

# INSPECTION REPORT

## AMBLE FIRST SCHOOL

Amble

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122174

Headteacher: Mrs A Armstrong

Reporting inspector: Mrs L A Furness  
8245

Dates of inspection: 6-8 May 2003

Inspection number: 248325

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-9

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Edwin Street  
Amble  
Northumberland

Postcode: NE65 0EF

Telephone number: 01665 710388

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor Robert Arckless

Date of previous inspection: 15 September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>			<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
8245	L Furness	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion Special Educational Needs Mathematics Information and Communication Technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
	J Holmes	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27677	D Davenport	Team inspector	Foundation Stage of Learning English Art and Design Design and Technology Religious Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
32233	A Dent	Team inspector	Science Geography History Music Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Amble School is a medium size first school situated in Amble-by-the sea in Northumberland. Its catchment area is mainly from the private housing surrounding the school but a few families do live outside this area. One hundred and forty-one pupils aged from 4 to 9 attend the school, and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for school meals free of charge broadly matches the national average. Although the percentage of pupils having special educational needs is below the national average, the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above the national average. All pupils are white British and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. There are five classes and all classes consist of pupils of one year group. A nationally approved assessment scheme shows that, when they start the reception year, most children have levels of attainment that match those expected for their age in communication language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. The school met the Quality Mark standards in February 2003, is accredited as a Healthy School and very recently has received an improvement award for progress made between 2001 and 2002.

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

This is a good school having many very good features where the headteacher, governors and staff are fully committed to providing very effective care and support for pupils, resulting in a school that is orderly, harmonious and very happy. The pupils' achievement is good because the quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school, they are very interested in their work and try extremely hard to do their best. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and she leads a staff dedicated to finding every opportunity for all pupils to succeed. Considering the skill levels of children on entry to the school in the reception, and the standards attained by pupils in Year 4, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher through her inspirational leadership brings a sense of magic and excitement into the lives of all pupils.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending school; they show very good interest in their work and their behaviour is very good.
- The school promotes a very strong ethos of care and consideration and relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The systems and procedures in place to support academic and personal care are very good.
- The schools' partnership with parents is very good and parents have very positive opinions of the school and its work.
- All staff have worked very hard to make the school an interesting, attractive and stimulating learning environment.

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

- The recently introduced very good strategies for improving the quality of teaching impacting more positively on pupils' learning.
- The evaluation role of subject co-ordinators.

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

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

The school was last inspected in September 1997 and since then all of the key issues have been addressed well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is greatly improved and has been a contributory factor to improved attitudes and behaviour which now are very good. Pupils' progress has improved through the improved quality of teaching overall and curriculum planning is much improved. The school environment is now bright and stimulating and actively promotes pupils' creativity. The school has implemented successfully the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the Strategy introduced for improving teachers' performance is securely in place. Standards have improved since 1997 and the amount of teaching judged to be at least satisfactory has improved. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection.



## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	C	C	A	A
writing	C	C	B	B
mathematics	B	C	B	B

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

Pupils' performance in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2002 was well above the national average in reading, and above the national average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, there was a similar picture. There has been an improving trend in all three subjects over the last three years. On the basis of teacher assessment, pupils' performance in science was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level matched the national average in reading, writing and science and was above the national average in writing. Over the last three years, boys have outperformed girls by approximately one term in all three subjects. The majority of pupils in the current Year 2 class are working at levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science and their achievement is at least satisfactory. However, in Year 4 the majority of pupils are attaining levels above those expected for their age. Achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 because of the consistently good and very good teaching that occurs in these two classes. By comparing the level of skills that many children have when they start at school and the levels they attain by the time they leave in Year 4, achievement overall is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the good support that they receive.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils really enjoy school. They are well motivated and have very good attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good both in class and around school. They fully understand the impact of their actions upon others, and clearly respect each other's points of view.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good and pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They like their teachers and there is a very strong community feel to the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance has improved since last year and now matches last year's national average. Punctuality is good with lessons starting promptly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good with evidence of very good teaching in Years 3 and 4. Teaching is rarely unsatisfactory. The headteacher who teaches classes throughout the school is an outstanding practitioner and makes learning magical and exciting for the pupils in the school. Teaching and learning in the reception class are good with some very good features. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively together as a team to create a caring and secure environment. They form very good relationships with the children and have high expectations of their behaviour, to which the children respond very well. The children grow in confidence because of the constructive praise they receive from the teacher and teaching assistant. The varied range of well planned, practical activities and good understanding of how children of this age learn, create a happy, well organised and stimulating environment in which the children work and play well together. English and mathematics teaching is good and the good teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is helping pupils to achieve well. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend pupils' thinking skills and good explanations are given so that pupils know what is expected of them. The very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils result in pupils trying very hard and taking a pride in their achievements. In the better lessons which mainly occur in Years 3 and 4, teaching is lively, resources are used very effectively and lessons move at a brisk pace. As a result, pupils are well motivated and produce good levels of work and this has a positive impact on their learning. Although teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mainly satisfactory there are times when the pace of introduction is slow and pupils are sitting for too long listening to the teachers' explanations before starting their independent activities. Written marking throughout the school does not consistently inform pupils of why work is good and how it may be improved. The school addresses the needs of all pupils well with teaching assistants used effectively to support all, including those with special educational needs.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The quality and range of the curriculum are good throughout the school. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and extra-curricular provision effectively enhances learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are promptly identified and are well supported in classrooms by teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' moral development and social developments are particular strengths. Pupils at the school clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They are friendly, but polite and show respect for each other and for visitors to the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school takes very good care of its pupils and has established a safe secure environment. Procedures for child protection are very well established and very effective.

The school's relationship with parents is very good and parents are full of praise for what the school does for their children.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is at the heart of all that is happening in this school. She has very successfully ensured that all staff work hard for the benefit of the pupils resulting in very good personal care and improving academic standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is enthusiastic and highly supportive of the school. It is fully involved in the school development planning process and ensures the school meets all statutory requirements.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school uses its test results appropriately as a focus to help analyse what it does well and what could be improved. Although the evaluation role of the headteacher is very well developed, subject co-ordinators need to use information from their monitoring activities to evaluate what is good practice, why it is so and what needs to be developed further.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school maximises the use of available grants well to improve its learning resources and accommodation and uses them effectively for its designated purposes. The basic principles of best value are carefully applied.

The match of the teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The school is well staffed so that appropriate support is available to pupils who require it. There are a large number of teaching assistants available, all having good levels of expertise to provide effective support to pupils. They work well to give pupils in their care, good support and guidance. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Space is at a premium and every spare area has been used to best advantage. All staff have made good efforts to make all classrooms and shared areas pleasant with bright displays in most classrooms and around the school. The overall impression is very warm and welcoming. Resources for learning are good overall.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no areas that a significant number of parents think needs to be improved.</li> </ul>

The parents accurately identified many of the reasons why this is a good school. The questionnaire sent to parents prior to the inspection had a very good response with 104 returned out of 141 sent out. The responses indicated overwhelming support for the school and there were no areas that a significant number of parents thought needed to be improved. The inspectors fully agree with all of the parents' positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' performance in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2002 was well above the national average in reading, and above the national average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools the results were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. There has been an improving trend in all three subjects over the last three years. On the basis of teacher assessment, pupils' performance in science was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level matched the national average in reading, mathematics and science and was above the national average in writing. Over the last three years boys have outperformed girls by approximately one term in all three subjects but as numbers are small, these differences may not be significant.
2. The majority of pupils in the current Year 2 class are working at levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science with a small minority of pupils working at levels above those expected. Although this appears to be a decline in standards from the previous year, the current group of Year 2 pupils is a very small cohort (20 pupils) and therefore each pupil reflects a large percentage of the overall statistics. In the current Year 4 class, the majority of pupils are attaining levels above those expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is attributed to the good teaching these pupils receive in Years 3 and 4. There were no significant differences observed between the attainment of boys and girls in the current cohorts of Year 2 and 4 pupils. By comparing the level of skills that many children have when they start at school and the levels they attain by the time they leave in Year 4, achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the good support that they receive from teaching support assistants. The school identifies pupils who are gifted and talented in literacy and numeracy. Now the school wishes to extend this provision to those pupils who excel in the arts and other subjects.
3. The majority of children start school with levels of attainment that match those expected for their age. They make good progress during their reception year and the majority of children are already well on their way to reaching the 'early learning goals' expected for children of their age in all six areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1 with a significant minority of children likely to exceed them. The children's good achievement is a direct result of the good teaching, challenging work and a stimulating learning environment which provide a good start to their education.
4. Standards in speaking and listening match those expected for their age throughout the school. Majority of pupils speak clearly and coherently using vocabulary well. When working with partners or in small groups, pupils discuss ideas fairly and help each other. Almost all pupils listen attentively during lessons and show good concentration. However, there are times when a minority of pupils in Years 1 and 2 lose concentration as a result of being expected to sit and listen to the teacher for too long a period of time. Standards in reading are above those expected for the pupils' age in Years 2 and 4 and achievement and progress are good. Throughout the school pupils read fluently and accurately from a range and style of texts which are appropriate for their age. They clearly express

preferences in type of texts and talk about their favourite authors with enthusiasm. Standards in writing by Year 4 are good and pupils achieve well. Progress in handwriting is good and by Year 4 almost all pupils can write in a neat, clearly legible and joined style. In Year 2 pupils are make satisfactory progress in learning to write creatively. The majority of pupils use description effectively to add detail and interest to their stories. They sequence their stories well and are beginning to write at length. Throughout the school, most pupils have a good understanding of punctuation and spellings, although they do not always apply their knowledge accurately when writing independently.

5. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 4. By Year 2, the majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of number including addition, subtraction and multiplication. Higher attaining pupils are developing an understanding of simple division problems. The majority of pupils recognise mathematical symbols and are developing a satisfactory understanding of simple mathematical vocabulary. By Year 4, pupils competently use a range of strategies for solving number problems. Higher and average attaining pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of area and perimeter and are able to record area correctly. Lower attaining pupils solve simple addition and subtraction problems but their knowledge of place value is insecure.
6. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 4. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of a variety of scientific topics including electricity, knowing how to use a battery, bulb and wire to make a simple electric circuit. By Year 4 pupils confidently investigate scientific ideas for example in the context of investigating liquids and solids. They can predict outcomes accurately, use simple apparatus and equipment safely, make observations and draw conclusions correctly.
7. In information and communication technology, attainment matches that expected for their age by Years 2 and 4 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils have satisfactory 'mouse' skills and use the computer for a variety of purposes, for example to produce simple pictures using drawing programs or using word processing programs to support their work in literacy. By Year 4, pupils have further developed their computer skills being able to enter and save text and graphics correctly using the Internet to extract information. They are able to send and retrieve e-mails and use data handling programs to support their work in mathematics and science
8. In religious education, the attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 4 matches the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school have a sound knowledge of Christianity and are beginning to understand how Christian principles apply to their everyday life, for example, being kind and caring to others. By Year 4, pupils have broadened their religious knowledge showing a satisfactory understanding of the main features of faiths such as Islam and Hinduism.
9. In art and design and design technology pupils in Years 2 and 4 are working at levels expected for their age and pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. In geography and history the standards of pupils currently in Year 2 match the national expectation and for pupils currently in Year 4 are above the national expectation. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 4. In music and physical education there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards or on achievement by the end of Years 2 and 4.

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

10. Pupils really enjoy school and have a very good attitude to learning. They work very well together and relationships are very good with a very good level of trust and respect between pupils and teachers. Pupils are friendly and confident in class and around the school; they are articulate and talk easily with adults. Pupils listen to teachers and show interest when others are speaking, responding well to questions although when lessons are not of a good pace their attention wanders and pupils become restless.
11. Pupil's behaviour is very good both in class and around school. There was no oppressive behaviour observed in the school during the inspection. There has been no exclusion in the past year. The pupils are involved in agreeing class rules, which are displayed in the classrooms together with the school rules. The school meets its aims to promote a school community, which cares for each other with respect, sensitivity and understanding. Pupils respect and understand the impact of their action on others; for example a pupil apologised for speaking whilst another pupil was talking. The understanding of their actions helps to give very good moral development. In the previous inspection the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils was a key issue for improvement. Now the attitudes and behaviour of almost all pupils is very good showing very good improvement since the previous inspection.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. The school has in place a school council with pupils from each year group taking part. The pupils are elected from each class to serve on the school council, which meets with the head teacher who acts as chair. The further development of the school council to allow pupils to chair the council would give them added responsibility and ownership of it. One pupil from each class has also been chosen to act as health and safety representative who report any problem they find. 'Buddies,' who help pupils at lunch-time and break-time have been introduced recently. As almost all of the Year 4 pupils volunteered for this role, a rota has been established so that all pupils have the opportunity to carry out this responsibility. The school council, health and safety representatives and the buddy system has a very good impact on the social development raising pupils' understanding of working together as a team. Pupils say they enjoy opportunities such as carrying out a survey of the local people's opinions of the area which helps their cultural development. Their understanding of a multi-cultural society is less well developed although the school has taken the opportunities offered to work with a school in Newcastle with a high ethnic population and a different environment. Pupils have time to reflect in assemblies and staff make use of praise well which helps to make the spiritual development of the pupils good.
13. Attendance has fallen over the past three year to below the national average, but during the current year the attendance has improved and now matches the national average for 2002 which is satisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence is nil as parents are good at notifying the school of absence. If parents fail to notify the school, first day contact is made with them. The school has analysed the absence statistics and has found that almost half of pupil absence is due to holidays in term-time. The school encourages parents to arrange holidays during school breaks but if unable to do so they are required to complete a holiday application form. Punctuality is generally good with lessons starting promptly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

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

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is mainly good with evidence of very good teaching. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching evident. There is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 and 2 are when introductions to lessons are too long and a small minority of pupils become restless losing concentration and motivation. A strength of the school is the contribution made by the teaching skills of the headteacher who whenever possible teaches classes throughout the school. She is an outstanding practitioner and makes learning magical and exciting for the pupils in the school. She is excellent at engaging the interest of the pupils as was seen in her introduction to the story of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin'. She used visual resources and her voice to very effectively portray the different characters and scenes within this poem. This exciting introduction provided pupils with an excellent stimulus for their follow up activities involving music, drama and art activities. In English, mathematics, science and religious education teaching is good overall. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement overall on the quality of teaching and learning.
15. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage (reception) is good and sometimes very good and children make good progress in all areas of learning. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively together as a team to create a caring and secure environment. They form very good relationships with the children and have high expectations of their behaviour, to which the children respond very well. Even when the adults are working with one group, the other children work well independently and remain focused on their tasks. The children grow in confidence because of the constructive praise they receive from the teacher and teaching assistant. The teaching assistant is well briefed by the teacher, knows the children well and makes a positive contribution to their learning. The teacher's clear explanations and effective questioning techniques have a positive effect on the children's learning. The varied range of well planned, practical activities and good understanding of how children of this age learn, create a happy, well organised and stimulating environment in which the children work and play well together and make very good gains in their learning.
16. English and mathematics teaching and learning are good overall and the good teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is helping pupils to achieve well by Year 4. Teachers use questioning effectively to promote learning. In English lessons, teachers use good questioning techniques to extend pupils' thinking skills and good explanations are given so that pupils know what is expected of them. This was also seen in mathematics. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher was aware of the prior knowledge of individual pupils and asked them direct and specific questions to assess their understanding of number. This resulted in an exciting mental mathematics game that all pupils thoroughly enjoyed and took part in eagerly. In design and technology, also, the teacher's careful questioning and the use of a good range of resources ensured that Year 4 pupils learnt about appropriate joining techniques and the suitability of a range of fastenings when making money containers. In both these lessons, pupils achieved well because of good quality teaching.
17. In the more effective lessons teaching is lively, resources are used very effectively and lessons move at a brisk pace. This was seen in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 when whiteboards, number squares and other adults were used well to promote learning. In

religious education, the good range of Islamic resources engaged the Year 4 pupils' interest. These interesting resources resulted in pupils listening attentively, with obvious enjoyment. In the good lessons, pupils are well motivated and produce good levels of work and this has a positive impact on their learning. The very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils result in pupils trying very hard and taking a pride in their achievements. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour to which pupils respond very well by listening attentively, concentrating on their tasks and behaving very well.

18. In less successful lessons the pace of introduction is slow and time within the lesson is not used efficiently to cater for the abilities of all pupils. This impedes learning. This was seen in both English and mathematics in Year 1. In an English lesson, pupils became restless because of the slow pace and classroom routines were ignored as pupils called out their answers. This was also seen in mathematics when pupils were sitting for far too long on the carpet resulting in a waning of motivation and interest. Also in some lessons throughout the school, the conclusions to lessons were rushed and did not consolidate or enhance pupils' learning.
19. The school has recently introduced the strategy of sharing with the pupils how they should evaluate how well they have succeeded with their learning. Although this is very good practice, it is used more effectively in some classes, notably Year 3, than in others. Not all teachers are using this strategy to its best advantage. Pupils were not always clear about what is expected of them as the phrasing of the success criteria using the terms 'must', 'should' and 'could' was not always clear. There were few opportunities provided for pupils to assess their own learning gains during conclusions to lessons with pupils having the chance to say 'I think I have been successful because.....'
20. In all classes the teacher shares with the pupils the learning intention of the lesson. However, pupils are rarely offered the opportunity to clarify understanding by articulating the learning in their own words. The quality of written marking varies and marking does not consistently inform pupils of why work is good and how it may be improved. Overall, teaching assistants positively promote the learning of pupils. They know the pupils well and provide less able pupils with the confidence and the strategies to carry out their activities. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for homework and often use it well to support learning in class.
21. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good. There is a high number of teaching support assistants in the school. This means that pupils with special educational needs receive a high degree of support to enable them to work towards their individual learning targets for improvement. Class teachers plan effectively to ensure that pupils of lower ability and the physically disabled are supported in their learning and can access the whole curriculum. Although there is some withdrawal from class for additional support, this is appropriate and linked to the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom at that time.

