

INSPECTION REPORT

FINCHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 130312

Headteacher: Mr D Fry

Reporting inspector: Mrs B Magson
18143

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 248797

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Whittaker
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

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17907	Mr M Bowers	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Special educational needs.	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Finchale Primary School is situated in Newton Hall, an urban district of Durham City. The school is similar in size to most primary schools with 250 pupils on roll, and slightly more boys on roll than girls. There are 30 in the reception class. Pupil numbers have fallen since the last inspection. Significant numbers of pupils join and leave the school at times other than in the reception year. Attainment on entry is average. Most pupils come from white British backgrounds, and of the 10 per cent of minority ethnic pupils, the majority are from Saudi Arabia. Twenty pupils speak English as an additional language. Some are at early stages of English acquisition, speaking Arabic as their main language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. Nineteen per cent of pupils are on the special needs' register, a below average figure. These pupils have a variety of special needs, including language difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems and learning difficulties. Six pupils have statements of special needs, which is above the national average. The school has experienced considerable change in its leadership and management since the last inspection, including three changes of headteacher, as well as changes in members of the senior management team. The present headteacher has been in post for just over a year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, which provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. By the time pupils are in Year 6, standards are average in all subjects, except science where they are above average. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governing body are very good, effectively maintaining standards during the changes in staffing. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science are above national averages;
- Provides very good leadership and management by the headteacher and governing body;
- Provides a curriculum with good breadth and balance, a wide range of learning opportunities and very good extra-curricular opportunities for older pupils;
- Ensures very good inclusion for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language;
- Provides very good provision for the moral, social and personal development of pupils engendering positive attitudes of trust, care and collaboration;
- Provides an honest, open and friendly environment in which everyone wants to learn.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics for pupils aged at 7 and 11 years;
- Use of assessment in lesson planning and in monitoring pupils' progress;
- The leadership and management of key staff and subject leaders need to be strengthened.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good rate of improvement since the school was last inspected in 1997. The key issues have been successfully addressed. Pupils are achieving better standards in information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers are more confident in teaching music. In Year 6 above average standards have been maintained for pupils in science and average standards achieved in all other subjects. Problems with staffing have been a barrier to greater progress. The curriculum has a better structure and provides a wider range of learning opportunities for pupils. At present teaching is satisfactory because it has been affected by long-term absence and teacher retirements. Although pupils' behaviour is now good, rather than very good, management of behaviour by teachers has improved and is very good. Pupils have more self-discipline and are taking good control of their learning.

The school has strengthened its procedures for assessment, but the use of assessment information is limited to senior managers, and there is scope for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	C	C	D	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	B	B	C	D	average C below average D
Science	C	B	B	C	well below average E

The trend of improvement in overall performance is in line with the national trend taken over a five-year period. The school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics for Year 6 pupils in 2002. Although there is a dip in standards in Year 6 they are still in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Strengths are in the pupils' performance in science, where almost half of the pupils have achieved the higher Level 5. In English and mathematics however, fewer pupils have achieved the higher levels than in the last reporting year. This is because over a third of pupils in the cohort have special educational needs and find reading and writing difficult; they are achieving better standards in science where there are more investigative activities. Compared to similar schools standards are average in science, but below average in English and mathematics. In the last two years, similar to the national trend, girls have performed better than boys in English, and significantly more so than in the national picture. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expected levels. Inspectors judged standards to be improving in core subjects and ICT, but with fewer pupils achieving the higher levels in English and mathematics than previously. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well to reach their individual targets for improvement. The school ensures that gifted and talented pupils are challenged appropriately and achieve high standards.

Children start school with average standards. They make good progress in communication and personal and social development and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning, and at 6-years-old achieve the early learning goals expected for their age. In 2002, the tests for 7-year-olds showed standards were average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. However, the results included pupils who had recently arrived from Saudi Arabia having very limited English language acquisition. Also included were an increased number of pupils with special educational needs. Without the inclusion of these special groups the school met its expected targets in 2002. Good numbers of higher attaining pupils achieved the higher Level 3, a third of the year group in reading and almost half in mathematics. More than twice as many pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in writing than nationally. Comparing results with those of similar pupils, standards were average in writing but below average in mathematics and well below average in reading. Gender differences persist particularly in reading and writing. The performance of girls is better than that of boys in all areas tested, and in 2002 it was significantly greater than national differences. Inspection findings show that for the current Year 2, standards are average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Standards are average in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and show an interest in activities.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school.
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Personal development and relationships	Very good and a strength of the school. Pupils and teachers get on well together. Pupils take on responsibilities willingly.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The attendance rate is in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Overall teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and has some good features. During the inspection most of the teaching and learning observed was good or better but scrutiny of pupils' books shows that these good standards are not maintained consistently. A strong focus is on the teaching of basic skills and this provides pupils with a good foundation to their learning. In each lesson very good attention is given to providing clear learning objectives and these are then evaluated effectively in the last part of the lesson. In the better lessons teachers manage pupils sensitively but firmly so that lessons can sustain a good pace and learning is rapid. Many teachers have an enthusiasm for their subjects and because they have developed very good relationships with their pupils they are able to share their love of learning. When the teaching is less successful teachers have insecure subject knowledge of the National Curriculum requirements for their age group. They are less skilful at handling pupils with challenging behaviour, and as a result teaching and learning lack consistency and pace. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support appropriate to their learning needs and progress is good. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are identified early and very good support is provided to help them access the curriculum. They achieve well. Any junior aged pupils identified as gifted and talented are also given good support so that they are challenged effectively. Teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies work well together to provide cohesive support for differing groups. There is very good inclusion of pupils with differing needs in all lessons. Currently there are some weaknesses in Years 3 to 6 in teacher expectations and there is a lack of challenge in some lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance. It is enriched by a good range of learning opportunities and very good extra-curricular activities. Racial equality is assured.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers and support assistants ensure pupils' individual learning needs are fully met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are fully met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with very good provision for the development of moral, social and personal development of pupils. Good opportunities for independent learning are provided, but not consistently.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Welfare and safety receive good consideration. Procedures for assessment are good. Insufficient use is made of assessment

	information in lesson planning and tracking of pupil progress.
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The school has a good partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. The leadership and management of key staff need to be strengthened.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very well informed, fulfil their responsibilities very well and are effective in their involvement in the strategic planning of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's performance is evaluated very thoroughly and action is taken to improve it.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Appropriate priorities are identified by the strategic planning group of staff and governors and supported through efficient financial management.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. Governors apply the principles of best value very well. Through the development of an ICT suite, pupils have better access to learning resources. The location of the school library inhibits pupils in being able to choose books to research a topic independently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school. • The school expects pupils to work hard and become mature. • Children are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about children's' progress. • The school working more closely with parents. • A more consistent use of homework across the school. • A wider range of extra-curricular activities for younger pupils.

Inspectors endorse most of the parents' positive views about the school though they do not think teaching is consistently good. Inspectors judge that provision is very good for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The range of extra-curricular provision is also considered to be very good. Although information to parents about homework and children's progress is satisfactory inspectors believe that it could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection standards at the age of 11 years, were judged to be above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2002 national tests for 11-year-olds, most pupils have achieved at least nationally expected levels in all 3 subjects. Standards have shown good improvement in science. In English and mathematics, although standards are matched to the national average, they have not shown the same improvement over time compared to national results. However, the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 has increased since 2001 in all three core subjects, and in English and science fewer pupils are falling short of the national level expected for their age. Each year the attainment of 11-year-old girls is better than boys in English, sometimes significantly. In 2002, it is a greater difference than between girls and boys nationally. In mathematics and science gender differences are not as significant and follow no consistent pattern. Standards in the current Year 6 are good in English, mathematics and science and pupils are achieving well towards their intended targets.
2. Results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 show that the majority of pupils achieve the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there has been a decline in all three areas tested since 2001 because standards have been affected by the recent arrival of pupils with additional language needs, and the increased numbers of pupils with SEN in this cohort. Without the inclusion of these pupils in the collated data, the school has matched its' expected targets. There has been a consistent decline in standards in writing since 1999. The school is now introducing measures to arrest this decline and raise standards for these younger pupils. Teachers assess that standards are improving in science with the numbers of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 increasing since 2001 and being very high in a national and similar schools' comparison. Achievement is highest in investigative work, which interests the pupils and encourages them to learn. Work seen in the current Year 2 is average in reading and mathematics, above average in science, but below average in writing. Inspection findings show that the attention to teaching basic skills is beginning to be effective in Year 2 but progress is slow.
3. Standards are in line with expected levels for children in the reception class. Good foundations are laid for children's development in literacy, numeracy and scientific enquiry and they make satisfactory progress in learning basic skills, for example of letter sounds. All children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning. By the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1 they are achieving the Early Learning Goals, which are expected for their age, apart from in writing. Children have limited independence in their writing at the end of the reception year and this impedes their progress in Year 1.
4. The national test results and teacher assessments in reading shows that pupils are achieving average standards in Years 1 to 6. Most pupils learn the basic skills of reading quickly, and through the use of reading targets called 'WILF's' ('**W**hat **I**'m **L**ooking **F**or') their rates of progress are increased because lesson objectives are clearly understood. Most pupils develop as confident readers, have a good knowledge of suitable children's literature appropriate for their age and identify particular favourites in authors and story titles. Less successful are pupils' research skills when using books and throughout school these are underdeveloped. Younger pupils know

how to access information from a book using a contents or index page, but they are unable to find relevant books for themselves in the library. Older pupils too are not confident in using non-fiction material to research for information. For example, a group for pupils in Year 6 had little idea about how to use the library classification system to find the information they needed. This is because the library is not readily available to them through the school day. Teachers provide books for them in class lessons. In preference, when the ICT suite is available, pupils use the Internet to research for information. However, only rarely do pupils have opportunities to be independent in their learning and this is limiting their progress.

5. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory overall although there were examples of good levels of debate among pupils when they are excited by a particular topic. In a mixed Year 5 and 6 class, for example, pupils entered into a well-argued debate about human rights in a discussion on recent world atrocities. In argument and counter statements they used a wide vocabulary to persuade others to support their views about the quality of human life and likened their discussions to a 'chat show.' Some teachers are skilled at questioning so that pupils respond with well-reasoned comments. However, this is not always the case and in a small number of classes teachers are happy to accept one or two word answers or dominate the discussions themselves. Overall pupils are willing to listen to others and appreciate that all pupils should be allowed to participate in discussions.
6. Standards in writing are improving and the structured interventions to improve spelling, punctuation and grammar are bringing about good improvements. Pupils are having some opportunities to write for different audiences both within English lessons and recently also through other subjects. However, in most lessons, pupils of differing abilities are set the same task and precise expectations of each group of pupils are not explained so that all pupils are challenged to improve their achievements. As a result this limits progress in writing for a significant number of pupils. Standards in handwriting are unsatisfactory throughout the school. Older pupils do not have a consistent style and do not understand the requirements necessary to create well formed letters, correctly joined. Overall few pupils are achieving standards in writing of which they are capable.
7. Inspection findings are that standards in mathematics are average for pupils currently in Years 2 and 6. In the 2002 national tests for eleven-year-olds standards have fallen due to the increased numbers of pupils with SEN in the cohort. For pupils in Year 2 in 2002, standards have also declined in mathematics. The recent arrival of pupils with English as an additional language, as well as some pupils with SEN has had an effect on standards overall, although all other pupils achieved as anticipated by teachers in their assessments. Most pupils are showing improvement in number skills because the school has sought to improve standards by focusing on increasing the speed of mental calculations. Number skills are now well taught, although not all pupils are yet confident in use of these skills in problem solving. In Years 3 to 6 the achievement of pupils overall is inconsistent. Some teachers in these year groups are insecure in their interpretation of the levels of which these pupils are capable. As a result progress is inconsistent because pupils are not challenged appropriately. This is particularly evident in Years 3 and 4 where teachers new to these age groups, or new to the school, are still adjusting to providing challenging work. In Year 6 higher attaining pupils are not always achieving their best work through the lack of appropriate challenge. They are taught alongside more able Year 5 mathematicians who are achieving well. In Years 1 and 2, good attention is given to encouraging the pupils who find number work difficult, and through sensitive support from teachers and teaching assistants they are making satisfactory progress alongside all other pupils.

