

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWKER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chester-le-Street, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 131233

Headteacher: Mrs Joan Gammon

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter McGaw
1206

Dates of inspection: 29 January - 1 February 2001

Inspection number: 67033

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Waldrige Road
Chester-le-Street
County Durham

Postcode: DH2 3AA

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Ebbatson

Date of previous inspection: There has been no previous inspection of this school

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1206	Peter McGaw	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed?
13459	Eva Mills	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3909	John Lewis	Team inspector	Art and design Information and communications technology Design and technology	How high are standards - the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well are pupils taught?
22806	Ann Evans	Team inspector	Foundation stage curriculum English	
27622	Howard Todd	Team inspector	Science Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
4817	Alan Waters	Team inspector	Geography History	How high are standards - pupils' attitudes, values and personal development?
27591	Madeline Campbell	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities Music Religious education	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Newker Primary School is a larger than average community primary school catering for 3-11 year olds. There are 424 boys and girls on roll full time in the main school and 102 part-time pupils in the nursery. It was opened in September 1998 following the amalgamation of three local schools. The school serves an area of private housing and some local authority housing in Chester-le-Street, County Durham. Levels of unemployment are low. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is very low. Currently there are eight pupils in the school with Statements of Special Educational Need. There are 61 pupils in the school identified as having special educational needs which is below the average for primary schools nationally. The overall profile of attainment on entry is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Newker Primary School is an effective school. Skilful leadership and management create a positive climate in which pupils work hard and achieve well. Standards are improving largely as a result of good quality teaching that takes place in almost all subjects of the curriculum. The school's strengths outweigh any weaknesses and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain appropriate standards in most subject areas with particularly high attainment in reading, mathematics, science and religious education in Key Stage 1 and improving standards in many subjects in Key Stage 2.
- Much teaching is of high quality; teachers create a calm and tightly disciplined climate for learning, focusing pupils' interest to enable them to make clear progress and achieve success.
- The school is well led and managed effectively; developments are carefully planned within a clear vision for the school aimed at raising standards and improving provision for all pupils.
- The school is a very caring community which promotes strong moral values, good behaviour and positive relationships and provides a secure base upon which children can develop as individuals.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and results in good progress.

What could be improved

- Staff lack confidence and expertise in teaching information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, art and design and music and resources are insufficient to promote the fullest progress and attainment in ICT, in design and technology and in art and design.
- The curriculum is not appropriately balanced because the time allocated to English and mathematics leaves insufficient time to promote fullest development in the other subjects of the curriculum.
- The planning for the teaching of pupils in setted groups, sorted by prior attainment, in English and mathematics does not take sufficient account of the pupils' differing needs and hinders fullest achievement for the higher and lower attainers.
- Pupils' speaking skills are underdeveloped as are the opportunities for pupils to show initiative and independence in their learning.
- The role of subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped and many co-ordinators have not had sufficient training to develop the necessary skills to be fully effective.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not previously been inspected. Since it was opened in 1998 there is clear evidence that provision has improved, particularly in Key Stage 2, and standards are rising. The school clearly has the capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
		1999	2000	2000
English		C	C	E
Mathematics		C	C	E
Science		C	C	D

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

By the age of five pupils attain average standards in all areas of the foundation stage curriculum and pupils make sound progress. Results at Key Stage 1 are good and improving with well above average proportions of pupils attaining Level 2 or higher in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2000 national tests. The results were also well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is above average in reading and mathematics. Standards in science and religious education are above average. Inspection findings support this picture and pupils are achieving appropriately and making sound progress. Standards in other subjects are average except in ICT where they are low.

At Key Stage 2 results in the national tests in 2000 were average in English overall with high standards in reading but below average attainment in writing. As a result of actions the school has put in place to tackle weaknesses in writing, progress is now satisfactory and attainment is improving. The school is on course to achieve its challenging targets. In mathematics and science standards in the 2000 tests were average. Currently whilst still average overall a significant minority of pupils are above average in mathematics and science. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls except in writing where boys achieved significantly lower standards than girls. In most other subjects pupils are attaining average standards. They are achieving appropriately and making sound progress except in design and technology, in art and design and ICT where standards are low and progress is slow. However, curriculum organisational issues and time constraints caused by a high focus on English and mathematics are limiting standards and progress in the other subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Positive. The majority of pupils are keen and motivated to learn. They are interested in their lessons and take a pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and are very sensible around the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils know right from wrong and are courteous and polite; relationships are respectful. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility but rarely take initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

The school encourages pupils to show respect to each other and to staff. Most pupils respond well resulting in a purposeful learning environment. Guidelines about acceptable behaviour are clear and widely understood. There have been no exclusions in the past year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons seen. It was good in 60 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in over a fifth of lessons. Examples of high quality teaching were seen in almost all subjects and years. In only one lesson, in physical education, was teaching of unsatisfactory quality.

