

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SUNNYBROW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Crook, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114060

Associate Headteacher: Mrs Anne Charlton

Reporting inspector: Mrs L J Traves  
24039

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hunwick Lane  
Sunnybrow  
Crook  
County Durham

Postcode: DL15 0LT

Telephone number: 01388 746413

Fax number:

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Long

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24039	Mrs L J Traves	Registered inspector	English Geography Religious education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
8988	Dr J Cross	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30954	Mr B Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
18154	Mr S Rigby	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Educational inclusion	
17685	Miss L Spooner	Team inspector	Art and design Music Special educational needs The Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sunnybrow Primary School is situated in the village of Sunnybrow, near Crook in County Durham. It is smaller than most schools, with 86 pupils on roll. Most pupils live in the local authority housing close by. All are white and English speaking. There are an equal number of girls and boys. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. A higher than average percentage (40 per cent) is entitled to free school meals and there are also more pupils (30.5 per cent) who have special educational needs than in most schools. These mostly relate to learning difficulties, although there are some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are two pupils who have statements of special educational need. The profile of the pupils on entry to school has changed over the last three years, with the majority now having skills which are below those expected for their age, particularly in their language development. The school has experienced a period of turbulence in recent years, with many staff changes and several changes in leadership. The present associate headteacher joined the school in January and works for four days a week in Sunnybrow and one day in her own school. There have also been difficulties recently in recruiting supply staff to cover for a teacher on long-term sickness leave. The school received an achievement award from the Department of Education and Skills in 2000 for good results in the tests for 11-year-olds.

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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and is developing well in some key areas, such as information and communication technology (ICT). Sound teaching overall, ensures that achievement is at least satisfactory for the majority of pupils. However, on occasions, the small number of more able pupils could make better progress, particularly in writing. There are inconsistencies in teaching, which the school is beginning to address. The associate headteacher has given a strong steer to the work of the school. With the support of staff and governors, she has achieved a great deal in a short space of time and has created a firm base on which to build. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The associate headteacher has set a clear direction for the work of the school and is steering it firmly towards improvement;
- The school uses ICT very effectively to promote learning in many subjects;
- The school enriches learning through providing a wide range of visits, visitors and activities outside lessons;
- Staff create a stimulating environment both indoors and outside to enhance learning and play;
- The school uses funds well to support its priorities.

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

- Standards in writing, speaking and listening; \*
- The quality and consistency of teaching; \*
- The behaviour, attitudes and personal development of a group of pupils in the Year 3/4 class; \*
- Pupils' attendance.

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

*\* The school has identified these areas for improvement*

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

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Until recently, progress towards the key issues identified had been slow, due largely to the changes in staff and leadership. However, in the last 6 months developments have been rapid. For example, teaching, learning and resources in ICT have been totally transformed and, as a result, standards are starting to rise. The curriculum is now more effectively planned to ensure that children can build progressively on their skills from year-to-year. Overall, teachers

are now providing work at the appropriate level for the majority of pupils, but there is more work to be done to stretch more able pupils in some lessons. There is also more work to be done to iron out inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. The school keeps a better check on the progress pupils make, but there is scope to use this information more effectively to set targets for them.

## 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	D	D	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	D	C	
science	B	B	E	D	

The test results shown above should be treated with some caution because of the low numbers of pupils in each year group. There were 17 pupils in the 2002 Year 6 class, which means that each child represents around 6 per cent. When pupils' results are compared to their previous attainment at age 7, the vast majority achieved at least as well as expected in all three subjects. A high percentage in this class had special educational needs and although their progress was steady, they did not achieve average levels, particularly in English. There were few pupils in the class who reached the higher level (Level 5) in all 3 subjects. Inspection findings indicate that for the current Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are average but remain below average in English. Although the majority of pupils are reaching average levels in reading and a fair proportion are reaching the above average level in writing, too few pupils are reaching either the average or the higher levels. The school has set itself challenging targets for this year, but is likely to fall short of these by a small margin.

Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are on course to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2003 tests for 7-year-olds. Inspection findings confirm this picture. Standards in reading and writing have improved, with significantly more pupils likely to achieve average standards. However, no pupils are likely to achieve the higher level (Level 3). Pupils have made at least steady and sometimes good progress from their starting points. Systematic teaching of the basic skills of reading, spelling and number ensures a firm foundation. However, in writing, more able pupils throughout the school could be challenged more effectively to sharpen progress. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are below average at both key stages. In most other subjects, standards are broadly typical of those found in most schools and pupils make steady progress. In ICT, pupils are now making good progress and standards are set to rise rapidly. It is not possible to judge standards in music or physical education at Key Stage 2 as little was seen during the inspection period. The children in the current reception class are making satisfactory progress in all areas of learning, despite being unlikely to achieve the goals for children of this age in most subjects. Pupils are on course to reach the expected goals in their physical development. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress because they are supported effectively by the adults who work with them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils are keen and interested when teaching is exciting. They are not as attentive when teaching is less stimulating.
Behaviour, in and out of	Satisfactory. Pupils behave consistently well at playtimes and when activities grip them in lessons. A significant minority of pupils in the Year

classrooms	3/4 class do not always behave well in lessons.
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Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils have sound opportunities to take responsibility. In most classes relationships at all levels are good. Effective procedures are in place to promote racial harmony.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Poor attendance affects the learning of a significant number of pupils.

A number of pupils in the Year 3/4 class find it difficult to behave well without high levels of adult supervision. Their attitudes to learning and their relationships with each other are sometimes poor. On some occasions, this affects their learning and that of other pupils. Their personal development has been hindered by the staffing changes they have experienced.

## 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.*

Teaching overall is satisfactory as at the last inspection. There were examples of good teaching seen in most classes and some very good teaching was observed. There was also one unsatisfactory and one poor lesson observed. The best teaching was seen in the Year 1/2 class, where it was consistently good or better. However, the impact of teaching on learning over time, has been satisfactory throughout the school. In the most effective lessons, teachers set out clearly what they want children to learn and match the work closely to pupils' abilities. They use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and to build on their previous learning. These lessons are imaginative and have a sparkle, which catches pupils' interest and fires their enthusiasm. As a result, pupils make sharp progress. In almost all lessons, ICT resources are used particularly effectively to illustrate key concepts and actively engage the children in learning. Where teaching is more ordinary, the sparkle is sometimes missing and pupils are not as well focused on their work. Tasks do not always provide the right level of challenge for every group and the pace of learning is slower. In the weaker lessons, pupils' behaviour was not managed effectively enough and learning was disrupted for all pupils in the class. There are inconsistencies between classes in how well teachers use marking to help pupils improve.

Early reading and number skills are taught effectively in the reception class. These are built on steadily as pupils move through the school. However, more able pupils are not challenged as effectively as they could be in writing. Teachers do not always pinpoint accurately enough the next steps in learning or have high enough expectations of what these pupils can achieve. The teaching of ICT has improved significantly and is having a marked impact on pupils' learning in many subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class by the adults who work with them. However, although appropriate targets are set for them, their progress towards these is not yet monitored as closely as it could be.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Pupils' learning is effectively enriched through visits, visitors and clubs. Opportunities for personal, social and health education could be planned more systematically.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils receive good support in class to help them achieve their targets. Their progress could be tracked more fully.



Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory overall. More opportunities could be systematically planned for spiritual development. Cultural development is good; pupils have many opportunities to learn about the cultures and beliefs of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Staff know pupils well and appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety and well being of pupils. A more careful eye could be kept on the personal development of some pupils in Year 3/4.

The school has a sound partnership with parents and is building on this. Parents have very positive views of the school.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the associate headteacher are good. She has stabilised the school and set a clear direction for its work, steering it firmly towards improvement. Co-ordinators are carrying out their responsibilities soundly. Most are new to their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. They support the school well and are committed to its development. After a less active period, they have recently become more closely involved in making decisions about the school's future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school now accurately identifies areas where improvement is needed. Information collected on pupils' performance in tests is used to make changes to teaching and the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Very good use is made of ICT. Funds are used effectively to support the school's priorities.

The school has a good number of support staff and deploys them effectively to support learning. It is working hard in conjunction with the local education authority to address staffing issues to ensure future stability. The environment is very attractive and stimulating, both inside and out. It ensures best value for the money it spends by comparing its results and obtaining the best prices for goods and services. However, it does not formally consult parents on developments.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good;</li> <li>• Children make good progress;</li> <li>• Children like school;</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no particular areas strongly highlighted by parents for improvement.</li> </ul>

There was a small return of questionnaires. Inspectors agree in part with the parents' comments. However, they judge that teaching and progress are satisfactory, rather than good. Expectations of pupils are also satisfactory. Most pupils like school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are average in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In English, standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection in mathematics and science. However, standards in English at Key Stage 2 are not as good as they were judged to be last time. Since the last inspection the school has been through a period of instability, which resulted in many staff changes over the last three years. More recently, the school has had three changes in leadership in a short space of time. This had a significant effect on the stability within the school. As a result, the rate of improvement has slowed. However, the school has achieved much in recent months and the situation has stabilised. Although standards in some subjects are not as strong as they were judged to be last time, there have been improvements in key areas, such as ICT. Caution must be used in comparing results over time, as the numbers of pupils in each year group is small. For example, this year there are only 12 Year 6 pupils and last year there were 17. One pupil may account for around 10 per cent of the school's performance figures. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the number of special needs pupils varies in each year group. Last year, over a third of the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were identified as having special educational needs. The figures are similar this year. The school has set itself challenging targets for this year, based on sound information about pupil progress and is working hard to achieve these. It is likely to fall a little way short of these, because the performance of one child has not been as strong as expected. The profile of the pupils has also changed since the last inspection, particularly over the last 3 years; their skills on entering school are now below those expected. Assessments carried out shortly after pupils enter school show that communication skills are a particularly weak area and have been for several years.
2. When results are examined over a period of 3 years, the majority of pupils in Year 6 attain at least the levels expected for their age in the national curriculum tests, in mathematics and science. The trend in these subjects has been above the national trend, with pupils achieving well above average results in some years. In English, the trend has been below the national picture. A sharp rise to broadly average levels in English in 2000 was sustained in 2001. Results then dipped sharply in all three subjects in 2002, when compared with all schools and schools in similar circumstances. However, when the results for these pupils were analysed against their previous attainment in Year 2, the majority had achieved at least as well as expected and a significant number in mathematics had done better.
3. The Key Stage 1 test results show a fluctuating picture in reading, with results dipping to well below average in some years and rising to average in others. In writing, results have remained stubbornly well below average over the last three years, despite an increasing number of pupils achieving average levels. This is largely because too few pupils achieve the higher level (Level 3) in the tests and many only just scrape over the Level 2 crossbar. Pupils perform consistently better in reading than they do in writing throughout the school.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on course to reach expected standards in mathematics and science. In English, the vast majority of Year 2 pupils are on course to reach average standards in both reading and writing, although few, if any, will reach the higher level. In Year 6, although there

is likely to be a slight increase in the number of pupils achieving both the average and the higher levels in the tests, overall standards are set to remain below average.