8. Standards in science are good overall for pupils aged 7 and 11 years. This is because teaching is of good quality and activities are challenging. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and pupils enjoy the challenge of investigative work. In Year 2, standards have continued to improve since 2001, with many pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Practical tasks are well planned and are efficient in ensuring pupils are suitably challenged. However, some pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, have difficulty working with other pupils in investigative work, lose concentration and this slows their rates of progress. They benefit from the link between subjects, which skilfully consolidates their learning in a range of different experiences. In Year 6 most pupils in 2002 achieved the national average and almost half of the cohort achieved the higher Level 5, above other schools both nationally and with similar pupils. By Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of technical vocabulary, can make hypothesis and through testing and recording of information make well reasoned evaluations and draw conclusions from their investigations.
9. All pupils are achieving satisfactory standards in ICT and are making good progress in most lessons. This represents good improvement in standards since the previous inspection. This is because through the use of the new ICT suite pupils are having more opportunity to learn specialist skills and then practice them in other subjects. Although previously opportunities for control technology have been weak, the full ICT programme is to be delivered this year. Most pupils are already achieving in line with expected levels in word processing, data handling and graphics. All pupils are eager to improve their computer skills and these positive attitudes are raising the profile of this subject and improving standards overall.
10. Standards are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils enjoy their work and make satisfactory progress in learning about Christianity and other major world faiths. The school is aware of the need to familiarise pupils with religion, which are practised by pupils at home, and is ensuring that pupils gain in tolerance and understanding. They undertake comparative studies of customs and beliefs and by Year 6 can recognise and describe similarities and differences. Pupils are making good progress in their personal development by their work in this subject.
11. The average standards achieved in all other subjects represent satisfactory progress for pupils in acquiring knowledge and skills appropriate for their age. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in standards in music because the teachers are now more confident when delivering the subject. Although the school has been through a period of instability affecting rates of progress for pupils, the recent attention to providing a good curriculum in which learning intentions are clearly stated and then evaluated has ensured that standards are now at appropriate levels for most pupils.
12. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their individual learning targets. They make good progress. Those pupils registered on the autistic and asperger spectrum make very good progress. They learn to follow class routines and accept the conventions of school life. Pupils with speech and hearing impairment receive specialist help and support, and make good progress.
13. Pupils learning English as an additional language make very good progress in learning basic skills. They are very well supported and soon make headway in their work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. These aspects are a strength of the school, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Parents, staff and pupils point out that this has not always been the case in the intervening turbulent period of high staff turnover. All sections of the school community acclaim the measures taken by the headteacher to create a school where everyone wants to learn, everyone wants to be and everyone is proud to be.
15. From the outset in the reception class pupils soon gain confidence, helped by the reassuring manner of their teachers and the support assistant. They quickly settle into school routines, respond positively in lessons and are well behaved. In the playground reception children are assigned buddies who are alert to their needs and sensitivities. These older pupils are trained in their role and fulfil their responsibilities very maturely. They encourage the children to join in playing games and successfully promote their welfare.
16. Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes towards their learning. They are compliant in lessons, show enthusiasm for their work and collaborate well. The staff have a consistent approach to rewarding and disciplining the pupils that enables them to be clear about academic and personal expectations. Pupils want to succeed and work hard to reach these goals. Pupils concentrate well, follow instructions carefully and remain fully focused on the activities set for them.
17. Parents rightly perceive that behaviour is now generally good. A small number of pupils sometimes find it hard to behave in an acceptable manner but they are not allowed to set the tone. Their occasional negative attitudes mar their own learning. Their classmates are good at ignoring such behaviour because of well embedded staff expectations that they get on with their work regardless and are self disciplined. One pupil was excluded from the school last year.
18. Pupils play happily in their free time. They organise impromptu football games and other activities such as skipping. There is space in the playgrounds for them to engage in these pursuits enthusiastically yet safely and without impinging on the gentler play of others. Arabic boys are very well integrated into the football, which is much enjoyed. Bullying is rare according to parents who appreciate the way that the headteacher sensitively and effectively deals with incidents.
19. Pupils get on very well with each other and with the staff. This establishes trusting relationships and mutual respect. Their personal development is of a high order. They chat proudly to visitors about their school, their work and the considerable achievements of their school council. Large numbers of older pupils stay behind after school for weekly extra-curricular activities. These clubs enable them to learn new skills whilst socialising with others from different classes and year groups. Many members of staff devote their own time to these pupils and are rewarded by their very positive response. For example, those in the 'putting on a show' club are full of enthusiasm and bursting with ideas to work into their own well scripted performance. Although pupils are given lots of good opportunities to take responsibility as monitors, council representatives, buddies and team captains they are insufficiently encouraged to become independent learners. They lack the library skills, for example, that are necessary for book based personal research.
20. Attendance is satisfactory overall, and has remained fairly static over the last five years. The national average has steadily risen over the same period. Irregular attendance by the minority ethnic pupils, who attend their own Arabic school at weekends, adversely affects the overall level. Unauthorised absence is minimal.

Pupils generally arrive punctually but a small number are persistently late and the school insufficiently tackles this.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Since the last inspection there has been a decline in the quality of teaching, although less unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Over the last 2 years the school has experienced a period of instability in staffing due to promotions, retirements and long-term illness which has made it difficult to maintain a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The quality of lessons seen during the inspection week was good or better. However, the results of teaching as seen in pupils' work, reveal a picture which is more satisfactory than good over time. Teaching observed was good or better, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 5 and 6 where teaching seen was never less than satisfactory. Some excellent teaching was observed in a science lesson taught in a Year 3 / 4 class. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed was the result of poor subject knowledge of the teacher and inappropriate management of pupil behaviour.
22. The strength in teaching is the consistency among teachers to explain lesson objectives and then in the plenary part of the lesson to review activities and progress, so that pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. The introduction of 'WILF targets' has fired pupils' imagination and all understand the symbol of the comic strip character, and his purpose to represent **What I'm Looking For.** The positive approach to learning has been further promoted by very good teacher management of pupils. Good behaviour is expected, good attitudes to work are rewarded, and successful completion of the learning task is celebrated. As a result most pupils are eager to please, they know what is expected of them and lessons progress at a steady pace.
23. The teaching of basic skills is good and based on a secure understanding of pupils' language and mathematical development. The structure of the Literacy strategy gives a secure basis for the pupils to learn about sounds, grammar, punctuation and spelling and enables the teachers to link the separate elements of reading, writing and speaking and listening within the weekly programme. In mathematics many teachers provide a good challenge in mental calculations, where pupils enjoy competitive tests and are learning to manipulate numbers at speed. At other times through the use of ICT, pupils practise reading, writing and mathematical skills. In some lessons teaching is too prescriptive and there is a lack of opportunity for investigation and independent choices in the learning tasks. However, in better lessons teacher expectations are good and pupils' learning is improving.
24. Teaching in the reception class is successful in promoting personal, social and emotional development of pupils and speaking and listening skills. The classroom is bright and inviting and children settle into school well. Although the inspection took place early in the school year, all children appeared confident, chatting happily among themselves and to the teaching staff. The teachers understand the need for well-established routines, ensure that resources are in place and attractively presented, and that learning tasks are clearly explained. They provide good role models and encourage children to participate in the full range of activities. Good attention is also given to developing children's skills of speaking and listening through carefully structured activities. The teachers recognise the importance of these activities, encouraging children to listen to one another, and through skilful questioning help children to respond in complex sentences. Throughout the reception classes the good deployment of adults, including parents and students, is a positive feature of the learning as children have many opportunities to talk with a range of adults. Good

consideration is given to the needs of all children. The children with special needs, or who learn English as an additional language, make good progress because of good team work among teachers and teaching assistants which ensures their learning targets are constantly addressed.

25. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. The long, medium and short-term planning is prepared thoroughly and matches the expectations of the National Curriculum for pupils of this age. There is some use of assessment in planning to ensure learning builds effectively on prior knowledge but not in all subjects. There is a systematic approach to teaching both the core and foundation subjects and activities are planned to ensure pupils have a good range of opportunities to consolidate their learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 working on recognition of rhyming words in a literacy session, shared poems about bedtime and night-time, and identified words which described night, such as 'moon, dream and star', and then created their own concertina books based on the 'Peace at Last' story. By the end of the lesson pupils had gained some understanding of how poems are planned and were beginning to recognise rhyming words. The weakness in the teaching is caused by the limited use of teaching assistants to support teaching and learning in these two year groups. Although the teachers try to present practical and independent learning opportunities for pupils, graded in difficulty to meet the needs of individuals, without additional adult support pupils find it difficult to operate alone and progress is slow. This is most apparent in lessons such as science or food technology. Pupils behave very well, try to be self-supportive and are keen to learn and by the end of practical sessions, lesson objectives are mostly achieved. However, the higher attaining pupils have limited opportunity to pursue their learning and raise their standards further.
26. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are variable, but strongest among the permanent teaching staff. There are several staff in this key stage either new to the school or to their year group. These teachers are still adjusting their teaching in order to provide pupils with challenging work matched appropriately to their ability levels and National Curriculum requirements. In this key stage there is insufficient use of assessment to build new learning on prior attainment. Where the better teaching takes place teachers plan carefully and involve teaching assistants and other adults in their lesson preparations so that learning objectives are clearly understood. Very good links are often made between subjects of the curriculum to reinforce learning. For example, in an excellent science lesson studying light and shadows, the teacher used the characters of Rama and Sita, taken from the teachings of the Islamic faith, to demonstrate the use of light in portraits. This provided very good links in learning in both science and religious education. Through very skilful questioning the teacher led the pupils towards suggesting that shapes for eyes could be cut out allowing light to pass through. There was excellent pace to the learning and intense levels of concentration from pupils. They watched fascinated as the images emerged on the overhead projector screen. They made excellent progress in scientific understanding and linguistic skills, as they explained how light can pass only through some materials. Where learning is unsatisfactory, teachers are inconsistent in their management of pupils, subject knowledge is weak and the pace of learning is slow. As a result, pupils become restless, concentration levels are erratic and the quality of written work is poor.
27. The school has identified specific programmes of work for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN). These are clearly described in teachers' planning and reflect pupils' needs. The pupils are fully involved in whole class activities. Teachers involve them by asking them questions that are relevant to their levels of understanding. Often skilled teaching assistants help them, to understand the teacher's explanations. Teachers are particularly skilled at organising learning situations that are effective for developing pupils with special needs. For example, in a

class of Years 5 and 6 pupils, a pupil with autism worked collaboratively with another child, often helping him to understand and complete the task. This organisation helped the autistic pupil develop his communication skills and form positive relationships with classmates.