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

22. The quality and range of opportunities provided for learning are good in Years 1 to 4. The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum that complies fully with the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for



religious education. There is a clear overall curriculum plan, within which long-term planning reflects the extent to which the National Curriculum programmes of study are addressed through each unit. Medium-term planning is clearly linked to the long-term and incorporates programmes of study, learning intentions, suggested activities and resources. This approach ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. The effectiveness with which long, medium and short-term planning are linked is a strong feature of the school, promoting continuity in progression and learning by facilitating effective learning and assessment.

23. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is well planned. This has a positive impact on the standards the children reach and on how well they achieve because of the strong emphasis placed on personal, social and emotional development and on communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. The planning is detailed and thorough and takes good account of the national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage and, where appropriate, the relevant sections of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This prepares children well for their work in Year 1. The detailed weekly plans show what work is to be covered in each area of learning and what skills the children are expected to learn. There are many good opportunities provided for the children to take part in a variety of visits out of school and for visitors to come into school. These visits effectively enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences
24. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching both literacy and numeracy skills is good. Both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established in school. The school is to be congratulated on successfully meeting the Quality Mark standards in February 2003 and gaining the accreditation for this. There are eight elements or strands involved, including a whole school strategy to improve performance in basic skills, regular review of progress made by under-attaining pupils and the use of appropriate teaching styles and learning materials.
25. Equality of access and opportunity at the school is good. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils take a full and active part in activities. The policy for equal opportunities is well understood by staff and pupil and is implemented effectively. All activities are accessible to boys and girls and strategies are in place to deal with any racial or gender based incidents should they occur. However, as yet the school does not identify pupils who are gifted and talented in subjects such as art and design or music. Pupils with special educational needs are promptly identified and are well supported in classrooms by teaching assistants.
26. The constructiveness of relationships with partner institutions is good and pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education. Links are clearer and stronger with the nursery and playgroup in Amble and there are clear links to promote continuity and progression within the Foundation Stage. Closer links to the Middle school are developing with co-ordinators' meetings to ensure smooth transition and the development of bridging type activities for the pupils.
27. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. Parents are very supportive of the school and are keen to help in school and support events very well. A SHARE project in 2002 and again in 2003 provided a training course for parents and grandparents interested in supporting their children effectively at home. Events such as the Christmas fair, the carol service in church and the harvest festival have provided worthwhile links

with the community. Regular visits from the school governors and other visitors, such as the coastguard, help to foster community links.

28. The provision made for extra curricular activities at the school is also good. Activities include a gardening club, kwik cricket, football and line dancing. In the last two years, many of the extra curricular activities that involve the arts have been offered through school community initiatives, such as an involvement in events surrounding Amble Sea Fayre. An impressive display of banners for this event, made with a visiting artist, is on display in the school.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school has recently become fully accredited as a Healthy School and has specific accreditation for both emotional health and well-being and sex and relationships Education. There is a clear drug education policy and older pupils have taken part in activities to raise awareness of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. The school tries hard to involve pupils in school improvement issues. For example, there is a suggestion box to explore strategies that enable pupils to develop positive relationships and the school council meets to discuss school issues, particularly those aimed at maintaining happy and secure relationships in school.
30. The overall provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual development at the school is good and is well promoted, particularly in religious education and in the daily act of collective worship in school. For example, a whole school assembly in which pupils were encouraged to think of special things was enhanced by the presence of a three-week-old baby which encouraged serious reflection on the importance of life as a 'gift from God.' Similarly in a religious education lesson for Year 4 pupils, the opportunity to handle Islamic artefacts, such as a prayer mat, and to model a skullcap helped these pupils to experience a sense of awe and wonder.
31. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is as strong emphasis on showing care and consideration for others and this is reinforced at appropriate times in school, for example in the assembly seen on special things. Pupils at the school clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. In one class, particularly, affirmation posters seek to remind everyone of positive ways to behave to each other and of the teacher's expectations of standards of behaviour and discipline in her classroom.
32. Social development at the school is also very good. Pupils are friendly, but polite and show respect for each other and for visitors to the school. In many lessons, pupils are expected to work collaboratively with others and to take some responsibility for organising their work. They are very willing to work together to help solve problems. In a lesson for pupils in Year 3, they were happy and able to help their friends who were having difficulty with their sculpture by suggesting ways to solve the problem. In a Year 4 science lesson, pupils were able to work well independently in groups on collaborative tasks.
33. Handling Islamic artefacts was an opportunity to see some of the provision for cultural development at the school, which is also good overall. In this lesson, pupils could be seen to be beginning to develop an awareness of multi-cultural Britain today. Links have been made to a school situated in a multi-cultural area of Newcastle and the school is pro-active in developing this association. Another example of good cultural development was seen in Year 3 where there are examples of proggy mats 'made during a visit to

Woodhorn Colliery. Community artists work in school on an annual basis and bring a multi-cultural focus to the school. Other displays in school, such as one of a collage of multi-cultural faces and another of prayer mats made by the pupils are evidence of a developing programme of cultural awareness

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

34. The school provides a very good level of support and guidance for all its pupils which are having a very positive impact on their personal and academic development. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The school very effectively achieves its aims to provide a happy, stimulating, caring environment in which all pupils feel secure and valued.
35. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. There is an appropriate policy in place for child protection and two key members of staff are trained in this area. Training is fully up to date for all other staff and systems work well when activated. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy with staff and governors clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities in this area. A health and safety representative from each class has recently been appointed to discuss issues on a termly basis with the headteacher. All relevant health and safety checks are carried out, for instance regular fire drills and annual equipment checks. Good attitudes to healthy eating and drugs and sex education issues are addressed through the curriculum and through the school's involvement in the health promoting school initiative. Regular visits made by the school nurse and dentist further enhance pupils' personal development, as do the visits from police and fire officers and the coastguard to talk about personal issues such as 'stranger danger'. There are a good number of people qualified to administer first aid in the school and good systems are in place for dealing with accidents.
36. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The very good relationships between all adults and pupils in the school demonstrate mutual respect and contribute to an environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. The staff know the pupils and their backgrounds very well and are sensitive to their differing needs. The pupils' self esteem is developed through house points for good work and behaviour, through opportunities to discuss concerns during circle time and through the attractive displays of their work throughout the school. Teachers use praise very effectively, resulting in pupils having the confidence to fully participate in all that the school offers. The pupils' personal development is further supported by the responsibilities they are given in their class and around school.
37. Procedures for supporting and maintaining behaviour are very good. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. There is a very good policy in place and pupils and parents are aware of the rewards and sanctions which are consistently applied throughout the school. Behaviour is very well monitored at all times and unacceptable incidents are appropriately recorded. Pupils collect house points and successes are acknowledged in the weekly awards assembly. The school has very good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour. The headteacher deals with any instances that occur but these are rare.

38. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. First day contact is made by the school when pupils are absent and attendance is regularly checked so that any emerging patterns of poor attendance can be identified and tackled. However, despite regular reminders, some parents continue to take family holidays during term time.
39. The school values all pupils equally. Effective support is given to those pupils who need to feel more secure in order to build their confidence and improve their self esteem. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is well recorded. The targets in their individual education or behaviour plans are reviewed regularly and effective action is taken to help the pupils make as much progress as possible. The statements of pupils with special educational needs are reviewed annually in accordance with statutory requirements.
40. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gained from them is used well to address weaknesses in learning. In English, mathematics and science all task and assessment results are rigorously analysed and used to inform future planning. Very good records are maintained of pupils' progress in end of year tests as they move through the school and target setting systems are in place for English, mathematics and science. The 'next steps' pack informs pupils, teachers and parents of targets for the following year. However, pupils do not always use these learning targets during lessons to help improve their work. There is a well planned programme for establishing agreed assessment procedures in all other subjects but these are not yet embedded well enough to raise standards further. All assessment information is collated into individual pupil profiles. In the Foundation Stage assessment, recording and reporting procedures are good and enable the teacher to monitor effectively the progress that each individual child makes in all six areas of learning recommended for children of this age.