5. Standards in speaking and listening are below average at both key stages. A significant number of pupils enter school with communication skills which are lower than expected. Throughout the school, pupils do not build sufficiently well on their skills from year-to-year to make the progress that they should. Although the school has identified this as an area for improvement, opportunities for pupils to develop the skills that they need are not systematically planned for and are therefore inconsistent between classes. In reading, standards are broadly average at both key stages. At Key Stage 2, this represents satisfactory progress over their time in the school. However, a significant number of pupils in Year 2 have made good progress in reading, in relation to their starting points. This is because of the higher emphasis now being placed on the systematic teaching of phonics and the extra time given to group reading sessions. Similarly, a significant number of Year 1 pupils are also making good progress with reading. Standards in writing are close to average at Key Stage 1, but below average at Key Stage 2. Better progress is now being made at Key Stage 1 by those of average and below average ability, as a result of the school's drive to raise standards. However, up until now, many pupils have had a lot of ground to make up in Key Stage 2 and although progress has been steady, it has not been good enough to ensure they reach average standards. Progress for the more able pupils throughout the school is not as strong in writing as it is in reading. These pupils are not always challenged effectively enough and often mark time, rather than moving on to work at a higher level. Girls make better progress than boys in English. However, the school has recognised this and is working to develop methods of teaching, which will engage boys more effectively and raise their self-esteem.
6. Pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in mathematics throughout the school. The recent emphasis on practical problem solving is beginning to improve pupils' rate of learning. A strong emphasis is placed on developing numeracy skills. Effective use is made of the mental and oral session at the beginning of lessons to develop pupils' mental agility. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound grasp of basic number skills, such as counting and ordering numbers. This is built on steadily in Key Stage 2. Pupils develop a good working knowledge of number bonds and times tables, which gives them the confidence and skills to tackle a range of different problems, for example, using money and measures. There is less evidence, however, of pupils carrying out open-ended number investigations, which would benefit the more able pupils in particular.
7. Pupils also make satisfactory progress in science. They are getting a much better grounding in practical investigations than in previous years and this is effectively developing their understanding and skills, as well as their knowledge of the subject. There are occasions when the more able pupils at both key stages could be given work at a higher level of challenge to sharpen their progress, particularly in following their own lines of enquiry.
8. Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now average at both key stages. The current rate of progress is rapid throughout the school and standards are set to rise further in the near future. This is because resources have improved dramatically and teachers are more skilled and confident in their delivery of the subject. In most other subjects, pupils' standards are similar to those found in most primary school. It was not possible to judge standards in music or in physical education at Key Stage 2 because no lessons were seen.

9. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. However, despite this, the majority will not meet the standards expected for children of this age by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities. A recent increase in the number of support staff employed is ensuring that these pupils are well supported, both in class lessons and in small groups. The school does not currently have systematic procedures in place for identifying those pupils who may have special gifts or talents. These arrangements are rather 'ad hoc' at present. As a result, some pupils may 'slip through the net.' Extra-curricular activities are provided for some of these pupils at the local high school. However, these have not proved as successful as they might have because some pupils choose not to attend.

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

10. The recent turbulent period of staff changes and other uncertainties has had a negative impact upon pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. All aspects are somewhat weaker than at the time of the last inspection but there are encouraging signs that pupils' response is beginning to improve in some respects. Attendance, however, is declining and a small number of pupils sometimes disrupt lessons. These are key barriers to learning that the school needs to tackle in order to raise standards.
11. Pupils in reception have generally positive attitudes towards school and their learning. Their behaviour is satisfactory and they get on fairly well together. They enjoy socialising over early morning snacks that help the school day to get off to a good start. They beam with pride when chosen to share their news and show things they have brought from home but quite a few spoil the learning of others during discussions. This is because they often call out instead of indicating that they would like to speak and waiting to be selected. Most are fully aware that this is one of their class rules, but are not yet able to follow these consistently.
12. As they get older pupils' attitudes remain satisfactory. They are well motivated when good teaching and resources grab their interest. The new interactive whiteboards, for example, are used very effectively to help pupils understand their work and make learning fun. In a Year 1/2 lesson on the use of word banks, for instance, pupils were keen to answer the teacher's questions and share ideas because everything was explained very clearly using the new technology. Immature attitudes sometimes prevail when teaching is more ordinary and fails to spark pupils' enthusiasm. Some pupils listen attentively to their teachers but others are sometimes disrespectful and chat amongst themselves.
13. Parents expressed the view that behaviour has settled down recently. Inspectors agree that pupils generally behave satisfactorily but a small number in the Year 3/4 class sometimes disrupt lessons. Some of these pupils have special educational needs related to behavioural and emotional problems and have not been fully supported in overcoming their difficulties. Consequently, when staff are unfamiliar to them and they are expected to work in a different way, they find it very difficult to adjust. Relationships at times are strained and the smallest incident can trigger large behaviour swings. This severely affects progress on occasions, as was seen in a personal, social, health and citizenship lesson (PSHCE) on bullying, when the poor behaviour of a few pupils prevented the whole class from learning effectively. Explanations of the consequences of their actions and references to the school and class rules were largely ignored because pupils predicted that they would not be applied. The same class of pupils was positive, keen and well behaved when creating stencilled patterns in an art lesson. All got on well without fuss, some using

computers to aid their designs, whilst others worked independently on practising painting with their stencils. This was partly because they were involved in the task, but also because of the very high level of adult support provided to ensure good behaviour.

14. Pupils are well behaved in the playground, which is very well equipped with wall games and other challenges such as stilts, hoops and wheeled toys. Drawing materials are provided in a designated quiet area for those who prefer gentler pursuits. These recent improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes at playtimes. However, some pupils still find it hard to share the equipment and take turns. Staff and pupils report that enthusiasm of boys and girls for playing football caused friction in the past on the main playground. Pupils have taken the sensible decision to only play football during their free time when the adjacent field is dry enough to use for this purpose. No bullying or racism was seen during the inspection period and none was mentioned by parents. One pupil was excluded from school for a fixed period this year.
15. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Many are polite and friendly but some struggle to establish and maintain positive relationships. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for being buddies to younger pupils and for carrying out tasks, such as playing the pre-recorded music in assembly. They undertake these tasks sensibly and maturely. A growing number enjoy staying after school for the different clubs that are held and these have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and are helping strengthen relationships. Pupils' independent learning skills are reasonably well developed. They are able, for example, to use the library, CD-ROMs and the Internet to research topics they are studying.
16. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It was below average two years ago, the most recent year for which there are national comparisons, and declined further still last year. Attendance was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection but began to slip back from the national norm when the staffing difficulties began. A small number of pupils have poor or very poor attendance and this severely affects the standards they achieve. These pupils adversely skew the attendance statistics in this small school but pupils in general have far more absence for medical reasons and holidays than is usual. Progress inevitably is slower because learning is disjointed. There is minimal unauthorised absence but the school believes that some parents condone absence when their child is well enough to attend. Most pupils arrive punctually but a few are persistently late.

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

17. Teaching is satisfactory, as it was judged to be at the time of the last inspection. There have been some improvements since last time, with much better teaching in ICT and a better match of work to the abilities of the majority of pupils. However, the picture is not yet a consistent one; there are pockets of good and very good teaching and pockets where teaching is more ordinary and at times, unsatisfactory or poor. There is still room to challenge the more able pupils more effectively, particularly in writing. Since the last inspection, there have been many staff changes and no teachers remain from that time. There are no teachers who have been in the school for longer than 2 years. The school has also had problems recently in recruiting and retaining supply staff to cover for a teacher on long-term sick leave. During the inspection, the teacher in the Year 3/4 class had been in post for 3 weeks.

18. The teaching of Foundation Stage pupils is satisfactory and, as a result, children learn at a steady rate. Relationships are good and this ensures that children feel secure and get on with others. Most aspects of the early skills of reading, writing and number are taught systematically and effectively. This leads to good progress for some pupils. However, more opportunities could be provided for the children to develop their writing skills for a wider range of purposes. The reception teacher and the nursery nurse work well together as a team to ensure that children's needs are met. A good range of interesting activities is planned and resources provided so that children are encouraged to learn. However, there could be more opportunities for the children to talk about what they see, know and understand, in order to promote the development of listening, speaking and thinking skills.
19. The very best lessons are not only very well planned and organised, but are exciting and have a 'sparkle' that captures the children's imagination and fires their enthusiasm for learning. A really good example of this was seen in the Year 1/2 poetry lesson when the teacher, dressed in a magicians cloak and hat, led pupils into the darkened classroom to the sound of 'spooky' music and scenes from 'Harry Potter' on the whiteboard. There was a real sense of anticipation and excitement as the lesson began and the pupils' attention was fully focused on the task. Where teaching is more ordinary, pupils sometimes find it more difficult to concentrate and are less keen to get down to their work. The majority of lessons are characterised by good relationships and a purposeful working atmosphere. The exception to this is in the Year 3/4 class. These pupils have suffered from a period of turbulence, due to the absence of their teacher and the number of temporary teachers who have taken the class in recent months. This has unsettled a significant minority and, as a result, these pupils are finding it difficult to comply with school rules, get on with others and work hard. A number of these pupils have also suffered from the staffing turbulence of the past and consequently, their personal development as well as their learning has been inhibited. The school is working diligently to support the temporary teacher currently in post. However, for these pupils, there are times when their own learning and that of others is still disrupted. The unsatisfactory and poor lessons seen related to the teacher's difficulty in managing pupils' behaviour effectively enough without high levels of support from the headteacher and classroom assistants to ensure that effective learning could take place.
20. In the most effective lessons, teachers' plans are detailed and set out clearly what they want children to learn. This information is shared effectively with pupils so that they know what they are doing and why they are doing it. For example, in a Year 1/2 ICT lesson, the teacher displayed the objectives for the lesson on the interactive whiteboard and explained very clearly what they meant. She continually referred back to these as the lesson progressed, which kept children focused and helped them learn at a good rate. In a Year 5/6 literacy lesson, the teacher revisited the learning objectives with the pupils at the end to determine what they had learned and to make decisions with them about what they needed to learn next time. In some lessons, teachers undertake a careful recap of previous work, using questions effectively to check on what pupils have remembered so that they can get the starting point right. In a reception/Year 1 science lesson, an effective recap of the previous week's work on 'pushes and pulls' led to pupils identifying that a child in a picture 'went down the slide because of gravity.' However, in other lessons, recaps are somewhat brief and pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to express their ideas in depth. Similarly, whilst in some lessons teachers use the time at the end of lessons effectively to assess how much children have learned, reinforce the main points and deal with misconceptions, in other lessons this time is rushed or children simply show others what they have done.

