.

98. Teachers make good use of resources, including high quality loan packs from museums and artefacts from the local community, to stimulate pupils' interest and make learning more meaningful. Good questioning by teachers ensures that pupils take a full part in lessons and helps teachers to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Very effective links are made with other subjects. For instance, art and design and design and technology are incorporated well, with, for example, Year 4 pupils making good quality clay replicas of Egyptian scarab beetles and cats, and designing and making a shadouf. Pupils enjoy the subject; they participate enthusiastically, show good interest and behave very well.

99. The subject is well led and this has promoted good improvement in the curriculum and in the style of teaching in Years 3 to 6. The new policy and planning provide a good framework for teaching the subject consistently and progressively across the whole school. Management of the subject is satisfactory; whilst there are no procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning, there is an annual staff review to highlight areas for improvement. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each topic and a record kept of their achievements. Since the last inspection the school has discarded its outdated books and improved the quality of displays. Some of these are very good and celebrate pupils' achievements extremely well. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are average and are rising rapidly. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Year 6 were below average. Since that time, the school has successfully introduced a better curriculum and improved teachers' own skills through a programme of training. Whilst better resources were provided in classrooms, the school felt that the limited number of computers continued to impede pupils' progress. This was mainly because opportunities for pupils to use the computers regularly to practise and improve their skills remained insufficient. This year, however, resources have been much enhanced by the provision of a new ICT suite, enabling much greater access by pupils. There have been some teething problems with the equipment, but it is now providing for good progress in all areas of the subject. Pupils have quickly made up lost ground because of the highly focused weekly lessons, which are closely linked to work in other subjects. There is an action plan to provide extra lessons, in numeracy and literacy now that problems are resolved.

101. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in operating computers and log-in and access programs quickly, ready to begin lessons. They write, using a word processor, locating the letters on the keyboard accurately and inserting pictures into their work. Lower attainers are well supported in lessons and higher and average attainers work confidently and

independently. All produce their own pictures and enjoy experimenting with line and colour. For example, Year 2 pupils produce pictures of houses, varying the thickness of their lines, and using the colouring tools to create their desired effect. They enter data into a simple database and convert their results into graphs. Pupils control the movements of a robotic toy and begin to use CD-ROM and the Internet for research.

102. By the end of Year 6, pupils use computers confidently to complete work in many subjects. They move text about the page and alter the size and style of print to enhance their presentations and create effect. They insert pictures, maps and photographs into their work, often downloading these from the Internet before making adjustments to their size and shape and repositioning them within the text. When conducting their own research, pupils download information from the Internet, learning to discriminate and select only what they need; for example, Year 6 pupils consider what information they require to support a geographical study of a nearby river. Pupils use spreadsheets and databases to present statistical data in graphs and extract information from them. They control events through the computer, such as the operation of model or simulated traffic lights, and in science they use a microscope linked to the computer for close observational work over a period of time. They use digital cameras in physical education to record their partner's performance, and this is linked to a laptop computer so that pupils see for themselves how their work can be improved.

103. Teaching is good and sometimes very good, which is promoting pupils' continuously good progress in learning a wide range of skills. Teachers give very clear explanations and directions and tell pupils what they are going to learn. In response, pupils are enthusiastic and most are confident in working independently. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to practise skills. They concentrate hard and are not afraid of experimenting to achieve their desired effect. Teachers support lower attainers or those who have learning difficulties well, enabling all to achieve the lesson targets. Teachers link work well with other subjects, both for lessons in the suite and classroom activities, resulting in pupils understanding the value of ICT as an important tool for learning and life.

104. Leadership and management are very good and are responsible for the significant improvement in provision and the rapidly rising standards. The school is very conscious of the large amount of money that has been invested recently in the subject and has developed good procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning and for ensuring that the expensive resources are giving good value for money.

MUSIC

105. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on standards, achievement or teaching because only one lesson was seen. However, in this lesson, for Year 5 pupils, the quality of teaching and learning was very good and pupils' standards were in line with what is expected for their age. In whole school assemblies, the quality of singing was satisfactory. Pupils sang enthusiastically and in tune, showing some skill in controlling their voices to depict contrasts of dynamics and tempo such as loud and quiet, fast and slow. Occasionally, however, pupils' exuberance results in performances where songs are 'shouted' rather than sung.