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

41. The school's relationship with parents is very good. The attendance at the parents' meeting was good with 19 parents attending. The questionnaire had a very good response with 104 returned out of 141 sent out. The responses indicated overwhelming support for the school with all questions apart from two having over 95 per cent agreement. There were no areas that a significant number of parents thought needed to be improved. Parents felt most strongly that the school was well led and managed, the school expected the children to work hard, the school worked closely with parents, parents feel comfortable approaching the school and the behaviour of pupils is good. The inspection team agreed fully with the views of parents.
42. Amble First School Parent Teacher Association holds a fund raising and a social event each term and parents are consulted over how the money raised is spent. Money raised from these events have recently provided a wide screen television and a new hut to store playtime games. The number of parents attending the meetings varies, although the events are well supported. Parents are keen to help in school supporting teachers and accompanying pupils during educational visits.
43. The information to parents about the children's progress is good. The reports give parents a clear view of what their children are capable of doing; the reports are thorough, detailed and clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement. The report is discussed with parents at the consultation evenings which are held termly. The attendance at

consultation evenings is very good. The school has a good induction programme for new pupils with a welcome meeting for all new pupils and parents. The school makes an offer of home visits if parents would like one; generally, only those parents who are having children attend the school for the first time take up this offer. The reception teacher visits the local pre-schools who send children to this school. The children have a series of induction visits prior to starting in the September.

44. The school sends out useful newsletters and information regarding changes and events that are happening during the term. The school has a home school agreement in place. An informative prospectus that includes details of the curriculum in each subject, together with information on school routines, is available for new parents. The governors' report to parents fulfils requirements although the attendance at the annual meeting, as in many schools, is low; the school is to try to encourage more parents to attend by linking it to another event.
45. The school has curriculum workshops each academic year with specific ones to update parents' skills to enable them to help their children with the homework that they receive on a regular basis. There has been a workshop with the local Education Authorities mathematics consultant with parents. The events are well supported by parents. The headteacher greatly values the opinions of the parents and their views of the school are sought in a variety of ways including newsletters, questionnaires and at the consultation evenings
46. The links with parents of children in the Foundation Stage are good. The teacher carries out home visits when requested and individual child profiles are completed before starting school. Visits to the school are arranged and there are appropriate induction procedures in place to ensure that children settle quickly into school routines. The teacher communicates with parents throughout the year by means of the home/ school reading books, individual profile files, through parents' meetings and through regular informal discussions. There are opportunities for parents to help in class and on visits and, through the SHARE scheme, to receive guidance on helping their children with work at home.

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

47. The school aim of presenting a bright, exciting and stimulating environment throughout the school, which celebrates achievement and diversity, is something that this headteacher is determined to make an accessible goal rather than just something that appears on paper. Her excellent style of leadership has resulted in a team of people working together striving towards school improvement and trying their hardest to offer the best provision possible for the pupils. Her very clear vision of what needs to be done effectively supports the ongoing development of the school and its continual drive towards high standards.
48. One of her main strengths is her ability to be very visible around school. First thing in the morning, no matter what the weather, she is at the school gate welcoming parents and pupils. Throughout the day she is in and out of classrooms, leading by example and supporting individuals to get across her determination to achieve the best for all pupils. In this way all staff are very clear about what is and what is not acceptable because of the very clear lead given to them. Another key strength is her understanding of the need to balance pupils' academic success with that of their personal success. Anyone visiting the school is left in no doubt that the headteacher feels it is very important for all pupils to

feel good about themselves. There are consistent messages everywhere which are aimed at giving pupils a sense of pride in their achievements. Assemblies are used very effectively by the headteacher to make pupils feel they are very much at the heart of what is happening in the school. Pupils enter and leave the hall singing enthusiastically, expressing their enjoyment for school life.

49. This year, the headteacher has had to work without the valued support of the deputy headteacher who is currently on maternity leave. At the present time she has assumed the deputies' responsibilities in addition to her own. In order to help her to carry out these additional responsibilities she longer teaches her usual two days a week in Year 4. However, she regularly teaches different classes throughout the school in order to demonstrate good practice to the teachers. The time away from the Year 4 classroom has allowed her to develop a more extensive monitoring role which includes regular classroom observations, monitoring of planning and assessments, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. In this way the headteacher has developed a very good awareness of her staff's strengths and development areas. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning she has introduced a number of very good strategies, such as sharing learning intentions and success criteria with pupils so that they are able to become more involved in the learning process. All teachers are trying hard to use such strategies but as yet they are not fully embedded in classroom practice. Very high priority is given to the analysis of pupil performance data and there are good systems in place for tracking individual pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This has led to improvements in the overall quality of teaching and learning, which, in turn have been a key factor in raising standards.
50. Additional monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken by subject co-ordinators who review planning and assess pupils' achievements through work sampling. Although the leadership and management of all subjects are at least satisfactory, co-ordinators do not have a complete overview of standards and provision in their subjects. Most classroom observations are undertaken by members of the senior management team and, in the main, focus on English and mathematics. This means that the majority of subject co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or the subjects' contribution to standards in the school. Subject co-ordinators have detailed subject files containing a great deal of information about their subject. However, apart from the headteacher, the coordinators have yet to develop their skills of evaluating what the information is telling them about what is good practice and why and what needs to be improved and why.
51. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs are good and pupils make good progress throughout the school. The co-ordinator is given time to maintain an overview of pupil progress and to advise the staff, but she has not been given time to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs, either in their lessons or withdrawal groups. She regularly attends training sessions and appropriately updates the staff on changes in the requirements of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.
52. Governors know the school well and have a clear view of where the school is heading. They are very much involved in school life. Through the committee structure, they meet their statutory responsibilities and keep an informed eye on school developments. They have set up suitable procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The literacy, numeracy and special educational needs' governors have a good understanding

of their roles. Individual governors visit the school on a regular basis and have a secure knowledge of the standards achieved. Performance management is securely in place and is used well to improve teacher performance. Every member of staff has performance targets and most are related to their individual needs but also link very closely to the targets in the school improvement plan, for example, extending the richness and diversity of pupils' spoken language.

53. Financial planning and management are good. The headteacher, secretary and governors conscientiously follow clear financial procedures. Expenditure reflects the priorities in the school improvement plan. This development plan is very detailed and focuses appropriately on raising standards. It is based on a thorough review of the strengths and weaknesses in performance. All staff and governors have the opportunity to contribute ideas. The clear and appropriate priorities in the plan are linked to specific targets that have deadlines and criteria by which to measure success. The responsibilities for taking necessary action are allocated and costs identified. The staff make good use of the new technology in dealing with financial transactions, planning, record keeping and analysing data. The principles of best value are applied carefully to further the opportunities open to the pupils. The school compares its costs with those of other schools in the local authority and makes effective use of benchmarking to make further efficiencies. Competitive tendering is well established, though the process of staff identifying and justifying the spending on different resources. The school usually consults widely on major expenditure decisions. Although there is a larger than usual carry over figure in the budget this year, the school is prudently saving money in order to improve the outside classroom accommodation.
54. The effectiveness of how well the school takes action to secure improvements can be seen in the very good progress it has made since the previous inspection in 1997. For example, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and the quality of teaching and learning has also improved. National initiatives, such as the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have effectively been introduced and performance management is securely in place. The key issues of the last inspection have been very well addressed.
55. The school has a good match of teaching and support staff who are well qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. All staff work well together as a team sharing experiences and expertise as appropriate. The provision of classroom support is good for a school of this size. These members of staff are well briefed and appropriately deployed. They make a valuable contribution to the progress pupils make.
56. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Space is limited but all available space is used to best advantage. The school hall is small, but in the lessons seen, the size of the hall did not affect the learning opportunities for the pupils. The effective use of displays of pupils' work both in classrooms and shared areas add considerably to the attractiveness of the school premises and create a stimulating and welcoming place to learn. The school is kept very clean and maintained to a high standard. The caretaker, kitchen staff and lunchtime assistants make a valued and valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school. Resources for learning are good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history information and communication technology, music and religious education. In physical education resources are satisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

**(1) Ensure the recently introduced very good strategies for improving the quality of teaching are impacting positively on pupils' learning by:**

- providing opportunities for pupils to clarify for themselves their understanding of the learning intention of the lesson;
- ensuring that teachers fully understand the purpose of sharing success criteria and that pupils also understand what is meant by the terms 'must', 'should' and 'could';
- using ends of lessons to effectively review pupils' learning;
- written marking used more consistently to identify what are the good features of pupils' work and what pupils should do to improve;
- using time more effectively in Years 1 and 2 ensuring that introductions to lessons do not last too long;
- supporting, monitoring and evaluating how teachers are using the different strategies to improve pupils' learning.

(paragraphs: 4, 10, 14, 18, 19, 20, 49, 72, 73, 78, 84, 104, &121.)

**(2) Develop the evaluation role of curriculum co-ordinators by:**

- giving subject co-ordinators opportunities to monitor and support teaching and learning in their subjects and
- providing further training on evaluating good practice by relating it to educational outcomes.