21. In many lessons, tasks of varying difficulty are provided for pupils of different levels of ability. This was evident in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson. The more able pupils were effectively stretched, as they carried out an independent problem solving task. An extension activity was planned for those who completed this, which required them to apply their knowledge in an interesting, relevant way by planning a holiday. Less able pupils were working on simpler problems with adult support. As a result, all pupils made good progress because they remained interested and focused and no time was wasted. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that on occasions, teachers throughout the school give pupils the same task. There were examples of this, particularly in science and geography, but in other subjects also. Sometimes the tasks were based on filling in a commercially produced worksheet, which, while often proving effective in supporting the less able, lacked sufficient challenge for those of higher ability. An analysis of pupils' work in writing revealed that on some occasions, more able pupils could be faced with a greater level of challenge from the outset, to encourage them to produce work at a higher level.
22. In the majority of lessons seen resources are used well to illustrate the concepts being taught. For example, pupils in reception/Year 1 were enthralled when a granddad brought in his impressive collection of model trains and Year 3/4 pupils were really interested in a video clip of a Sikh tale and could identify the main message from the story, as a result. The recently installed interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to promote learning in all classes. The staff have worked very hard in a short space of time to develop their own confidence and skills in this area. Demonstrations and explanations are brought to life through the use of music, text, video, photographs and sound effects and children are often transfixed by what is being shown to them. The pupils themselves are becoming adept at using the boards, for example to highlight particular words or phrases in a text during literacy lessons. Teachers are good at teaching children the skills that they need to use computers for a range of purposes and are rapidly extending the use of computers into most other subjects.
23. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. Teachers of younger children help them to see the links between reading and writing and how to work out unfamiliar words. Teachers successfully promote the use of basic number skills through the mental and oral sessions at the start of numeracy lessons.
24. There are some weaker aspects of teaching that cut across all classes and subjects. Speaking and listening skills are not taught as systematically and consistently as they could be. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how well children will listen in class. For example, in a reception/Year 1 physical education lesson, the pace of learning was slowed because children were talking inappropriately and instructions had to be repeated. In a Year 3/4 literacy lesson, pupils found it difficult to carry out a group discussion exercise because their skills of listening to each other's points of view are poorly developed. Although teachers question pupils appropriately, they do not always provide sufficient space and time for pupils to reflect before they answer a question, nor do they always encourage them to extend their answers beyond one or two words. This affects their ability to use talk for reasoning and working things out, or for negotiation. There are also inconsistencies between classes in how well teachers use marking to help pupils improve. Where marking is good, teachers make evaluative comments which not only indicate how well pupils have done, but set appropriate targets for future learning. On other occasions, marking is rather cursory and amounts to simply a tick at the end of the piece of work.

25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The increase in the number of support staff is starting to make a difference to the progress some pupils are making. Pupils are provided with good support in most classes and in withdrawal groups. However, pupils with behavioural problems in the Year 3/4 class are not provided with enough support and guidance to help them improve their behaviour and attitudes to work. Teachers' planning takes appropriate account of the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and work is usually adapted accordingly for them and suitably linked to their learning targets. Individual education plans provide clear guidance. These are recent developments and the full impact of them is yet to be seen. Systems are not yet fully in place for tracking the progress pupils have made over time, to check the consistency of progress.

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

26. The quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils is satisfactory. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. However, there are some developing strengths and some areas that have improved since last time. The school meets its statutory requirements for all subjects of the national curriculum and also meets the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Nationally recommended curriculum guidelines have been adopted in most subjects and these have been adapted to relate them more closely to the pupils' needs. This is giving teachers good guidance on what to teach and when to teach it. It is also ensuring that pupils can build systematically on their skills from year-to-year. Local education authority guidelines have been utilised to ensure that planning for pupils in mixed-age classes meets their needs appropriately and avoids repetition.
27. The recently improved resources and opportunities for learning in ICT have made this subject a strength of the curriculum. ICT is now used to enhance both teaching and learning in many subjects. For example, pupils use their word processing and desktop publishing skills effectively in literacy to produce multimedia presentations and in mathematics and science, data handling programmes are used to collate and present information in different ways. Teachers are making very effective use of the interactive whiteboards, individual laptop computers and an extensive range of software to engage pupils more fully in both class and group activities and catch their imaginations by introducing lessons in exciting ways.
28. Another developing strength is the use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning experiences in many subjects. For example, the recent visit to Durham by the infant pupils has done much to stimulate their interest and develop their knowledge of the Fire Service as part of their history topic about the 'Great Fire of London.' It also developed their understanding of people in society who help us. Visits to Durham Cathedral and a local Gurdwara ensure pupils develop first-hand knowledge of the customs and practices of different religious groups. A visit from a science specialist sparked the interest of Year 5/6 pupils in their topic on sound and helped them make good progress in their understanding. Such experiences are starting to be used to develop pupils' speaking and writing skills. The school has also recently extended the range of practical, hands-on learning experiences offered to pupils. This is having a strong impact on learning in science and mathematics.
29. The curriculum for pupils in the reception class (Foundation Stage) is satisfactory. It is planned appropriately in relation to the six areas of learning outlined for pupils of this age. Interesting activities are planned within each area of learning to capture



children's interest and engage them in learning. The recently created outdoor play area provides an attractive environment in which children can play and learn together, for example, using wheeled toys. More opportunities could be provided for children to talk about their experiences and to 'have a go' at writing in a wider variety of situations.

30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is satisfactory. Improvements have been brought about in recent months as new systems have been implemented, although the full impact of these has yet to be realised. The school appropriately addresses the requirements of the revised Code of Practice. Teachers now devise good quality individual work programmes for these pupils. They contain detailed, realistic targets and a well-matched teaching programme, complete with learning support arrangements. There are currently limited arrangements in place to provide for those pupils identified as having particular gifts or talents.
31. The school has effectively implemented the strategies for teaching Literacy and Numeracy. The literacy curriculum is planned thoroughly with due regard to the national strategy. There is a good emphasis placed on the teaching of the basic skills of reading and spelling in particular. Good use is made of guided reading sessions and the school has devoted extra time to this. However, there needs to be better planned provision for speaking and listening and the few higher attaining pupils in each year group could be provided with greater challenges in writing. Basic number skills are taught well. Pupils throughout the school are developing a good understanding of number and are given sufficient opportunities to apply their skills in a variety of circumstances.
32. The range of additional learning opportunities, provided through the school's programme of extra-curricular activities, is good. These activities, which are led and supported by class teachers and sports coaches, extend the curriculum in art, dance and physical education. There is also a French Club that prepares pupils well for this subject at secondary school.
33. Provision for pupils' PSHCE is satisfactory overall. Sex education is taught effectively, helped by the school nurse talking to older pupils about puberty. Pupils suitably learn about keeping healthy and safe, including the dangers of drugs. Community police, for example, visit to raise pupils' awareness of the dangers that might face them. Discussion times, focussing upon issues of importance such as bullying, are not as well embedded and pupils find it hard to talk openly about their feelings. Citizenship is appropriately promoted through encouraging older pupils to become playground buddies and through charitable fundraising. Pupils, for example, have supported a school in Africa by collecting second-hand books to send there or to sell. They do not, however, have a regular forum for contributing their ideas to school improvement. Although sometimes involved in decision-making processes, there is no school or class council to enable them to experience democracy at first-hand. The school has identified as a priority the need for its PSHCE provision to be reviewed and developed, in order to ensure that all aspects are planned and taught systematically and progressively.
34. The school uses the local community well to enrich pupils' learning through visits and visitors. They learn about their village in history and geography and go further afield into the wider community to visit museums, places of worship, the theatre and the seaside. Local clergy occasionally lead the worship in school. During the inspection period a Salvation Army captain entertainingly brought home the message to pupils that they should be true to themselves rather than following the crowd. Theatre

groups and musicians perform in school and members of the local community are actively encouraged to share their skills and experiences with the pupils. Links with the local cricket club and Sunderland AFC are successful in helping pupils to develop their interests and skills. The school has recently strengthened its local bonds by donating redundant computers to the community centre for use by people of all ages, including pupils wishing to do their homework.

35. Beneficial relationships are established with the local high school. These links are helping to raise standards in ICT and other subjects. The high school's computer technician, for example, provides invaluable support and higher attaining pupils have access to ICT, art, science and drama clubs there. Year 6 pupils have accompanied pupils from the high school to a rugby match and to athletics events. Suitable arrangements are made to enable pupils to become familiar with the premises, staff and routines and for teachers to exchange relevant information. These ensure that the transition process is smooth.
36. Some aspects of spiritual and cultural provision have improved since the last inspection but the structure for promoting pupils' social and moral development, whilst sound, has weakened somewhat. This is largely due to the difficulties the school has faced in retaining staff. High turnover of teachers and lack of consistency of approach have unsettled the pupils and impacted upon relationships and behaviour. Nevertheless, all four elements are satisfactorily nurtured.
37. Spiritual development is chiefly promoted through collective worship, religious education lessons and the celebration of pupils' achievements. Worship takes place daily now in line with statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect upon weekly assembly themes. Class teachers and other staff do not generally attend the worship unless they are helping to lead it. This does little to promote the importance of the occasion, or the sense of community in school, and prevents staff from building upon the social and moral messages.
38. Religious education features strongly in the school's displays, which successfully promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Cultural development is good. A refreshingly high emphasis is placed upon representing the multiethnic nature of today's Britain. This successfully raises pupils' awareness of the different faiths and cultures in our society and helps them to respect others' beliefs and customs. Pupils' work in art on Asian patterns has also been beneficial. Multicultural education has improved greatly since the last inspection, at which time it merited scant reference.
39. Teachers and pupils negotiate promises at the start of the school year, which are discussed in assembly and formulated into whole-school pledges. These help pupils to think about the need to behave well and the impact of their actions upon others. Weekly celebration assemblies include nominations by midday supervisors and pupils themselves for the 'citizen of the week' awards and 'restaurant table' privileges. These awards successfully help to strengthen relationships at lunchtime. Extra-curricular clubs and educational visits, which include trips to museums and places of worship, further help to promote pupils' social and cultural development.

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

40. The school continues to care for its pupils satisfactorily. Pupils are well supervised by the staff at all times and older pupils are actively encouraged to share responsibility for looking after the younger ones. Staff know the pupils well. Midday supervisors and classroom assistants are suitably trained in the school's procedures

for managing pupils' behaviour positively. This helps them to fulfil their important role in maintaining the ethos successfully throughout the school day.

41. Pre-school children visit the reception class in the term before they start school and older pupils visit their prospective classes or schools. These good arrangements enable children to establish relationships with their new classmates and help to ease transitions.
42. Health and safety risk assessments are suitably undertaken and matters relating to child protection dealt with appropriately but some of the staff have not had any recent training. This is not surprising in the light of recent high staff turnover. A training session is arranged for all staff in the near future.
43. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' needs and sensitivities and give them sound academic and personal support and guidance. Most pupils with special educational needs are provided with good adult support and guidance. Their individual education plans set appropriate targets for them and these are regularly evaluated. However, support for some pupils with behaviour problems is not as well established. The school has suitably enlisted help from outside agencies for pupils who find it hard to manage their anger but has had to prioritise the limited support that is available. This affects the progress some of these pupils make in developing strategies to manage their behaviour in class.
44. Good behaviour and elimination of bullying, racism and harassment are promoted satisfactorily overall. Staff have focused upon improving behaviour and discipline this year, with some success, according to parents who believe that a small number of disruptive pupils are better controlled now. The school has introduced a well-liked rewards system whereby pupils collect stars for good or improved attitudes and behaviour. These accumulate towards much sought after bronze, silver and gold certificates and prizes.
45. Consequences of misbehaving include 'time-out' periods from the classroom or playground, involvement of parents and rare fixed period exclusions. Incidents are suitably recorded. These procedures, whilst working well for most pupils, have not eradicated the disruptive behaviour of a few, which sometimes mars learning, particularly in the mixed-age Year 3/4 class. Pupils in that class have experienced a high turnover of temporary teachers in the recent past and some need a more structured, consistent approach to managing their behaviour. Teacher's threats of invoking the consequences are not always carried out and a small number of pupils take advantage of this.
46. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance are unsatisfactory and have failed to prevent the recent decline. A computerised system for attendance data was successfully introduced last term. This is enabling the school to keep a closer check on patterns of absence than in the past. Reasons for absence are now carefully noted in the registers and, if not forthcoming, are appropriately sought. The education welfare officer is involved in contacting parents of those with worst attendance. However, the success of this has been limited to date. The school has no realistically attainable incentives or targets to encourage improved attendance, however small. Latecomers are marked in the registers appropriately but their time of arrival is not noted. This would enable the school to prove to parents of persistent latecomers just how much time their child is losing and to celebrate any small improvements.
47. The procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and have been improved since the last inspection. The school has firm plans in place to develop these further in the new school year. Results of national statutory and optional tests are analysed thoroughly and areas for

improvements in the curriculum or in teaching are highlighted. For example, as a result of close analysis, a more systematic programme for teaching spelling has been implemented and more emphasis has been placed on problem solving in mathematics.