28. Teachers are beginning to provide additional work for pupils who are gifted and talented. They are given challenging tasks to complete at school and at home. Visits out to places of interest have been started to widen their learning experiences.
29. Marking of pupils' work although satisfactory overall is inconsistent across the school. In the best examples it provides pupils with a clear explanation about how to move their learning forward as well as giving praise for good achievement. Some teachers check later to see if the advice has been successful in helping pupils achieve sustained progress and they provide positive comments to acknowledge and reward further success. However, some teachers provide only a brief word of praise, a star or a tick and there are missed opportunities to use marking as a tool for improvement and raise pupil self-esteem.

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

30. The overall quality and range of the curriculum is good. There is strength in the way the school is developing an inclusive curriculum that takes account of the needs of every child. It also fosters pupils' personal development very well.
31. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. Subject planning has been given greater structure with the support of national guidelines and County planning documentation. The continual use and development of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies is beginning to have a positive influence on raising standards in English and mathematics. Science curriculum provision is further developed than in English and mathematics. ICT has improved since the previous inspection enabling pupils to make good progress.
32. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 meets statutory requirements to include the teaching of all National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education. It is broad and relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils. It is enriched by the inclusion of 'Golden Time', where staff organise extra projects that promote further pupils' interests. The curriculum is further enhanced by regular visits during school time to places of educational significance. This gives an added dimension of relevance and reality to the curriculum. The school promotes well pupils' personal, social and health education and provides music instrumental tuition.
33. The curriculum reflects the content of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the nationally produced subject guideline documents. This ensures that aspects of subjects are taught in logical sequences. In some cases such as English, science, design and technology, religious education and information and communication technology good links are beginning to be made so that one subject supports another. However, this practice is not fully embedded. Although the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies ensure that the subject skills are introduced and taught in a systematic manner, these skills are not consistently used in other subjects.
34. The school introduces the teaching of modern foreign languages to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Over the course of the school year, they have the opportunity to study both French and Spanish. These subjects are offered in order to support work in geography and to prepare pupils for secondary school. One lesson was seen during

the inspection in Year 5. This was of a satisfactory standard, with the emphasis rightly being placed on speaking and listening. The pupils were able to understand questions, short statements and simple classroom commands. They responded in a reasonably good French accent, using short phrases. French is used as much as possible so that pupils get used to hearing the language. Opportunities are missed to use rhymes, songs and conversation between pupils to keep them motivated.

35. As reported in the last inspection, a good range of extra-curricular activities is available for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. Regular clubs include 'Putting on a Show', board games, ICT, craft and a full range of sports and games clubs and teams. Clubs usually run for a fixed number of sessions and pupils who complete the course receive a certificate. This is a key element of the school's commitment to a 'life long learning ethos'. Currently there are few extra-curricular activities for younger pupils.
36. The school continues to develop its good links with the local community especially work with the Sunderland Football Club, the Sixth Form College, the local secondary school and the police. These activities are very popular and some pupils choose to join local clubs as a result of these initial introductions. There is an annual 'fun run', which is supported well by the local community, families and officers from the local prison. The regional water authority supports the school. The school also trains childcare students from the local College of Further Education.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The guidance of an adult ensures that pupils cope well with the work they are asked to do, especially in English, mathematics and science. They are almost always taught as part of the class.
38. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from the school's planning and arrangements. A new initiative gave them good opportunities to extend their knowledge by visiting the science museum. Following the visit, where photography was used to investigate shadows, they had the task to prepare a visit for other pupils.
39. The curriculum for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The well-planned support for pupils learning to speak and understand English makes sure that they enjoy the benefits of the school's curriculum. A particular strength is the use of Arabic translations for stories in the 'Story Sacks' in the Foundation / Infant Stage and in the home support folders for mathematics throughout the school.
40. The curriculum provided for the reception year is satisfactory. The activities provided are planned to address all six areas of learning. The topic based planning helps children to make connections in their learning well. However, planning is not sufficiently linked to the 'stepping stones' identified in the nationally recommended curriculum guidance for these children and the target set for each lesson is general and applies to all children in the class regardless of their ability or previous attainment. Whilst records of children's progress are kept, the knowledge that the teachers gain from assessing the achievements of the pupils is used inconsistently in planning the next steps in their learning. As a result, whilst children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, it is not as high as it might be if planning and assessment were more clearly linked to the different abilities of the children.
41. The school's promotion of pupils' moral, social and personal development is very good, and provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report.

42. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual development in themed assemblies. They are linked with festivals associated with both Christianity and other world faiths. Pupils visit local priories and places of worship. Sacred artefacts, for example of the Muslim faith, are shown to them and their use described. This gives them good introductory insights into the values and customs of various believers. In school assemblies there are good opportunities for prayer and reflection. The wonders of nature are promoted well through work on the development of the school grounds. Pupils experience the changing rhythm of nature as they observe the aesthetic beauty of the autumnal colours of the trees. Moments of 'awe and wonder' occur in lessons but are rarely planned. For example, the wide-eyed and open-mouthed surprise when pupils hear their own voice messages on computers excite and interest them.
43. All staff are very good role models to the pupils. They care for them and use the positive discipline policy very well to teach the difference between right and wrong. Older pupils are taught how to look after younger ones, consequently the 'buddy system' is very successful. Very good use is made of role-play in drama to emphasise 'doing the right thing.'
44. All the teaching and support staff work hard to develop the pupils' sense of community values. The school supports a number of charities including the local, national and international charities. The older pupils benefit from a comprehensive range of clubs, games and competitive sports activities. These help them to form friendly relationships with a greater range of children. The School Council meets regularly, providing elected class representatives with an opportunity to raise wider concerns. It is very successful. A very good range of events is organised to enable the local community to be involved in the life of the school. The system of class monitors provided pupils with chances to undertake a range of duties to help in the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
45. The school effectively promotes the pupils' awareness of local history and heritage but is less effective in developing an awareness of life in a multicultural society. Dance and movement lessons enable pupils to learn about African and South American dance. In religious education pupils learn about Hinduism through their study of the story of Rama and Sita, and in art they study the work of world famous artists.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school cares effectively for its pupils. It helps and guides them and promotes their welfare now better than at the time of the last inspection. Improvements have been achieved in assessments of pupils' standards and provision for those with special educational needs has improved. A more conducive climate for learning is established now than in the last few years due to the successful introduction of a whole-school structured approach to behaviour and discipline. Parents appreciate the benefits to their children resulting from these improvements.
47. The sensitivity with which the whole school community embraces and nurtures pupils with autism reflects the high level of care and concern shown by everybody for everybody. Specific learning plans (IEPs) are well written for most pupils who are identified with special educational needs. This ensures that they make very good progress as members of their class, learn to concentrate on their work and form positive relations with others. Pupils with statements of special needs make good progress. Good support from the local authority teacher helps teachers to make accurate assessments of the progress made by these children. Gifted and talented pupils are benefiting from the school's close liaison with the local authority's 'Learning

Links' unit based on site. Its personnel offer the school their wealth of expertise on out-of-hours learning. Family learning and drugs awareness are also arranged through their help.

48. Five years ago inspectors reported that the ethos was sufficiently strong not to require formal school rules. Good behaviour was maintained at that time by consistently high expectations and alert classroom management. Parents with several years' experience of the school noticed a serious decline in behavioural standards during the ensuing period of staff instability. They are pleased that the headteacher has taken appropriate measures to reverse this situation. All staff have recently been trained in the use of assertive discipline and have introduced 'WILF' 'What I'm Looking For' targets for behaviour to clarify to pupils exactly what is expected of them.
49. Pupils have helped the staff to devise suitable rules and there are daily rewards for all who meet expectations. These are very popular with children of all ages who strive hard to achieve the stickers because they accumulate towards much sought after small prizes, certificates and medals. The threat of missing out on the rewards is an effective deterrent for all except those with the most challenging behaviour who have special individual plans to help them moderate their actions. Consistently high expectations of the staff are backed up by firm but fair, clear consequences for those who misbehave. Incidents of bullying, for example, are dealt with swiftly and effectively according to parents. All members of staff award team points whenever they see particularly positive attitudes. This sets the example to others and works well by creating healthy rivalry between the four houses. The new measures are very effective and enable the school to track pupils' personal development suitably.
50. Registers of attendance are closely checked for patterns of absence and reasons appropriately sought. Parents are generally good at informing the school when their children are absent. Lateness is not pursued with sufficient rigour. There is no system of logging how late pupils arrive so this goes totally unrecorded if pupils make it to their classroom before the end of registration. Some staff are unclear as to when to start marking pupils late in the registers resulting in inconsistency. The time of closure of the registers is not stated in the staff handbook or attendance policy. This lack of structured approach does little to bring home the importance of being punctual to pupils.
51. The school now has personnel with up-to-date training in first aid, an improvement since the last inspection. Midday staff meet regularly with the headteacher to share suggestions and concerns. Their training in managing pupils' behaviour and matters relating to child protection has enabled them to fulfil their important role more effectively. Staff actively encourage pupils to play games in the playgrounds to channel their energies and increase fitness levels. Football, skipping and occasional family fun runs are very popular. The caretaker and other governors are alert to health and safety issues. They undertake regular checks, assess risk and suitably prioritise action.
52. The results of the national tests in Years 2 and 6 are analysed and these results are used well to identify weaknesses in pupils' subject knowledge. The curriculum is then adjusted to improve the quality of teaching in the weaker areas. In other year groups each class teacher carries out tests in English and Mathematics annually. These results are used appropriately to predict and set future targets. Teachers monitor and review progress towards these targets. In English individual targets are set for pupils. However, for some pupils these are not focused sharply enough to ensure that pupils make systematic progress. In science, on-going assessment is used well and as a result pupils make good progress. In other subjects assessments are beginning but

are not yet fully in place. Of those that are well established, such as ICT, class teachers have good knowledge of what pupils have achieved and what they need to learn next. Some subject leaders are not able to monitor or track pupils' progress sufficiently and as a result are unable to judge whether the progress made by each pupil is good enough. Plans are in place to introduce assessment fully in other subjects. Baseline Assessments are carried out in the children's first term in the reception class and are analysed to provide a basis from which future progress can be measured. This analysis is used to predict the results each child is likely to achieve in the national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 years. There has been successful implementation of a pupil 'progress book' which is passed on from year to year, and gives a good indication of pupils' progress overtime.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school has an effective partnership with parents. The headteacher has won their support through his dynamism and vision for improvement. They appreciate his leadership style and the changes that are helping to raise standards and to enhance pupils' personal development. This partnership is successfully established early on when the reception class teacher visits the homes of new entrants to exchange information. Throughout the school parents are satisfactorily informed about the curriculum and routines and their involvement in their children's learning is broadly typical.
54. Parents' views about the school are generally positive. They are particularly pleased that their children like school, are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature. Some feel insufficiently informed about their children's progress and homework.
55. The school usefully carries out its own annual surveys of parental opinion and responds suitably to the outcomes. For example, parents requested more information about topics and about homework. They were provided with curriculum maps, which briefly outline the topics to be covered over the year, and homework plans telling them which subjects to expect each night. These are helpful to parents but do not always go far enough in involving them in their children's learning at home. They do not, for example, generally make suggestions as to how they might help their child to reinforce learning related to the topics. Homework is not always set to the plan and there is inconsistent use of homework diaries. Some parents would appreciate a routine outline of what has to be done and when to return the work so that they can better support their child.
56. Parents have good opportunities to discuss progress with their child's class teacher at the termly consultations. The annual written reports tell parents clearly what their child is doing but are too impersonal. They do not adequately inform them about their child's progress, whether this is good enough, and what they need to do next to improve.
57. Parents are able to examine their children's individual education plans and have good opportunities to visit the school on a termly basis to meet with staff. Parents of pupils with statements of special needs are formally invited to their children's annual review meetings.
58. There are very good relationships between the school and the parents of pupils identified as autistic or having asperger syndrome. They respond immediately if their child is having difficulty in class and is not responding to the agreed programmes.