Pupils learn new skills and knowledge well in most lessons. They consolidate this learning effectively and work hard and with enthusiasm in most subjects. They rarely show initiative or independence, however. Most teachers use varied, relevant and engaging approaches successfully in lessons. They have secure subject expertise in most subjects which they use well to devise purposeful lessons in which pupils make sound progress. However, in some classes not enough account is made for the different levels of attainment and fullest progress is sometimes hindered for the higher and lower attainers. Many teachers lack confidence in teaching ICT, design and technology, art and design and music. Whilst questioning is well sequenced to move pupils forward quickly, open-ended questioning is not used often enough to further pupils' thinking and develop their understanding fully. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad but not well balanced as too much time is given to English and mathematics which results in limitations on other subjects which hinders fullest progress. Statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school is committed to and successful in meeting the needs of all pupils with special educational needs in an inclusive approach.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' moral and cultural education is good; spiritual and social education are sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring community which gives good support to pupils.

The school provides sound opportunities for pupils to take responsibility but less opportunity for pupils' to take initiative, develop independence in their learning and promote the development of speaking skills. Monitoring of pupils' personal and academic progress is developing well. Arrangements for the welfare of pupils are good as are the procedures to promote their health and safety. The school works hard and successfully to develop its partnership with parents to ensure pupils' welfare and development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership and management and a clear educational direction. She is well supported by a developing senior management team. The skills of some subject co-ordinators are good but overall the role of subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is active and supportive. There is a clear awareness amongst the governing body of its responsibilities. Governors are committed and enthusiastic.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and senior staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are taking appropriate action to tackle weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is carefully done. The school uses its resources well, in line with its educational priorities. The principles of best value are well embedded but the school does not yet monitor the impact of spending decisions closely.

The school is well led and is managed effectively. Developments are planned efficiently and are aimed clearly at raising attainment and improving the quality of provision. The process of monitoring and self-review of provision and standards is well developed at senior staff level but less secure through subject co-ordinators. Evaluating the impact on standards that changes the school makes to tackle weaknesses have is less well developed. The school is adequately staffed, accommodation is good and it is generally well resourced except in ICT and aspects of design and technology, art and design and music.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents feel that their children are making good progress • Most parents feel that behaviour is good • Most parents believe the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best • Most parents feel that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible • Most parents believe the teaching is good • Most parents say their children enjoy school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework • Some parents do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem • Some parents feel the school does not work closely with them • Some parents feel they are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on

Most parents are pleased with the education the school provides. The findings of the inspection support this view and endorse those aspects which parents feel are positive features of the school. The inspection team judge homework to be both sufficient and appropriate. The information the school provides for parents is good and informative. The evidence of the inspection is that the school is approachable and staff work closely with parents and carers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school in the nursery with average attainment. By the age of five pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected of five year olds in each of the areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Pupils continue to make sound progress during Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven their attainment is at least at levels expected of seven year olds and often above such levels. Pupils continue to progress during Key Stage 2 and reach and sometimes exceed levels of attainment expected of 11 year olds. Results in national tests are improving. Pupils achieve appropriately during their time in primary school, giving them a secure foundation on which to build their secondary school career.

National tests

2. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 were good and well above national averages for the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 or above in reading, writing and in mathematics. In terms of the proportion attaining Level 3 or better the results were well above average in reading and mathematics and close to national averages in writing. Pupils' performance recorded in science teacher assessments were well above the national average for Level 2 or better and close to national averages for Level 3 or better. Statistical evidence of pupils' performance is only available from 1999 when the school came into being following amalgamation. Using average points scores to show trends over time, the last two years' results have showed an improving trend in reading and mathematics greater than that found nationally, from close to average in 1999 to well above average in 2000. In writing the trend has followed a similar path to the national trend of improvement but with results always being slightly above the national average.

