

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND (AIDED) FIRST SCHOOL

Whitfield, Hexham

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122303

Headteacher: Mrs E Hatton

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Lewis
22787

Dates of inspection: 30th June – 1st July 2003

Inspection number: 248340

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitfield Hexham Northumberland
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Wenham
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22787	Mrs M Lewis	Registered inspector	English The Foundation Stage Art and design Music Educational inclusion	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
11084	Mrs J Hughes	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
17907	Mr M Bowers	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Physical education Special educational needs	
30954	Mr B Ashcroft	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	5
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	8
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	10
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	14
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitfield Church of England Aided First School is much smaller than most primary schools. It is situated on a local country estate within the village of Whitfield, near Hexham. It is a popular school and numbers have increased by about a third since the last inspection, with around a quarter of the pupils choosing to come from outside of the immediate area. Pupils travel to school by car or taxi each day from surrounding farms, hamlets and villages. The school takes pupils aged from four to nine years. During the inspection week, there were 30 pupils on the roll (15 boys and 15 girls). This included two four-year-olds attending part-time. The school has a stable population and no pupil has left or joined the school over the last year. Pupils are all white and speak English as their first language. They are taught in two mixed-age classes, one for pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 and the other for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The headteacher has a 90 per cent teaching commitment in the junior class. The percentage of pupils having a free school meal (0 per cent) is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (20 per cent) is just below average. Most of these have learning difficulties. There is an above average proportion (3.3 per cent) of pupils with statements of special educational need. On entry to school, children's attainment is wide ranging and varies considerably from year-to-year but overall it is average. The school has won several important awards; a School Achievement Award in 2000, and in 2003 Activemark and Healthy School Awards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school which is led and managed very effectively by the headteacher. Along with staff and governors, she works with great commitment and purpose to provide a high standard of education and care for the pupils. The school has very strong links with parents, the parish and the local community. It creates a very welcoming, family atmosphere in which children feel valued and in turn learn to respect and value others. The teaching is good overall and pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in Years 2 and 4 in English, mathematics and science;
- Teaching is good overall and this helps pupils make good progress in their learning;
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent and this has a very significant impact on their learning;
- It provides well for pupils with special educational needs and consequently they make good progress;
- It involves parents and the community very well in its work;
- It provides a very high standard of care for its pupils and is committed to including all of them in its work;
- It is very well led and managed by the headteacher who is well supported by staff and governors.

What could be improved

- Some aspects of provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage;
- The way the school promotes pupils' awareness of life in a modern multiethnic British society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has shown a very good rate of improvement since it was last inspected in December 1997. A significant factor in this improvement has been the leadership and management of the headteacher, who took up her appointment in September 1999. Since then she has moved the school forward at a good pace. Parents think very highly of the school and it has increased its links with the community and other nearby schools. All the key issues from the previous inspection have been vigorously addressed and

other areas have been strengthened. The teaching and learning have improved significantly and the standard of pupils' work has risen in English, mathematics and science. The school caters well for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress. There is now increased staffing for the children in the reception class, although some aspects of teaching and planning of the curriculum could be further improved. The school has introduced a coherent approach to checking pupils' progress in order to identify the next steps in their learning and personal development. The curriculum is planned in detail over a two-year programme and pupils have good curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Governors are considerably more involved in the work of the school. They monitor successfully to enable standards to be maintained and improved.

STANDARDS

If there are 10 or fewer pupils in a year group, statistical data is not reliable and is not therefore included. This is the case for the Year 2 class which took the National Curriculum tests in 2002.

Inspection judgements and the records of pupils' progress show that standards are above average in English, mathematics and science for pupils at the ages of 7 and 9. All pupils achieve well and some very well in their time in the school, in relation to their previous attainment. Over the past three years standards have risen in all three subjects and are being maintained above the national trend. The school's results hold their own against other schools nationally. When pupils enter the reception class their attainment is average overall. Some year groups have a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs or of higher attaining pupils than others.

Pupils in both the infant and junior classes make good progress in English and mathematics and achieve well. They do particularly well in reading and writing. They make rapid progress in the development of writing skills. This is due to the increased emphasis the school has placed on this area recently. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics. Skills in mathematics lessons are particularly strong in the junior class and for the higher attaining pupils in the infant class. In most other subjects of the curriculum pupils achieve broadly similar standards to those found in most other schools. Standards are higher than usually found in music, art and design and in swimming at the end of Year 4. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in physical education.

Most children in the reception class are likely to do better than is expected for pupils of this age in their personal and social, language and literacy, and mathematical development by the time they begin in Year 1. They are mostly already working at the early stages of the National Curriculum in language and mathematical development. Children show satisfactory levels of development in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and are on course to reach the expected goals.

The school gives effective help to pupils with special educational needs, which helps them to work confidently and make good progress. Those pupils identified with particular gifts and talents achieve well because the school makes good provision for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They invariably persevere with all activities and strive to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils show a high standard of behaviour at all times and this makes a significant contribution to their achievements. They rise to the high expectations of staff and work and play together well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships permeate the whole school. Pupils respond maturely to the opportunities they have and soak up new experiences they are given.

Attendance	Very good. Well above average. The school has a below average rate of unauthorised attendance. As a result, pupils gain maximum benefit from school.
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Pupils really enjoy coming to school and hate to miss any school day even for the best of reasons. They are proud of their school and by the time they leave in Year 4 they have become rounded individuals able to express a carefully considered point of view.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is particularly strong in Years 3 and 4 where there is a higher proportion of very good teaching. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well as individuals, because the classes are small and they spend several years with the same class. As a result of this and the sensitive and positive approach that teachers have, relationships throughout the school are excellent. This helps pupils make good progress in the majority of lessons and throughout their time in the school. During the inspection, some lessons in the infant class lacked clear outcomes and structured opportunities for the reception pupils. This was because tasks were biased towards the older pupils and consequently reception pupils were not always involved at their level. Nevertheless, children in the reception class get off to a sound start overall and do well in their personal, social, emotional, language and mathematical development.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 benefit from being taught alongside pupils in Years 3 and 4. The skills of literacy are taught very well throughout the school. The teaching of reading and writing is particularly strong. Pupils in the reception and infant class develop their skills at a rapid rate because reading, writing and spelling are taught effectively, which means they quickly become confident readers and writers. Teachers develop pupils' handwriting and spelling skills well in both classes. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established. Numeracy skills are taught successfully. Pupils are taught particularly skilfully in the older class and helped to find different ways of working out calculations in mental arithmetic quickly. Good attention is given to developing pupils' investigative skills in mathematics and science. Pupils with special needs make good progress because work is adapted to meet their needs and they have very good quality extra help during most lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum offers a good range and quality of opportunities for first hand experiences including educational visits and visitors into school. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory overall but it is limited in the areas of pupils' creative and physical development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and assistants are effective in targeting and helping pupils so that they make good progress and achieve their best.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall, with strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The school extends pupils' cultural development well but it could do more to help pupils' understanding of life in a multiethnic society in Britain today.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. There are very good procedures in place for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. Assessment of each pupil's achievement is good and very good personal support is given to all pupils. The school has suitable procedures in place for promoting racial harmony.
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There are very strong links with parents and most make an excellent contribution to their children's learning. On occasions, the opportunities for pupils in the reception class to choose their own activities for using their imagination and developing their skills in physical activities both indoors and outdoors are limited, because they are part of a class with older pupils. This means that they do not progress quickly enough in these areas.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school. She is very committed to raising and maintaining standards and leads by her own example. She is dedicated and manages a heavy teaching load with her management duties very effectively. She is well supported by other staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory requirements and provides good support for the school. It acts as a valuable and critical friend of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school identifies the right priorities for development and takes effective action to accomplish these. It is constantly seeking ways to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school manages its budget carefully and uses its funds wisely for the benefit of pupils and to support educational priorities.

The school uses its accommodation imaginatively and stimulating classroom displays provide a high quality learning environment. However, the tiny hall is too small for the effective teaching of gymnastics. Resources are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value successfully. It compares costs on spending and seeks parents' views about the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is well led and managed. They feel very comfortable approaching the school; Behaviour in the school is good and their children make good progress and like school; The teaching is good and the school expects their children to work hard; The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons and is helping their children become mature and responsible; They are kept well informed how their children are getting on and the school works closely with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very small proportion of parents disagreed with the amount of homework.

Parents overwhelmingly support the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors agree with the parents' very positive comments. The inspection team judges that the amount of homework is similar to that found in many primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average overall at the end of Years 2 and 4. This is shown by inspection judgements of lessons seen during the inspection, scrutiny of pupils' work, results of pupils' assessments and the school's tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school. All pupils achieve well and some very well in their time in school in relation to their overall starting points.
2. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 have varied over the last three years between very high, well above average and above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This variation is due to the very small numbers of pupils who take the tests each year. Caution must be used in comparing the standards achieved in the national tests. For instance, there were only six pupils in the Year 2 group in 2002 so that it is unrealistic to compare their performance with that of other schools, because one child can account for 17 per cent or more. A closer analysis shows that the school is nevertheless holding its own and pupils' performance is very favourable.
3. Analysis over time is made more complex by the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs and statements of special need in each year group. In the current Year 2 group of six pupils, one child is identified with special educational needs, three pupils as higher attaining in literacy and four in mathematics. However, it is likely that pupils' results will be similarly well above average as were those of last year.
4. There have been improvements in English and mathematics since the last inspection and pupils now achieve well and sometimes very well in relation to their abilities. When pupils' attainments in the national tests over time are analysed, the overall trend has been one of improvement in all three subjects and this has been maintained above the national trend. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and there has been a greater focus on raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics, which were average at that time. The implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been effective and they are now well embedded in the teaching and learning. Standards in science have been maintained as above average since the previous inspection. Assessment of pupils' progress is good and better use is now made of it to plan pupils' work than at the time of the last inspection, when it was identified as an issue for improvement. The careful checking and close attention the school pays to individual children's progress and the early identification of those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils have proved successful ways of ensuring that pupils achieve their best.
5. Children make satisfactory progress overall in the reception class. They make a particularly good start in the learning of literacy and numeracy skills. They soon develop a good awareness of themselves as readers and writers as they join in with many of the activities of the older pupils in Years 1 and 2. They learn letter sounds and to recognise familiar words and enjoy counting and working with numbers. Pupils in the current reception group are on course to exceed the expected standards in personal development, talking and listening and reading and mathematical understanding. In writing, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, they are likely to meet the expectations for children of this age. Because most of the tasks they are given are biased towards the older pupils in the

class and there is a lack of planning for structured activities with clear outcomes and targeted adult input, children do not make as much progress as they could in all the areas of learning.