59. The school usefully shares an outline of its development plan with parents and has detailed its behaviour plan to enlist their support for assertive discipline. Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with all that is happening in school. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not fully comply with recent statutory requirements because they have minor omissions.
60. Parents are welcomed as helpers in school and with the Friends of Finchale association, which successfully organises fund raising and social activities. The headteacher arranges entertaining family competitions and fun runs which offer further opportunities for parents to get involved in school life. Arabic parents who speak English as an additional language have helped to make story sacks for use in school and their older children sometimes assist class teachers in lessons. These initiatives have helped them to integrate better into the school and wider community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governing body are very good. At the time of the last inspection leadership and management was also judged to be a strength of the school. However, since this time the school has gone through a period of considerable change involving two further headteachers as well as periods with an acting headteacher. Although management systems have been maintained successfully, there has been a lack of consistent direction as a result of these changes.
62. The headteacher, who has been in post a little more than a year, is committed and dedicated to the improvement of the school. He has a very clear vision and through his enthusiasm, and his leadership and direction he has succeeded in building a team of governors and staff who work well together and are equally committed to developing a good quality of education for their pupils. They have identified the right tasks for the future and have taken positive steps to make their work effective. Important issues of raising standards and appointing new staff are taking precedence. Currently the deputy headteacher and key staff have minor roles in the management of the school and influence its' direction only marginally. The school has identified this as a priority area for improvement in its strategic plan.
63. The school has very clear aims and values, which includes a strong emphasis on inclusion. Values regarding personal behaviour, equal opportunities and respect for others are strongly promoted and have a positive impact on the work of the school. All subjects and aspects of the curriculum reflect the aims of the school well.
64. The governors offer very good support to the headteacher and play an active part in the strategic planning of the school. Their responsibilities are shared effectively through a relevant committee structure. They fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously. The headteacher shares data of pupil performance with them and together they analyse pupils' achievements to identify strengths and weaknesses within the provision. Individual governors have taken on responsibility for a curriculum area and meet with the co-ordinator for that subject. When requested governors have then reported their findings to the governing body or the strategic planning group. These initiatives have strengthened their understanding of the curriculum and proved beneficial in measuring the success of their long-term planning.
65. The school development plan is of very good quality. It evolves from a very good programme of consultation between the headteacher, governors and teachers and is then shared with parents. The present plan has identified very clearly the direction of the school for the next five years. Action plans have annual targets, which are addressed continually through a well-structured system of monitoring and evaluation.

Resources and personnel are then targeted into areas of most need. The governors have a very good understanding of financial management. Their systems ensure that the school provides good value for money. The finance committee regularly reviews achievements against agreed priorities. Following on from the previous inspection, for example, the school has given good attention to the development of ICT, and has raised teacher expertise and extended the curriculum provision considerably. The pupils are now achieving nationally expected standards in ICT, which represents good improvement over time. The day-to-day financial management of the school is good with good support provided by the school's administrative officer.

66. Curriculum co-ordination in individual subjects is generally satisfactory with some good examples where teachers have a firm grip on the subject and are clear about strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders are involved in preparation and monitoring of medium-term planning and are currently working to ensure that the school incorporates the recently introduced county curriculum plan into the school's own planning structure. An audit of resources has also been necessary to ensure curriculum provision can be maintained. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning in the classrooms mostly by the headteacher and key staff and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There are however, weaknesses in that most subject leaders do not have opportunities to judge if curriculum plans are appropriately matched to the needs of pupils or if learning is progressing at a rapid rate. The headteacher and governors analyse standards and gain an overview of pupils' progress over time through the use of assessment. However, in some subjects there is no assessment and as a result most subject leaders are unable to use assessment as a tool to measure improvement or provide effective leadership and management of their subjects.
67. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Appropriate training takes place in response to national initiatives or identified areas of weakness. Good arrangements are in place for the induction of new teachers to the school and training is also provided for support staff and lunchtime supervisors so that they can make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The school's approach to performance management is good, clear targets for professional development are set and the work of each member of staff is appraised.
68. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the passage between the two buildings creates some difficulties for movement of pupils and in the management of learning. The reception classroom is of a good size, spacious and appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum for the younger children. However, the inclusion of the school library within this early years' classroom means that conditions are cramped for the younger children, and the use of the library is restricted for all other pupils. There is limited outdoor play provision for the younger children in the reception class. This is impacting adversely on the progress, which pupils can achieve. The development of an ICT suite, although utilising space to the best advantage, again creates difficulties of access. Teachers minimise disruption and make best use of the facilities, and pupils' progress is not restricted. The quality and range of resources is satisfactory and effectively meets the needs of the range of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

(a) Raise standards in English for pupils at the age of 7 and 11 years by:

- providing a more structured approach to the development of writing skills for all pupils;
- improving standards of handwriting;
- increasing pupils' skills of research through effective teaching of library skills and greater use of the library.

(paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6, 19, 23, 25, 33, 68, 78, 86 – 95, 156)

(b) Raise standards in mathematics for pupils at the ages of 7 and 11 years by:

- providing more opportunities for the application of mathematical skills in problem solving both in the mathematics' curriculum and in other subjects;
- improving the progress of pupils by increasing the level of challenge, pace and variety in lessons.

(paragraphs 7, 33, 96 - 104)

(c) Develop the use of assessment to:

- providing all pupils with a better challenge in lessons;
- ensuring teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Curriculum levels in all subjects and in areas of learning for younger children.

(paragraphs 5, 7, 26, 28, 40, 52, 66, 73, 94, 101, 102, 133, 158)

(d) Develop the role of the senior management team and subject leaders to share more effectively the leadership and management of the school and curriculum areas.

(paragraphs 61, 65, 104, 119, 127, 133, 137, 158)

The following minor issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- improve statutory reporting arrangements to parents.

(paragraph 56)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	21	19	2	0	0
Percentage	2	16	41	37	4	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		250
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	15	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	30	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (88)	86 (88)	86 (85)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	16
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	30	32	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (85)	86 (91)	84 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	19	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	21	26
	Girls	16	15	18
	Total	38	36	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (78)	77 (89)	94 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	21	25
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	37	35	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (87)	73 (91)	85 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	224	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	19	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	580911
Total expenditure	595115
Expenditure per pupil	2164
Balance brought forward from previous year	37062
Balance carried forward to next year	22858

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	254
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	37	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	41	3	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	51	11	2	4
The teaching is good.	55	39	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	48	17	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	11	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	61	31	6	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	0	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	40	11	1	14

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

70. Since the previous inspection the school has made sound progress in implementing the new nationally recommended curriculum for children in the reception classes. The latest baseline assessments carried out in 2001 indicates children's achievements were judged to be above average in personal and social development; speaking and listening; reading; using and applying mathematics; physical development; and, knowledge and understanding of the world; achievements were average in writing, and number. These pupils made sound progress throughout the year. Attainment on entry is broadly average and most children make satisfactory progress overall. Children who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress in all areas of learning.
71. A wide variety of activities are provided and these ensure that the children achieve appropriately in most areas of learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children are reaching the standard that is expected for their age in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. In these areas the teaching is sound and children make appropriate progress. All children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. In these areas the teaching is good and standards are above expectations by the end of the reception year.
72. The teamwork between staff and the deployment of the additional adults such as parents and students is a positive feature of the provision for the youngest children in the school. All members of staff place the highest emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.
73. The curriculum provided for the reception children is satisfactory. The activities provided are planned to address all six areas of learning. The topic based planning helps children to make connections in their learning well. However, planning is not sufficiently linked to the 'stepping stones' identified in the nationally recommended curriculum guidance for these children and the target set for each lesson is general and applies equally to all children in the class regardless of their ability or previous attainment. Whilst records of children's progress are kept, the knowledge that is gained from assessments is not yet used to plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, whilst children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, it is not as high as it might be if planning and assessment were more clearly linked to the different abilities of the children.
74. The leadership and management of the reception classes are sound. There is a very good induction system that helps pupils to settle happily into school. The relationships between the staff, the children and their parents are very good. Parents are kept well informed about the curriculum and advised of ways in which they can help their children at home. The cramped space inside the classrooms is used very well. The school is aware that further improvements need to be made to planning and provision outside to allow regular opportunities for outdoor play. This will enable the children not only to initiate their own activities but also to provide them with opportunities to explore ideas and interests in depth and learn from one another through appropriately planned adult support and intervention.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. By the end of the reception year most children have exceeded the early learning goals in this area of learning. They make good progress in developing self-confidence and self-esteem because of the strengths of the provision and the good role models demonstrated by the staff. Children rise to staff's expectations that they will take care of their own needs and join in what is going on. Children settle into school very quickly and soon gain confidence from knowing the routines and pattern of the sessions. As a result, children come happily into their classes each morning, respond very well to the staff, and sit quietly and listen when required. They try very hard to follow the teacher's instructions and interact very well both with one another and with adults, taking their queue from the very good role models set by the staff. As a result they learn to help each other, say please and thank you and are polite and friendly towards one another. Should disagreements arise the staff help the children to sort things out, and advise on how to avoid similar problems in the future. This helps children to make very good progress in understanding and respecting the rights and opinions of others. The children are able to concentrate for a long time when engaged in tasks that interest them such as in the computer suite. Children are helped to persist with activities through the sensitive intervention of the adults. The children take turns and share when allowed to choose their own activities, tidy away quickly when asked, and move around the school in a very orderly fashion.

Communication, language and literacy

76. The quality of teaching and provision for developing speaking and listening is good. The adults generally structure their teaching well to develop children's spoken language. Through the daily class and group activities the children learn to join in rhymes, songs and familiar stories. All these activities help children to practise speaking and to increase their vocabulary. Staff encourage pupils to listen to one another and not interrupt. Through skilled use of questioning, they encourage pupils to use complex sentences and as a result, some children are able to explain their ideas well. As a result of good teaching, the children make good progress and they are likely to exceed the level expected in speaking and listening by the age of six.
77. The teaching of reading is satisfactory; the children make sound progress and are likely to achieve the standard expected by the age of six. Adults read stories to the children and encourage them to discuss the pictures. They are encouraged to act out the stories they have heard during role play. Pupils change the books they take home frequently. They are taught to recognise letters and sounds. In some lessons the sounds being taught are too difficult for the children to distinguish and the writing / reading task involves copying a sentence and is inappropriate because it lacks challenge. As a result, children do not make as much progress as they otherwise would. Children would benefit from greater opportunities to practise their own free writing both during the formal literacy lesson and in their free play. Most children can form the letters in their own name correctly.
78. Writing skills would benefit from the teacher 'modelling' the writing process and letter formation as described in the nationally produced guidance for teaching literacy in the reception class. In writing, the standards achieved at the end of the year are likely to be below average. Opportunities for children to practise their writing skills are missed because they record their work on simple worksheets rather than using their own ideas to express themselves.