3. At Key Stage 2 results in 2000 in English, mathematics and science were close to the national average for the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 or better. For the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or better results were similarly average. Performance in writing, however, was significantly lower than in reading. Again, statistical evidence of pupils' performance is only available from 1999. Using average points scores to show trends over the last two years the overall trends in English, mathematics and science are close to average. The results over the last two years in Key Stage 2 do not show as marked an improvement as those at Key Stage 1.

4. The school achieved its targets in English and mathematics in 1999. In 2000 it exceeded its targets by substantial amounts. The targets set for 2001 are challenging when compared to pupils' prior attainment. The local education authority (LEA) has agreed the school's targets. The process upon which targets are based is well developed. The school is rich in data on pupils' progress and attainment and is using this information well to set its targets and implement procedures to support pupils. The school's targets are well used as a means of promoting improvements and raising expectations and standards.

5. In Key Stage 1 in 2000, the school performed very well in relation to similar schools. In Key Stage 2, however, it did not. In Key Stage 1 in 2000 the pupils' performance in reading and mathematics was well above average and in writing it was close to the average in similar schools. In Key Stage 2, however, performance in English and mathematics was well below that of similar schools. In science it was below the average. Of particular significance is pupils' poor performance in writing and particularly that of boys. The school has noted this weakness and has taken action to tackle the issue - for example, through additional classroom support. Inspection evidence indicates that these measures are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. This additional provision is having positive impacts on improving pupils' writing skills, as the standards seen during the inspection were close to national norms at the end of both key stages, with pupils achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.

6. The school has worked hard since amalgamation to put in place procedures and actions for raising standards. Identifying pupils' prior attainment accurately, setting out support procedures and setting targets for improvement have not been easy tasks. However, the relatively short time it has had to implement actions to tackle weaknesses is the main contributory factor to the school's relatively poor performance at Key Stage 2 in 2000 when compared with similar schools. The satisfactory progress currently being made by most pupils bodes well for the future.

Standards in the fuller context

7. In judging pupils' standards, progress and achievements inspectors take account of what is seen in lessons, through a scrutiny of completed work, from discussions with pupils and from teachers' assessments of work. Standards overall are broadly in line with those expected by the National Curriculum in most subjects. Progress is generally satisfactory and most pupils are achieving appropriately. However, there are differences both within and between subjects at each key stage.

8. Pupils make satisfactory progress in nursery and continue to make similar progress in reception so that their attainment in personal and social development, in language and literacy, in mathematics, in knowledge and understanding of the world, in physical skills and in creative development is what is expected nationally by the age of five. For example, in language pupils can follow instructions and listen well. They know sound symbol relationships and can use this information to recognise letters and build simple words. They can write captions for pictures using their emerging understanding of writing. They can copy write and make up sentences from words in a reading book, forming the letters correctly. In mathematics they can recognise numbers and can count to five and beyond. They can count bears and put them in groups, which add up to ten and write the appropriate sums on their work sheets.

9. Standards in literacy seen during the inspection were average with pupils making good progress and achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior achievement. Significant proportions of pupils in both key stages are attaining above national expectations in reading. Attainment in writing is at least in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 with a significant proportion of pupils above average. At the end of Key Stage 2 whilst still slightly below average standards are improving as a result of strategies which the school has put in place. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on teaching, learning and standards. Standards of listening are good, in speaking they are less secure, however. Many pupils find difficulty in expressing themselves aloud; this is often related to limited planned opportunities for pupils to develop this skill within their work in class. The school is aware of this issue and is to develop the scheme of work to ensure that pupils' skills in speaking are developed systematically throughout the school. Circle time, when pupils sit round with their teacher to talk about matters of interest to all, and the daily mathematics lessons are being used to encourage pupils to explain their methods and work to the class. These regular activities form a good basis upon which speaking skills are being developed.

10. In mathematics standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line national expectations with a significant minority of pupils achieving above average standards. Pupils are achieving well for their prior attainment. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to count on and back, multiply by 10, know addition and subtraction facts to 10 and have a good grasp of place value. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to partition, use doubles and near doubles, use grid method for multiplication and chunking for division. Many are able to use compact standard written methods. Pupils can handle fractions, decimals and percentages and use them to describe proportions of a whole. Pupils at both key stages attain appropriately in shape, space and measure and in Key Stage 2 in data handling, although these aspects are not as strong as number. Numeracy skills are applied appropriately across the curriculum – for example, in science and design and technology. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a significant and positive impact on standards, particularly number calculation skills.