(paragraphs: 50, 74, 81, 91, 100, 104 & 123. )

**In addition to the above issues the governors, headteacher and staff may wish to include the following in their action plan:**

- Identification of pupils who are gifted and talented in subjects other than literacy and numeracy, and providing these pupils with appropriate provision. (paragraph: 2, 91 & 112 )

*This issue has already been identified in the 2002 – 2003 School Development Plan.*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	17	9	1	0	0
Percentage	5.7	17.1	48.6	25.7	2.8	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 almost three percentage points.*

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

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	141
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	17

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	18

#### **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	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (91)	97 (88)	97 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (91)	97 (97)	97 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	141	0	0
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

*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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28.2

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

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

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	293480
Total expenditure	259111
Expenditure per pupil	1948
Balance brought forward from previous year	24169
Balance carried forward to next year	34108

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

**Questionnaire return rate: 73.8%**

Number of questionnaires sent out	141
Number of questionnaires returned	104

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	19	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	74	23	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	40	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	79	19	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	34	1	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	14	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	20	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	68	31	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	20	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	24	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	38	10	2	7

## **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**

58. Children start school in the reception class (the Foundation Stage) in the school year in which they will be five. There are currently 30 children in the reception class all of whom attend school full-time. The class follows the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, which is measured at the end of the year by the early learning goals. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *Stepping Stones* from which standards and progress can be measured.
59. Most children start school with levels of attainment that match those expected for their age. They make good progress during their reception year and the majority of children are already well on their way to reaching the nationally expected standards by the time they enter Year 1 with a minority of children likely to exceed them. The children's good achievement is a direct result of the good teaching, challenging and varied work and a stimulating learning environment which provide a good start to their education.
60. Most children have had some pre-school experience and the teacher liaises effectively with these out of school providers. There are good systems in place involving home visits, school visits and pre-school profiles which promote a good relationship between home and school and provide a smooth transition from pre-school into reception. Appropriate induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly into their new routines.

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

61. The provision for children's personal, social and, emotional development permeates all areas of learning in the reception class and teaching is good. As a result all children achieve well and are on course to attain the nationally expected standards at the end of their reception year with a significant minority likely to exceed them. They settle quickly into school life because of the happy and secure environment created for them. The good balance between teacher directed and children initiated activities and the effective organisation of the classroom and of resources help develop children's confidence and independence. They listen attentively, follow instructions carefully and when asked to do so, they select activities, remain on task for some time and concentrate well on what they are doing even when the adults are working with other groups. The children work and play amicably together, share resources and co-operate with adults and with each other. In outdoor play activities children are given good opportunities to work as a team and make decisions as they plant seeds and solve problems in their water play. The children demonstrate good personal skills as they find, put on and remove coats and aprons and get changed quickly for physical education lessons, undressing and dressing themselves again with minimal adult help. Good levels of responsibility are fostered as children act as milk and register monitors, become fully involved in classroom duties and tidy up after activities. Relationships are very good. The teacher and teaching assistant know all the

children very well, are sensitive to their individual needs and give good levels of support. This has a very positive impact on children's personal development.

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

62. When the majority of children start at school their attainment in communication, language and literacy matches that expected for their age. All children make good progress in this area of learning and the majority are on course to meet the national expectation for their age by the end of their reception year with a significant minority likely to exceed it. This is due to good teaching, using a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities that are well matched to children's individual needs. Speaking and listening skills are developing well through opportunities to talk about their work and personal experiences and through role play and "small world" activities. However, more structured adult intervention in these activities would further enhance children's imaginative and language development. All children enjoy listening to stories and through careful adult questioning the majority are able to respond to them well, talking enthusiastically about what they have heard. They handle books with care and respect, hold them the right way, understand that words and pictures carry meaning and are aware that print is read from left to right. The majority of the children are beginning to associate sounds with patterns, letters and words and read familiar words accurately. Spelling is improved by a planned approach to the teaching of the letter sounds. All children recognise and write their own name. They enjoy mark making and basic writing experiences, often employing letters from their own names to convey the intended meaning. A small number of children make good attempts at writing sentences independently with due attention to capital letters and full stops. All children are developing appropriate handwriting skills and present their work neatly. Children who find learning more difficult receive good support from the teacher and teaching assistant which enables them to participate effectively in all activities and make good progress. Children's communication, language and literacy are very effectively re-enforced in all other areas of learning and make a very positive impact on the children's overall progress.

### **Mathematical development**

63. Progress is again good in this area of learning and almost all children are well on the way to reaching the national expectation at the end of the reception year with a significant minority likely to exceed it. Teaching is good. Well planned activities such as the counting and sorting of objects and sequencing of patterns, together with practical activities for measuring and shape work, all contribute effectively to the children's mathematical progress. When counting, ordering and adding numbers together the children show a good understanding of numbers up to 10 which they consolidate through singing number rhymes. In one good lesson a challenging measuring activity linked to literacy work further consolidated the children's knowledge of number and size. Here the majority of children were able to explain ways of measuring animal pictures. They then used this information to make a suitable flap to cover their own animal for a page in a class story book. Most children recognise and make repeated patterns. They know the names of common regular shapes, for example square, circle and triangle and can represent and interpret information on simple pictograms. Most of the children use an appropriate range of mathematical language such as "more than", 'less than' and 'total' during their number work which is effectively consolidated by their use of a computer program. When measuring and working with construction kits and in sand and water

areas, mathematical language is developed further as the children are encouraged to use such terms as 'over', 'under', 'full', 'empty', 'longer', "shorter".

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

64. Children make good progress in this area of learning and almost all are on course to reach the nationally expected standards for the end of the reception year with a significant minority likely to exceed them. This is because teaching is good and activities effectively planned to stimulate the children's curiosity, develop their powers of observation and encourage them to ask questions. Their scientific knowledge is developed through a study of 'ourselves' and through simple investigations using moving toys. The school and local environment are used well to enhance children's learning about living things and how to care for the environment. The children develop a growing awareness of the passage of time through looking at themselves and their families at different stages in their lives and by studying old toys. They learn about 'people who help us' as they visit the dentist and shops and listen to the school nurse and local police officer. These visits and visitors make a significant contribution to children's literacy, personal, social and creative skills as they record the main features through writing, drawings, role play, paintings and large collage displays. Children's work with construction kits and games introduces them effectively to modelling and making structures. The good opportunities to use information and communication skills are having a positive impact on children's progress in most areas of learning. They are confident when using the computers and show good control when using the mouse. The stimulating activities presented to the children result in good levels of concentration and enjoyment and prepare the children well for their work in science, design and technology, history, geography and information and communication technology.

### **Physical development**

65. Again the children make good progress in this area of learning and most are well on course to meet the nationally expected standards by the end of the reception year with a significant minority likely to exceed them. Good teaching ensures that the children have good opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by using scissors, holding pencils and brushes, threading, rolling, completing jigsaws and using small construction apparatus. They successfully build and construct models and use appropriate tools and methods when assembling and joining materials. During physical education lessons in the hall, children have good opportunities to explore a range of large apparatus and to explore space through their movement and dance activities. As at the last inspection, opportunities for outdoor play activities are limited. However, when outside, the area is used effectively to allow the children freedom of movement, to enhance their experiences across all areas of learning, as well as to provide access to wheeled toys and small games equipment

### **Creative development**

66. Most of the children are on course to reach the nationally expected standards for their age by the end of the reception year and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. They make good progress as a result of the stimulating and varied range of activities presented to them. The quality of teaching is good. The children have many



opportunities to draw, paint and make objects from a variety of media. Their work is often related to other areas of the curriculum as they paint self portraits, make clay divas and construct large co-operative collages about a shopping trip in the village. They recognise and mix colours well and make good use of a computer program to create imaginative, colourful images and patterns. The children participate very well in music lessons due to the very good teaching. They make very good progress in their understanding of how sounds are made and they know how to play a variety of musical instruments. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes and add actions enthusiastically.

## ENGLISH

67. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 matches that expected for their age and achievement and progress are satisfactory. However, there is limited evidence of higher attainment in this small cohort of pupils. Standards for pupils in Year 4 are above those expected for their age and achievement and progress are good. This is a direct result of the good teaching that pupils receive in Years 3 and 4. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their English targets and achieve well because of the school's good systems for supporting their learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
68. Pupils are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills through the school and in all subjects. They make mainly good progress in the development of these skills and standards match those expected for their age. The teachers work hard to promote speaking skills, offer good role models and vary their speech to suit the changing situations that arise in lessons. In an excellent introduction to a whole school drama session, the headteacher used her voice very expressively to portray the different characters and scenes within the story of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin', thus providing pupils with an excellent model for their follow up activities. Most teachers give appropriate opportunities for pupils to contribute orally in class, using effective questioning to extend responses and vocabulary. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils displayed a good range of descriptive vocabulary and spoke confidently as they planned character sketches. When working with partners or in small groups, pupils discuss ideas fairly and help each other. Since the last inspection the school has extended the range of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example, in assemblies and performances, through role play and drama activities and in 'circle-time'. The introduction of a school council and health and safety officers has also given further opportunity for pupils to express their views on a range of issues. All these activities make a positive impact on standards and on the pupils' personal and social development. The majority of pupils have very good attitudes to their work and listen attentively during lessons; this enables them to sustain concentration and to gain an appropriate understanding of the work they are to do. Pupils in most classes show an obvious enjoyment as they carefully listen to stories and poems and discuss their content. This is because of the teachers' good use of voice and resources.
69. Standards in reading are above those expected for the pupils' age in Years 2 and 4 and achievement and progress are good. Reading materials are carefully matched to pupils' ability levels and in all classes pupils enjoy talking about books. Throughout the school pupils are able to use an appropriate range of strategies to determine unfamiliar words and to use the text appropriately to predict what might happen next in a story. Good opportunities, including homework, are provided throughout the week for pupils to extend their basic skills and to read for different purposes. As a result, almost all pupils in Years

2 and 4 read fluently and accurately from a range and style of texts suitable for their age. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and enjoy books. They clearly express preferences in reading matter and talk about their favourite authors.