6. Pupils in both the infant and junior class make good progress in English. They respond well to the teachers' questions. They listen carefully, follow instructions well and by the time they leave the school they are very confident in expressing their opinions and evaluating their work. Reading skills are taught very well and pupils progress at a rapid rate from the earliest stages. By the end of Year 2 almost all pupils are keen, fluent, independent readers. By the time they leave the school in Year 4 they tackle many different kinds of texts and read with a good understanding. Almost all parents support their pupils well with reading at home and this plays an important part in the success that their children have with reading. The school has recently placed greater emphasis on the development of pupils' writing. This is having an impact on pupils' progress in both classes and this is beginning to pay off well. Standards of handwriting and presentation are high by the time pupils reach the end of Year 4.
7. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 become adept at sequencing numbers and are developing competent skills in recognising number patterns. Pupils become quick and accurate in mental mathematics and in Years 3 and 4 apply their skills very effectively to problem solving in mathematics. A range of opportunities is provided for using mathematics through some subjects such as design and technology and researching history evidence. However, more planned opportunities could be provided in other subjects, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
8. Good progress is made in science and pupils attain above average standards at the end of both Years 2 and 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. Pupils have many opportunities to investigate, to plan and predict the outcomes of experiments. They develop a good understanding of a fair test and give good explanations and draw conclusions about why things are as they are.
9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average and similar to most schools. Although resources have improved since the last inspection and further staff training has been undertaken standards are not as favourable as last time when they were above average. This is because expectations for the subject have increased and the school has given its emphasis to raising standards in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects of the curriculum standards are average except in music, art and design and swimming at Year 4 where standards are above average.
10. In the infant class pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall in English, mathematics and science. In English and mathematics they achieve the average level. In science, whilst they achieve average levels, there are shortcomings in the development of investigational skills. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to make good progress and achieve standards that are close to the expected levels for this age in English, mathematics and science. This is because of the specific targets that are set for them and the careful and regular assessments. They are supported very well by all the adults who work with them and this develops their confidence and helps them learn effectively. Pupils with particular gifts or who are academically very able are well catered for and often reach high standards in their work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their very high attendance figures. Some parents at the meeting commented that their children worry if they cannot come to school for any reason. Pupils are very keen to participate in every activity and persevere with determination in lessons. There is no shortage of volunteers to answer teachers' questions and pupils show a great will to succeed. They are seldom satisfied with their first answer to a teacher's question and will add to it several times as a debate continues until they are finally satisfied with their response. The school teaches children not to bear a grudge against anyone and they are keen to debate issues centred on caring and responsibility during lessons. Pupils are very trustworthy and have each other's best interests at heart, as in any close knit family. When one boy accidentally dropped someone's reading book and record on the floor, not only did he pick them up, but he then painstakingly looked up in the diary where the bookmark should have been and replaced it accurately.
12. Behaviour is very good in all areas of the school. Pupils take adults' high expectations for granted and follow the code of conduct closely. There is a busy hum of activity throughout the school as pupils engage readily in a variety of interesting tasks. Pupils respond very well to the positive remarks from their peers; they are offered specific guidance on how to support others and they use this information wisely. This is a very orderly and happy community where pupils are eager to do their best each day. There have been no exclusions from school. Parents state that they are very happy with the way children behave in school.
13. Excellent relationships permeate the whole school. This is a very happy place in which to work and pupils take their lead from the adults and treat one another with respect. They are quick to come to the aid of someone with a problem and are keen to share in celebrations such as birthdays. There is a great generosity of spirit in the school and, due to the small number of pupils, a real sense of family. Parents pick up on this and feel it to be a great strength of the school.
14. Pupils reach excellent levels in their own personal development. They soak up new experiences and revel in the many social settings they experience during their time at school. They become increasingly independent and by the time they reach Year 4, the vast majority are delightfully rounded individuals, imbued with a strong sense of fair play. They hold sensible conversations with visitors and think carefully before expressing an opinion. Parents are very supportive of the way the school extends their children's personal development through educational visits they undertake and through different approaches to learning used in school. The 'DANSI' programme of drugs awareness highlights pupils' assertiveness and common sense while the 'Philosophy for Children' approach for older pupils enables them to debate specific questions in detail. Each pupil has a direct involvement in the School Council and they all take this role very seriously. Older and younger pupils co-exist equably; this is highlighted at lunchtimes at the mixed age tables where pupils take turns to be 'servers'. Their social skills are at a high level.

15. Levels of attendance are consistently very high in comparison with other schools and there is no recorded unauthorised absence. Pupils come to school by taxi or car and are very punctual. There is a prompt start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. In almost all lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory or better. It has improved since the last inspection and there is now a higher proportion of very good teaching. There have been particular improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics which is now good in both classes. The teaching of science has been maintained as good. Pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in all of these subjects by the end of Years 2 and 4 as a result of the improved teaching. Since the appointment of the headteacher, the staff have worked very hard to develop their skills, confidence and subject knowledge. They have kept up to date through a well devised programme of staff training, for instance in ICT and Thinking Skills. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum is good across all subjects. They have worked extensively to develop planning at the long, medium and short term. Well devised schemes of work are in place and nationally recommended guidelines have been adapted to meet the needs of the school over a two-year period and in particular for meeting the needs of the mixed aged classes. Weaknesses identified as issues in the previous report in the day-to-day assessments and their use in planning have been eliminated along with the implementation of good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and their personal development.
17. There are strengths in the quality of teaching in the reception class, particularly in developing children's personal, social and emotional development and their language and mathematical development. This helps pupils make a sound start to their education. However, at the beginning and conclusion of most lessons for all pupils in the infant class, reception pupils are expected to sit and listen for too long which means that they lose interest. The activities prepared for them are not planned carefully enough with clearly expected outcomes to meet their needs within the areas of learning. In areas of learning such as creative and physical development, the activities and staff input for the children are not always sufficiently and imaginatively planned to enrich and give pupils the full range of experiences in these areas.
18. Very good teaching is found in the Year 3 and 4 class and in the teaching of the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 for literacy and numeracy. Higher attaining pupils in literacy and numeracy from Year 2 are taught as part of the junior class and this helps them make rapid progress and reach levels higher than is expected for pupils of their age. Similarly pupils in Year 3 with special educational needs learn with the younger class for literacy and numeracy and this helps them make good progress from their previous attainment.
19. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching and learning. All staff are hard working, and committed to providing the best for the pupils. They work very effectively together and this has a significant impact on both teaching and learning. They develop very good relationships with pupils. They set high expectations of standards of behaviour and of pupils' relationships and as a result these are excellent throughout the school. Teachers know the pupils extremely well and are sensitive to their individual needs but at the same time they expect the pupils to work hard as individuals and to help each other. They value all pupils and give them praise for their achievements and efforts which are shared across the school. Consequently pupils

work hard and show good levels of respect for their teachers and the other adults who work with them.

20. Teachers generally plan and assess their lessons effectively to ensure a good match of work. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics and science. However, in some lessons the same task, often biased towards the oldest pupils, is sometimes given to all pupils. Although good levels of support are given to the youngest pupils who succeed well, the average attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not always receive sufficient challenge in mathematics. This is not the case in the juniors, where tasks are carefully planned to meet the needs of the different pupils in the class. For instance, in a mathematics lesson on place value, pupils were questioned and challenged appropriately in their mental work and in written tasks they were given tasks with three general levels of difficulty. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 worked independently on doubling and halving numbers such as 40, 35, 60, 25, and 80, whilst pupils in Years 3 and 4 focussed on solving problems using similar procedures but with numbers that involved decimal computations. Teachers make good use of the skills of the teaching assistant. In the infant class, for instance, she worked very well with a small group of pupils in reception on helping and developing their understanding of the concept of twos and pairs. No time is wasted in lessons, as she methodically ensures that all children in the infant class are heard to read every day. Teachers are very clear about what they want the pupils to learn. Explanations are given clearly and pupils know what they are doing and why. The concluding parts of lessons, when pupils are brought back together, are used effectively although the youngest pupils in the reception class spend too much time listening to the teacher at the beginning and conclusion of lessons. This means that they often become restless.
21. Teachers use their skills of questioning very effectively to probe and challenge pupils' understanding and develop their skills of thinking. This is an area that the school has chosen to concentrate on recently and it is beginning to bear fruit. Teachers' questions are well thought through and considered beforehand at the planning stage of lessons. For instance, in the opening to an art and design lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 the pupils were given the opportunity to talk about what they could see and what they thought the pictures meant. The teacher directed their thinking well by asking questions such as, 'Are some of the motifs symbols? Should they mean something? What do you think is happening?' This helped pupils to gain an understanding of what the pictures meant to the artist and to come up with their own ideas for their own pictures which they were able to explain afterwards. One pupil in Year 3 explained what her picture meant to her, saying 'It is meant to be cheerful and happy and to show that the world is a wonderful place.' Pupils realised that they could express their ideas, such as feelings and emotions, in an abstract design.
22. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Marking is particularly effective in the junior class, where it is positive but also gives pupils tips on how they may improve their work. Pupils take a pride in their work and teachers generally ensure that work is well presented. However, on occasions, pupils in both classes are given too many worksheets to complete in some subjects, such as mathematics, which do not aid the quality of pupils' presentation.
23. Teachers use learning resources effectively. In both classes they make very good use of the outdoor environment and the local area. This makes work interesting and relevant to the pupils. A good example of this is in the planning of science lessons during the summer term when pupils study the homes, habitats and conditions for mini-beasts first hand, setting up experiments around the school grounds. Another

example was in a good history lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The teacher, who was very knowledgeable about the local area, used census materials and a series of maps very effectively to show how Whitfield had developed over the past two hundred years. This enabled the pupils to develop their skills of historical enquiry by collecting evidence and also to discuss and provide the reasons for the changes that had taken place.

24. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively. The teaching of reading is very successful and most pupils make rapid progress. The school has given a recent emphasis to teaching writing and this is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are taught consistently and successfully. During the inspection the skills of punctuation were taught well in the infant class through the use of computers with material carefully prepared by the teacher for pupils' different levels of ability. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects, for example, to discuss, explain and give opinions and to write up investigations in science. Teachers develop pupils' writing skills very well and give them opportunities to write in a variety of ways such as a diary format or by writing an account of events in the past, for instance, in history and religious education. Good opportunities are also provided for researching information using books and CD-ROMs and on occasions the Internet. Pupils develop good skills in mental arithmetic and develop a very good and confident understanding of number work. They have regular opportunities to solve problems and undertake investigations in mathematics, although ICT is not used systematically in mathematics lessons.
25. In English and mathematics the successful school policy of 'setting' pupils according to their current achievement is particularly effective for both pupils on the special educational needs register and those who are higher attainers. In the junior class, precise and accurate lesson planning takes into account the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans and specific work is prepared for these children who work alongside other members of the set class. Consequently, they make good progress. Targeting is not as refined in the infant class and, consequently, progress is not as measurable as it could be. The positive atmosphere for learning helps individual pupils with low concentration spans or behavioural difficulties to remain on task or to modify their behaviour. The learning support assistant is kept well informed of pupils' targets and she works skilfully with both individuals and groups. This ensures that those pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented are fully included in lessons.

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

26. The school meets its statutory requirements and teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The overall quality and range of the curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all the pupils.
27. The school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work in most subjects and these have been adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and to relate them more closely to the pupils' experiences. The curriculum in most subjects has been organised into a two-year cycle that ensures that pupils in the mixed aged classes do not cover the same themes in subsequent years.
28. Careful planning has ensured that there is a well thought out curriculum with good links between subjects so that the pupils are able to make effective connections in their learning. For example, Art and design and ICT enrich the work in geography and science; pupils draw Indian pictures to illustrate their work on Chembakolli and use a

computer program to support their work in science to find out which conditions minibeasts prefer. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed in many subjects and across all subjects there is a good balance between increasing pupils' knowledge and providing them with opportunities to develop and practise the skills they have learned. The curriculum is enhanced by the many visits which are made to such places as the Planetarium in South Shields, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to the seaside when they looked at rock formations caused by the erosion of the sea.

29. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. It is strong in personal, social and emotional development, and in aspects of language and mathematical development. Staff do not always provide as well as they could for the children in the reception class. There are some shortcomings in the opportunities they have in their creative and physical development such as the lack of sufficient opportunities for structured play, imaginative activities and the regular planned use of the outdoor playground and equipment including wheeled toys.
30. The school has successfully implemented the National Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. In literacy the skills of reading and writing are taught very well and are used effectively across other curriculum subjects. Basic numeracy skills are also taught very well and the pupils have a good understanding of number throughout the school. This has helped to achieve the above average standards.
31. The community makes a very full contribution to the life of the school and the success it enjoys. The school is at the heart of the community and benefits in turn from the co-operation that exists. A very wide range of visitors come into school to talk to children and to help them to experience a wider curriculum. For example there are opportunities for pupils to see what a television film crew does one week and then to dress up as a beekeeper the next. Very effective links with businesses ensure the school benefits from support from environmental agencies who have, for example, helped to plan the new play area for use by the school and the local community. The local 'Rural Action with Families in Tynedale' (RAFT) provides a play bus that visits each week and enables toddlers and reception children to experience a different range of creative activities from those provided in school. Educational trips enable pupils and parents to visit a range of different social settings and these have a huge impact on the work they do in school. For example, some beautifully descriptive written work and vibrant artwork followed on from a trip to the Planetarium, based in South Tyneside College.
32. Effective links are established with other local schools and colleges. This headteacher has recognized the value of cementing firm relationships with the two other First schools in the area and, together, they participate in sports and social activities. Such liaison allows children to meet pupils from other schools with whom they will mix at the middle school. Staff and pupils also benefit from links established with the sports' co-ordinator at a local high school. Staff attend development courses there and trainers come down to work with groups of children and this has a positive influence on their physical skills.
33. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils and they attract a good deal of support. Pupils are keen to discuss the various activities they attend and the school has attained an 'Activemark' award. Activities such as art, netball, cricket and computers are offered in six-week blocks so that a wider range can be offered over the course of the year. Links with the local sports college improve this provision. Some parents also make a significant contribution to the extra-curricular activities such as French.

34. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning, indicating an improvement since the previous inspection. They benefit from the insistence on equal access to the curriculum that is evident throughout the school. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They settle quickly and listen attentively, often volunteering to answer questions or contribute to discussions. Their personal development is very good. They are confident learners who strive to work independently. All staff are involved in the process of developing a suitable curriculum for the pupils. Individual education plans are closely monitored by the co-ordinator. Progress is closely checked and there is good communication between all the staff.
35. There is very good provision overall for pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and a strong commitment from the school to ensure each pupil becomes a well rounded and useful member of society.
36. Very good spiritual provision encourages pupils to develop a curiosity about life and the world in which they live. For example, they use knowledge gleaned from a trip to a local college planetarium to produce a display on 'Our Fantastic Journey Through Space'. Pupils added descriptive passages to interpret the scenes. One wrote, 'I made the space swirly to make it look like the solar wind is blowing and to make space seem like a dangerous place'. The headteacher makes great effort to help pupils connect more with their inner feelings, primarily through following the 'Philosophy for Children' programme. This encourages the older pupils to become critical, creative and caring thinkers. Staff create a prayerful community, where pupils learn to appreciate the wonders of the natural world around them, along with all the blessings in their own lives. The school attempts to introduce different elements of spiritual awareness into children's lives. A fine example is the creation of a 'spiritual garden' in the school's grounds. Older pupils have already planted a hedge in the garden and the whole school was involved in creating the stunning 'Tree of Life' sculpture outside the infant classroom. This made a big impression on the children who delight in explaining what it is and how they contributed to its finished form.
37. Pupils' moral and social development is given equally high status by the school. Staff set very good examples to pupils and encourage them to become more thoughtful and to base their decisions on actions and reasons. They learn to consider the lives of people less fortunate than themselves and pupils join with staff and parents to raise substantial sums of money for a number of local and national charities, such as 'Seeds for Africa'. Extra-curricular activities enable pupils to mix together after school and to test themselves in new social situations. The opportunity to spend time away from home at Ford Castle on a four-day residential trip is very valuable as pupils make new friendships with children from other schools in the local area. Each child in the school is a member of the School Council and they all feel they make an important contribution to school life.
38. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. Staff provide pupils with a very good understanding of their own cultural heritage through interesting projects and well considered educational visits. Pupils in the junior class are encouraged to use older family members as first hand sources of historical information. Their topic on 'Special People' included discussing aspects of their grandparents' childhood and war experiences. Children then compared these with their current lives. Pupils also have the opportunity to join in traditional activities such as Maypole dancing which is supported by community members.

39. Some aspects of provision for pupils' multicultural development are good. Cultural exchange visitors, such as the Japanese lady who stayed for three months, make a huge contribution to pupils' knowledge of other countries and cultures. During their topic on Japan, pupils studied the language, the differences and similarities of everyday life and food and learned a great deal about the differences in approach to life of Japanese people. Even with these varied topics, however, pupils still do not gain sufficient insight into what it is like to live in a multiethnic society, such as exists in some parts of modern Britain, and this is an area for development. Currently there are no opportunities for pupils to visit areas in this country with a diverse cultural mix; neither are there any established Internet links.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. This is a very happy, family-oriented school where pupils develop ever increasing confidence in the welcoming atmosphere created by staff. The excellent quality of relationships stems from the fact that staff know the pupils so well and understand what it means to be part of this particular community.
41. Very good procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and well being. More effective systems are in place than were found at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, staff and pupils know what to do if they need to evacuate the building in an emergency and any accidents are carefully logged. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the correct recording and administration of any medication and adults are aware of individual medical needs. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place and overseen by the headteacher. She makes sure that regular training takes place and that staff have enough information to ensure children's protection.
42. There are very effective procedures in place to monitor and promote regular attendance in school. The school ensures parents appreciate how important it is for children to attend regularly and they are very conscientious about informing the school of reasons for absence. The headteacher monitors attendance closely and there is only occasional need for advice from outside agencies.
43. All adults in the school set very high standards for pupils' behaviour and the school radiates a calm working environment. Pupils help to set the rules and are clear in their own minds about what is allowed. Extremely consistent good management of pupils by staff in lessons and around school ensures that there is always a happy atmosphere. Pupils' best efforts are rewarded through an entry in the school's 'Gold Book'.
44. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school has made good progress in developing assessment systems and the key issue regarding assessment from the previous inspection has been fully addressed. The information gained from checking pupils' progress is used well to plan work for pupils at all attainment levels.
45. In the Foundation Stage assessment is carried out when pupils start and when they are at the end of the reception year. Their progress is closely monitored each week in personal social, emotional, language and mathematical development. In the rest of the school, assessments include on-going checks in English, mathematics and science, the end of year statutory assessment in Year 2 and the optional national tests in Year 3 and Year 4. Results of these tests are carefully analysed and highlight areas for curriculum improvement. All other subjects are assessed, using tests at

the end of units of work. The wealth of information gained leads to teachers having a very clear picture of the standards being achieved. The school also makes good use of it, for example, to group pupils by ability in English and mathematics and prioritise areas for school development. This system is making it easier for teachers to follow the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and to plan tasks that match the ability of the pupils.