11. In science standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above national expectations. In Key Stage 2 they are average with a significant minority of pupils achieving above average standards. In both key stages pupils can apply their scientific knowledge well to investigations and experiments and their knowledge of scientific vocabulary extends progressively as they move through the school. They can record information well and their standard of presentation of diagrams is good overall. Pupils are able to work safely in their science work and can handle equipment confidently and competently.

12. In most of the other subjects standards are similar to those set by the National Curriculum for the end of the infant years except in ICT where they are below average and in science and religious education where they are high. In ICT pupils are not achieving as well as they should owing to unsatisfactory provision. This weakness in provision is soon to be rectified with substantial investment in new hardware and software resources through government grants.

13. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are broadly in line with those expected by the National Curriculum in most subjects except ICT, design and technology and art and design where they are below average. In ICT pupils are not achieving as well as they should because, as in Key Stage 1, ICT resources are limited and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their ICT skills progressively in lessons and over time. In design and technology and in art and design standards are lower than they should be because teachers lack confidence and expertise in teaching these subjects at the highest levels.

14. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school make sound progress and are achieving appropriately because provision for them is good with well-targeted and well-judged support to enable them to learn effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all very good, the only significant exceptions being their ability to speak at length about their learning and to exercise initiative. The many strengths which pupils have developed make a very positive contribution to their progress and achievements and to the very positive climate for learning which exists in the school.

16. Pupils' very positive attitudes to school and to learning are underpinned by the very good relationships that are a key characteristic of the school. Pupils know that they are both valued and respected. They know that they have a contribution to make to the school community and they are keen participants in school life. They want to do well and take pride in the work they do. They listen to their teachers very well, they settle quickly to their tasks, they concentrate well on their work and they try very hard. At times, however, pupils can be too passive and too heavily reliant on teachers for moving them forward with their tasks and their learning. This lack of confidence is also evident in their speaking. Pupils are willing to respond but tend not to initiate questions, ideas or lines of enquiry. They take few risks in their learning. This in part reflects much of the teaching which though otherwise good sometimes offers only limited opportunities for pupils to take a lead in directing their own learning. Some pupils were seen to do without readily available equipment which very obviously would have helped them to complete their work. Similarly, expressing ideas and responses with confidence and clarity is an observable weakness. On occasions, as seen in some mathematics and history lessons, pupils struggle to give fluent and well-ordered answers, and need a lot of help from the teacher to complete their explanations. Again this is linked to the limited planned opportunities to practise and to develop such skills.

17. Pupils' behaviour is noteworthy. In classrooms, at lunchtime and at play pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and this is constantly reinforced through the highly controlled expectations of good, considerate behaviour set by the school. Pupils understand and accept the school rules and conventions. They readily undertake responsibilities to help maintain the calm and orderly atmosphere. For example, pupils volunteer on a rota basis to monitor corridors and entrances, they help to manage equipment in lessons and around the school and older pupils help to monitor younger ones at play. All of these activities are carried out in a caring and responsible way. Pupils show a high level of respect for property and for each other. In religious education lessons pupils listen carefully to each other and are tolerant of the ideas and views expressed by others. In assemblies and in circle time pupils demonstrated the ability to reflect on issues of importance to themselves and to other pupils. They work well together in pairs. For example, in gymnastics pupils carefully matched their sequences and movements and acted upon the suggestions for improvement made by their partner; in Year 6 science they discussed how to ensure their testing was reliable; and pairs worked well together in Year 5 when editing their writing on the computer. This co-operative approach to working together helps progress, though generally there are too few opportunities to fully develop their capacity

to work together in larger groups, especially under their own direction. Pupils are polite, considerate and friendly towards each other and to their teachers and other adults. They enjoy coming to their school of which they are clearly proud. There were no exclusions in this past year.

Attendance

18. Attendance at the school is very good with rates above those achieved nationally. There is no unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and is effective in meeting the needs of most pupils. Teachers are committed to providing a high quality education for their pupils. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 99 per cent of lessons observed. Of that percentage, teaching was good in 40 per cent, very good in 21 per cent and excellent in three per cent. Teaching and learning in only one lesson were of unsatisfactory quality.