Mathematical development

79. By the end of the reception year, most children meet the early learning goals. They make appropriate progress and teaching is sound overall. Children regularly engage in counting activities and sing number rhymes. They are given opportunities to use number puzzles and games and helped to learn the mathematical language of shape. The children learn to make patterns using different mathematical shapes; they sort toys and handle 'money' in the 'toy shop'. They take the customers' orders and become familiar with different coins. When children take part in the daily mathematics lesson, they learn to count in sequence to 20, recognise and write numbers to ten, use numbers in familiar contexts and are beginning to learn about addition and subtraction. In the good lesson observed, the teaching methods used were well matched to the age and stage of development of the pupils. There was a wide range of mathematical activities provided for the children that helped move children forward in their learning. However, the frequent use of simple work sheets in activities that are not well matched to the ability of the children restricts the quality of learning. They do not make the children think hard enough and it is difficult to ascertain exactly what the children know, understand and can do.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. On entry to school, the general knowledge of most of the children is average. They make satisfactory progress, and by the end of the reception year, attain the standard expected for their age. Teaching is sound overall. Sometimes, however, the timing of lessons needs to be better. For instance, the history lesson observed was interrupted by playtime. By the time the children returned, the impetus and momentum of the lesson were lost. Children begin to understand about the jobs that adults do. At present, the children are learning what it means to be a customer or member of staff in a toy shop. Children learn from the world around them. They can name the common parts of the body and of plants, or name some everyday things that move by pushing and pulling. They begin to develop an understanding about the passage of time when talking about old and new toys, and toys suitable for babies. Worksheets are sometimes used to record the historical aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. These are often inappropriate for the task because the children do not understand them.
81. Children regularly engage in designing and making. They use large and small construction toys, card, paper, paste and glue to learn how to build, cut, stick, join and fold creating a wide variety of models, cards, and notebooks to use in their play. During a lesson about materials and their properties, a child explained that he had used bubble wrap on his model *'because it looks like glass.'*
82. Children learn how to use computers independently. They are taught to use the mouse to click on the icons that operate simple computer programmes. Computer skills are taught systematically. In the very good lesson observed in the computer suite during the inspection just half the class were taught at a time. This made teaching, assessment and supervision much more manageable. As a result of very good teaching and appropriate use of resources, the children made very good progress because they were highly motivated by the task. When one child discovered that by clicking and dragging he could make the farm gate fly through the air, he squealed with delight and began to make dogs climb trees and to move a whole wall. The support provided for the children when they work on the machines is well matched to their needs, either by pairing them with another child or by giving extra adult support. 'Logging on' has been taught to a small group of children. Throughout

lessons the teacher keep notes of how well the pupils manage in order to build upon the skills they have learned.

Physical development

83. In this area of learning the children make satisfactory progress and the teaching is sound. By the end of the reception year children meet the standard expected for their age. From the earliest days in school the children are encouraged to put on their own coats and get changed for physical education (PE) lessons. Most of the children rise to the challenge and succeed. Children achieve better when using the large movement skills needed for PE than they do in the skills needed in writing, cutting and drawing. In the good lesson observed in the hall the children made good progress. The teacher explained the 'rules' clearly and had high expectations of both children's achievements and behaviour. She used a variety of teaching methods and used resources well to reinforce pupils learning so that, by the end of the lesson, most children could walk or jump as a star shape. Some children are not yet able to use space appropriately, but the more able children can move imaginatively.
84. Opportunities for the children to engage regularly in high quality activities out of doors are limited because there is no discrete outdoor play area. The school is aware of this deficiency. The children have opportunities to practise and refine their manipulative skills by the use of a variety of tools, implements and equipment across all areas of learning. They use thick and thin pencils, brushes and felt tips, and practise cutting cut out. However, these skills are not yet well developed and they have poor hand control. This is likely to affect the standard they achieve in handwriting at the end of the year.

Creative development

85. This is another area where teaching is sound overall; children make sound progress and attain average standards. Children are given the opportunity to use and experiment with a wide variety of media, tools and textures. They have opportunities to experiment with printing, make collage pictures and paint pictures. The children are encouraged to dress up and act out stories heard in the different role play areas available to them. Through daily class and group lessons, the children learn to listen to and join in rhymes and songs, and to play percussion instruments. By the end of the reception year, children are beginning to understand about using loud and quiet sounds for different effects, and how to make a fast or slow sound. They learn to sit quietly and listen to music for short periods of time. In the music lesson observed, the children were keen to please their teacher. They behaved very well and tried hard.

ENGLISH

86. Standards are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Since the last inspection and the intervening period, staff instability has had an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in English. Inspection findings show that there are signs of improvement as the situation has now stabilised. Good teaching in most classes is now ensuring that the majority of pupils, including those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language, learn the basic skills of reading and writing well and make good progress in lessons. However, an examination of pupils' work indicates that pupils' progress over time has been steady rather than sharp and that until recently the teaching picture has been a satisfactory one.
87. Standards in writing are improving, although there is still more work to be done. Some key factors explain this improvement. Firstly, writing has been identified as a priority for development throughout the school. Structured, systematic teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is bringing about good improvements. This is giving pupils a firm foundation on which to build. Almost all pupils have a good range of strategies

to draw on to in order to spell unfamiliar words. In most classes, there are many prompts displayed around the room to help children with spelling. Punctuation is taught and its use emphasised from the earliest stages, until its application becomes almost automatic for the majority. Secondly, writing opportunities in other subjects are being effectively exploited to give pupils more realistic purposes and reasons for writing. For example, in Year 2, writing is used well in science to produce instructions for planting seeds and information leaflets about the needs of birds. These incorporate a good range of features learned in literacy lessons, such as bullet points and speech bubbles. Thirdly, teachers have made a sound start on identifying how pupils might improve and set targets for them. This is helping pupils in some classes to have greater understanding of their own learning needs and their aims.

88. There are still ways in which writing could be developed to sharpen progress and raise standards for all. There are inconsistencies in practice, which need to be ironed out. Although targets are set, some teachers are better than others at getting right to the heart of what it is pupils need to do next in order to improve. Sometimes, targets are too general and this makes it harder for children to know what they are supposed to achieve and when they have achieved it. In some classes, there is a good balance between teaching pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation and giving them opportunities for independent writing. In other classes, the balance is not as successful and pupils have too little time to explore their ideas and write at length. This has a particular impact on the progress of higher ability pupils, who could sometimes be challenged more effectively. Pupils also need more guidance on how to organise, in particular, their story writing.
89. In the Year 2 class, pupils' current attainment indicates the scope for standards to rise. Potential for improvement is also evident in the standards that the Year 3 and some of the Year 5 pupils are now attaining. However, there is evidence to indicate that on occasions, teachers overestimate or underestimate what pupils can do and this does not always help them to set work at the right level of challenge for all. A factor that currently limits progress in writing for a significant number of pupils is their lack of independence when they start the National Curriculum in Year 1. Some pupils have a lot of ground to make up in Year 1.
90. Standards in handwriting throughout the school are below average. Not enough attention is paid to developing pupils' skills systematically in this area. In some classes pupils are given regular opportunities for practice, but not in others. Children do not develop a consistent style as they move through the school and teachers themselves do not always provide good models for them to follow. As a result, letters are often poorly formed and joins inconsistent. This spoils the presentation of work, which is often untidy.
91. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory overall, although pupils demonstrate a wide range of ability. Most teachers place strong emphasis on pupils giving full attention when listening to adults and other pupils and they respond well to this. The majority converse easily with each other and with adults. Many Year 2 pupils demonstrate good skills in describing and explaining what they do, and most Year 6 pupils give detailed accounts of their views and opinions. Not all are as articulate in justifying their opinions or in using language to explain as clearly as they might. This is sometimes reflected in their writing. In some lessons, teachers miss the opportunity to ask pupils to expand on their responses. Sometimes they accept one or two word answers. On other occasions, teachers expand on a pupil's explanation themselves, rather than asking for more detail. However, all teachers are very good at teaching the vocabulary related to specific subjects and insisting that pupils use this. Some good opportunities are given for children to practice speaking. For example, Year 6 pupils

have performed Shakespeare to their classmates and there are regular chances for children to speak to others in assembly and take part in whole school performances.

92. Good teaching ensures that most pupils learn the basic skills of reading quickly. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to take their books home. Parents often give good support in this area. Pupils are encouraged to share their reading targets with their parents, using the bookmarks and reading diaries provided for this purpose. Teachers make good use of daily shared reading sessions and group reading times, to introduce pupils to a wide range of authors and text types. They give pupils good opportunities to practice reading and by Year 2, most read with good expression and developing fluency, taking account of punctuation. When reading out loud, they are learning to correct their own mistakes and can retell stories accurately. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are confident readers, who can express their preferences and demonstrate a sound understanding of character and plot. More able pupils use their skills of inference and deduction, for example to work out characters' motives and feelings when reading *Oliver Twist*. Pupils have definite reading preferences and talk about why they like books by J.K. Rowling or Jacqueline Wilson. However, children's research skills throughout the school are under developed. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 know what contents and index pages are and where they are located, they have too few opportunities to use these practically to find information for themselves. In the junior classes, pupils also have limited skills in locating information for themselves from books. For example, Year 6 pupils do not know how to skim text to get the gist of a passage or scan to find key words and phrases. A small group laboriously ploughed through the contents page to find their chosen topic, when use of the index would have given a much faster result. The location of the school library inhibits pupils in being able to choose books to research a topic independently. Teachers provide reference books for them, for example when studying history and geography. These factors limit progress for all pupils, but particularly for the older and most able. Pupils have a better understanding about how the Internet can be used for research purposes and find web sites with ease. Computers are generally used well in English to support basic skills such as spelling and for word processing, when writing stories and poems.
93. The school makes a good effort to ensure provision is made for all pupils. Those who find reading and writing difficult are sometimes taught in small groups, using nationally recommended 'catch up' programmes, in order to accelerate their progress. Good support is provided for those pupils with special educational needs. Support assistants often reinforce key concepts from the shared part of lessons in small groups. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the assistant ensured that her group understood what 'rhyming strings' were and through careful prompting, helped them to choose appropriate rhyming pairs of words. Consequently, the pupils made similar progress to others in the class. Confidence and self-esteem are developed because, in many lessons, these children are encouraged to share their work and feel valued as a result. Pupils with English as an additional language are also well supported and make similarly good progress.
94. Although the overall quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good, there are inconsistencies that have yet to be ironed out. In almost all lessons, pupils were well managed. Teachers set clear expectations for them in terms of behaviour and the majority respond well to this. All teachers share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils through 'WILF' targets. As a result, children focus quickly on their learning. In the best lessons, the 'WILF' is revisited so that pupils can see how effective their learning has been. Most teachers use questioning well to draw out pupils' prior knowledge and build on this. In many lessons, resources are used well to catch the pupil's interest or to involve them in learning. In a Year 3 poetry lesson, for example, the

children gasped in amazement as the teacher displayed a photograph of a firework on the electronic whiteboard. As a result, their enthusiasm for the task was fired and they wrote good quality poems in response. In a few lessons, teaching lacks this sparkle and excitement. The pace is slower and consequently, children do not learn as quickly as they could. In some lessons, children are expected to sit and listen to the teacher for too long, without practical involvement. This passive learning style does not suit all pupils and some boys, in particular, 'switch off' after a time and take little part in the lesson. Teachers do not always recognise this or take steps to remedy the situation.

95. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The subject leader has good subject knowledge, particularly in relation to Key Stage 1. She is enthusiastic and provides a good model of teaching for others to follow. She gives guidance to colleagues, for example, about how to plan their work. She has recently analysed test results, in conjunction with the headteacher and from this, has identified broad areas for development. However, as yet she has not had the opportunity to check on teaching and learning to highlight areas that need to be improved and gain an overview of the subject across the school.