46. The results of end of year assessments in English, mathematics and science are also used very well to track the progress of groups, and of individual pupils as they move through the school, although there is a gap for pupils in Year 1.
47. Staff maintain detailed records about each pupil's personal development. Regular assessments of their work along with updated notes on personal achievements enable staff to build up a comprehensive picture of each child's strengths and areas for development. The school is committed to helping pupils to discover and develop their talents and offering them positive and realistic goals. All pupils, including those with special talents or particular difficulties, are offered appropriate levels of guidance and support. This ensures all pupils make the best use of their time in school. Parents are kept in touch with how well their children are doing through informal verbal exchanges and also through the comprehensive reviews staff share with them each term.
48. Careful analysis of pupils' development by the co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that individual education plans include precise and relevant targets. Pupils are given tasks that they are capable of achieving and this helps them realise that they are making progress. A good range of documentation is available to enable staff to record pupils' progress in, for instance, high frequency words, tasks involving number, handwriting and reading development. Educational psychologists and advisory teachers help the school make accurate assessments of children on the register and monitor progress. This contributes well to the good progress that pupils make.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Almost every family responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire which is unusual and reflects parents' very high levels of commitment to and support for the school and its work. Parental replies were strong in all areas but particularly so concerning the very good behaviour among pupils, how approachable they find the staff and, overwhelmingly, the very good leadership and management in the school.
50. Staff are very committed to ensuring that channels of communication between home and school are always open; parents report that they can contact staff if they have concerns and that they feel very well informed about school life and the progress their children make. Only one parent did not feel well informed. Detailed documentation is sent home regularly and the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contain a wealth of useful information. They give a clear flavour of school life and paint a vibrant picture of children's daily experiences. Concise direction is offered to parents about what their children are learning in lessons and how parents can support these efforts at home. Useful curriculum information is sent home regularly to help parents become more involved in their children's education.
51. Very high quality written reports on pupils' progress are sent to parents during the summer term. These are so useful to parents because they provide a concise review

of what a child can do in each area of the curriculum and what s/he needs to do next to improve. Even more impressive are the termly review sheets that teachers compile. They use these as a basis for discussion at the two parents' meetings. These contain a wealth of information about a pupil's progress in English, mathematics and science as well as matters concerning their personal development. Copies of these 'interim' reviews are often requested by parents as they find them so helpful. They enable parents to offer just the right level of support at home so that children make the most of their time in school.

52. Parents show a huge commitment to the work of the school and make significant contributions of time and money. This is a very generous parent body that successfully raises large sums of money used by the school to offer a higher quality range of learning opportunities than would otherwise be possible. The parents contribute without the need for a formal Parent Teacher Association or even a 'Friends of the School' group. They demonstrate on many occasions that they are, indeed, true friends of the school and of the local community. The recent playground project has provided a brand new outdoor play facility for the school and also for the local community. The school is seen as being very much at the heart of the local community and projects such as the playground project serve to underline this happy partnership.
53. The school understands the importance of working in partnership with its parents and its 'open door' policy is clearly stated in the school brochure. Despite the distance that most pupils live from the school communication on a daily basis is good and the school receives and deals with many messages by telephone. Parents have formal meetings with the class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator at least twice each academic year. They are kept fully informed about their child's progress and of any changes to the targets included in the individual education plan. Parents of any pupil with a statement of educational need attend annual reviews where they are able to contribute to discussions and share in the decision making process.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are very good. They are a major strength of the school and make a strong contribution to the high standards of pupils' attainment, their very good behaviour and attitudes to learning, and to the excellent provision for pupils' personal development. The aims and values of the school are reflected exceptionally well in all areas of the school's work. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
55. The headteacher gives a very clear direction to the school's work. She has successfully steered the school forward in many areas since her appointment in 1999 and has dealt successfully with all of the key issues from the previous inspection. She shows great dedication to both her teaching and management roles. She juggles her heavy commitment of teaching for 90 per cent of the time and the co-ordination of several main subject areas with the responsibilities of running the school very successfully. She makes a strong impact on the quality of teaching in Years 2, 3 and 4 and in English and science throughout the school. The headteacher leads by example and has created a good working relationship with all staff who give her good support. She is dedicated to promoting high standards in all aspects of the life and work of the school and provides a clear direction for school improvement and sustaining the school ethos. She has the confidence of parents. The headteacher has led all members of the school and parish community in creating a very supportive and welcoming, family atmosphere for the pupils. She makes sure that

the school plays an integral part in the parish and wider community. Parents are kept fully informed of the school's work so that they feel valued and as a result, support the pupils and the school very well. All parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed.

56. The school recognises that in its context as a small school, it must look outwards to guard against becoming insular. It makes a concerted effort to do so and works closely with nearby first and middle schools. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher draws in specialists to work with pupils and governors and receives good support from the Newcastle Church Board of Education. Staff attend a wide range of courses to meet their professional needs such as the development of Thinking Skills and Philosophy for Children. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' cultural development successfully since the last inspection. For instance, a Japanese visitor and an African drumming group have worked with children and staff in the school. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to experience life in a modern multicultural British society.
57. Both the headteacher and the assistant full time class teacher have responsibility for several subjects of the curriculum and, in the case of the infant teacher, also the Foundation Stage which is led and managed satisfactorily. Teachers and support staff in the school work very closely together and meet on a regular basis for developmental meetings. Staff work collaboratively in auditing the school's work and devising subject action plans which in turn contribute to the school's development plan. Expectations of subject coordinators in English, mathematics and science are high. They successfully maintain high standards in each subject and have monitored the teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Since the previous inspection the teachers have effectively developed levels of planning at the long and medium term in all subjects, adapted to meet the needs of mixed aged classes.
58. The headteacher and co-ordinators monitor the teaching and learning across the school through a planned schedule of classroom observations. This has been concentrated on English, mathematics and science and has shown a good impact on the teaching and learning in these subjects. Planning is checked on a regular basis by staff as part of their co-ordinator roll and governors who are linked to curricular subjects also monitor some lessons. Scrutiny of work carried out by staff in English, mathematics and science has been effective in helping teachers make very accurate assessments of pupils' attainments. This emphasis on monitoring undertaken by both teachers has made a good contribution to their professional development. However, there has been no recent monitoring of teaching by external agencies and staff have few opportunities to visit other schools to observe practice which means that some staff have less confidence in their own teaching and in being observed.
59. The management of special educational needs is very good. All documentation is in place and informative records are kept relating to pupils' progress, parental views, meetings and visits from outside agencies. There is ongoing monitoring and recording of pupils' progress. Advice is sought from outside agencies and specialists for such conditions as Autism and Dyslexia. Arrangements for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs are very effective. The school also plans individual work programmes for those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented. Many interest groups are organised to help develop their specific skills.
60. The contribution made by the governing body is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the governing body took a smaller part in school

development and planning. Governors fulfill their legal requirements through a well-organised committee structure. This, together with regular monitoring visits, helps them gain a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Good efforts are made to ensure that new governors are up to date with any new legislation to ensure that the school responds promptly to any new requirements. Governors are fully committed to providing an education that meets the needs of the pupils. They are very proud of the school and have worked effectively with the headteacher, as critical friends of the school, to identify areas for improvement and to raise standards. They take their roles seriously, for example by questioning the good quality information provided by the headteacher and by forming and playing a part in a steering committee to raise funds and bring about playground improvements.