20. Examples of high quality teaching and learning were seen in most subjects and years. Teaching and learning are good overall in all aspects of the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics, science, geography, physical education, religious education and history. It is similar for most subjects in Key Stage 2 except physical education where the quality of teaching and learning, whilst generally good, varies between unsatisfactory and good. Too few lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 in design and technology, music and ICT to make a secure judgement about these subjects but from the few seen, from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and from talking to pupils, teaching and learning appear broadly satisfactory in some classes but weaker in others. This is clearly related to the varying levels of teachers' confidence and subject expertise.

Strengths

21. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and religious education. Recent training within the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has improved significantly teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in these areas - for example, in being more precise in explanations, in insightful sequencing of questioning of pupils' understanding of a concept and in promoting further enquiry. Teachers have secure subject knowledge for other areas of the curriculum - for example, in history, geography and physical education.

22. Most teachers plan their lessons well and use an appropriate range of teaching methods to manage, organise, question, encourage and motivate pupils. Many teachers match work well to pupils' prior attainment giving pupils the opportunity to make at least satisfactory and often good progress. This is a particular strength in the provision for pupils with special education needs who, as a result of close matching of work to needs in English and mathematics, make effective progress.

23. Introductions are lively, purposeful and approached enthusiastically. In a mathematics session in reception the teacher's enthusiastic approach motivated pupils and kept their attention on learning how to count to 5 and beyond. In a mathematics session in Year 6, a fast and furious approach to mental arithmetic - beating the clock - kept all pupils on their toes and engaged fully. Lesson beginnings are clear and pupils are made aware of what they should learn during the lesson and over time. In an art and design lesson in Year 3 the lesson sequence was explained well, giving pupils a clear understanding of the range of techniques they were to attempt and how to improve their artistic skills. In a geography lesson in Year 5 the objectives for the study of the local area were made very clear at the beginning, enabling pupils to think ahead and seek avenues of research and investigation - for example, using the Internet facilities to find high quality street maps of Chester-le-Street. In a design and technology lesson in Year 4 the introduction to an activity on designing and making a pop-up story book was particularly effective in enabling pupils to apply their understanding of a traditional story in order to illustrate their own story with mechanical actions.

24. Explanations are clear. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6, pupils were given a very clear explanation of how to approach the investigation of recognising the changes that occur when dissolving materials in order to record their observations successfully. In a physical education lesson in Year 1 pupils were given clear instructions on how to jump properly on the balls of the feet and to bend their knees; this enabled pupils to settle quickly into the activity and make good progress. In an English lesson in Year 1 the precise nature of the teacher's explanation focused pupils' attention very well towards an appropriate emphasis on letter formation.

25. The support given to pupils is often helpful without directing them too closely. In a history lesson in Year 6, the teacher asked a series of probing questions of a pupil about Ancient Greece, prompting the pupil to look again at the artefacts and resource sheets to develop a more substantial answer. In a reception class the teacher used good teaching skills to support pupils working on practical activities involving doubling and subtracting a smaller number from a bigger one by appropriate questioning which checked pupils' understanding and enabled the teacher to pose even more challenging problems. Most teachers are particularly adept at choosing the right time to step in to question or guide pupils in order to move their learning forward at pace, which in turn allows pupils to make swift progress in their understanding of a concept or process. This strategy has a motivating effect on pupils who work hard to improve the quality of their work as a result.

26. Teachers often pay high regard to pupils' answers, respecting their thinking, their ideas, their thoughts and continuing to use probing questions to build up ideas for further enquiry. In a geography lesson in Year 3, having previously printed off maps of Chester-le-Street from the Internet, pupils used the maps to orientate themselves in terms of location. In a circle time session in Year 2, pupils discussed friendships openly and things that make them happy; the teacher drew out pupils' feelings very well and when some pupils were not confident to speak, gently encouraged a response. In many lessons pupils' responses to questions, even if inaccurate, are used positively and sensitively to develop understanding and promote further discussion in a climate of trust where pupils are encouraged not make fun of incorrect answers.

27. Teachers use some sound learning approaches which lead to rapid learning. In a Year 2 English lesson the introduction to work on glossaries built quickly on pupils' knowledge of content and indexes in non-fiction texts. In a Year 6 English lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to consider fully better ways of expressing limericks and poems to make them more interesting. In a range of activities in the nursery and reception pupils were involved actively in applying their mathematical understanding - for example, through playing shopping games and making numbers with play dough.