48. Pupils' progress in the reception class is closely monitored, with effective use being made of assessments undertaken in the first few weeks of school to set targets for them. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the way it records and uses its assessment information in English, mathematics and science, so that teachers can track the progress of groups and individual pupils. This enables the teachers to identify the next broad steps in learning for pupils and set targets for them. However, teachers are not yet fully confident with this process and as a result, assessments and targets are not always used as effectively as they might be. There are inconsistencies between classes and within subjects. For example, in writing, targets are sometimes too broad and expressed in technical terms. This makes them hard for children to understand and for teachers and children to measure success against them. On other occasions, pupils are given the same target repeatedly, which suggests that they have been set at an inappropriate level, or that teaching has not taken them into account sufficiently well. However, the best examples are specific and pinpoint the right small steps in learning for pupils that are challenging, yet achievable.
49. Assessments in other subjects are not as well developed. Although records are kept, these are not always linked closely enough to National Curriculum attainment levels to help teachers measure progress. The school has identified this as an area for improvement in the School Improvement Plan from September 2003.

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

50. The school continues to be committed to establishing an effective partnership with parents. It has worked hard during the recent period of staff changes and uncertainties to maintain trusting relationships with them. This has largely proved successful and recent initiatives have begun to get parents and carers more involved in their children's learning. More parents are now coming into school for meetings, assemblies and events that enable parents to see children's work, find out about their progress and how they might support their learning at home. These events are helping to change perceptions about the value of education.
51. The smaller than usual proportion of parents who gave their views to inspectors about the school were generally very positive about all aspects of its provision. Some, understandably, expressed concerns about the large number of staff that have taught their children over the past year. Parents are, nevertheless, pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress made by their children.
52. The headteacher and staff were delighted with the turnout for the parents' meetings held in the spring and summer term. These were arranged in order to provide opportunities for as many parents as possible to attend. About nine out of ten pupils were represented, which was very encouraging for them and the staff. The children had baked biscuits for the event and were actively involved in showing parents their work. Parents were able to discuss their children's progress informally with class teachers. They have two other opportunities for discussion about progress each year and more in some cases if their child has special educational needs. Written reports for parents on progress are satisfactory overall in quality. They suitably cover pupils' achievements and aspects that need improvement in English and mathematics. However, some of the targets for improvement outlined are too general and others

are worded in language that is too complex for parents to understand. Reports for pupils in the Year 1/2 class are very good. They are well written, highly personalised and better identify attainment and progress in the non-core subjects than is common in such documents.

53. The school is in the early stages of developing links with parents of pupils with special educational needs, particularly at the review stage. Parents are invited to all reviews and those who do not take up the invitation are provided with a copy of their child's individual education plan. There is currently no forum for teachers, parents and pupils to discuss progress together at the review meetings. However, teachers take account of parents' views when writing individual education plans and setting targets. The views of the older pupils are also sought.
54. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall, as at the time of the last inspection. However, some aspects have improved since that time. Omissions in the school's brochure have been rectified and a good start has been made in explaining how and what the children are taught. The reception teacher has provided a suitable outline of the work that is underway this term, and the targets that the children are working towards. Reception parents have been encouraged to attend a recent curriculum meeting. They appreciated this opportunity to learn more about what goes on in school and attended in reasonable numbers. Firm plans are in place to extend the initiative to other year groups during the next school year.
55. The school occasionally asks groups of parents what they think about its provision but not all are given the chance of a regular say. Parents recently indicated that they would like more extra-curricular clubs and the school responded positively to their request.
56. Parents contribute satisfactorily to children's learning at home and to the life of the school. They supported Red Nose Day well, for example, when the children were encouraged to have a 'bad hair day' and take part in a talent show to raise money for Comic Relief. A small number of parents and governors volunteer considerable time and their skills towards helping in school and on educational visits. Some create story bags to make reading more fun for the pupils and others help with fundraising events. Staff greatly appreciate their efforts and their dedication.

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

57. The leadership and management of the associate headteacher, who has been in post for two terms, are good. She has set a clear direction for the work of the school and is steering it firmly towards improvement. She is well supported in this by the governors and staff. The school has been through a period of instability in the last few years, due to many staffing changes and, more recently, changes in leadership. This has slowed developments in some areas. For example, until very recently, the quality of teaching had not been effectively and consistently monitored and this has led to inconsistencies. Some parts of the key issues identified last time had been addressed, but staffing changes had resulted in slow progress towards some of these. However, the associate headteacher has made significant progress in a short space of time in ensuring that firm management procedures are in place and are understood and accepted by all. She has been determined to develop a strong sense of teamwork among the staff and governors and, to this end, has involved them fully in the decision making process. As a result, staff are very clear about what they are working towards and their part in this, and governors are playing a greater strategic role in making decisions for the future.

58. The headteacher has worked with energy and skill to evaluate the work of the school, in order to identify the key areas for improvement. She has had a particular impact on leading the school in the implementation of the new computer 'Test Bed' project. The headteacher has ensured that staff have had the necessary training to develop their skills and improve their confidence. She has effectively utilised the high quality support of local authority advisers and consultants both for training purposes and to assist with project management. The result has been a dramatic turnaround not only in the nature of the resources available for learning, but also in the standards pupils are starting to achieve and the rapid progress they are making. The learning curve has been steep, but staff are now making very effective use of the new resources to enhance teaching and learning in almost all subjects. The project has also had the effect of giving all the stakeholders in the school a goal to work towards. Staff and pupils have worked and are continuing to work with energy and enthusiasm to ensure its success.
59. Another major improvement has been the development of the school outdoor play areas to enhance personal and social development and to ensure adequate provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage. The playground has been organised to provide opportunities for different types of games and activities. Seating has been provided for those who enjoy quieter pursuits and ingenious resources, such as large-scale noughts and crosses games, which are attached to the walls, have been purchased. The classroom blackboards, which are no longer in use, have been recycled and attached to the playground walls for children to utilise in devising their own games. The Foundation Stage pupils now have their own fenced area of decking, which is utilised for a wide range of play and learning activities. The impact of the improvements can already be seen in the positive atmosphere on the playground and the good attitudes and behaviour of the majority of children during playtimes and lunchtimes. Most play together well and take good care of the equipment. The majority happily instigate and take part in a range of games and some enjoy the opportunity to read or to chat with friends.
60. Effective systems have been put in place for comparing the school's performance against that of schools nationally and those with a similar intake. The school is using the information it collects on pupils' attainment in tests and on their progress to identify gaps in teaching and learning and pinpoint those pupils who need extra support. However, there is still more work to be done to ensure the information is used to maximum effect in setting individual and group targets for pupils.
61. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but with strengths developing in some areas, such as ICT. Most co-ordinators are new to their roles and all have responsibility for more than one area. Effective deployment is currently made more difficult because of staff absence and also because one member of staff is newly qualified and as yet has not been given an area to manage. However, in the main, co-ordinators give good guidance and support to their colleagues. They now have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Most are directly involved in checking teachers' planning and some have checked on children's work. As a result, some are beginning to develop a clearer picture of standards in their subjects and have a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses than previously. The English co-ordinator has made a start on observing the quality of teaching. However, much of this work is in its very early stages and has yet to have a full impact on raising standards. The headteacher is working alongside staff, where appropriate to develop their skills. Performance management is being used as an effective tool in this process, with co-ordinators setting development targets related to their areas. For example, the English co-ordinator has identified the need to develop her skills in analysing performance data and training has been booked for

this purpose. However, there is still some way to go before co-ordinators have the skills and confidence to check on teaching and sharply identify areas for improvement.

62. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. There are two co-ordinators who share the responsibility. However, the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator is currently absent from school and the bulk of the work is being undertaken by the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, who also has responsibility for literacy, Early Years, music and history. She is working tremendously hard to ensure that the recent new procedures are implemented. Clear systems have recently been established and are starting to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school. The co-ordinator has a sound overview of pupils' progress and the targets set out in their individual education plans. In conjunction with the headteacher, she ensures that appropriate support is provided and that parents are involved. Pupils' progress in relation to their individual targets is monitored. However, the school's tracking system is not sufficiently developed to provide information on the progress pupils have made over time. This is an area for development. The school does not yet have a policy for the identification and support of gifted and talented pupils. The current systems are informal. As a result, opportunities could be missed to develop the abilities of such pupils as fully as possible.
63. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. They are committed to the school and have an appropriate knowledge of its strengths and where it needs to improve. They are beginning to make good use of the high quality information provided for them by the associate headteacher to help them plan strategically. For example, an analysis of test results has led to governors allocating funds to employ extra classroom support assistants.
64. The school budget is managed well, to support the school's educational priorities. Extra grants are used effectively for their specific purposes. For example, funds have been allocated wisely to employ more support assistants. This is having a beneficial effect on learning for a significant number of pupils, for example, by ensuring that national 'catch up' programmes can be fully utilised to improve the progress of pupils who need extra help with literacy. Grants to improve ICT, both specific to the school and those obtained by the cluster of schools linked to the 'Test Bed' project have been used particularly effectively to raise standards of teaching and learning. Funds have also been used effectively to improve the building and the outside areas to enhance the environment for learning and play. The governing body seeks best value for the money it spends by comparing the prices of goods and services and comparing the school's performance with that of others. However, there is a need for the school to consult more widely with parents, for example about changes to the curriculum. A start has been made on this through canvassing the opinions of small groups, however, as yet, there are no formal systems for ensuring that all parents have a 'voice.'
65. The accommodation is good and is well maintained. Teaching and support staff work hard to ensure the environment is bright and stimulating for the pupils, through the good quality, interesting displays they create, which place a high value on pupils' work. Resources are plentiful in most areas and well maintained. They are very good for ICT. The school secretary is efficient and carries out her responsibilities well. She provides a warm welcome for visitors and a friendly, yet professional, first point of contact with the school.
66. When pupils enter the school, their attainments are below those expected for their age. The majority of pupils make at least steady progress during their time in the school. The strong and effective leadership and management of the associate



headteacher are moving the school forward. It is therefore judged to give satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. The associate headteacher, staff and governors should:

**a) Improve standards in writing by:**

- making better use of assessment procedures to pinpoint more specifically the next steps in learning for groups and individuals;
- ensuring that pupils are aware of how they can improve their work and achieve their next learning target;
- ensuring that more able pupils are more consistently and effectively challenged;
- raising teachers' awareness of the precise requirements of each level of the national curriculum for writing and communicating these more effectively to older pupils, in particular;
- limiting the number of worksheets used and providing more opportunities for independent writing throughout the school.

(paragraphs: 3, 5, 18, 29, 78, 89, 91, 95, 112, 128, 153)

**b) Improve standards in speaking and listening by:**

- developing whole-school procedures and guidelines for teaching speaking and listening skills;
- providing more planned opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in all subjects;
- making more effective and consistent use of drama and role play throughout the school;
- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve in all classes.