61. The overall management of the budget is good. Spending is linked to priorities in the school improvement plan and the staffing situation has been continually adjusted to meet the increasing numbers of pupils who attend the school. Past high levels of financial reserves have been allocated to agreed priorities and the school is now working within the nationally recommended contingency levels. It has a small amount of funds earmarked for planned future spending. Overall, monitoring of spending is good. The school's administrative procedures are efficient in checking on spending on a daily basis and providing information about the overall financial situation. ICT is used well and accurate information on spending can be located quickly. Specific grants are spent correctly in the best interests of the pupils.
62. The principles of 'best value' are applied effectively in major spending decisions. The headteacher is constantly looking for ways to move the school forward. Very good use is made of steering committees, composed of governors and parents in respect of raising extra financial resources and planning new initiatives; for example, the new outside play area. Consultations are carried out before any major spending decisions are made.
63. The school is adequately staffed by teachers and classroom assistants. Procedures for performance management are in place and along with arrangements for the professional development of staff are effective. Training is closely linked with the needs of the school. The headteacher puts great emphasis on staff development and procedures for the induction of new staff are also effective.
64. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Improvements to the accommodation since the time of the previous inspection include the completion of outdoor fixed play equipment and a conservatory. This has improved the accommodation for the children in the Foundation Stage. However, the school hall that serves as a dining area is unsuitable for gymnastics lessons because space is limited and pupils do not have sufficient room to use the limited equipment to its full potential. This is a barrier to learning in gymnastics that teachers work hard to overcome by innovative organisation of groups and classes.
65. The quality and range of learning resources is satisfactory overall. They are suitable and sufficient in all subjects and improvements include the purchase of new computers. Resources for the Foundation Stage are satisfactory but they do not include wheeled vehicles to enable children to develop their motor skills. This is an area that the school is currently planning to improve.
66. The many strengths in the leadership and management of the school ensure that its mission statement is reflected in all aspects of daily life. Pupils learn to grow together

in a happy and caring school. They are taught how to be friendly, share, grow with God and respect others.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to further improve standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should now address the following issues:

- a. Improve aspects of the teaching and provision for reception pupils by:
 - providing more planned and imaginative opportunities with clear learning outcomes for outdoor physical development and creative play;
 - improving the resources to include wheeled toys;
 - providing well matched tasks and ensuring that teacher and staff input in group activities is carefully planned;
 - planning a better balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities.

(paragraphs: 5, 17, 29, 69, 70, 71, 74, 75, 76)

- b. Improve the children's understanding and awareness of the diversity of cultures within Britain and the wider world.

(paragraphs: 39, 56.)

and as funds allow:

- c. Improve the accommodation in the school to give full facilities for the teaching of gymnastics and dance.

(paragraphs: 64, 130)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	7	6	1	0	0
Percentage	0	18	41	35	6	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 six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent

Special educational needs		YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		6

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
30	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Average class size	15

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
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	£
Total income	127,911
Total expenditure	124,242
Expenditure per pupil	4008
Balance brought forward from previous year	7341
Balance carried forward to next year	11,010

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	29
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	19	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	89	11	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	96	4	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	81	7	7	0	5
The teaching is good.	93	4	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	85	11	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	96	4	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	100	0	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	89	7	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	96	0	0	0	4

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

68. Provision and accommodation for reception children has improved since the last inspection when the attainment and progress for children in all areas was judged as satisfactory. There is now a full-time teacher for the reception and Years 1 and 2 pupils, and a part-time qualified nursery nurse who also works additional hours as a teaching assistant. A very recent outside play area and conservatory extension to the classroom gives additional space and has improved the opportunities for reception children to develop their skills both inside and outside the main classroom for activities such as sand and water, growing plants and seeds and acting out stories. However, the new play area has not yet had time to impact sufficiently on children's effective physical development. Pre-school contact with families is firmly established before the children start school. Four-year-olds start in the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday and are given a part time place. During the inspection there were four full-time children and 2 part-time in the reception class. No pupil was identified as having special educational needs. Children achieve well in the reception class. They start school showing the full range of stages of development but overall their attainment is average for four-year-olds.
69. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall with particular strengths in the quality of relationships, the sensitive and positive shared approach to children's behaviour and personal development and the teaching of reading and writing. In many instances, reception children benefit from working alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example in the opening and closing parts of the literacy and numeracy lessons. Nevertheless, there are occasions when opportunities for them to explore and investigate through structured play activities are limited and when adult input to these group activities is not carefully enough planned for the youngest pupils. This means that pupils do not get off to as strong a start as they could in all the areas of learning. Children are very well cared for and the identification of those with special educational needs is ongoing through the good quality assessments that the teachers and staff make of children's progress in their learning. Teachers and staff have a very clear knowledge of what each child has achieved and this is used effectively particularly for their personal and social, language and mathematical development. Good opportunities are in place for parents to be involved in their children's learning from the outset.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Teaching is good and children achieve well, quickly developing good attitudes to their learning. They come into school very happily and the newest starters show a good degree of confidence. Children soon develop an understanding of the well established systems and daily routines which leads to a secure and predictable environment coupled with positive relationships. They learn to trust the adults around them and this helps them develop and grow further in confidence. The teachers and the nursery nurse are very sensitive to their personal and emotional needs and achieve a good balance between helping pupils and encouraging them to do things for themselves. They maintain a calm and positive atmosphere and this helps children develop an understanding of social conventions and acceptable behaviour. Children show a good degree of independence, for example, in getting themselves changed for a dance lesson. In the shared parts of lessons they know that they must take turns and put their hands up to answer questions. They understand the need to

follow rules and are becoming aware of the needs of others. They learn from the good models set by the older pupils in the class. The oldest pupils are developing good concentration for working independently and in their small group work. For instance, they support each other well when working together on the computers although adult help at these times is not carefully targeted to enable them to make the best progress.

Communication, language and literacy

71. By the end of the reception year, almost all children reach the goals expected of them in this area and about half of them are on course to well exceed these levels in reading, writing, talking and listening. Teaching is good overall in all these areas. Children learn to listen attentively as part of a large group although sometimes in the parts of literacy lessons shared with the pupils in Years 1 and 2, they are expected to sit and listen for too long. This means that although the concentration skills of the higher attaining pupils are good for children of this age, some less able children lose interest and this affects their progress. Most pupils, including the youngest, discuss the stories they have heard and give their own ideas. The oldest reception children are able to hold their own in a discussion led by the teacher of the similarities and differences between two stories. In one lesson they compared 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' with 'The Bad-tempered Ladybird' in good detail and knew which story they preferred. They develop their reading abilities well because they are given frequent opportunities to listen, respond and enjoy books and stories. They have a free choice of colourful and enticing books which they take home everyday to share with their parents as well as frequently reading to staff and other adults who help in school. They are taught effectively through a systematic programme of teaching letter sounds and blends. These phonic skills are taught every day, and as a result, most children know and recognise a wide range of sounds and letters and are able to successfully build up simple words and sentences. They are introduced to books in the reading scheme as they are ready and read stories in their reading books and use clues from the picture to help with the meaning.
72. Writing skills are developed well in the reception class. The children are encouraged to write in both formal and informal situations such as in the 'post office', in their independent play as well as writing their names and other familiar words with the teacher and nursery nurse. There are writing areas where children can practise their writing skills, copying letter shapes or doing 'pretend writing'. Most children develop the control of pencils and writing tools quickly. They practise the correct formation of letters in small groups with adults and most form letters correctly and write their names, write under the writing or write and sequence simple sentences correctly. The oldest reception pupils are beginning to use capital letters and full stops correctly in their sentence writing. The staff value all of the children's efforts and they become confident writers as a result of the positive reinforcement and help that is given.

Mathematical development

73. All of the children are likely to reach the expected learning goals with a significant proportion exceeding them by the end of the reception year. The teaching in this area is good and the pupils make good progress. The teacher and support staff use a range of strategies, experiences and practical activities that promote an enjoyment of working with numbers and other mathematical concepts. For instance, in one lesson the children used number cards, socks and a washing line to develop mathematical language such as 'before', 'after', 'next to', 'first' and 'last'. The children worked well in a small group with the nursery nurse to develop an understanding of 'pairs' and a

sequence of twos. The skills of counting and addition are taught well. The teacher ensures that in the part of the daily lesson shared with the older children the needs of the reception children are well catered for. Most respond well to the challenges they are given in these parts of the lesson and their mental skills are developing at a good pace. Pupils' recording of work in their books indicates that they are working accurately with numbers to ten and some beyond this. The newest part-time children paint ladybirds successfully and count the spots they have painted. Older reception children count on and back to add and subtract. They compare lengths and heights of objects for comparisons and to answer questions such as 'Taller than' 'wider than'. They know the names and recognise basic shapes such as circles, triangles and squares. The more able pupils also recognise more complex shapes such as a rectangle and a hexagon.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children start school with a reasonable understanding of the world around them. Staff in the reception class build appropriately on this knowledge and extend it further through activities. For instance, practical activities, such as investigating and finding places where insects, such as ladybirds, caterpillars and spiders make their homes, raises children's interest and enthusiasm to learn about how creatures live and how they change. Children use their observations well and develop an understanding of caring for small creatures. They know that a caterpillar goes through several changes before it becomes a butterfly and are able to describe the things that they like to eat. They know that seeds grow into plants and that they need to be cared for by watering and having light to grow. They know what it would be like to live on an island and what hospitals were like in the time of Florence Nightingale. Children can choose resources and work out how to go about constructing a model with a purpose in mind. However, there is not always enough input and questioning from adults during independent activities to extend children's thinking skills. Although the teacher and the nursery nurse move around the class during these times, their roles and the activities prepared are not directed carefully enough to target the needs of the reception children who usually have the same task as the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children learn about different beliefs and cultural practices through the celebration of events special to their lives like their birthdays. They learn about other celebrations in the Christian Church year and are given opportunities along with the pupils in Years 1 and 2 to learn about famous characters such as Florence Nightingale. The majority of children are confident in using the computer to draw pictures and to play games. Staff use the computers well to develop children's skills on how to log on and access programs although most children need help and instructions from the teacher to do so. They have good control of a mouse that they use adeptly to move and place objects in different places as the teacher asks. The teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. As a result, the majority of the children are on course to attain the levels expected of them by the time they leave the Foundation Stage.