28. Some teachers use carefully planned lesson structures to promote pupils' progress. For example, lessons start with quick reviews of previous work, the main part of the lesson focuses on substantial new learning, and at the end of the lesson scope for reflection is given on what has been learned. These structures enable pupils to make good progress. In a mathematics lesson in Year 5 revisiting the concept of multiplying by 100, the teacher presented a range of activities that enabled pupils of all levels of attainment to make progress. At the end of the lesson there was a good session where pupils reflected on their success or otherwise which allowed them to see what they understood and what they needed to consolidate in future lessons.

29. Most teachers have high expectations of themselves and of their pupils and in the majority of lessons pace is brisk. In an English lesson in Year 2, high expectations and the brisk pace kept pupils interested and resulted in pupils making good progress in their understanding of glossaries.

30. Teachers give good feedback to pupils on how they are doing. They develop positive rapport and relationships with their pupils. In a Year 3 art and design lesson pupils valued the praise given for good work on abstract drawings, they worked harder and made good progress as a result. Most teachers maintain good discipline and good behaviour that results in the lesson progressing well and the pupils being able to learn in an atmosphere free from disruption and conflict. Homework is generally well used to extend pupils' classroom work.

31. Most teachers make effective use of the resources available - for example, in developing pupils' research skills using sources in science and in history, by using the local environment in geography, and through examining artefacts in history and religious education.

Weaknesses

32. In the lesson which was less than satisfactory or in those lessons which were otherwise satisfactory but had unsatisfactory features, teaching was often over directive, contained too much explanation and relied too heavily on published schemes. These weaknesses at times stifled pupils' initiative and independence. A further weakness in some classes occurred when teachers did not focus the work to match the needs of pupils in the classes formed by grouping pupils by prior attainment – the setted classes – in English and mathematics.

33. In some lessons pupils are also not given enough opportunities to think for themselves or take the initiative. An unsatisfactory aspect of some teaching is that periods of explanation are too long at times; this taxes the concentration of pupils. For example, in a lesson in Year 4 the teacher took too long explaining the task, which led to pupils becoming bored and losing concentration. Progress was hindered as a result. Some questioning is also weak - for example, where questions require one-word answers that are right or wrong and thus do not allow pupils to extend ideas or develop their thinking and understanding. Opportunities are not always taken to draw out explanations and responses that fully engage pupils as participants in lessons and develop their confidence in this aspect.

34. Based upon the evidence of pupils' work and teachers' planning, teachers' ICT confidence and subject knowledge is often insecure. This weakness is exacerbated because the computers do not always work properly. Pupils are therefore missing out on consistent opportunities to record and present the outcomes of their scientific and mathematical investigation work, to present reports or to write creatively using word processing techniques. This lack of opportunity prevents pupils from making progress and moving onto higher levels of attainment in ICT. The school is aware of this weakness and has identified appropriate action in the school development plan to remedy both the equipment issue and the training needs of staff. The Friends of Newker School have already raised a considerable sum of money to purchase new equipment to add to government funding to improve ICT resources. Teachers' subject knowledge in aspects of art and design, music and design and technology is also sometimes not fully secure with the result that work is pitched at the lower levels so hindering fullest attainment.

35. In the core subjects there is satisfactory practice of assessing pupils' work and using the outcomes of assessments during units of work to help teachers gauge pupils' progress and understanding and then to plan the next stage of learning and promote pupils' further progress and attainment. However, it is underdeveloped in most other subjects. The impact of this weakness is that some pupils do not always have close understanding of how they are doing and what to do to improve their work.

Special Educational Needs

36. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good. Relationships are good and pupils are well known as individuals by their teachers. There is a strong culture of inclusiveness throughout the school where most teachers try hard to ensure pupils of all levels of attainment are given equal opportunity to achieve to their full potential. There were some particularly good examples of support teaching and work that is well matched to pupils' individual needs ensuring that pupils become fully integrated into the class activities; they make sound progress as a result. For example, in a mathematics session in reception a boy and girl who lacked confidence were regularly encouraged to explain their answers in an atmosphere of mutual support and trust. Where dedicated support for literacy and mathematics is available for pupils with special educational needs they make particularly good progress. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is regular and constructive with detailed, up-to-date records. This information is well used to guide planning. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are clear and helpful to staff in guiding their planning to meet pupils' needs closely in English and mathematics.