(paragraphs: 5, 11, 18, 24, 29, 31, 70, 73, 76, 93)

**c) Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:**

- setting clear criteria against which the quality teaching can be evaluated;
- identifying and setting out clearly the steps teachers need to take to improve their practice and iron out inconsistencies;
- identifying existing good practice and sharing it throughout the school;
- ensuring that work is consistently set at the appropriate level for pupils of differing abilities;
- making more consistent use of marking to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

(paragraphs: 5, 6, 7, 17 - 25, 60, 61, 92, 104, 108, 112, 148, 153)

**d) Improve the behaviour, attitudes and personal development of some pupils in the Year 3/4 class by:**

- identifying and supporting their individual needs more effectively;
- setting clear expectations of their behaviour and ensuring that the consequences for misbehaviour are fully understood and consistently applied;
- improving the provision for personal development;
- ensuring stability of teaching for these pupils.

(paragraphs: 10, 13, 19, 24, 33, 43, 45, 93, 117, 134)

**e) Improve the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance:**

(paragraphs: 10, 16, 46)

The associate headteacher, staff and governors may also consider including the following minor issue in their action plan:

- implement procedures for the identification and support of gifted and talented pupils.

(paragraphs: 9, 30, 62)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	0

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	7	10	1	1	0
Percentage	0	21	29	42	4	4	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	86
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
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	5	12	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (88)	71 (75)	88 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (88)	59 (88)	82 (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	5	12	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (75)	76 (75)	82 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (50)	65 (88)	76 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Results are published only when there are more than 10 pupils who took the National Curriculum tests. In the 2001/2 Year 2 and 6 groups there were fewer than 10 boys, but more than 10 pupils in total

### ***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	86	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17:1
Average class size	21

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	307465
Total expenditure	316959
Expenditure per pupil	3729
Balance brought forward from previous year	40006
Balance carried forward to next year	30512

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

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	13

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	62	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	38	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	31	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	23	0	0	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	54	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	31	8	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	46	54	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	46	0	0	0

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



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

68. The provision for reception children is satisfactory. This indicates that the school has maintained standards since the previous inspection. The reception children are in a class with a small group of Year 1 pupils.
69. Attainment on entry to the school is lower than expected of children of this age, particularly in communication and number skills, although a range of ability is represented. Although just under half of the children are in line to achieve or exceed the expected learning goals in the six areas of learning, others are unlikely to reach these targets by the end of the reception year. All of the children, however, including those with special educational needs, achieve at least satisfactorily during their time in the Reception class in all of the areas of learning.
70. Taking account of teaching over time, as seen in an analysis of pupils' work and in the lessons observed, teaching is satisfactory. Staff promote good relationships with pupils and this ensures that children feel secure, know what is expected of them and get on well with adults and each other. However, expectations that all of the children will listen during discussion sessions and wait until it is their turn to speak are not set out clearly enough. The teaching of basic skills in aspects of reading, writing and number is effective, and this leads to some good achievement in these areas of learning, particularly for the average and more able children. Not enough opportunities are provided for the children to develop their writing skills for a wider range of purposes. Effective use is made of ICT and both the teacher and nursery nurse demonstrate good skills in using this to introduce the class to a topic, such as, transport in the past, and to support learning during lessons. The reception teacher and the nursery nurse work well together as a team and are effective in meeting the children's learning needs. Activities are interesting and resources are carefully planned within each area of learning to capture the children's imagination so that they want to learn. There are not enough opportunities for the children to talk about what they see, know and understand to promote the development of listening, speaking and thinking skills. The school has identified this as a weaker area of development when the children enter school. As a result, it has firm arrangements in place to implement a project involving parents, supporting them in helping their children in this important area.
71. Assessment procedures, through ongoing observations and records of achievement in all six areas of learning are good. They are effective in providing an up-to-date and accurate picture of how well each child is doing and the information is used effectively to plan what the children need to learn next. The marking of work in books and folders is also good. It praises what the children do well and explains in simple terms how they might improve their work; for example, in one writing task where the children were working on word building, the teacher commented, 'Remember to listen to the sounds in the middle of the word.' Individual reading diaries provide a good link between home and school. However, these do not provide parents with enough specific information on how they might help their children develop their reading skills. The children are appropriately introduced to elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this prepares them appropriately for work in Year 1.
72. The outdoor learning environment has recently been improved and provides a pleasant area for the children to develop a range of social, physical and creative

skills. In addition, good use is made of the extended school grounds as a learning environment.

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

73. Pupils make steady progress. Staff provide many opportunities for children to learn about themselves and the importance of good relationships. As a result, they work well together and are happy to share resources during activities. For example, they share equipment sensibly when playing in the outdoor area and in physical education lessons. A significant number find it difficult to wait until it is their turn to speak in class or group activities and have not yet learned to be attentive to what others say and not to call out. For example, during the shared part of a literacy lessons, learning was interrupted as the teacher had to refocus children's attention towards her questions and the text.
74. Staff are caring and encouraging and always pleased to celebrate the children's achievements. Resources are organised well and are easy for the children to collect and put away. This helps them feel secure in their surroundings and encourages independence. However, the majority of the children are very dependent on adult support in a wide range of activities and find it difficult to remain on task when not supervised.

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

75. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there are strengths in the way early reading skills are taught. Letter sounds and blends are taught systematically. As a result, many pupils are making good progress in this area.
76. Speaking and listening skills do not develop so well. Communication skills are a weaker area on entry to school. The majority of the children find difficulty in listening to others for longer than a few moments. However, progress is slower than it might be because expectations that they listen to what others have to say and wait until it is their turn to speak are not set out clearly enough. For the majority, skills in talking about what they see, know and understand are not well developed. Adults ask appropriate questions and model language well, particularly in the introduction of new key words and ideas. However, on occasions, children could be given more time to think about their answers.
77. The children enjoy looking at books and most are attentive when an adult talks with them about what is in a book or reads a story. For example, when reading 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', pupils joined in enthusiastically with the teacher, relishing the repetitions. They copied the way she emphasised certain words and phrases, developing good expression. The teacher pointed out the punctuation marks and text features to help them understand the part they play in the reading process. The large majority are beginning to read books from the early part of the school's reading scheme. Achievement is at least satisfactory for all children and better than this for the average and more able children who have made good progress in the development of their reading skills since the beginning of the year. This group read a range of familiar words and can identify the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make, using this knowledge to try to work out words they are not sure of.
78. An appropriate range of opportunities is provided for pupils to practise writing. They are encouraged to 'have a go' at writing for themselves, rather than simply copying. The majority write individual letters to communicate meaning and the average and more able children are beginning to write familiar words and sentences

independently. Most of the written work seen was based on pupils recording of their personal experiences. More opportunities could be provided for children to write for a wider range of purposes and to choose some of these purposes themselves. For example, more use could be made of role play to stimulate children's imaginative writing.

### **Mathematical development**

79. Teaching is satisfactory in this area. Many opportunities are provided for the children to develop their number skills. As a result, achievement is at least satisfactory, with evidence of good achievement for some in the development of basic number skills. A good variety of practical activities are planned and these are matched well to the children's learning needs. A particular feature of the provision lies in the effective use of resources to promote learning. However, there are not enough opportunities for the children to use their mathematical skills in more 'real-life' situations. The children are learning to count reliably to ten and beyond. Many recognise numbers to ten and some to twenty and above. More able children are confident to add two numbers together to find the total.
80. In the lesson observed, the interesting practical activities were effective in helping the children to learn the names of different coins. Some more able children developing skills of counting out specific amounts of money and using their number skills to count in tens.

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

81. An appropriate range of planned opportunities is provided for the children to build upon their understanding of the world around them. The children are developing an understanding of place through, for example, working with an adult in groups to draw large maps of the school building and grounds and then illustrating some of the features. A visit to Durham has helped the children to learn more about different types of transport resulting in a large display of paintings and box models of cars, lorries and trains.
82. They learn about the past through a range of activities. During the inspection, as part of the topic on transport, they listened to a visitor who told them about the different ways that children travelled to school when she was young. By the end of the lesson, most had learned that transport in the past was different from the present day.
83. The children are learning to observe and think about why things happen. For example, in one well planned and effectively taught activity, by the end of the lesson, most of the children were able to identify the difference between push and pull forces.

### **Physical development**

84. All of the children achieve well in the development of co-ordination and control in activities such as throwing and catching a ball, jumping and hopping. This is because all of these activities are carefully planned to build on the children's skills. Sound opportunities are also provided for them to develop their physical skills and their awareness of space, for example, through riding bikes and pushing prams in the outdoor area.
85. Handwriting, using scissors, drawing, and other activities that require smaller, more precise movements are not as effectively developed. Skills in this area are weaker on

entry to school. Consequently, the majority of the children are reliant on much adult support and are unlikely to achieve the expected learning goals in this aspect.

### **Creative development**

86. With close adult help, the children achieve satisfactorily in activities such as drawing, painting and making collage pictures. They make rubbings of natural materials such as tree bark and paint pictures of some of the things they saw on a visit to the public library.
87. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for the children to develop their creative and imaginative skills through role play activities. For example, in the literacy lesson, the children listened to a story through the listening centre and then acted it out using puppets.

### **ENGLISH**

88. Standards in reading and writing are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. Standards in speaking and listening are below average at the end of both key stages. This picture is not as strong as it was judged to be at the time of the last inspection, when standards were judged to be average overall in English. There are several reasons for this. The profile of the pupils has changed over time, particularly over the last 3 years; their skills on entering school are now below those expected. Assessments carried out shortly after pupils enter school show that communication skills are a particularly weak area and have been for several years. In some classes, the numbers of pupils with special educational needs is also particularly high. The numbers of pupils in each year group fluctuate, but classes are small and one pupil can dramatically affect overall test results.
89. The trend in test results in English at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last 3 years has been below the national trend. Inspection findings indicate that the majority of the current Year 6 pupils have achieved satisfactorily in relation to their attainment at the age of 7 years. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds are likely to show an improvement this year in the number of pupils achieving the average level. However, few pupils are on course to reach the higher level (Level 5) and, overall, they are likely to do better in reading than in writing. Inspection evidence and as yet unvalidated test results, show that the vast majority of the current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach at least the level expected for their age in both reading and writing. However, although significantly more pupils will reach a solid Level 2 in writing than last year, few if any will reach the higher level (Level 3).
90. There is evidence that progress in Key Stage 1 is accelerating, particularly in reading. A broad analysis of test results revealed the continuing gap between standards in reading and writing and identified a significant number of pupils who were only just scraping over the Level 2 'crossbar' in both subjects. The analysis also identified spelling as a weaker area. As a result, measures have been recently put into place to address these issues. Support from local educational authority advisory staff has been effectively utilised to improve staff confidence and skills in key areas. A phonic programme has been introduced, which is resulting in good, systematic teaching and allowing children to build progressively on their skills. Extra time outside the literacy hour is now utilised for group reading sessions and good use is being made of national 'catch up' programmes at both key stages to support those pupils who are falling short of average standards. As a result, many of the current Year 2 pupils have made good progress in reading. Action has been taken by the headteacher and

governors to provide extra support staff to enable work to be targeted more closely to meet pupils' needs.