106. The commercial scheme used ensures that pupils receive a comprehensive range of learning experiences. This aspect has clearly improved since the last inspection. Pupils have opportunities to perform, listen to and evaluate different types of music, including that from a range of times, traditions and cultures. Music plays as pupils enter and leave the hall for assemblies, with the title and composer identified and some information provided about the musical piece being played.

107. In the lesson seen, pupils built on previous work in identifying the styles of Reggae, Traditional Jazz, Calypso, Blues and Heavy Metal. They chose words to describe how the various musical styles made them feel and then, after experimenting with a range of instruments to discover the sounds that they made and different ways to play them, pupils worked in pairs to compose their own music in one of the aforementioned styles. This lesson was highly successful because the teacher had good subject knowledge and had planned well to ensure a very good balance of activities. The pace of teaching and learning was brisk, but pupils had plenty of time to engage in practical work and discussion. The learning objectives were clear and shared with the pupils and a very good range of resources was provided. The very good, direct, teaching to the whole class that preceded the practical work, enhanced pupils' compositions, especially the teacher's effective demonstrations of how musical sounds could be put together to create texture and the opportunities that were provided for pupils to practise these skills before beginning composing. Relevant links with literacy and history were exploited well, with the teacher providing a bank of descriptive words to help pupils evaluate music and pupils singing songs from the World War II period.

108. Throughout the school, planning shows that the subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. ICT links are established through the use of software that allows pupils to compose at the computer; the recently purchased keyboards provide other programming facilities to support ICT skills. An extra-curricular guitar club offers valuable tuition for pupils from Year 4 upwards and this is well attended. Junior pupils also have the opportunity to be assessed for receiving specialist tuition in the cello from a visiting teacher. Pupils benefit from a range of visits and visitors, such as that from a string band.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. Standards are above average at the ends of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection and is due to the consistently high-quality teaching of all classes by the headteacher. Standards in swimming are also above average. Following lessons last year, and with two more terms to come this year, 70 per cent of Year 6 pupils have already achieved the basic requirements of the National Curriculum, with some pupils achieving beyond this.

110. Pupils in Year 2 acquire good games skills. They move confidently and use space well whilst warming up; one performs an excellent cartwheel. When working with the large balls, pupils show high awareness of safety and of avoiding collisions. Their ability to control the balls when bouncing, rolling, throwing and catching is of a particularly good standard. Junior pupils show above average skills in gymnastics. For example, Year 3 pupils have a good sense of balance and show clear awareness of the need for 'stillness'. In balancing activities, two pupils use their bodies very well to form 'bridges' and a number strive for full leg extensions, keeping their legs straight and pointing their toes. Year 5 pupils show very good awareness of space and produce good quality balances based on symmetrical shapes, including one excellent splits position. Pupils are keen to improve their skills and are self-critical when looking at photographs of themselves at work. All pupils are taught the purpose of warming up and the effect of vigorous exercise on their bodies. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They dress correctly, work very hard, co-operate extremely well and applaud each other's efforts.

111. Teaching and learning are very good. The headteacher adapts his approach effectively for pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties are fully involved and their success and hard work is praised. Excellent subject knowledge underpins the high quality of teaching. This was evident in a Year 1 and 2 games lesson where skills were taught progressively and correctly. Similarly, Year 3 pupils made very good progress in improving

the quality of balances because the teacher continually referred to 'stillness' and 'control'. He also ensured that the pupils observed each other and commented on performances. Strong emphasis is placed on health and safety and pupils respond well to this, taking care not to collide.

112. The subject is led and managed extremely well. The headteacher, who is also the co-ordinator, is aware of the need to continue improvement. He has identified dance as an area to be developed and has taken steps to bring in some specialist assistance, aimed particularly at motivating boys. Pupils have good opportunities for extra-curricular sporting activities and participate, with some success, in inter-school competitions. Links that exist with a local professional football club and with the county cricket club enhance learning experiences. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal and social development.