MATHEMATICS

96. Standards in mathematics are average for pupils in Years 2 and 6. More able pupils are capable of higher standards. In the recent national tests (2002) in Year 6, three out of four pupils achieved nationally expected levels. The remaining pupils, all of whom have special educational needs, achieved well in relation to their individual targets. The pattern emerges of a fluctuating picture in standards for pupils in Year 6 over time, not currently as high as they were at the last inspection. This is a result of a period of instability in staffing and leadership and management of the subject. Overall, the sound teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6 with well planned, focused teaching of basic mathematical skills is beginning to strengthen pupils' attainment and help develop their skills in problem solving. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving well and most are set to achieve nationally expected levels. Standards in mathematics for pupils at the age of seven have improved steadily over time, until in 2002, when there was a dip in performance. As a result, positive action has been taken by the school to improve pupils' mental skills. Both scrutiny of work and lessons seen during inspection show that number skills are now improving and pupils respond more rapidly to teacher questioning.
97. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate in numeracy in all year groups. The National Numeracy Strategy forms a sound basis for planning and teaching. Teachers carefully reinforce multiplication tables, number facts and mental and written methods of calculation. There is a satisfactory emphasis on shape and measure, and on data handling. In Year 2, most pupils double numbers, such as 10, 64, 231, and explain how they calculate their answer. They count confidently in 5's and 10's. They use their developing understanding well and are beginning to apply numeracy skills to solve problems. For example, they use number lines effectively to judge where a particular date fits in a history 'timeline'. In Year 6, most pupils calculate whole number confidently and explain the methods they use. They have good understanding of shape and measure, for example using the characteristics of quadrilateral shapes to work out the perimeter of rectangles. They work confidently with multiple numbers during mental arithmetic sessions and confidently explain the strategies they use. Knowledge of decimals, fractions and percentages is satisfactory.
98. Pupils with special educational needs, and those pupils with English as an additional language, make good progress in developing their basic number skills in relation to their abilities. This is because teachers plan work at the right level for them and

learning support assistants give good support. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on plotting co-ordinates, the use of an Arabic / English dictionary made sure the pupil could concentrate on the mathematics being taught without having to struggle with English. As a result, she was able to achieve equally well with her peers.

99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. All teachers have a sound understanding of mathematics and explain new ideas and methods clearly. Lessons are well planned and the aim of the lesson is discussed with pupils before hand. This ensures they know exactly what they are expected to learn. Lessons begin with mental arithmetic sessions which, when they are taught well, develop pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics. The most useful part of this mental warm up is the way teachers include and challenge all pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Their contributions are valued and used effectively to support children's learning. This results in improving pupils' enthusiasm and interest in mathematics. All teachers use questions skilfully to help pupils explain what they are doing in mathematics and some move lessons forward at a brisk pace. For example, in Year 2 during a 'Spider' game pupils successfully explain that 'double means '2 of the same number' and demonstrate their understanding explaining that double 32 is 64 because 'you double the 3 tens and 2 units.'
100. There is some good use is made of work in other subjects to extend mathematical knowledge. Additionally skills in other subjects are used in mathematics lessons. For example, ICT is used appropriately in support of mathematics. Pupils work on computer programmes related to their class work. For example, pupils in Year 5 use spread sheets to work out the costs of a Christmas party.
101. Homework is used appropriately to extend learning. Teachers plan for tasks or activities at different levels of difficulty for appropriate groups of pupils. However, this work does not always match closely enough what the pupils have achieved previously and thus their capability, so that the level of challenge is not always right.
102. Teachers assess pupils' learning at regular intervals. However, teachers who determine what different pupils need to do to improve their learning do not consistently use the information they obtain. It is used less successfully by temporary teachers who are less secure of school procedures and have had limited opportunity to access this information. The introduction of 'WILF' targets for pupils is proving beneficial in helping them understand how improvements will be achieved in daily learning tasks. At present the whole class has the same target and teachers do not yet identify targets for different groups of pupils. The school does not have a portfolio of pupils' work in mathematics. Some teachers find it difficult to measure and moderate standards across the school and ensure that all pupils make good progress during their time in school.
103. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have very clear expectations of how pupils present their work and this results in pupils of all ability levels maintaining good standards of presentation in mathematics. However, the school's marking policy is not being used consistently through the school. As a result many pupils do not know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
104. The headteacher is currently leading the development of mathematics for a short period following the recent resignation of the subject leader. The recently implemented action plan is having a significant impact on raising pupils' awareness of number. A clear overview has developed among teachers so that they understand how pupils can achieve higher standards and use these skills effectively in other subjects

SCIENCE

105. Standards are above average at the age of 7 and 11 years. In last year's National Tests for Year 6, pupils achieved above average results in comparison with all schools. Attainment at the higher level was high in comparison with all schools. These results were close to the standards achieved by schools in similar circumstances.
106. Teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils at the national level were well below national standards. This reflects the larger number of children in the year with special educational needs. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was well above national standards. These results are close to the standards achieved in all schools and in those of similar circumstances. Standards have improved since the previous inspection because the curriculum is better organised, teachers provide appropriate work for both higher achieving pupils and those with special educational needs and continually involve them in practical investigations. Pupils are keen and interested in their work, often working well together in small groups sharing ideas as they work hard to complete their tasks. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are fully involved in scientific investigations. They often make very good contributions to the lesson by producing detailed work.
107. The scheme of work has been supported and improved through the inclusion of both the National Guidelines and local authority advice. It ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and that lesson planning is often constructed around practical experiences, and the practice of challenging pupils to make predictions about the possible outcomes of investigations. Pupils are not skilled in the use of reference books or information and communication technology to research knowledge. Many older pupils understand how to set up a fair test as part of a scientific investigation. They compile tables to record the results of their experiments, but the use of mathematics to interrogate this information or the application of data handling in information and communication technology is not systematically developed.
108. The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well to ensure that their pupils are involved in good practical activities to investigate the qualities of various materials. Often the introductory session is too long. It gives pupils opportunities to share their ideas with their classmates and handle various materials, however, some pupils have difficulty in keeping up their concentration. The time to explain what the practical tasks are is limited; consequently some pupils have difficulty getting started on this part of the lesson.
109. Practical tasks are effectively planned and respond well to the range of abilities of the pupils. This ensures that the more able are suitably challenged to examine and compare the properties of, for example, a piece of cotton cloth and a section of plastic bag. Pupils enjoy their work and concentrate well, taking turns to handle the objects they are examining. Very good links are made with design and technology as children select materials that would be suitable for making a 'snoozer' to accompany Barnaby Bear on his holidays.

110. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Some very good and excellent teaching was observed in Year 3 when pupils were involved in investigations into light and shadows. The posing by the teacher of general questions raised pupil's levels of interest and many confidently stated why it can be dark during the daytime and light at night. This quickly led them to list primary and secondary light sources and decide whether they are man made or natural. Pupils were expected to record their ideas and very good use was made of the computer in the classroom to encourage them to type directly to the screen. The teacher realised that the objectives of the lesson were being achieved and began to introduce the following week's lesson about shadows. This showed very good use of time and ongoing accurate assessments.
111. In an excellent lesson the teacher introduced the theme of light and shadows by telling the story of Rama and Sita. This held the pupils' interest and introduced the second part of the lesson. Very accurate assessments of these younger junior children identified that many did not connect the formation of a shadow with the fact that the object had to block out the light. The pupils were engaged in a task to draw a face with a mouth, nose and eyes and place it on the overhead projector. Pupils were surprised that they only saw the outline of the face appearing on the screen. The teacher posed the question; 'How can we make the eyes appear on the screen?' One pupil, who is learning English as an additional language, was the first to cut out the eyes. Her work was used to demonstrate the scientific information. There was a moment of wonder and reflection as the light shone through the eyes and caused the face to appear to look out at the class. The pupil was proud of her achievement and her self-esteem was enhanced.
112. Teaching in Year 4 has some unsatisfactory elements. This is because the lesson was under resourced as the lesson planning did not include battery holders. Consequently, when pupils were attempting to construct circuits to light bulbs they had difficulty, because they had to hold the insulated wire directly against the battery terminals. This caused some frustration and, although many pupils persevered, they were unable to include more components in their circuits. However, good links with design and technology were established when, in a later lesson, the pupils worked well together in pairs to construct a model fireplace with a bulb circuit lighting up the strips of coloured transparent paper to simulate a flickering fire.
113. Good teaching in Year 5 ensures that pupils make good progress in the use of reference books and information and communication technology to develop their research skills. Lessons commence with accurate practical explanations to help pupils gain new knowledge about the universe. Careful questioning and the use of photographs taken from outer space support this. Children listen attentively and enter into class discussion. Group work is carefully organised with sufficient reference materials available to allow pupils to work in pairs and gather the information. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants. The lesson planning shows good progression and pupils who complete the first level of the task are challenged to locate more detailed facts about The Solar System. However, some of the reference books do not have the required information. Sufficient time is allocated to the various aspects of the lesson and the new knowledge is carefully examined during the plenary session.
114. Very good teacher analysis of concept (mind) maps ensures that lessons in Year 6 are planned at the appropriate levels. The specific language of new topics is carefully introduced and used during the whole class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to examine circuit diagrams to check whether they are a complete electrical circuit before they use electrical components to construct the circuit and check their statements. Pupils enjoy this practical activity, often collaborating well in groups. In this investigative atmosphere all pupils, including those with special educational

needs who are supported by well-informed learning support assistants, make very good progress. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace and very good planning ensures that there is an investigative atmosphere. Very good use is made of pupils' discoveries, such as in the lesson when a pupil constructed a parallel circuit and there was a 'Eureka' atmosphere within the group. The teacher immediately called the class together to share the 'new discovery' with them.

115. The recently appointed subject leader has good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. A good policy is in place to guide the planning teaching styles. The scheme of work is supported well by suitable resources. A well designed action plan has been drawn up to direct the development of investigation and research skills. Change is being managed well.

ART AND DESIGN

116. In Years 2 and 6, standards are as expected and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well because their needs are carefully considered and sensitive adult support provided if appropriate. Although there has been a decline in standards since the last inspection this is because there is less teaching time available for developing specialist skills in art. Often art is used by pupils as a method of pictorial representation, when the focus of the learning is on other subjects. Pupils enjoy their work and persevere well. They are proud of their achievements and keen to share them with others.
117. Pupils in Year 1 draw and paint reasonably well-proportioned figures and by Year 2 they are beginning to consider movement as they try to draw figures in action. Through studying still life and looking at objects in detail they are helped to improve their skills of observation rather than drawing from memory. Pupils are also using computer programs to produce pictures and captions for their portraits linked to work in other subjects. Attractive posters to remind pupils about health education are the result of some good work on colour and space.
118. By the end of Year 6 pupils' work shows satisfactory development of skills. More emphasis is given to developing an understanding of art techniques through the study of famous artists. Using graphics pupils copy the work of Mondrian and create their own geometric designs using bright colours and dark outlines to create vivid patterns. A half-term topic on perspective and proportion in Year 5 and 6, linked to work on the Impressionists, began with a visit to Finchale Priory. It involved photography and observational drawing of the river, instruction on application of paint in the style of the Impressionists, charcoal drawings of a bridge disappearing into the horizon, and finally the recreation of a river scene in their own interpretation of the Finchale landscape. In conjunction with work in other subjects, pupils have a further range of experiences, which lead to satisfactory progress with other materials. They make clay pots, masks and Viking shields as part of their topic work on the Greeks and Vikings. Through discussion pupils are learning skills of critical appraisal, to evaluate and appreciate the work of others. Because in each lesson they are made aware of the learning objectives they are able to judge their achievements and trial different techniques for better results. Art makes a good contribution to the spiritual moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They learn to collaborate, share resources and appreciate their own cultural heritage. They are beginning to develop their own opinions about art and address key questions about the scope of artworks in the twenty-first century. 'Splodges of paint aren't art,' they explain. They recognise that art is a result of careful reflection and use of colour, shape and texture, but are not yet skilled at recognising art in its many forms.