91. The school has identified the need for more work to be done to raise standards in writing. Pupils are now given more opportunities to write in the literacy hour and the school is working to provide more opportunities for writing in other subjects, as a result. However, despite this, there are still occasions when pupils and, in particular, the more able could be challenged more effectively in writing, throughout the school. The current arrangements for tracking and recording pupils' progress do not always enable teachers to pinpoint sharply enough the next steps for some pupils. Often, teachers set targets that are too broad and not easy to measure against. They are not always expressed in language that can be clearly understood by the pupils themselves. Sometimes, pupils are given the same target over too long a period and mark time in their learning, as a result. On occasions, some teachers are over generous when ascribing a level to a piece of writing, particularly for the oldest, more able pupils. This does not help them to improve.
  
92. Teaching in English is satisfactory overall. There were examples of good and very good teaching seen. However, an analysis of pupils' work shows that the impact of teaching over time has been satisfactory. A strength in teaching is the use teachers are making of ICT to promote learning. Very effective use is being made in some lessons of the recently installed interactive whiteboards to catch pupils' interest and fire their imaginations. For example, pupils in Year 5/6 were able to watch video clips of advertisements of familiar products and compare the use of persuasive language. They also examined 'still' shots of advertisements and used the special pen to highlight particularly strong examples for the rest of the class. In Year 1/2 the board was used to very good effect to set the scene for writing 'Dark' poems. The pupils were able to use the sound function to add relevant sound effects to the class poem. Planning of lessons is also consistent and thorough, linked effectively to the National Literacy Strategy, with clear objectives outlined. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching between classes. More effective use could be made by some teachers of marking to explain how pupils might improve. The best examples contain evaluative comments and clear targets. However, in some instances marking is simply a tick at the bottom of the page with some spelling corrections highlighted. Better use is made by some teachers of the time at the end of each lesson. In some classes this is used effectively to recap the main points, pick up on any misunderstandings, set homework and identify topics to cover next time. In other classes, this time is sometimes rushed or used simply for pupils to tell others what they have done.
  
93. Throughout the school, many pupils find difficulty in clearly expressing their ideas and using language with precision, for example, to put their point of view across. Many older pupils are often still reticent when answering questions posed by adults and need much prompting and encouragement to answer in more than one or two words. This has a particular effect on their writing, as they often cannot translate their ideas into either spoken or written language. The school has identified that many pupils have poor communication skills on entry to school. However, although some firm plans are in place to remedy this, these are still in the early stages of implementation and have not yet had sufficient impact. Teachers have recognised the need to extend the pupils' vocabulary by engaging them in discussion and encouraging them to express themselves more fully. In some lessons pupils are encouraged to talk to each other and to adults before they write. For example, a group of Year 1 and 2 pupils shared their ideas with a support assistant about 'Dark', before writing their poems. She gave good encouragement, prompting them to refine their ideas. The end results were very pleasing and the pupils' self-esteem was raised as they were given the opportunity to read their poems to the class. However, this is not yet a

consistent picture throughout the school and such opportunities are 'ad-hoc', rather than carefully planned to ensure pupils build on their speaking skills progressively. Pupils are not always given the time and space to respond to teachers' questions and to work out what it is they want to say. On some occasions, teachers speak for them if they hesitate and on other occasions they do not prompt them or encourage them enough to extend their answers. Teachers in some lessons are planning really good opportunities for group discussion. For example, in one Year 3/4 lesson, pupils were discussing stereotyping after reading 'Bill's New Frock', by Anne Fine. However, the pupils did not have the necessary skills for this type of task and consequently found it difficult to listen to the ideas of others and take them on board. As a result, learning was interrupted because a significant number of pupils could not sustain a discussion.

94. The majority of children throughout the school make satisfactory progress in reading. Pupils are given a firm foundation in Key Stage 1 and this is built on steadily at Key Stage 2. Sound teaching of reading in small groups, the systematic teaching of phonics and the effective use of national 'catch up' programmes is starting to accelerate the progress of those pupils who find reading more difficult and those with special educational needs. Shared reading sessions in the literacy hour are used appropriately to introduce pupils to a wide range of texts and make reading strategies explicit to them. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, were making good progress in one session in using their skills of deduction to identify persuasive language in advertisements. Challenging questions probed their understanding and made them think hard as they scrutinised the text for examples. In Key Stage 1, systematic, focused teaching of letter sounds and blends is helping children to develop the skills they need to work out unfamiliar words. Year 2 pupils have learned a reasonable range of strategies to help understand the books they are reading. For example, they use the pictures to provide clues and some re-read sentences to get the meaning of a word from its context. All teachers model reading well in shared sessions. As a result, pupils find stories and poems enjoyable. Year 1 and 2 pupils read with good expression, as they followed their teacher's example when reading a 'Dark' poem. They were encouraged to read together, using different 'voices'; for example, a 'spooky' voice and a voice like a witch. They thoroughly enjoyed the task and this enjoyment enhanced their learning and had a beneficial effect on their own writing. Boys have not always enjoyed reading or achieved as much as girls. However, the school has identified this and recently paid attention to choosing texts that will capture their interest and develop their enthusiasm. Increasing use is also being made of ICT for this purpose. From Year 2 onwards, children are able to use reference books and dictionaries competently both to support their work in English and in other subjects. Although reading records are thorough and reading diaries are sent home regularly, these are not always used to best effect to support parents in helping their children at home.
95. The majority of pupils are now making satisfactory progress in writing in Key Stage 1. However, for the small number of more able pupils, progress could be sharper. Although a higher than average percentage of Year 2 pupils reach the upper range of Level 2, no pupils reached the higher level last year and no pupils are on course to reach it in this year's tests. In Key Stage 2, although the majority of pupils are now building steadily on their previous attainment, a significant number have too much ground to make up and are not yet reaching the average level. Few able pupils also reach the higher level and progress for this group is slower than it should be. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that, throughout the school, more able pupils are not always challenged as effectively as they might be. They are very often given the same tasks as those of other pupils, which do not always stretch them sufficiently well. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are not given sufficient indication of what they need to

do to achieve the higher level. Consequently, they have not always developed sufficient confidence in writing in a more formal style, for example when tackling discursive pieces. Teachers are starting to provide more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. For example, in Key Stage 1, they have retold familiar Bible stories and written about their visit to the local farm in geography. In Key Stage 2, pupils have written accounts of the life of Henry VIII and his wives and have made booklets about Ancient Greece. However, on too many occasions, worksheets are used which whilst sometimes supporting those with special needs effectively, place too few demands on the more able pupils. However, there are some strengths emerging. Teachers now pay closer attention to teaching the process of writing in lessons, as a direct result of training they have received. As a result, their use of interesting vocabulary to enliven stories and poems is developing well. For example, one more able pupil had written, 'The rust had joined it for eternity....' in his mystery story. Pupils are also developing their understanding and use of punctuation and spelling is improving. In Key Stage 1, good links are made between reading and writing. For example, in a reception/Year 1 lesson, when reading 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', the teacher made good use of the text to reinforce the children's understanding of punctuation, such as exclamation marks and text features such as bold type. By the end of Year 2, children can retell familiar tales with reasonable accuracy and detail. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their own imaginative writing. More able pupils can write at length, but they do not always develop the aspects of their writing, such as more complex sentences that would help them achieve the higher level for children of this age.

96. Standards in handwriting are average at both Key Stages. A more structured approach to the teaching of handwriting is proving beneficial, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, the Year 5 and 6 pupils have not had as solid a foundation to build on and standards could be better for some pupils.
97. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in English, in relation to their abilities. They often receive good quality, well planned support in class lessons. For example, during a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils were supported during a group discussion task. They found it hard to get to grips with what they were supposed to do and made little progress at first. However, the support assistant skilfully steered the task in another direction, settling the group, ensuring that they learned at a satisfactory rate and had something to contribute when the class got together again. However, as yet the progress of these pupils over time is not yet tracked as fully as it might be. Consequently it is not always easy for staff to pinpoint precisely how well they have achieved.
98. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is strongly committed to moving forward. She effectively manages resources and gives appropriate support to colleagues in planning work. She has constructed a sensible action plan to underpin future developments. More recently, she has been involved in analysing test results and in working alongside the headteacher to observe teaching, highlighting areas for improvement. She has identified the need for further training in these areas to develop her role more fully.

## **MATHEMATICS**

99. Inspection evidence and as yet un-validated test results for 2003 indicate that the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on course to reach average standards. Over time, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection. There is

no significant difference between the standards reached by boys and girls throughout the school.

100. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well. This has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers also make good use of published resources to supplement national guidance. The recent emphasis placed on practical problem solving has helped to improve the curriculum and to plug previous gaps in teaching and learning. However, there is less evidence in pupils' books of number investigations and pupils' explanations of the methods they have used.
101. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of basic number skills, such as counting and ordering numbers. They are beginning to understand place value and know how to break numbers into tens and units, so that they can make calculations simpler. They apply these skills to calculations involving money. Pupils are making appropriate progress with telling the time. They recognise o'clock and half past times and understand what a fraction, such as 'one half' or 'one quarter' means. Given their low level of attainment when they begin school, many of the current Year 2 pupils are achieving well. The vast majority of Key Stage 1 pupils work hard and show an interest in the lessons.
102. Pupils make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics in Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils cope well when multiplying and dividing by 10, 100 and 1000. They know the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages and use different methods of calculation when they are solving number problems. Their good knowledge of number bonds and times tables gives them confidence and accuracy to do this. More able pupils confidently plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants and can measure and draw angles accurately.
103. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities. They follow the same curriculum but work is set at the correct level for them and they receive good, targeted support. For example, in a lesson in Year 3/4, the lower attaining group received good support from the headteacher as they investigated lines of symmetry in different shapes. Good questioning such as 'Can we fold it?' or 'What does this tell us?' kept the pupils' interest, challenged them to think hard and helped them to complete the task correctly. This raised their confidence and self-esteem.
104. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, although there were examples of good and very good teaching observed. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the impact of teaching over time is also satisfactory. There are some strengths within the teaching. For example, number skills are generally taught well throughout the school. The mental and oral starter at the beginning of the lessons is used effectively to develop skills of counting, using number multiples and refining pupils' mental agility in handling number. These sessions have good pace and teachers involve all the pupils. Whiteboards are used to jot down answers and pupils are often encouraged to explain their answers or show different ways of calculating them. They enjoy responding to teachers' questions that ask, 'Can you do it another way?' and often come up with a good range of ideas. This shows that the pupils have a good understanding of what they are doing. In a very good lesson observed in the Year 1/2 class, pupils achieved particularly well because the lesson had been planned very thoroughly and the tasks were well matched to their differing abilities. All pupils made very good progress ordering different sets of numbers. The lesson was conducted at a very good pace and the classroom assistants gave good, focused support to the different groups. The very good relationships in this class ensure that the pupils work



hard because they want to please their teacher. However, there are inconsistencies in teaching between classes. In the more effective lessons, teachers share with children what it is they want them to learn. They are often referred back to these objectives during the lesson to check whether the pupils are achieving what they should be doing. For example, in a good lesson in the Year 5/6 class the teacher reminded them of the lesson objectives of converting analogue time to twenty four hour clock times, when she was checking the progress the pupils were making. However, in some other lessons, teachers do not explain the targets for learning clearly enough. Consequently, pupils are less clear about what they are trying to achieve and the pace slips. The time at the end of the lessons is sometimes used effectively to assess and review what has been learned. For example, in Year 1/2, the teacher used a puppet to help her to order numbers as she recapped on the main points of the lesson. This kept the pupils interested and made them think carefully when she deliberately made some mistakes. At other times, for example in a reception/Year 1 lesson, this time was not used so effectively because pupils had 'gone off the boil' and did not listen as well as they should.