Physical development

75. Children are on course to reach the expected levels of the learning goals by the time they leave the reception classes. This is similar to the time of the last inspection. The teaching in this area is satisfactory although indoor space for running, jumping and dancing is limited in the small hall. Staff use the outdoor area well by organising activities during playtimes and lunchtimes times to offer children maximum opportunities to develop their physical skills and enjoyment in games with balls and skipping ropes. Children from the reception class take part in these activities with enthusiasm. They throw and catch balls with increasing confidence and skill. They

hop, jump and run. Children have few opportunities to use the very new playground equipment, such as climbing frames and slides since no special time is set aside for small groups to go outdoors on a regular basis and initiate their own activities. At present there is a lack of wheeled toys for children to learn to control and this restricts their social contacts with each other, as well as their ability to play safely on wheeled toys and to learn to use space well and avoid crashes. During the inspection the children confidently joined in with a dance lesson for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 in preparation for a public performance of a 'Dragon dance.' They showed a high level of interest and were able to sustain the activity following the teachers' instructions carefully. However, physical development sessions are not sufficiently well balanced to allow for both teacher directed work and the children's own exploration and awareness of their own space and control over their bodies. Children use small implements such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and glue spreaders with confidence.

Creative development

76. The majority of children are on course to attain the expected levels by the time they begin in Year 1. Since the last inspection teaching has been maintained as satisfactory overall. Staff develop children's imagination satisfactorily through discussion work, stories and painting pictures. However, some opportunities are missed for children to develop situations in character such as dressing up and acting out parts of stories. This adversely affects the social and communication skills of lower attaining children. Staff give children opportunities to use a limited range of materials like paint, pastels and crayons to create pictures but there is a lack of imaginative opportunities for children to experiment with different media and to explore a wide range of materials. Children join in songs and rhymes confidently and add actions. Most of the activities in this area of learning are overly teacher directed which restricts the children's opportunities to use their imagination in art and design, music and acting out situations.

ENGLISH

77. Standards in English are above average overall, both at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave school at the age of 9 in Year 4. This is better than the average attainment reported at the time of the previous inspection. This improvement is due to better teaching and assessment of pupils' work, careful tracking of pupils' performance in national and optional tests and the very good co-ordination of the subject and the emphasis that the school has given to it. The subject co-ordinator has strong expertise in English and understands the strengths and areas for improvement. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded into the curriculum and pupils' skills in literacy are used consistently well across most other subjects. The school has recently identified some of the areas for improvement such as an emphasis on writing development and this is already bearing fruit.
78. Standards in reading and writing have risen since the last inspection and over the past three years test results have been maintained consistently well above average in reading and a similar picture is evident in writing. In 2002, pupils achieved in the highest 5 per cent of pupils nationally in writing. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 show that the school is holding its own and doing very well in comparison with all schools nationally in both reading and writing and results are favourable in comparison with schools with a similar intake of pupils.

79. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the individual targets set for them. This is because of the extra help they receive from both the teachers and support assistant. The support assistant helps individual pupils gain the most from lessons. Staff have strong relationships with pupils and ensure that the pupils have a sense of achievement in what they do. The school caters well for all its pupils. For instance, in literacy lessons pupils are taught in two classes of 15 pupils. Higher attaining pupils from Year 2 are taught alongside pupils in Years 3 and 4 and pupils in the junior class with special educational needs are taught with Year 2 pupils. The teachers are careful to target questions and work which is suitable to the mixed ages, gender and abilities of the children found in each of the classes.
80. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening across the school are good. They are very good for a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were judged as satisfactory. The very high standard of behaviour in school has a marked effect on the progress pupils make in speaking and listening. Teachers give many opportunities for pupils to give their opinions and contributions to lessons. Pupils from an early age listen respectfully to others and are interested and keen to join in lessons. They show that they have followed the telling of a story or the introduction to a lesson by the responses they make. Pupils listen intently. For instance, when the teacher read a story of 'The Bad Tempered Ladybird', pupils showed their knowledge of insects and one pupil commented at the end of the story that the ladybird had learned his lesson. By the time they reach Years 3 and 4 they speak with assurance and in their discussions use extended sentences and a rich vocabulary for their age. They are confident in holding lengthy conversations with visitors about things which interest them such as their friends, hobbies and school meals.
81. Pupils concentrate well and listen to each other and to their teachers showing an interest in their lessons. They follow instructions accurately. Good listening skills are developed well by teachers. This is apparent from the comments and responses of the pupils who enjoy displaying their knowledge and answering teacher's questions particularly during the introductions to lessons. For instance, in a recap of previous work in the introduction to an ICT lesson in the infant class pupils in Years 1 and 2 were able to name and explain different sources they could use for finding information such as, books, television, asking other people and computers. The pupils are given regular opportunities to further develop their speaking and listening skills at the end of lessons. A good example of this was following a practical art and design activity for pupils in Years 3 and 4 when they explained their work and what it meant to them. Within other subjects such as science, teachers are keen to extend pupils' vocabulary. During the week of the inspection, pupils in the infant class were making a study of mini-beasts and accessing a CD-ROM to extend their knowledge of the names of common creatures and the conditions that they preferred for their homes. They used words such as 'aphid' and 'habitat' confidently.
82. By the end of Years 2 and 4, standards in reading are above average overall. Most pupils' standards in reading match what is expected for their ages and many pupils achieve better. This is because pupils have a very positive attitude towards reading and develop an enjoyment of books. Most parents support pupils' reading at home and this has a good impact on the overall standards in reading. Higher attaining and average pupils in Year 2 talk enthusiastically about parts of books they like. They have a good understanding of terms such as, 'author', 'title', 'illustrator' and 'publisher.' They often correct their own errors and have developed good ways to help them read unfamiliar words. They name the title of their favourite books, and

recall the author's name such as George's Marvelous Medicine by Roald Dahl. All pupils know that information books are different from 'stories.' By Year 4, most pupils are confident and independent readers, although lower attaining pupils are more hesitant and tend to read with less expression. Nevertheless, they show a good understanding of their reading. Higher attaining and average readers read dialogue expressively and explain the character of the characters in a story clearly. Pupils of all abilities in Year 4 cope well with difficult words of several syllables and correct themselves when reading difficult words. All pupils know the purposes of contents and indexes and that a glossary 'tells you about words you don't know'. Pupils know when to scan or skim texts for information and to help understanding. They learn to use these methods well in some other subjects, such as history. Teachers plan opportunities outside the literacy hour for pupils to read for pleasure.

83. Standards in writing are satisfactory in the infant class, with some good features. They make a good start with writing in the Foundation Stage and build on this in Years 1 and 2. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4 standards are above average. In the juniors pupils write for a wide range of purposes including stories, reports, conversations, instructions, poetry, prayers and letters. Throughout the school writing skills are practised well in other subjects such as history where for instance pupils in Years 1 and 2 write accounts of The Great Fire of London and pupils in Years 3 and 4 write about life in the Roman army. In Years 3 and 4 good teaching ensures that pupils are given good tips and opportunities to plan their stories and have opportunities to practice writing the beginnings and other sections of stories. They learn to make their work interesting in a variety of ways such as using a range of connecting words and different openings for sentences. They mostly punctuate their work accurately. Pupils in Year 2 structure and sequence sentences well using capital letters to begin and full stops to end. They are beginning to use a range of other punctuation correctly such as question and speech marks. Throughout the school standards in spelling are good. This is because teachers ensure that spelling activities are matched well to pupils' varying abilities. Good teaching makes sure that pupils are taught a wide vocabulary and this is reflected in their writing. Handwriting is good, and is taught well. However, once they have mastered a fluent, joined script, pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not write using pens in preparation for the next stage of their education. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are challenged well and about half are working at the higher level. Pupils in Year 4 plan their writing well and their work is beginning to be organised into paragraphs. Pupils often use mature vocabulary and usually write with grammatical correctness.
84. English is taught well in both classes. Lower attaining pupils in the infant class are given additional support in their work. In very good lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and share this with the pupils. Teachers' good subject knowledge is evident in their planning. They use grammatical terms correctly and this is taken up well by the pupils. Teachers think carefully about their questioning. Questions are chosen well to challenge pupils in the whole-class part of lessons. Lessons move at a brisker pace in the junior class than in the infant class where sometimes the pace drops. In both classes pupils show interest in their lessons and often work collaboratively and support each other's learning well.
85. The marking of pupils' work is sound overall. It is effective in the junior class but although marking in the infant class is encouraging and positive it seldom indicates how pupils' might improve or the progress they are making towards achieving their targets. Teachers check how pupils have learned in lessons in order to plan future lessons with tasks that build on what the pupils already know. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning particularly in reading and spelling.

86. Resources in English are satisfactory. Class libraries are well organised with good collections of books. Reading books are arranged in levels of pupils' reading ability and pupils can readily choose between them. The school also makes good use of library loans to supplement its book resources. The limited accommodation means that the school has no library or separate area for small group study or library research skills. This is a shortcoming that teachers overcome well by using every available space and providing homework to ensure that this does not affect pupils' progress in research skills.

MATHEMATICS

87. By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards are above average and pupils achieve well. The higher attaining pupils in Year 2 make very good progress, benefiting from the setting arrangements and being taught alongside the Year 3 and 4 pupils. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 was average.
88. This rise in standards, is in the main due to better teaching and careful and accurate assessment of pupils' work. Teachers use the results of assessments very well to group pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with higher attainment, into groups of similar ability for lessons. In addition the school analyses pupils' performance in national and optional tests carefully and this leads to adjustments in subject planning and accurate tracking of pupils' progress.
89. The results of 7-year-olds in national tests have been subject to fluctuation since the previous inspection because of the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the year groups. However, the standard of the higher attaining pupils, who achieve the higher national levels, is well above average. This is because the school is providing greater challenge for these pupils. Two thirds of pupils in Year 2 are currently on track to reach the higher level, which is a greater proportion than normally found. Pupils who are average achievers and those with special educational needs are currently working within the average levels expected for children of this age.
90. Pupils in Year 4 continue to make good progress overall, with about half beginning to work at the higher level expected of 11-year-olds.
91. Many Year 2 pupils are very competent in sequencing numbers and they are developing a sense of number patterns and place value. They are confident in estimating then counting up to twenty objects. They handle simple money problems and count accurately in fives. They make sensible estimates before they measure the lengths of everyday objects using regular cubes then centimetres. Higher attaining pupils sort numbers that are common to 3 and 5 and to 4 and 5 multiplication tables. They gather information and present the data well in simple graphs. In a good mathematics lesson, they worked competently alongside older pupils in the junior class on doubling and halving two digit numbers which had been well chosen by the teacher to match their level.