70. Years 3 and 4 pupils make good progress in learning when extracting information from texts or understanding the different layers of meaning. Their knowledge of information books and their uses is well developed. They recognise the distinctive features of non fiction books such as contents, index and glossary and are developing satisfactory library skills as they research information across a range of subjects. Teachers' effective questioning skills enable most pupils to make comparisons between texts and identify and compare language to create a given effect. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils appreciated the effect of humour in the poem 'How Can I' which was then used well to compare figurative and literal language. Pupils' progress in reading is recorded well, although there are some inconsistencies in setting individual targets to support improvement. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of a range of texts make a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development as they learn about their own literary heritage and that of other cultures and societies.
71. Writing, together with reading, has been a major focus for development for some time and the initiative has had a positive impact on raising standards. Pupils in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress in learning to write independently and their achievement is satisfactory. The majority of pupils use description effectively to add detail and interest to their stories. They sequence their stories well and are beginning to write at length. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty sequencing their ideas and write briefly, mainly about their personal experiences. Standards in writing by Year 4 are good and pupils achieve well. Pupils write in a variety of forms across the curriculum and presentation is satisfactory. Progress in handwriting is good because a structured programme is followed. Almost all pupils can write in a neat, clearly legible and joined style. However, throughout the school pupils do not always apply their handwriting skills consistently when presenting their writing. Throughout the school most pupils have a good understanding of the main systems of punctuation and spellings, although they do not always apply their knowledge accurately. Appropriate planned opportunities are given to all pupils to extend their writing skills across other areas of the curriculum and this adds to the quality of pupils' learning. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology by pupils as they word process their work and research information.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is sound in Years 1 and 2 and is good in Years 3 and 4. In all lessons teachers explain the learning of the lesson well and, as a result, pupils are very clear about what they are to learn. Pupils use what they already know to support new learning for example, as Year 3 pupils use homonyms and play on words to identify similes and solve riddles. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend pupils' thinking skills and to promote skills in speaking, listening and reading. In the better lessons teaching is lively, resources are used very effectively and lessons move at a brisk pace. As a result, pupils are well motivated and produce good levels of work and this has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers give good explanations so that pupils are clear about what they are to do. The good practice of sharing information with pupils about how they may evaluate their own learning is a strategy the school has recently introduced. However, not all teachers are using this strategy to its best advantage and pupils are not always clear about the success criteria for learning.

73. Planning throughout the school is good and work is appropriately matched to the different abilities of pupils, so that all are able to make at least satisfactory progress. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of initiatives such as additional and early literacy learning support materials which are effectively delivered by the support staff. The sessions at the end of the lessons are used mainly appropriately to check and consolidate pupils' learning. However, there are occasions when not all pupils are actively involved in these. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour to which pupils respond very well by listening attentively, concentrating on their tasks and behaving very well. However, this was not the case in a Year 1 lesson where pupils became restless because of the slow pace and classroom routines were ignored as pupils called out their answers. In a Year 2 lesson, learning was not maximised as some pupils did not listen to instructions carefully enough. Relationships are very good throughout the school and the good use of praise and encouragement has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides support and guidance to teachers when necessary. End of year test scores are analysed and strengths and weaknesses are identified which are used to inform teachers' future planning. There are very good systems in place to assess pupils' attainment, to track their progress as they move through the school and to set targets for further improvement. However, the subject co-ordinator is not yet involved sufficiently in this process or in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards further. Teachers' written marking is sound. It informs pupils of how well they have achieved and what they need to do next. Extra weekly literacy sessions have been introduced focussing on short reading and writing tasks to encourage pupils' freedom of choice and expression. Resources are good, well organised and used well throughout the school. Visits to the local library and theatre, participation in World Book Day events and visits from poets and theatre groups enhance pupils' learning and make a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. The standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 match those expected for their age and their achievement is satisfactory. The standards attained by pupils currently in Year 4 are above those expected for their age and their achievement is good. This is a direct result of the good teaching that pupils receive in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs although attaining standards below those expected for their age, achieve well because of the good support given to them by teaching support assistants.
76. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well and teachers have adopted the structure and format of a numeracy lesson as suggested by the National Strategy resulting in a mental mathematics session becoming an integral part of every lesson. The Framework is used well by all teachers as the basis for planning, to ensure that learning is continuous throughout the school.
77. Pupils cover a wide range of work during Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, the majority of pupils recognise, sequence and record numbers accurately to 100 and count correctly in 2s, 5s and 10s. They are beginning to use multiplication facts and higher attaining pupils are developing an understanding of simple division problems. They work practically with simple fractions and are able to produce some symmetrical patterns. They know the names of mathematical symbols and understand mathematical vocabulary, such as subtraction and minus. By Year 4, pupils demonstrate confidence in using a range of

mental and written strategies for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, across a range of numbers. Higher and average attaining pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of area and perimeter and are clearly able to record area correctly. Lower attaining pupils solve simple addition and subtraction problems but their knowledge of place value is insecure.

78. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good. Teaching is good in classes of pupils in Years 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 although there is evidence of good teaching in Year 2. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher was aware of the prior knowledge of individual pupils and asked them direct and specific questions to assess their understanding of number. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the mental mathematics game and all tried hard to answer questions correctly and quickly. In a Year 4 lesson, there was a brisk pace and the interactive whiteboard was used well to ensure all pupils were engaged in practising number facts. During the main activity the pupils understood the process well because of the teacher's clear explanations. In all the lessons observed, teachers displayed at least satisfactory subject knowledge and teaching of the basic skills. However, in some lessons, the conclusions to lessons were rushed and did not consolidate or enhance pupils' learning. The school has recently introduced the strategy of sharing with pupils how they should evaluate how well they have succeeded with their learning. Although this is very good practice it used more effectively in some classes than in others. Not all teachers are using this strategy to its best advantage. Also there are times when the pace of the lesson is slow and pupils spend too long on the carpet listening to the teacher as was seen in a Year 1 lesson. Marking does not always effectively challenge pupils' mathematical thinking.
79. Pupils throughout the school show consistently very good attitudes to their work in mathematics which is good improvement since the previous inspection when attitudes were judged to be frequently unsatisfactory. Their behaviour is also very good again good improvement since the previous inspection. Information and communication technology is used sufficiently to enhance teaching and learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted by this subject. For example, pupils are encouraged to work together, share ideas and resources and respect each others' answers.
80. Pupils with special education needs make good progress when supported by teaching or classroom assistants. This is evident in the good Year 4 numeracy group lesson for the pupils with special educational needs. In this good lesson pupils were practising their knowledge of number facts. The support assistant showed great perseverance and patience in ensuring that all pupils were able to succeed.
81. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory with the subject co-ordinator having a satisfactory knowledge of the subject's strengths and areas for development. Day-to-day assessment was a weakness in the previous inspection that has been effectively addressed. There are very good systems in place to assess pupils' attainment, to track their progress as they move through the school and to set targets for further improvement. End of year test scores are analysed and strengths and weaknesses are identified which are used to inform satisfactorily teachers' future planning. However, the subject co-ordinator is not yet involved sufficiently in this process or in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards further. Resource provision is good and resources are used well by staff. Standards have improved much more than the national trend over the last three years and school improvement is good.