105. In most classes, teachers manage the pupils well and the pupils respond by working hard in the lessons and behaving well. They enjoy mathematics and this makes them willing learners. However, this is not the case in the Year 3/4 class, where a significant minority of pupils find it hard to concentrate and behave sensibly, without very high levels of adult support. This slows the progress, not just for these pupils, but also for the rest because the teacher has to stop the lesson and constantly reprimand the badly behaved pupils and try to refocus their attention. This also makes it more difficult for these pupils to tackle practical activities and their work indicates that they have undertaken a very high percentage of formal 'pencil and paper' exercises throughout the year.
106. ICT is used appropriately to support pupils' learning in mathematics. Pupils use carefully selected programs to help them develop their mathematical skills. Very effective use is being made by teachers of the newly installed interactive whiteboards. For example, teachers use them to demonstrate different strategies for working out problems, to engage all pupils in activities, such as, coin recognition and to order numbers on an interactive number line. This captures the children's interest and keeps them involved and focused on the lesson.
107. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject and so has not yet had the opportunity to impact on standards. However, she has good ideas for taking the subject forward; for example, she is planning to further develop the assessment systems and increase the monitoring of teaching, teachers' plans and children's work. Resources for mathematics are plentiful and of good quality.

## **SCIENCE**

108. Standards in science are average at both key stages and the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection. The school has taken steps recently to improve the opportunities provided for pupils to carry out investigative work. As a result, pupils are benefiting by undertaking interesting practical, 'hands-on' activities, which is deepening their understanding and sharpening their skills. However, there are still occasions when teachers could stretch the more able pupils more effectively, for example, by providing more opportunities for them to follow their own lines of enquiry and record findings independently. Pupils' progress is tracked, but the

information gathered is not yet used as effectively as it could be to set targets for pupils to ensure they build on their skills more rapidly.

109. The subject co-ordinator is currently absent from school. However, evidence suggests that leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The school has adopted national guidelines to underpin teaching and learning in science. This has been appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and provide effectively for the mixed-age classes. Guidance is also provided as to the use of a range of teaching strategies to support children's learning.
110. The oldest pupils in the school show a keen interest in the topics they had studied and demonstrate good recall of their work on forces and how materials altered due to changes in temperature. They can also express their opinions on the role people need to play in protecting the environment. They have a firm grasp of life processes and living things, demonstrated, for example, by their understanding of the importance of food chains and the water cycle. Appropriate links are made with their work in geography, as they study, for example, the effects of water on different types of rock.
111. Younger pupils have appropriate opportunities to investigate and explore topics. For example, some of the youngest children have explored the effect of gravity and how the angle of steepness and the surface of a ramp will affect the speed an object travels at. Year 2 pupils also carry out investigations into different light sources and reflective surface. Key Stage 1 pupils have a positive attitude towards lessons. They work well together when sharing resources and ideas.
112. Evidence from the analysis of pupils' work indicates that the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is satisfactory. However, during the inspection, the teaching seen was good. Planning was thorough and provided appropriate tasks for the different ability groups within classes. Resources were carefully chosen and well used to illustrate the concepts being taught. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to good effect to show the children a letter written to them by 'Little Bear' asking them questions about light. This captured their interest and, as a result, they worked hard at investigating answers to his questions, using computers to record their findings in replies to the letter. This gave pupils good opportunities to practice their literacy skills as well. Good quality questioning from the teacher was in evidence, with the teacher asking, 'How does it feel?' and 'What could you see?' This encouraged pupils to participate in discussion. The most able pupils provided fuller answers and expressed their opinions and judgements well. One 7-year-old knew that 'the light bulb is lit by mains electricity.' Teachers always use appropriate technical and scientific vocabulary and encourage pupils to do the same. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in science. This is largely due to the quality of relationships and support provided by the classroom assistants. There are some weaker aspects of teaching. There is an over dependency on the use of commercially produced work sheets in some lessons, particularly for the older pupils. This results on occasions in the needs of some pupils not being fully met. It affects the progress of the more able pupils, because the demands made on them do not stretch their thinking and opportunities are limited for them to use and develop their recording skills to the full. Marking is not carried out consistently or used as effectively as it could be both to record pupil progress and to indicate to pupils how they might improve.
113. The science curriculum is enriched by a range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school. For example, recent visits have taken place to the Discovery Museum in Newcastle and to the seaside to support work on the senses. These

visits have a marked impact on children's learning, extending their understanding and stimulating the most able pupils to interpret their experiences and observations. A recent visit from a forensic scientist provided Year 5/6 pupils with a large number of visual experiments on sound frequencies and deepened their understanding of how technology has allowed us to record them. Throughout the lesson good use was made of technical vocabulary explaining pitch, volume and frequency. The pupils responded positively by being attentive and interacting with the experiments and they learned rapidly, as a result.

114. Science resources are satisfactory and are well managed. High quality displays celebrate pupils' work in science and serve as a good visual reminder of what they have learned. These are frequently enhanced by a range of artefacts and equipment that encourage pupils to explore and interact with them.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. Pupils make satisfactory progress and are on course to attain the standards expected for their age by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
116. Evidence from work on display around the school and in pupils' sketchbooks indicates that standards in each year group are similar to those seen in most schools. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills in observational drawing and these are built upon as they progress through the school, so that by the age of 11 years, they work confidently with a range of visual information. For example, they carefully observe and draw the patterns made by the seeds inside a pomegranate. They explore ideas such as drawing natural sculpture and using shading to create form. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills in drawing in proportion. Examples in sketchbooks show that they are aware of the position of different features within the face. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicates that although they have a satisfactory knowledge of other aspects of art, such as printing, collage and working with clay, they know very little about the work or lives of any famous artists.
117. The quality of teaching, based on the lessons seen and evidence of work over time, is satisfactory. No judgement on the teaching of art was made in the previous inspection report. Pupils are enabled to build upon their art and design skills as they move through the school. In the lessons seen, pupils in Year 5, all achieved well, including those with special educational needs who were provided with good adult support. The teacher's subject knowledge and skilful demonstration of techniques resulted in the pupils producing carefully executed and colourful wax drawings. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class were motivated well by the very effective use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate the different effects of pattern. As a result of this and the high level of adult support during the lesson, they really enjoyed using stencils to make their own patterns and worked hard as they developed their skills in computer-generated design.
118. The pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school. A particularly effective feature lies in the use of art to support work in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. A good example was seen in the work on patterns as part of an investigation into the features of buildings in the Year 1/2 class. Pupils drew tree and leaf patterns to represent the school and added their interpretation that, 'We all start school as small shrubs and leave as blossoming trees.' Effective links are made with ICT to develop computer-generated designs and pictures and to support learning in lessons.

119. The headteacher is currently 'caretaking' the leadership and management of the subject to ensure that it is being satisfactorily maintained. The scheme of work appropriately addresses the full programme of study. Assessment and recording procedures ensure that teachers maintain an ongoing record of how well pupils are achieving. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development through opportunities for them to be creative and to work with others. A small number of pupils take part in the school's weekly art club. This offers a positive social and educational experience. During the inspection, pupils attending the session enjoyed practising marbling techniques. Staff place high value on the pupils' artwork through the attractive displays they create. This not only adds much to the stimulating environment, but also encourages pupils to see themselves as artists.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

120. Standards in design and technology are broadly typical of those found in most schools and are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory in both key stages. Throughout the school, pupils work on an appropriate range of topics, designing working with a variety of materials and evaluating their products. They also undertake food technology projects. No lessons were seen during the inspection, as the subject is taught in half termly blocks alternately with art. However, an analysis of pupils' work on display indicates that teaching is satisfactory. The oldest pupils within the school have experienced a range of design-based activities and have acquired sufficient skills during their time in the school to become confident model makers.
121. Younger pupils have designed and made a range of clay tiles that they feel best reflects the patterns they find within the building. They have designed and made pizzas, identifying the ingredients they need and the method of baking before eating and enjoying the finished product. Mathematics skills were used effectively in weighing the ingredients. Older pupils in the school have been taught a variety of ways to join paper and card, for example, using split pin joints, flaps, springs and envelopes. As a result, they have the necessary skills and confidence to make their own pop up books for younger children. They have also used their knowledge of paper technology to make a variety of headbands to use for role play. The oldest pupils have each produced a radio-controlled buggy, with help from parents. They have used their knowledge and skills to create a chassis out of softwood and have cut and joined cardboard to provide the body shell. To complete their models, pupils used their knowledge from science lessons well to incorporate electric circuits to create flashing lights for the vehicle. Pupils showed a clear understanding of the design, build and evaluation process through the project. The designs, models and evaluations also show an understanding of the need for accurate measurements and clear labelling of diagrams. Pupils' self esteem was raised as they enjoyed displaying the completed buggies for their parents at Open Day.
122. Pupils who were interviewed spoke enthusiastically about being provided with the opportunity to cook. They explained that they have had a number of opportunities to practise their skills through cooking for events such as the Strawberry Fair and Red Nose Day, when they produce chocolate nests, cakes and biscuits. Pupils' work is valued and celebrated and the quality of display is good in all classrooms. This helps provide an informative and colourful learning environment.
123. The subject is currently satisfactorily lead and managed on a temporary basis by the headteacher. Teachers follow the latest national guidelines for the subject. These provide clear direction, ensure that all aspects are covered and that pupils can build progressively on their skills from year to year. In addition there are appropriate health

and safety arrangements in place, which follow guidelines outlined by the local authority. Resources for the subject are adequate and well organised. However, there is currently no action plan in place to guide future developments.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

124. Geography is taught in alternating half termly blocks and because of this, no lessons were seen. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that standards are similar to those found in most schools at the end of both key stages, as at the time of the last inspection. From the work seen, it is clear that teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress.
125. The school follows nationally recommended and local education authority guidelines and adapts them to meet the needs of the pupils. This ensures that there is a satisfactory balance between the teaching of skills, such as map work and subject knowledge. It also ensures that pupils can develop their understanding and skills steadily from year-to-year. As pupils are taught in mixed age classes, a two-year topic cycle is planned so that work is not repeated. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to research topics from books and, increasingly, using ICT. The school's own resources are supplemented by making effective use of book loans from the library service. The co-ordinator is currently absent from school. However, the associate headteacher is keeping a sound overview of the subject.
126. Visits to places of interest are used well to enhance learning experiences. For example, pupils have visited the seaside, the nearby city of Durham and studied the River Tees and the landscape around Middletown-in-Teesdale. Key Stage 1 pupils have visited a nearby farm, taking good account of features in their local landscape.
127. Sound links are made between geography and other subjects. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils have used their mathematics skills to measure distances between places on a map and used co-ordinates to find key features. Learning in science has been effectively utilised by Year 6 pupils to understand the action of water on different types of rock, using terms such as 'permeable' and 'impermeable.' The study of a village in India gives pupils appropriate opportunity to compare life in Chembokolli with life in the village of Sunnybrow and understand the similarities and differences between the two.
128. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, overall, pupils study topics in sufficient detail. However, pupils in Year 6 have studied a more limited range of topics than those in other classes this year. The school is adapting the planning to ensure that this situation is remedied. Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes supported in their learning by being given tasks that require less of them in terms of reading and writing. For example, 'writing frames' are used which require less written recording. This ensures that they make the same progress as others and are not held back by their weaker literacy skills. However, on occasions, an over use of worksheets which direct pupils' thinking and require one or two word answers limits the opportunity for more able pupils to pose their own questions and record their findings independently.