92. Pupils in Year 4 have a secure grasp of place value relating to tens and units and of common number operations. Their good knowledge of number bonds and times tables gives them confidence in mental mathematics. The great majority of pupils has a good understanding of fractions and can present a fraction in its lowest terms. They understand that an angle is a measurement of turn and they accurately calculate the third unknown angle, applying their mathematical knowledge that there are 180 degrees in a triangle. Pupils have a sound understanding of area and realise that the same number of centimetre square tiles can make different patterned shapes that all have the same area.
93. Pupils in the junior class are able to establish properties of numbers by investigating patterns. They recognise patterns of odd, even and square numbers and confidently manipulate number values to make whole tens when adding lists of numbers. Their sensible estimating of weight and capacity shows a good understanding of various measures. They know, for example, that water takes the shape of the container it is poured into and therefore the capacity does not change, although it may appear to change when poured into in different containers.
94. While there are differences in standards between different year groups, the pattern over time shows that this is a reflection of individual abilities, rather than changes in the quality of teaching.
95. The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to good learning throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has been thought about because the National Numeracy Strategy is well established. However, there is still an over reliance on the use of printed worksheets and workbooks in lessons in the infants. This means that they do not have enough opportunities to experiment with numbers or to set out their work. Although the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 benefit from being taught alongside Year 3 and Year 4 children, work does not always challenge the remaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 sufficiently well to help them become confident and independent in mathematics.
96. Lessons begin with sessions of mental mathematics which are conducted at a brisk pace that captures pupils' attention. Teachers select questions carefully so that all children can enjoy success as a result of their efforts. In lessons in the junior class, pupils are challenged to explain their thinking and to explain to others how they arrive at their answers. For instance, a pupil explained how, when doubling 38, he rounded up to 40, doubled it and subtracted 4 to get the answer. The teacher's explanations are clear and based on good teacher knowledge. Very good use is made of individual white boards to encourage pupils to experiment with numbers and practise computations such as doubling or halving. Lessons hold pupils' attention and help them to understand new mathematical ideas. Pupils in the older class are carefully questioned to help them explore the learning objectives and make them think carefully about what is being presented. They are encouraged to participate well in discussions and enjoy their mathematics.
97. Lessons are organised well and there is smooth movement between whole class sessions and group or individual tasks. The older pupils are given the information and the resources they need so that they can quickly settle to their work. Different levels of task cater for the range of pupils' attainment and all are challenged at the appropriate levels, including the higher attaining pupils in Year 2.

98. The concluding part of the lessons, when the class is brought back together, is managed effectively in both the infants and the juniors. This time is used well to reinforce key teaching points and tackle any weaknesses that have been identified. This helps pupils to consolidate their understanding of the topic.
99. The two class teachers work well together to lead and manage the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and resources are both suitable and sufficient. ICT programs are used satisfactorily to develop and consolidate pupils' number skills. Pupils' progress is checked carefully and regularly with assessments used to place them into attainment groups. Test results are analysed thoroughly to see what aspects require improvement.

SCIENCE

100. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 4 are above average and overall achievement is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were average.
101. Improvement has been brought about by increasing the involvement of pupils in investigative work. This ensures that pupils learn the scientific skills of observing, collecting and recording evidence and setting up scientific tests. For example, pupils grow seeds in the same conditions, ensuring that their samples receive equal quantities of light, water and nutrients. They regulate the amount of heat their samples receive to study the effect of heat and cold on the process of germination and growth. In conducting these fair tests, pupils also gain scientific knowledge about the conditions required to ensure that plants grow. Pupils are encouraged to use accurate scientific vocabulary.
102. The pupils in the current Years 2 and 4 are making good progress. In Year 2 pupils have good knowledge of life processes and living things, and physical processes such as forces. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 identify the directions of forces. For instance they understand the interaction between the force within a weighted elastic band and the effect of the force of gravity, which stretches the elastic band until a balance is achieved between the two forces. The school recognised that the programme of work relating to physical processes was an area for development and the resulting curriculum planning has raised standards in this aspect of science.
103. Pupils are building up a good fund of scientific knowledge. Ideas are clearly explained and pupils are trained to predict, test and draw sensible conclusions for what they see. This works well, for example in their work on mini-beasts most pupils in Year 2 wrote up their findings without much help. They used mathematics expertly to sort and classify large-scale models of mini-beasts into sets, according to their characteristics.
104. By Year 4, pupils handle scientific equipment carefully and present their findings accurately. They carefully record their investigations into the hardness of various rock samples. They have devised a testing system using the same grade of sandpaper to rub each sample an agreed number of times then examine the dust on the sandpaper to identify the hardest and softest rock and check their findings against their predictions.
105. All pupils work together well and teachers insist on high standards of accurate recording. Consequently, by Year 4 pupils produce precise observational drawings and labelled diagrams with correct scientific terminology and vocabulary. They

compile accurate tables of results. However, they do not systematically analyse these tables through graphical analysis to identify any patterns. Pupils' writing shows that they understand the basic ideas in a range of scientific topics.

106. Teachers take great care to ensure that the less able pupils and those with special educational needs take a full part in lessons. For instance, when researching and collecting accurate data on a mini-beast, pupils were provided with a choice of simple texts to help them find out the relevant information. Consequently, these pupils made good progress.
107. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and there are several strengths to the teaching, particularly in the juniors. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 the teachers' preparation was very thorough and initial explanations clear. Challenging questions made pupils think. For example, the teacher asked, 'What are the key facts to be recorded on an information sheet about a spider?' Pupils were then asked to choose a species of minibeast and compile relevant information. Very good planning ensured that sufficient book resources were available to involve all the pupils in research although relevant CD-ROM or Internet sites were not used or visited. Pupils responded enthusiastically to these tasks, using their literacy skills effectively to gather information and present it in an interesting way with very good use of detailed sketching to illustrate the creature.
108. A shortcoming in the teaching of science to the younger pupils is the inadequate planning of fieldwork investigations, which results in pupils not knowing what to do. They are not always given sufficient opportunities to be involved in independent research for instance in the habitat of mini-beasts and, when they locate these creatures, they do not have sufficient opportunities to examine them and raise questions about why they are found in that particular environment. Pupils have good opportunities to use CD-ROMs, for instance, to predict and find out such facts as where woodlice would prefer to live.
109. The subject is effectively led and managed by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in science. Science is currently a priority in the school development plan. Much work has been completed to assemble an accurately annotated portfolio of pupils' work. This is helping the staff to make more accurate assessments of pupils' progress. There are good links with design and technology where pupils have recently completed working 'moon buggies' operated by battery power. The subject is widened further by visits to the local city planetarium. The very good quality of work about the Solar System evidences the high levels of pride pupils take in their work together with the creative language that records their observations and depth of understanding.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Standards are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Year 2 in both subjects and by the end of Year 4 in design and technology. Most pupils in Year 4 are already reaching standards in art and design which are above those expected for their age. This is similar to the findings at the last inspection. Standards have not been maintained at the above average level they were at the previous inspection in design and technology. This is largely due to the emphasis the school has since put on raising the standards in English, mathematics and science. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both subjects. Co-ordination of both subjects is satisfactory. National subject guidance has been

adopted and ensures that all areas of the curriculum are taught. The co-ordinator has sensible plans in place to review the curriculum in art and design next year. There are sufficient resources available to support learning in both subjects.

111. No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching in design and technology, as no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, work on display, discussions with teachers and pupils and a review of the scheme of work and teacher's planning shows that an appropriate range of work is covered. Design and technology is used successfully across other subjects such as science. For instance, pupils in the infant class have made a model of Incy Wincy Spider in a web which uses a battery to light it.
112. In both classes pupils develop their skills in making successfully. They learn how to use a wide range of tools, materials and components. Younger pupils experiment with different ways of sticking and joining materials together. They are becoming competent in cutting, attaching and joining paper and decorating paper and card and stitching or gluing materials together. In the junior class they develop their skills in planning and evaluating their work. Their finished models of 'Lunar Buggies' and the different photograph frames they have made are good examples of this.
113. In the one lesson of art and design observed in the junior class during the inspection the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Other evidence from pupils' work on display indicates that teaching is generally good across the school although there was little evidence of three-dimensional work. Pupils' artwork is valued by teachers. It is stimulating and well displayed, for instance a colourful display of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' in the infant classroom has been contributed to by all pupils in the class. In the infants pupils have opportunities to work in a variety of media such as drawing, paints and pastels and with a selection of different tools. Skills are developed systematically. Staff use the local environment, first hand experiences and other subjects of the curriculum well as a focal starting point for much of their work. For instance, in a study of mini-beasts in both classes pupils are able to extend their skills of observational drawings well. In the juniors pupils' knowledge and experiences of different media are added to and pupils have worked very successfully with a variety of fabric paints and resist techniques. They have learned to use wax resist techniques when tying and dying fabrics to make Kalamakari patterns similar to those from Southern India. In the lesson seen, as part of a unit of work from the national scheme 'Viewpoints', pupils were studying, comparing and commenting on paintings by Miro and Kandinsky. They were given the opportunity to quickly make their own picture of their own interpretation of a dream. They showed a strong interest in the teacher's well prepared introduction, questions and discussion and added their own ideas, showing an understanding of how they could express their own ideas in an abstract design using oil pastels. By the end of the lesson they showed that they were able to make thoughtful and meaningful observations of their own and other people's work, understanding how starting points could be used for choosing ideas for a picture or painting.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

114. Pupils' standards in history and geography are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 4, standards are also broadly in line with those expected for the age of the pupils. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well over time. These standards have been maintained

since the previous inspection. Co-ordination of both subjects is satisfactory. Resources to support learning are also satisfactory.