119. Teacher's planning is satisfactory and based on recommended national guidelines and the county curriculum plan. This ensures that key skills and experiences in the subject are taught progressively from year-to-year. However, most ideas come from the teacher and pupils are given only limited opportunities to explore and develop ideas for themselves. This restricts their progress. The assessment of pupils' progress in the development of knowledge skills and understanding cannot be guaranteed since there is no whole school system to track their progress. There has been little monitoring of the teaching and learning in the subject since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language in Years 1 and 2 get off to a sound start so that by the age of seven they are reaching standards typical of what is expected for their age. In Years 3 to 6, they make satisfactory progress and at the age of 11 years, standards are similar to those expected nationally. The previous report judged standards to be higher than national expectations. However, in recent years there have been considerable developments in the subject and much more is now expected of pupils.
121. Records of pupils' work and the lessons observed show that there is sound teaching in Years 1 and 2. The youngest pupils quickly learn how to manipulate construction kits to assemble models of towers, houses and moving vehicles. However, there is a need to update the resources to provide a greater range of experiences. Pupils rapidly learn how to use tools to prepare food for a fruit salad. They identify a good range of fruits on a poster before they use 'playdough' and modelling clay to form a model. They handle fresh fruit items and predict which would be the best way to prepare them for the salad, cutting, mashing or scooping them before they use the tools sensibly and safely. They enjoy their work showing very good levels of application and concentration.
122. Teaching is satisfactory in the junior classes. The youngest pupils carefully follow a given design based on 'The Angel of the North' statue to create an 'Angel of Newton Hall'. Following initial sound explanations and instructions from the teacher, pupils carefully roll out, cut and flatten modelling clay to construct the body and wings of the statue. They listen attentively to the teacher's advice before they begin joining their sections together to complete their work. All the models meet the criteria set at the beginning of the lesson that they should be stable and free standing. However, there is a missed opportunity to introduce pupils to the specific tools related to moulding and working clay.
123. In Year 5, pupils draw up detailed designs for a variety of containers. These include side and plan views. Year 4 pupils successfully apply their scientific knowledge of battery driven electrical circuitry to assemble a model fireplace with flickering flames. They collaborate well together cutting irregular holes in cardboard shaped grates, sticking coloured transparent paper over them and setting up a circuit to light a bulb behind the model.
124. Pupils are not directed to evaluate their completed products. For example, younger children assemble containers and bags out of card but they do not check to see if this material is the most appropriate for carrying items in the rain. Neither do they check to see which design provides the largest carrying capacity.
125. The preliminary work in food technology, where Year 5 pupils are involved in bread making, is a good example of how the subject has developed since the previous

inspection. Pupils compile preference lists as they evaluate the range of available varieties. They sequence the stages of bread making before they become involved in the actual bread making process.

126. There are some good examples of the use of information and communication technology when pupils construct a lighthouse and traffic lights. They connect them with a computer and programme software that controls the light sequences.
127. The headteacher is the temporary subject leader. The immediate priority is the development of the sequences required for making and the safe use of tools. Links are continually being forged with other curriculum areas. This is successfully moving the subject forward and raising standards.

GEOGRAPHY

128. Time for geography is 'blocked' for each class from Year 1 to Year 6 with units of work planned in line with the latest national and local curriculum guidance. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection but a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils shows pupils reach standards broadly in line with those expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. Progress is satisfactory. Both standards and progress are below those found at the previous inspection when standards were deemed to be above average and progress good at the end of both Key Stages.
129. In Year 2, pupils' secure knowledge of different forms of transport shows when they talk about how Barnaby Bear goes from Durham to Dublin. Many can relate this journey to one they have made. Some talk about going on a train. Others describe boarding the car deck of a ferry to go to France or Ireland. A boy explains what a 'bird's eye view' is, drawing on his experience of being on an aeroplane. They know maps show places relative to one another and that the narrow blue 'strip' between England and Ireland is the wide stretch of the Irish Sea. Pupils understand the significance of a 'key' when drawing and interpreting maps and how the 'key would help Barnaby Bear to find his way around Dublin.' They can locate Dublin on a map of Ireland and find the different countries and capitals in the British Isles and name these. They know that Barnaby Bear would need Euros to spend in Dublin. Pupils have a good idea of the relative distance of places and know, for instance, that Majorca is farther away than Norfolk. Year 1 pupils are able to describe their route to school and talk about the different kinds of houses and shops passed en route.
130. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of other environments. They are able to provide very precise answers about mountain ranges in response to a questionnaire drawn down from a website. Their work is neatly presented and shows that they understand how animals adapt to their surroundings so that they can survive in harsh landscapes, such as the snakes that survive in the Sahara Desert. From all the evidence examined, teaching in geography is judged to be satisfactory overall. However, in the lesson seen in Year 3 the teaching was good. The teacher had secure subject knowledge. Activities were planned well to include all pupils fully in lessons. The teacher used resources such as photographs and maps linked to the pupils' recent walk around the neighbourhood well. She used the correct terminology and checked the pupils understanding of geographical vocabulary by skilled use of open - ended questioning. As a result of this coupled with her lively encouraging manner, pupils were able to draw up a long list of the way land has been used in their own locality. Learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well to enable them to take part well in most of the lesson. The good pace of the lesson and the time limits given for completion of tasks ensured that the pupils made good progress and the lesson objectives were met in full.

131. Most pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to the subject and achieved the standard expected for their age.
132. The geography work in books and around the school shows appropriate links made across subjects, notably using literacy, mathematics and ICT. For example, Year 6 pupils write up work using the Internet and a display in Year 6 shows how they have used the Internet and done multimedia presentations and the work on co-ordinates when reading maps has clear links to mathematics. The display work carried out by Year 3 when visiting Newton Hall and Finchale Abbey has strong links with history. The school makes very good use of its immediate environment and localities beyond this for field study.
133. The subject is co-ordinated satisfactorily. The subject leader monitors teachers' planning to make sure it matches units of study mapped out over the year. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms of the older pupils. As the co-ordinator teaches in both Year 6 classes these pupils benefit from her subject knowledge and expertise. Resources are audited regularly to ensure that these are sufficient to meet curricular demands. As yet assessment is not carried out systematically in the subject, but plans are afoot to address this. There are good links with the head of geography at the local comprehensive school. They discuss the curriculum and the secondary school co-ordinator comes to teach the Year 6 pupils from time-to-time.

HISTORY

134. The curriculum is now organised into 'blocks' of time across the school year, and planning is based on the latest guidance and ensures suitable coverage. Lessons were observed only in Year 1 and Year 2. A scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning together with discussions with groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 show that 7 and 11-year-olds reach standards expected for their age. This judgement differs from the last inspection when pupils in Year 2 attained above average standards. The judgement for Year 6 remains the same. In Year 6, pupils are able to talk about their learning about Victorians. They show how well they can empathise with people from past times. They imagine what it must have been like to be a child in the Victorian era having to go out to work making pertinent comparisons with their own lives. In Year 5, where written work is more extensive, pupils demonstrate their understanding about life in ancient Greece. When asked, most pupils in years 5 and 6 can extract relevant information from books, pictures and artefacts, but they have too few opportunities to use the library or to develop their independent research skills.
135. In Year 1, past work and teachers' notes on what has been learned show pupils are beginning to think about passing time in ways meaningful for them. They consider which toys are suitable for babies and which for older children. Activities encourage links to be made to other subjects. For example, pupils apply skills of speaking and listening and, writing skills learned in their literacy lessons. In the good lesson observed in Year 1, the teacher and children had brought in a wide range of toys suitable for babies through to six-year-olds. Children listened to both the teacher and to one another well and provided clear explanations demonstrating an understanding of the passage of time. For example, one pupil explained, *'I've had my teddy bear for a lot of years now. My mummy had it when she was a little girl and she gave it to me.'* The children were able to make their own decisions about the toys most suitable for different age groups and articulate clearly the reasons for their choice. The teacher manages effectively the pupils with behaviour problems.

136. In Year 2, more able pupils enjoy giving details about work on the gunpowder plot. Pupils learn about important days in the year and are able to link them with history such as the birth of Jesus and Easter. The very good lesson observed was linked very topically to Remembrance Day. Pupils demonstrated their understanding of this event by explaining *'There was a war and some people gave up their lives.'* They discussed when the war started and ended and its relationship to other events in history since the birth of Jesus. Good use was made of time-lines throughout in this lesson and these were made easier or harder to match the different abilities of the children.
137. Whilst the quality of teaching seen in the lessons observed during the inspection was judged to be good and very good; taking into account, the examination of pupils' books and the work studied, teachers plans and other school documentation, teaching is judged to be sound overall. In most classes, a major strength in teaching is the way literacy skills enhance pupils' understanding of history content and concepts taught. For example, pupils use a wide variety of writing styles such as labelling diagrams, note taking and writing accounts of greater length. In addition to using appropriate resources in lessons, teachers also make good use of study visits, for example, to Finchale Priory and Durham Cathedral. History resources are satisfactory, but the practice of keeping all the required information books in topic boxes, limits the opportunities for pupils to use the library and develop their research skills. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The headteacher is currently taking care of the subject. Planning is monitored to check that it underpins units of work allocated across year groups. The headteacher has a clear vision of the way in which history should develop in school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. All pupils are currently making good progress because of strong teaching, a well-structured curriculum and good quality resources. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average and the subject was identified as a key issue for action. Funds are used wisely to provide good quality resources, staff training and ensure that all pupils have sufficient time in the computer suite to develop their skills. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, are quickly making up the previous lost ground and all are on course to reach higher standards in the future.
139. The subject leader leads and manages the development of the subject very well. She has a high level of expertise and uses this very effectively to provide good quality training and support for her colleagues. This has increased teacher's confidence, particularly with recently introduced technology, such as the interactive whiteboards. She has developed a very effective scheme of work, which guides teachers' planning well and ensures that pupils can build progressively on their skills from year to year. A good quality assessment programme has also been introduced so that teachers have a clear idea of what pupils have achieved and what they need to learn next. As a result, teaching and learning have both improved and standards are rising quickly. A strength of the subject is the way that pupils are given good opportunities to cover all the required aspects in sufficient depth and practice and refine their skills through interesting and relevant tasks.