## **HISTORY**

129. Standards in history are similar to those found in most schools at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

130. The school has adopted the most recent national guidelines and has begun to adapt them to make more effective links with other subjects. Topics are taught over a two-year cycle in order to cater appropriately for the mixed age classes and ensure that pupils can build progressively on their knowledge and skills. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to research topics from books, from CD-ROMs and from the Internet. The school's own resources are supplemented well through loans of artefacts and books borrowed from the local education authority. The school museum provides a really good way of stimulating the pupils' interest by giving them the opportunity to look at different artefacts. At the time of the inspection a high quality display of Victorian artefacts and home life helped to remind the pupils of their topic on Victorian England. Very good use is made of the local area to enrich the pupils' historical understanding. Visits to places such as Hadrian's Wall, the Beamish Museum and Durham Cathedral provide good opportunities for the pupils to study history at first hand. This generates interest and enthusiasm and helps to ensure that they learn effectively.
131. By the end of Year 2, pupils have an understanding of life 'then' and 'now.' They are able to make comparisons, for example, between the Fire Service today and what it was like during the time of 'The Great Fire of London.' They know that we can use photographs, artefacts and pictures from the past to give us information.
132. By the end of Year 6, pupils can talk about main people and events of the periods they have studied, such as Henry VIII, or Gods they worshipped in Ancient Greece. They know about the key events in Queen Victoria's reign and how they have impacted on our lives today. They use their writing skills appropriately, for example, to write accounts of why Henry VIII had six wives and link their history to art when they complete Tudor brass rubbings.
133. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. In the two lessons seen during the inspection, one lesson was very good and the other in the Year 3/4 class was unsatisfactory. In this lesson, although it was well planned and prepared, children did not make sufficient progress. This was due to the fact that a number of pupils inhibited learning because of their disruptive behaviour and the lack of respect shown to the adults working with them.
134. In the very good lesson in Year 1/2, the pupils were investigating why the 'Great Fire of London' spread so quickly. The teacher's very good questioning reinforced the pupils' previous knowledge and the very interesting activities such as sketching, use of jigsaws and use of ICT to write accounts and word games, kept the pupils on task throughout. The pupils were motivated because of their recent visit to the Fire Station in Durham.
135. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator gives sound support to her colleagues when planning topics and organises resources well. However, history has not been a priority recently and, as a result, she has had few opportunities to check on the standards pupils are achieving. Assessments are completed at the end of each topic. However, these could be linked more closely to the national curriculum to provide a more comprehensive picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Resources for the subject are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. Standards in ICT are typical of those found in most schools at the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when

standards were unsatisfactory. There has been a tremendous improvement in the provision for ICT recently, through the school being part of a national project to develop the subject. The school has embraced the project wholeheartedly and staff are working with commitment and enthusiasm to ensure its success. Much has been accomplished in a short space of time and the learning curve for both staff and pupils has been steep. However, the very high quality, plentiful resources, staff training and time given to the subject are resulting in exciting teaching and rapid learning. Pupils are now making sharp progress throughout the school and standards are set to rise further. A strength in the subject is the way in which the use of computer technology is planned into almost all areas of the curriculum.

137. The co-ordinator is leading and managing the subject well. She has considerable expertise and is leading by example in using the new resources to maximum effect, giving good support and guidance to her colleagues. The school uses the nationally agreed guidelines for teaching the subject and these have been adapted to meet the needs of the school. Assessments of pupils' progress set against the learning objectives of the scheme are currently undertaken. However, through the 'Test bed' project the school is in the process of implementing the 'Digital Excellence' assessment scheme. This enables pupils to develop at their own level by closely tracking their progress and identifying their next learning steps.
138. Teaching is good overall. Only one ICT lesson was observed during the inspection and this was very good. However, many lessons were observed where teachers and pupils were using ICT effectively in their work in different subjects. Teachers and classroom assistants were observed giving good, focused support to pupils, encouraging them to 'have a go' for themselves. Teachers' demonstrations of how to use programmes were consistently good. Pupils use the Internet regularly to access information, for example, for their history and geography topics. In science they produce graphs and charts using a data-handling package. In mathematics number programs are used to develop their skills. Year 5/6 pupils were designing their own advertisements, complete with voice-overs, during their English lessons, making very effective use of individual laptop computers. This was an interesting, practical task, which gave real purpose to their writing, with the needs of the audience in mind. This class is also using a range of ICT skills, working on 'Power Point' multimedia presentations as part of their geography project. In the very good lesson seen, Year 1/2 pupils were inserting words into a poem. The teacher's very good questioning and use of the interactive whiteboards to create images for the pupils motivated them to work hard. Tasks were set at the correct levels for each group and all the pupils made good progress. Sensitive support was given by the classroom assistant to those with special educational needs. This enabled them to undertake a similar task to the other pupils, with confidence.
139. Infant pupils build well on the skills they gain in the reception year. By the age of seven, most pupils are competent in using the mouse and are beginning to develop appropriate typing skills using the keyboard to identify letters, capitalise, use the space bar and delete and insert words. Pupils know how to save their work and can use the computer to generate pictures. By the age of 11 years, pupils are able to access programs confidently and can load materials such as photographs in relation to multimedia presentations. They know how to save, organise and refine information in different forms. They use words such as 'drag', 'rotate', 'edit' and 'clipart' with confidence and demonstrate good understanding of what they mean. Their keyboard skills are well developed and many type using both hands.
140. Work in ICT is often part of their everyday work in other subjects and this helps to consolidate and develop pupils' skills effectively. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to instructions and act upon them enthusiastically. They greatly value the time they have

on the computers and work hard. Pupils are very well behaved whilst on task, show great interest in their work and sustain concentration well. Pupils help each other and those with special educational needs benefit from the support of their peers as well as from the classroom assistants. Pupils treat the equipment with respect and, as a result of their positive attitudes towards the subject, they make good progress.

## **MUSIC**

141. It was not possible to judge overall standards in music, or the quality of teaching, as no music lessons were observed. Music is a feature in assemblies and offers satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their listening skills and appreciation of music. It is used as a background to promote reflection. In the assemblies observed, most of the pupils were quietly responsive to the music being played. The standard of singing in assemblies is satisfactory. Pupils sing hymns tunefully in response to the music being played.
142. Planning for music shows that all aspects of the subject are covered appropriately throughout the school. Music is taught in blocks of lessons throughout the year. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that they are given satisfactory opportunities to develop singing and listening skills through, for example, singing two-part songs and listening to different types of music.
143. Teachers keep records of pupils' achievements in the subject using an agreed whole-school system of recording pupils' skills and responses. This information is used to inform reports to parents and provides teachers with satisfactory information on how well pupils are progressing.
144. A range of musical activities provides satisfactory opportunities for the pupils to take part in musical events, such as the 'Red Nose Day' talent show performed for pupils and their parents and to listen to professional music groups. A small number of pupils are learning to play a musical instrument. A music club was held earlier in the school year to offer pupils opportunities to take part in a range of musical activities, such as composing 'sound stories' and exploring the electronic keyboard.
145. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. Currently, however, there are not enough opportunities for her to observe teaching and learning to provide a clearer overview of how well pupils' musical skills are being taught throughout the school. Resources to support teaching and learning in the subject are of good quality and are well organised.
146. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' personal and cultural development through opportunities for them to take part in and respond to music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147. Standards reached by children at Key Stage 1 are broadly typical of those found in most schools, as at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress. It is not possible to judge standards or teaching at Key Stage 2 as no lessons were seen. However, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicate that an appropriate range of activities is covered throughout the year, including swimming, dance, gymnastics and a variety of team sports.
148. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. One was very good and the other was satisfactory. Both lessons were well planned and thoroughly prepared. In the very good lesson, teaching moved at a sharp pace and pupils made very good progress



with linking movements together to create a dance. They showed good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies as they carried out warm-up and cool-down activities. The teacher gave clear instructions and built on the children's achievements. Pupils worked well together, co-operating and sharing their ideas. However, where teaching was more ordinary, pupils did not listen attentively enough to the teacher's explanations and the pace slowed as she had to repeat instructions and bring pupils back to the task. Opportunities were missed to develop pupils' awareness of the effects of exercise on their bodies during warm-up activities. In both lessons, classroom assistants effectively supported groups and individual pupils, developing their confidence and skills

149. The curriculum is enriched through the use of specialist coaches who work with the children in activities, such as, rugby, cricket, table tennis and basketball. This work has resulted in the children participating in a range of sports festivals within the local community. A range of after school clubs, which include dance and football, further enrich learning for those who take part. The dance club session, which was observed during the inspection, had a good number of pupils attending from across the school and included both girls and boys. Pupils interviewed reported that they enjoyed the wide range of sports taught to them and felt that keeping fit was important to them and their health.
150. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has only held the post for a year but has a strong action plan in place that guides future developments. She represents the school in the local primary cluster, which provides good opportunities to share ideas and resources to develop the curriculum. The school is currently trialling new subject guidelines provided by the local education authority, to ensure that pupils can build on their skills effectively in all areas of the subject. Staffs have identified the need to improve their skills in teaching dance and training has been organised to address this. The school has a sound range of gymnastics and games equipment stored centrally. However, there are some difficulties with storage and access, particularly with gymnastic mats. The school has good sized outdoor facilities, with both grassed and hard surface areas. The playground surface, however, is somewhat uneven and line markings are faded and in need of replacement.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Standards at both key stages are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus and typical of those found in most schools. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. One lesson was seen during the inspection and this was satisfactory. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress throughout the school in learning facts about the faiths studied and in understanding some of the messages from religion.
152. Pupils throughout the school develop a satisfactory understanding of the different faiths they study. They learn about the customs and beliefs of the major faiths. Year 3 and 4 pupils know important stories from several faiths and can identify the messages within them. They can explain the 'Five Ks' of Sikhism, for example. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can describe the different Hindu gods and goddesses and compare Hindu celebrations and festivals with those of Christianity. They have a clear understanding of Muslim prayer rituals and the importance of prayer to people of other faiths. Key Stage 1 pupils can retell familiar Bible stories. They know that the Bible is the special book of Christians and that the Torah contains the special writings of the Jewish faith. They study concepts such as friendship and link this, for example, to learning about the disciples as friends of Jesus.

153. The locally agreed syllabus has been used appropriately to guide teachers' planning. It ensures that pupils in the mixed age classes can build appropriately on their knowledge and skills from year-to-year, without repetition. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning. For example, pupils have visited Durham Cathedral and a local Gurdwara. They have regular visits from local clergy and have had visitors from the Sikh faith and from the Salvation Army. Teachers are now making greater use of ICT to provide opportunities for research, using both CD-ROMs and the Internet. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to use their literacy skills. For example, pupils have retold stories in their own words and written about the impact the stories of Jesus have made upon their own lives. However, such opportunities could be further developed. More opportunities could also be provided for pupils to express their ideas and feelings through drama and role play. On occasions, worksheets are used when it would be more beneficial for pupils to record work themselves. This limits the progress of the more able, in particular.
154. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and gives sound guidance to colleagues on planning and resources. She has identified sensible priorities to develop the subject further. The subject is given a high profile throughout the school. Displays in corridors and classrooms are of a high standard and incorporate many interesting books and artefacts to stimulate the pupils' interest. In response, older pupils report that they enjoy the subject and find it interesting.