115. In history, by the end of Year 2, pupils remember facts about famous people and events from the past. For example, they remembered that the Great Fire of London started in Pudding Lane and knew about famous people such as Samuel Pepys and Florence Nightingale. They are developing a sense of chronology and how times have changed in everyday life. In Years 3 and 4, pupils talk knowledgeably about the work they have completed about the Romans. They build on previous learning and, for example, know that the Roman and Viking periods predate the Normans and the Tudors. Pupils use different source materials to access information and their progress is enhanced by their good reading and comprehension skills.
116. Pupils in both classes develop their skills successfully in making and using maps. Younger pupils draw maps of the school and the surrounding area. They can pick out various places from the map and can talk about their local area comparing it, for example, to 'The Island of Struay'. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils' mapping skills develop further. Their knowledge of the local area is increased as for example, when they completed a key for the map of the area, showing places of interest. They compare their own locality to Chembakolli in India and have a good insight into the climate, living styles and people of that country compared to their own.
117. Teachers plan well and use good open questioning to reinforce previous learning. Pupils complete interesting activities and teachers place good emphasis on developing pupils' skills in finding and using information from different sources. For example, in the good history lesson observed in the junior class, the pupils were using different maps and census information successfully to trace the development of Whitfield from 1769 to the present day.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are in line with those expected nationally. By the end of Year 4, standards are also in line with those expected for the age of the pupils. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by girls and boys. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well over time. Although standards are not judged to be as high as at the time of the last inspection, they are now improving as a result of the teacher's increased confidence and updated skills in teaching ICT and also the pupils' growing familiarity with using ICT equipment. Many pupils use computers at home and are developing more confidence in using their skills.
119. There is good evidence that ICT is used in many lessons to supplement and help pupils' learning. For example, in their work in art and design pupils have used a program to complete line drawings in the style of Piet Mondrian and produced pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock. They use the Internet to access information as part of their geography topic and CD-ROMs to find information for science investigations as well as using programs to develop their number skills in mathematics and the use of correct punctuation in English.
120. Pupils throughout the school enjoy using the computers and behave sensibly when doing so. They co-operate well and are keen to help each other if they experience any difficulties. For example, in the lesson seen in the junior class, the pupils who had successfully completed the task then helped the other pupils to do so. Pupils listen

attentively to instructions and act upon them enthusiastically. They value the time they have on the computers and work hard, either independently or in a pair.

121. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 build well on the skills they gain in the reception year and, by the age of seven use computers confidently and know how to use a range of programs. They make good progress in learning to handle the computer mouse, use the keyboard and also to use the different functions on the screen. They know how to change the font size and the colour of the text. They also know how to save their work and can use the computers to generate pictures. By the age of nine, pupils start up the computer with self-assuredness and locate the appropriate programs. They can access, save and print off their work. Most pupils have developed reasonable keyboard skills and are able to use the mouse with control. They understand that computers can be used to generate information that can be presented in a variety of ways.
122. Teaching of ICT is good in both classes. Lessons are planned well and activities are planned at different levels to cater for the needs of all children. This ensures pupils remain motivated and are on task throughout. Good reminders of what they have learned recently and open questioning carefully directed to individual pupils, such as 'What do we do next?' or 'How can we alter the size of the shape?' made the pupils think as they were working and learning to make different shapes or to edit work prepared by the teacher.
123. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject satisfactorily. She has worked to bring about improvements by adapting the units from the nationally recommended scheme of work to fit the school's curriculum plan and ensure that ICT is used in all subjects whenever possible. ICT is beginning to have a higher profile in the school. Assessment sheets are in place to determine which key skills the pupils possess.

MUSIC

124. In the one very good lesson seen, standards were above those seen and heard in most schools at Year 4. Singing is good throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented, enjoy singing and are fully included in lessons and singing activities with other schools. This helps them make good progress. Resources are good. The school has a good selection of percussion instruments both tuned and untuned. They improve the quality of both pupils' performing and listening skills. Music plays a major part in extending the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development from the beginning.
125. At the beginning of the lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the children warmed up their voices with a selection of songs from a wide ranging repertoire. They sang sweetly and naturally to the teacher's voice and glockenspiel accompaniment holding the tunes well. For example, they sang local songs such as 'The Keel Row' in two part parts adding a descant part and other songs such as 'My Grandfather's Clock'. They used and experimented with different techniques such as fading out at the end, singing in four parts and adding beats. As a result of good directed questioning from the teacher they showed their understanding of how they could make their singing pleasant to listen to. They knew from practising and refining their singing and experimenting with their voices that it is more difficult to sing quietly with good intonation and diction than to sing with gusto, and they understood the need to listen carefully to their own voice and others when singing in parts. They followed the conducting of the teacher listening perceptively and striving to improve their performance and adding a pulse on untuned instruments. This was a pleasant and

happy singing session where the very good relationships between the pupils and the teacher were strongly in evidence and as a result all pupils including those with special educational needs made very good progress in their learning and in the enjoyment of music. Pupils have a good understanding of pulse, rhythm, standard treble clef notation and of composing melodic phrases using tuned percussion instruments. There was further opportunity for instrumental work when in a serious working atmosphere pupils concentrated hard and practised and improved melodies they had composed as a group for performance. After each group's playing of their work pupils had the chance to make comments and contribute useful ideas. They consistently looked for the good features and made constructive points such as 'I liked the way they each started one after another', 'I liked the way it finished on C at the end' and 'I think he needs more practice to learn the tune'. This demonstrated the good awareness the pupils have of each other's work and the good quality learning involved in the lesson as well as the pleasure they took in their success.

126. The school uses music across the subjects of curriculum for instance in collective worship and dance lessons, so that pupils have the opportunity to appreciate the music of a range of Western composers. The development of closer links between music and other areas of the curriculum is an area for future review. Some pupils learn instruments privately from home but there are no opportunities for pupils to learn instruments from visiting specialist teachers. The subject is co-ordinated well. The co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and the areas for development in the subject. For instance, she has taken steps to provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in music making with other schools. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had opportunities to sing in a performance together with another local first school and this has been an eventful and memorable learning experience for them.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. In Year 2, standards in dance match those expected for this age. No lessons were seen in gymnastics or games so it is not possible to make an overall judgement or to compare with the previous report when standards were above average. By the end of Year 4, pupils achieve average standards in athletics. Achievement in swimming is above the level expected. This is because all pupils have planned opportunities to visit the local swimming pool. Records indicate that almost all the pupils are confident in the water and many are making good progress towards the target of swimming twenty-five metres. Teaching is sound overall in the infants and good in the juniors.
128. In dance pupils in Years 1 and 2 moved with good balance and control, using space well to match the mood of the music. All were keen and confident, remembering the sequence of their movements as they practised a dance to celebrate the opening of the new playground facility. However, there was insufficient variety or change in movement during the middle part of the dance. Pupils worked well in small groups during the first part of the dance, using leg and arm actions to create the movements of a dragon. They enjoyed themselves, carefully following each other, quickly forming a class line that twisted and turned around the playground to complete the dragon dance sequence.
129. Pupils in the junior class take part enthusiastically in athletics activities. In one lesson seen they quickly learned how to sprint around a circular track as they practised relay races. They had difficulty co-ordinating their hand movements as they attempted to hand over the baton but tried hard to improve this. Pupils remembered the techniques for throwing, refining their run-ups and release of a beanbag to improve

their performance. They worked quickly to set up the equipment for these activities and ensure that the pace of the lesson did not fall away.

130. Teaching and learning of dance is satisfactory in the infants and is good in athletics in the juniors. Teachers enjoy a good relationship with their classes. However, with more interesting ideas given to stimulate their imagination, the younger pupils could achieve higher standards. The lesson seen in the junior class was very well planned and organised with sufficient equipment readily available to enable pupils to practise throughout the lesson. The good pace of learning was sustained effectively because pupils had completed a vigorous warm up routine. Pupils benefitted from good teacher demonstrations but the opportunity for pupils to demonstrate what they could do to others was sometimes missed. The school hall is very small for teaching gymnastics. Teachers overcome this by making good use of the outdoor areas in the school such as the playground and the field. However, this is more difficult during inclement weather when, for instance, gymnastics is taught successfully in small groups in the tiny hall.
131. The subject is organised well and a wide range of physical activities are taught, including orienteering. The residential visit incorporates a range of adventurous activities. The school uses sports coaches to help pupils develop their skills and a good range of after school sports clubs are well attended. These include badminton, short tennis, keep fit, hockey, tag rugby, and tri-golf. Very good links have been forged with the local sports college and the school takes part in a range of inter-school sports competitions. The local community loans its Maypole, enabling the school to introduce country dancing. The school also hosts the annual small schools' sports day to which parents are invited. In recognition of its provision for physical education, the school has been awarded the 'Sports Active Mark.'