140. In Year 1, pupils build steadily on the skills learned in the reception class, for example, to support their literacy and numeracy work. They confidently use the mouse to click on and select their choices from a menu. The majority know their way around the computer keyboard well. They work together sensibly in pairs, showing good levels of independence. Year 1 pupils have also used a data-handling programme, pitched at just the right level, to collect, store and sort information about them. This has then been reproduced in the form of pictograms. In Year 2, pupils are making rapid progress. They are confident at opening programmes and choosing from 'drop down' menus. Most can save and retrieve their work with growing independence. Their word processing skills are developing well and they know how to use the return and shift keys and the space bar appropriately, for example, when writing riddles in their literacy lessons. Year 2 pupils have made good use of the Internet, for example, to find out about the many places in the world 'Barnaby Bear' has visited. They have printed out their information and have incorporated it into informative booklets about Barnaby's travels. They have also written simple programmes themselves to work a programmable toy. All infant pupils have also had good opportunities to use simple 'paint and draw' programmes to create their own pictures.
141. Throughout the junior classes, pupils are confident at 'logging-on' to the computer, using their own individual passwords. They can save their work in electronic folders and the majority can confidently retrieve this independently, when required. They are also very competent at finding their way around many different types of programmes and use a variety of keyboard and mouse features with ease. Word processing skills are developing well; lower junior pupils are adept at changing font style, size and colour to add interest to their stories, letters and poems. They can use columns and boxes effectively, for example, when producing a school newspaper. Older pupils use more advanced features and functions, such as 'word art', to enhance the quality of their writing and 'find and replace' to help them edit their work. Such opportunities are helping children develop a good understanding of the usefulness of computers in everyday life. Junior pupils are given frequent opportunities to combine and use their computer skills to work on projects that support learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they have made good use of both ICT and their numeracy skills, working with spreadsheets to plan, cost out and keep track of expenditure for the Christmas party. Year 6 pupils have combined their scientific knowledge with their ICT skills through writing programmes to control traffic light sequences.
142. Teaching in the majority of lessons is good. Teacher's planning is effective and most show good levels of expertise in using the equipment. In the best lessons, explanations describe teacher expectations clearly and children are challenged well in relation to their abilities. More able pupils are stretched by harder questions, such as explaining how a 'hyperlink' can be used. Responses demonstrate they have a good knowledge of the Internet. Teachers help children build up their knowledge step by step, through good practical demonstrations, which are particularly beneficial for the less able and less confident pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Classroom assistants demonstrate a good understanding of what is to be learned and skilfully guide and encourage the children they work with. As a result, these pupils develop confidence and are often able to achieve as well as the other pupils within the class. Similarly, teachers and classroom assistants have a good understanding of the needs of those pupils who speak English as an additional language. They respond to these needs sensitively to ensure learning is maximised.

143. A strength in ICT provision is the good opportunities, which are provided to help pupils to research on the Internet to support the topics they are studying. The pupils thoroughly enjoy this way of learning and make good use of the cards teachers produce each week with suggested sites they might visit, linked to their current studies. One Year 6 child commented, 'This is the new, modern way about finding out about things and we like it.' Older pupils enjoy having the opportunity to develop their skills further in the weekly computer club.
144. The school has prioritised improvements in the subject through its' very clear action plan for the subject. The school has now identified that, although a positive start has been made on linking ICT to other subjects, there is still more work to be done, for example in music. Continuing to improve resources and provide staff training are also seen as priorities. Appropriate steps have been taken by the school to safeguard pupils in their use of the Internet and ensure that correct procedures are in place.

MUSIC

145. Standards in music are in line with national expectations at Year 2. However, not enough evidence was seen during the inspection to enable a judgement to be made on standards at Year 6. However, from the lessons observed, examples of pupils' work seen and pupils' response in assemblies and in activities outside lessons, progress in both key stages is judged to be satisfactory. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. However, music was judged to be a key issue at that time. This was because teaching was inconsistent and the curriculum was not effective in ensuring that pupils could build systematically on their learning from year-to-year.
146. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher has taken responsibility for the subject and has made a sound start on raising its profile throughout the school. He has ensured that music is taught regularly in all classes and appropriate time given to lessons. A clear scheme of work is now in place, which covers all aspects of the national curriculum and gives teachers good guidance on what to teach and how to teach it. This is helping to build staff confidence. It also ensures that pupils can build steadily on their knowledge, skills and understanding from year to year. Pupils' progress is checked on regularly and this is also ensuring that all learn at a steady rate. A sound range of resources is also available and stored in the music room. This enables teachers to maximise learning time.
147. In Year 2, most children understand the term 'beat' and can relate this to their work in science about their own bodies. One child explained that a beat is, 'like a pulse'. Most can copy and hold a regular beat, following the teacher's lead. The majority are also able to sing and clap or tap the rhythm at the same time. They can also sustain the beat on untuned percussion instruments, whilst working in a small group. Most children can name a range of percussion instruments and play them using reasonable methods, with sensitivity. In the lesson seen, they also explored how to beat alternative beats, for example the third beat for 4 / 4 time.
148. In Year 4, pupils sing enthusiastically in groups and in unison. They are able to hold both the melody and the time. They can explain variety in tempo and style, for example, 'That's Funky', 'Its Heavy Metal.' They can play untuned percussion instruments in an appropriate style, keeping time with the song they are performing. In the lesson seen, pupils experimented with various techniques of playing percussion. Most could use terms like 'compare and contrast' in their discussion and evaluation of different musical pieces and give sensible explanations for their opinions. For

example, when comparing different versions of 'Winter Wonderland', some could explain that one version was more 'Christmassy' because of the accompaniment, which included sleigh bells.

149. Teaching was satisfactory in both the lessons seen. In the Year 2 lesson, the teacher was very enthusiastic and this engendered interest and enjoyment in the children. As a result, they were well focused on the task and keen to join in. The teacher constantly questioned the children and probed their understanding. For example, when encouraging them to remember relevant vocabulary, she exclaimed, 'Remember we used that word in science!' Children learnt quickly because of this. All the children were given equal opportunities to play the instruments and were strongly encouraged to share and help each other, which resulted in good behaviour and a happy working atmosphere. Opportunities were missed, however, to vary the lesson content to keep the pace sharp and ensure maximum involvement of all. On a few occasions, also, the teacher chose or suggested instruments for the children to use, rather than letting them experiment themselves. In the Year 4 class, the lesson was appropriately planned to provide opportunities that enabled the children to recognise a breadth of style in composition and dynamics. The teacher used questioning effectively to describe musical terms and make comparison. However, although most pupils were enthusiastic, not all demonstrated appropriate listening skills. Learning was slowed, as the teacher had to constantly stop and remind pupils to listen. In this lesson, a pupil with special educational needs made particularly good progress. This was because his needs were skilfully and sensitively met by the support teacher, who ensured he took a full and active part in the lesson. Pupils enjoy music, and this is reflected in the comments of a child who said, 'Music, it's brilliant. You can play instruments.'
150. The music curriculum is enriched by opportunities to sing in assembly. Almost all children are keen to join in and sing enthusiastically, in tune. However, more opportunities could be provided for pupils to listen and respond to the music played as they file in to the hall and to learn about the composers. Out of school activities, such as the 'Putting on a Show' club and visiting music teachers also develop pupils' musical skills. There have been good opportunities to learn about music from other cultures, for example, through the visit of the African Drummers group. However, opportunities for the use of ICT to make music have not yet been provided.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

151. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6. These are lower than the previous inspection when physical education was judged to be above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress. All pupils are fully included and specialist support and help is given to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with English as an additional language have help with interpretation of instructions if necessary.
152. Good provision is made for pupils in Years 3 and 4 to make sure that most children leave the school being able to swim at least 25 metres. Pupils in Year 2 respond well to the stimulus of music in dance as they explore the making of a bonfire and fireworks exploding and spinning. They reflect on their feeling about fireworks and work imaginatively. They show good body control as they twist, spin and jump. Pupils in Year 1 use space well, demonstrating good control as they walk, run, skip and jump using ropes as obstacles. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have opportunities to learn basic rugby skills. They use attacking and defending skills appropriately as they practice the basic principles of team play. Pupils also show satisfactory awareness of

- the impact of rigorous exercise on their bodies and of the need to warm up and cool down their bodies at the right time.
153. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers break down a skill into its component parts and plan well for pupils to practise the various techniques involved. Some good use is made of pupil demonstrations and they are able to evaluate and improve the level of their own work. Good attention is paid to pupil safety. In better lessons teachers have clear expectations of pupils and manage them well. This helps them to work well in small groups to practice and develop their skills such as practise in throwing and catching. Progress is satisfactory and by Years 5 and 6 pupils are developing ball handling skills. The school has very good links with the Durham Gilesgate College whose students and staff actively support the teachers in developing a good curriculum in PE in the junior classes. The impact of this support has improved teachers' confidence, particularly in teaching gymnastics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Standards at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are similar to the locally expected levels of the Agreed Syllabus. This represents satisfactory achievement for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. At the time of the last inspection weaknesses were identified in lessons where teachers gave insufficient time for pupils to reflect and discuss the meanings and relevance of religions to their own experiences. This is no longer the case and represents an improvement since the last report. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of their actions and how they can affect others.
155. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a growing awareness of Christianity through stories from the Bible. They describe their favourite New Testament stories and recognise the difference between a parable and a miracle. They know about the major Christian festivals and recognise the importance of Christmas and Easter to Christians. Time for reflection is an important aspect of all the work in religious education and makes a significant contribution to the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. When celebrating their own harvest festival they looked at the problems faced by children in Africa and began to understand how famine and poverty can create hunger and hardship. They know about special times in the lives of people and realise that this may be represented by different customs for different religions. Much of the teaching in religious education is done through discussion and it is through these discussions that teachers help pupils to come to their own understanding of events. When discussing precious things they looked at how these vary for them both in their home and at their places of worship. This work helps them form better relationships in school through a closer understanding of themselves and others.
156. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are studying the development of Christianity in their local area. They have studied St Bede and St Cuthbert and have a good understanding of how these saints undertook their work. Pupils think about the choices they can make in their own lives and are beginning to understand the implications of these choices. Pupils continue to learn about the Bible and about great leaders and their teachings. Through comparison and discussion they begin to see the similarities and differences in world faiths. As part of this work they learn about places of worship and compare religious customs at a church, mosque and temple. Pupils are happy to share their own experiences. For example one pupil described how her family are undertaking fasting during the period of Ramadan. Sometimes parents help by describing their religious beliefs. There are a sufficient number of books and artefacts in school for pupils to undertake research to extend their knowledge. However, there are few opportunities for pupils in junior classes to undertake personal research by use of the

library or the Internet. By the time the pupils have reached Year 6 they have covered a wide variety of topics and have gained a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths as well as examining themselves as people and their feelings and views of aspects of life. Recent intense discussions have centred on the theme of forgiveness, and pupils have wrestled with their consciences as they have compared religious teachings of major world faiths with world events, which have caused injury and death. The continuous thread of the religious education programme is the way it enables pupils to reflect on their own lives and recognise the consequence of choices.

157. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory. In better lessons the teacher relates religious themes to personal events and world issues and encourages pupils to share in discussions, whilst also acknowledging the contributions made by individuals and organisations showing good levels of social responsibilities. Those teachers with good subject knowledge are more skilful at questioning to widen the level of debate. The good use of praise helps pupils gain in confidence and they contribute effectively to discussions. All pupils are fully included in lessons and those who need it receive sensitive support. The weakness in the curriculum currently lies in the limited quality of written work. Often this work does not reflect the good quality of the earlier debate. Because teaching time in religious education is limited and debate has been extensive there is little time for the inclusion of writing tasks. The teachers are not yet extending literacy work to link with this subject in order to provide more opportunities to write biographies, historical accounts or religious reviews.
158. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. The curriculum is following the recently introduced County plan and Locally Agreed Syllabus. Resources have been audited and increased to match new requirements. There is some limited monitoring of teachers' medium-term planning. Assessment is seen by the subject leader as an area of development.