## SCIENCE

82. The standards of the majority of pupils currently in Year 2 match those expected for their age and their achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of life and living processes materials and their properties and know how to construct a simple circuit using a battery, bulb and wire. Attainment by pupils currently in Year 4 is above national expectations and their achievement is good. In this class, pupils are encouraged to use and investigate their ideas, predict outcomes, use simple apparatus and equipment, make observations and draw conclusions. This was clearly demonstrated in a very good lesson observed in Year 4 when pupils investigated what happens when water is added to some solids. The pupils had to plan a fair test, record results on a chart and explain what they thought would happen next. The pupils showed an enthusiasm for the subject to match their curiosity and worked well together without close supervision. They enjoyed the lesson and most were attentive and keen to participate in answering questions. They settled on the set tasks with the minimum of fuss, sharing equipment and exchanging ideas willingly.
83. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, receive good support from teachers and teaching support assistants. They make good progress to achieve levels in line with their potential. However, often support staff are underemployed at the start of lessons when they tend to sit and watch the class teacher, rather than use the time productively to make assessments or support pupils with learning difficulties, for example.
84. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and occasionally are very good as in a lesson seen in Year 4. Activities are provided for the range of ability within classes and these activities reflect the work done by the school since the previous inspection to develop scientific skills, attitudes and knowledge. Investigative work now forms a greater part of science teaching at the school. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and plan lessons effectively. The learning intentions of the lesson are clear and are discussed with pupils so that they know what they will be doing and objectives are reviewed at the end of lessons. However, the sharing of success criteria is more successful in some classrooms than in others. Key words are identified in the planning but not enough emphasis is placed on discussing these words at the start of lessons to reinforce work in literacy. Occasionally, the pupils are kept too long on the carpet as was seen in Year 1 when pupils became fussy and fidgety until they were given a task to do. When this is the case then both productivity and pace of working are unsatisfactory. Pupils produce written work of satisfactory quality in Years 1 and 2 and of good quality in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' work is regularly marked but this is usually restricted to supportive comments made at the end. Teachers do not consistently identify how pupils may improve the standard of their work.
85. Teachers usually have high expectations and these are reflected in the good range of activities provided for pupils in the main body of the lesson. These are matched by the provision of good quality and suitably matched resources. For example, in a Year 1 lesson two digital cameras, a projector, classroom objects, scissors, paper, glue, shadow boxes, coloured shapes, pictures and charts were provided. The ensuing activities ranged from taking photographs and making real shadows to making shadow pictures and drawing shadows. Information and communication technology resources are used well in this subject.

86. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good throughout the school. The appropriate statutory curriculum is now well established and good long, medium and short-term planning systems are in place within which assessment opportunities are highlighted. Science contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by offering the pupils good opportunities to collaborate together and to support each other's learning. Older pupils are beginning to become more independent and to take some responsibility for their own learning by setting their own targets at a meeting near to the start of the school year.
87. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Science is well monitored, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is also good. Less successful, although still satisfactory, is the ability of the school to effectively evaluate the subject's performance in order to take effective action. Much has been done to improve teaching and learning in science since the last inspection. A comprehensive planning system is now in place underpinning coverage of the National Curriculum. Good procedures for regular assessment of pupils to monitor their attainment and progress have been put in place, although there is still some work to be done in fully developing monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Learning resources are good and so is their strategic use for the subject. Above all is the presence of a very high and shared commitment to improve the subject and the capacity to succeed.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

88. As at the last inspection, pupils in Years 2 and 4 are working at levels expected for their age and pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning as only one lesson was observed.
89. Pupils throughout the school are able to develop their artistic skills using a range of media. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experiment appropriately with paint, mixing colours and creating different shades and tones, for example, when painting sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. They show satisfactory skills in the development of their collage work as they use a variety of textures and materials to create the correct effect. In all classes, pupils learn the importance of close observational skills. For example, they study shape, texture and tone when drawing fruit and study facial features when painting self portraits. The whole school art and design workshops have effectively developed pupils' and teachers' watercolour painting techniques as they mixed colours, used colour washes, made close observations and developed effect by the use of different papers. As they move through the school, pupils' drawings and paintings show increasing attention to fine detail. Year 4 pupils skilfully use a variety of media and different effects with line, form and tone to create a feeling of depth within their sea scenes in the style of Van Gogh. Pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of the works of famous artists and use their work, for example, that of Monet and Pollock, as a stimulus to create their own pictures. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
90. Art and design is used effectively to record and enhance learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 1 pupils used the story of The Iron Man to make collage masks, whilst Year 4 pupils created patterns to represent sound waves travelling through

air. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to further enhance pupils' artistic skills as, for example, Year 2 pupils created patterns in the style of Mondrian. Pupils' work is effectively displayed to create a welcoming and attractive working environment and to celebrate pupils' achievement. Art and design makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development and includes opportunities to work together collaboratively with an artist in residence.

91. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The nationally approved scheme of work provides sound guidance for teachers' planning and ensures that pupils experience a good balance in the different aspects of art. The subject co-ordinator has had opportunity to monitor teaching and learning but needs to evaluate the information from this monitoring more rigorously in order to raise standards further. There are good systems in place to assess and record pupils' progress in acquiring skills in art and design and to ensure that learning is continuous as they move through the school. However, sketchbooks are not used systematically to improve pupils' work. Resources are good and used well throughout the school. As yet the school does not identify pupils who are gifted and talented in this subject. Overall there has been sound improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

92. Pupils in Years 2 and 4 attain levels expected for their age and their achievement is satisfactory. This shows good improvement in standards since the last inspection when there was no long-term plan or programme of work to ensure that learning was continuous throughout the school. There is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching and learning overall.
93. Throughout the school, appropriate emphasis is placed on the planning, modifying, making and evaluating process. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have opportunity to develop their skills in making models out of construction kits. They learn about the properties of different materials and how best to use, assemble, join and combine them. Year 2 pupils show satisfactory skills in designing and making castles that incorporate a moving drawbridge. Older pupils are given the opportunity to develop their skills using a wider range of tools and materials; for example, as they use screen printing techniques to create very attractive banners for the opening of Amble Pier. Working with an "artist in residence" has had a positive impact on the development of design and technology skills for all pupils seen, for example, in the very effective ceramic mural depicting life in and around Amble. This, together with the making of "proggy" toys linked to history work and sock puppet rats to enhance the story of The Pied Piper of Hamelin, makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development.
94. In a Year 4 lesson, teaching and learning was good and pupils achieved well. This is because the teacher used her good subject knowledge to plan an appropriate practical activity which was well suited to the abilities of all pupils and kept them well motivated. Pupils were very clear about what they were to do because the learning intention was shared with them and the teacher gave clear explanations. Pupils showed a good understanding of the properties of materials, as they considered which was most appropriate when making a money container. As a result of the teacher's careful questioning and the close observation of a good range of resources, pupils discussed a variety of styles, appropriate joining techniques and the suitability of a range of fastenings. Pupils showed very good attitudes to their work and responded well to the teacher's high

expectations by listening carefully, discussing sensibly and behaving well. This had a significant impact on their learning.

95. Design and technology is linked well to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their scientific knowledge of levers as they make greetings cards with moving parts, whilst Year 4 pupils make pop up books using different mechanisms. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily across the school as pupils measure for a range of purposes and weigh out ingredients in food technology. All pupils have appropriate opportunities to apply their skills as they plan, modify and evaluate their work. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to further enhance learning.
96. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has made significant improvements since the last inspection in order to raise standards. Staff training sessions have enabled teachers to become more confident with the subject. Teachers now use the nationally agreed scheme of work which provides sound guidance for their planning. The subject co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and checks on standards by examining pupils' work. There are good systems in place to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to track pupils' progress to ensure that skills are developed year on year as pupils move through the school. Priorities for further improvements are clearly identified in the co-ordinator's action plan. Resources are good, with a wide range of media available for all pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development as they share ideas and resources, make decisions and work collaboratively in pairs and groups.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. There has been good improvement in the provision for geography since the last inspection. A programme of study is now in place, which allows for good long, medium and short-term planning and assessment opportunities.
98. During the inspection it was only possible to see geography taught in Year 2, so no overall judgement can be made on teaching and learning. However, discussions with teachers and pupils together with scrutiny of work and displays have provided sufficient evidence to allow judgements to be made on attainment, progress and provision. Attainment and progress are satisfactory by Year 2 and good by the time the pupils are in Year 4. A good quality and range of learning opportunities are offered to the pupils as they learn about the local area, how to draw and interpret maps and gain an appreciation of life in other cultures. The school makes good use of local natural resources, for example through fieldwork in the Year 2 topic on the seaside and a Year 4 topic on rivers.
99. Geography makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils. They are encouraged to reflect on the impact of mankind on the world and they are introduced to the concept of 'stewardship' in relation to sustainable development. The school aims to develop an understanding of different cultures so as to avoid stereotyping. For example, in a Year 4 classroom a wall display illustrates life in St Lucia and the pupils' writing demonstrates an appreciation of life for a family in the Caribbean. In a good lesson observed in Year 2, the focus was on other places and countries. Well-planned activities allowed groups of pupils to research suitable places for 'Barnaby Bear' to visit and each group was able to share its findings with the rest of the



class. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in this subject.

100. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory. However, although the subject co-ordinator has monitored the subject well the evaluation element of her work needs to be developed further. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and the use of assessment information to guide planning is satisfactory. Learning resources are good and they are put to effective use in lessons. Both the commitment to improve and the capacity to succeed is one of the school's strengths.

## **HISTORY**

101. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 match the national expectation and those for pupils currently in Year 4 are above the national expectation. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 4. As only one lesson was observed, it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning overall. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
102. Scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school followed by discussions with both pupils and teachers, indicates a good range and quality of learning opportunities in history. The appropriate statutory curriculum for the subject is well established, supported by the relevant policy statement, programme of study and comprehensive long, medium and short-term planning. Consequently, the history curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. In Year 2, pupils have developed their understanding of time by listening to stories of the past and how famous people contributed to change. By Year 4, pupils have developed a sense of chronology by studying different periods of history and have learnt to use a variety of historical sources to find out more about the past.
103. The teaching of history contributes well to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils by giving them opportunities to explain their views on social questions. They have the opportunity to learn about becoming active citizens in a democratic society by learning how laws are made and changed, and they learn about multi-cultural developments, tolerance and respect for others. The school makes good use of museums and the locality to enhance the curriculum. For example a visit to Woodthorn Colliery has helped pupils in Year 3 understand local history and cultural traditions. Good use is made of outside visitors, information and communication technology (including CD ROMS, Internet and video), photographs and artefacts.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall and there is a very high commitment on the staff to make improvements. Whilst the procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good, the monitoring of the subject and the use of assessment to guide curricular planning are not as developed, whilst still being satisfactory overall. The marking and correction of pupils' work are not focused enough on the learning intention of the lesson. As a result, the comments do not advance pupils' learning significantly.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching and learning overall, but evidence indicates that, by Years 2 and 4, the attainment of the majority of pupils

matches the national expectation for pupils of these ages. Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by support assistants and make good progress.

106. By Year 2, pupils know that some toys can be programmed and most pupils programme movable toys, for example the 'Roamer' or 'Pixie', in order to make things happen. They are developing satisfactory mouse skills and are becoming confident in the use of literacy and numeracy programs. Pupils are able to produce simple pictures using drawing programs and are beginning to develop confidence in word processing programs. By Year 4, pupils enter and save text and graphics correctly. Many cut, paste and copy pictures from the internet to a word document. They are able to send and retrieve e-mails to friends in a school in Newcastle and use data handling programs correctly
107. The attitudes of the pupils are very good. During their work in pairs, pupils collaborate well, sharing ideas. They treat equipment with care and respect. They are well behaved and show interest and enjoyment in their work. The subject impacts positively on pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. One particularly good example of this was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, when pupils used information and communication technology to support the learning of number facts. The pupils shared ideas willingly and supported each other in trying to work quickly. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils again collaborated well when using a microscope to examine everyday items.
108. The school is successfully developing cross-curricular links in information and communication technology and many programs are available to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Information and communication technology is also used well in other subjects. For example, pupils are encouraged to use the Internet to download information on relevant topics in history and geography. Information and communication technology is used very well to support pupils with special educational needs. A variety of programs are used to support their specific learning difficulties.
109. The leadership and management of the subject are good. In the absence of the deputy headteacher who is the subject co-ordinator, the role is conscientiously overseen by the headteacher. There is a detailed development plan for the subject, which assesses the needs of the subject well. There are very clear plans ensuring progression, and the breadth and balance of the subject curriculum are good. The headteacher monitors the subject well by collecting evidence from pupils and talking to them, scrutinising teachers' planning and wall displays and monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom. Assessment and record-keeping systems are good and a file of pupils' work is kept to monitor standards throughout the school. Resources are good and are used well by all staff. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

## **MUSIC**

110. No overall judgement is made on standards or teaching and learning as no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, it is clear from discussions with teachers and pupils and from observation of collective worship that very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection.
111. The quality of singing throughout the school is very good. It is clear that singing has a high profile in the school as it is used to support both cultural development and multi-cultural education. For example, pupils were observed to enjoy singing as they enter the hall for

collective worship. They know the words by heart and so the assembly starts in a most positive way. The pupils learn a wide range of songs, some with local origin, others drawing on cultures and traditions of other countries. Music at the school contributes well to pupils' personal development. An attractive music display in the small hall reflects pupils' good interpretation of Schubert's Quartet through their artwork.

112. The appropriate curriculum is now well established and the very detailed medium term planning and programmes of study support the teaching of music very well. Assessment and record keeping systems are developing well but opportunities for the gifted and talented pupils are not yet fully identified.
113. Good music opportunities are offered to all pupils as they progress through school. In Year 3 there is an opportunity to learn the recorder and in Year 4 to play an instrument at the Christmas concert. This year the introduction of penny whistle tuition for the pupils, as a means of boosting the playing of instruments, represents a good example of innovative practice at the school. The school takes every opportunity to perform music in the community, for example at the Sea Fayre Festival, at an old people's home, at church and at the local Christmas market. Visitors to school also enhance and enrich the music curriculum, for example, local singers and composers working alongside pupils and a community artist working on drumming activities.
114. During the inspection, a very successful drama workshop activity was observed, involving the whole school. An excellent introduction in the hall was followed by workshops including one for music in which pupils listened very well to music and responded appropriately, demonstrating high levels of use of vocals and a most positive attitude to the subject. Music is very well led and managed at the school, with the subject co-ordinator providing clear educational direction. There is a good range of resources which are used well by teachers and pupils. Information and communication technology resources are used satisfactorily in this subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

115. No overall judgement is possible for standards or teaching and learning as no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, it is clear from discussions with teachers and pupils that an appropriate statutory curriculum is fully in place and that physical activity is an important feature of the pupils' development. The pupils have the opportunity to participate in games, gymnastics and dance and have access to a range of extra-curricular activities, including kwik cricket, football and line dancing. Alnwick swimming pool is used for pupils in Years 3 and 4 to attend swimming lessons. The majority achieve 10 metres and some 25 or 50 metres by the end of Year 4. The school is currently trying to raise funds for transport to the swimming club and is also working towards the Active Mark for swimming.
116. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection and the staff have received training in both Top Dance and Top Play and is planning to implement Top Gymnastics. These initiatives are helping to raise effectively standards in physical education throughout the school. More opportunities are now offered for pupils to evaluate their own work by encouraging pupils to offer helpful hints to each other during lessons. This was a weakness of the previous inspection that has improved. Through the sensitive evaluations of each other's work, pupils' moral and social development are promoted.

117. Dance forms an important part of the physical education curriculum at the school and an example of this was seen during the inspection in a workshop as part of a whole school drama activity. Pupils tried very hard to express their ideas in an imaginative way. They listened to the music well and the majority managed to convey their despair when the 'Pied Piper took their children away'.
118. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Resources are satisfactory overall. Although the hall and the outside playground is small, the school manages as best it can to maximise physical education opportunities. The facilities at Amble Middle School are used well for games lessons and for the annual sports' day.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

119. The attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 4 matches the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Overall there has been good improvement in all aspects of religious education since the previous inspection.
120. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of the Creation story and describe special times of celebration such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. They are beginning to understand how Christian principles apply to their everyday life, for example, being kind and caring to others. Pupils of this age have good opportunities to learn about other religions through stories and pictures and are developing a sound understanding of the religious significance of celebrations such as Holi, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Pupils in Year 4 show a satisfactory understanding of the main features of faiths such as Islam and Hinduism. They are familiar with the key events in the life of Jesus and stories from the New Testament. They relate Christian beliefs to the life and work of Mother Theresa and consider the importance of caring for others.
121. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. For pupils in Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory and it is good for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Year 2 pupils listen attentively to stories and effectively use real life and role play situations to express their own thoughts and feelings when friends move away. The majority of pupils are eager to participate and articulate their thoughts well. However, because of the teacher's inconsistent classroom management, a small minority of pupils are unwilling to listen sensitively or attentively and time is not used well enough to maintain pupils' interest. The good range of Islamic resources in Year 4 engaged the pupils' interest throughout the lesson and they listened attentively and with obvious enjoyment. The pupils responded well to the calm, reverent atmosphere and there were gasps of awe and wonder as the artefacts were respectfully revealed. Pupils' attitudes were good, they were eager to learn and they behaved well. This is due to the good relationships between teacher and pupils and to the teacher's good classroom management and organisation.
122. Pupils throughout the school record their work in a variety of ways, apply their literacy skills appropriately and use information and communication technology and reference materials satisfactorily to research information. The well planned curriculum provides for an appropriate range of visits and visitors that enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils have visited the local church and an inner city multi ethnic school. Through developing their understanding of religious beliefs and the effect they have on the life and

culture of the people who follow them, religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

123. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and provides appropriate support and guidance to teachers when necessary. Planning is thorough and closely based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are good procedures in place to assess pupils' attainment and to monitor their progress to ensure that their learning is continuous throughout the school. However, although the co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning, the co-ordinator now needs to evaluate this information more rigorously in order to raise standards further in this subject. Written marking does not consistently inform pupils of why work is good and how it may be improved. Resources, including artefacts from different religions, are good and enhance pupils' learning.