Overall

37. The school has made significant progress since its amalgamation in establishing a foundation of good quality teaching and learning. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning even further the school should now work to remove weaknesses in teaching and inconsistencies in practice by:

- carrying through agreed processes for assessment and marking, using the information gained to guide planning and to help pupils understand what it is they need to do next to improve;
- placing less emphasis on published schemes for teaching in English and mathematics;
- encouraging more group work to develop pupils' independent learning skills and promoting the taking of initiative;
- ensuring that planned activities in each setted class are appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils;
- improving the subject knowledge and confidence in the teaching of ICT, of design and technology and of art and design; and
- continuing to share widely best practice to bring all teaching up to the quality of the best.

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

General coverage

38. The school provides a broad curriculum of good quality and with a sound range of learning opportunities. The curriculum satisfies all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. There are policies for all subjects based on schemes of work and guidance produced by central government agencies although the use of ICT is underdeveloped across the school in all subjects.

39. Work is planned for pupils under five to cover the six areas of learning to address the Early Learning Goals and provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. There is appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy but not enough is done to develop pupils' personal and social skills, particularly independence in learning in reception. Daily activities are provided to support talk and play but opportunities to enrich this experience and understanding by using the local environment have not yet been fully exploited.

40. The school has implemented the recommended National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and they are having a very beneficial effect on attainment and learning. For example, there is evidence that in writing, an area of the curriculum that the school has identified for intensive work, sound progress has been made. Teachers take account of the recommendations both for lesson structure and content, although in numeracy there is some inconsistency in the quality of delivery and understanding of the purpose of the mental and oral starter.

41. Time allocated for the teaching of each subject is unbalanced. Taken together, the time planned for teaching of English and mathematics is very high compared to other schools nationally. As a consequence, the reduced time that remains for the teaching of the other subjects is having a limiting effect on attainment and progress. Lessons in English and mathematics are longer than the time recommended in the National Strategies, sometimes by as much as 20 minutes. This has a negative impact on pupils' learning as they are sometimes unable to maintain concentration and interest over such long times, and the pace and vigour of teaching is reduced.

Special educational needs

42. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support staff are well utilised and work either in the classroom or withdraw pupils to designated areas for intensive support. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is appropriate and fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice.

43. Pupils with special educational needs receive the same learning opportunities as other pupils, except in a few instances where individuals and small groups are withdrawn for additional literacy and numeracy support when the remainder of the class are being taught other subjects. This, at times, causes pupils to miss out on some of the work. However, the decision to withdraw pupils is often well

founded as they are able to make rapid progress in literacy and numeracy which then has a positive impact on their learning in other subjects.

44. All staff are kept fully informed by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), and planning files contain appropriate details, including individual education plans which set out realistic targets to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics.

45. The documentation and routines for pupils with special educational needs are well established. The Governor concerned with special educational needs is well informed and supportive and all staff are committed to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their child.

Detailed arrangements

46. Pupils are taught English and mathematics in classes which are formed by grouping pupils of similar attainment together – a process called setting. The result of setting has a variable impact. Positive gains are achieved in those few year groups where planned provision and activities undertaken address the needs of the different ability levels of each set. However, where one member of staff undertakes planning for a whole year group the content of work for both sets is often the same. Although some effort is made to match the work to the needs of most pupils, the work set for higher attaining pupils often lacks challenge. In Year 6, because mathematics and English are taught concurrently, it is not always possible for pupils to be assigned to the appropriate set in both subjects and some pupils do not make as much progress as they might, especially in English. The use of commercial worksheets in mathematics, for instance, restricts the higher attaining pupils because there is insufficient opportunity for presenting questions at a greater level of complexity and some teachers do not prepare supplementary or extension work. Where additional teachers have been employed in Year 4 and Year 6 the smaller class sizes have a positive impact on learning. In particular the lower attaining groups are small and pupils receive more individual attention.

47. Sufficient and relevant homework is provided on a regular basis and supports learning in the core subjects of English and mathematics by learning tables, spelling and reading. It also supports work in other areas by giving pupils research activities, such as in science where they were asked to note the sugar content in packaged foods for part of a topic on healthy eating and teeth.

48. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities including an art club, French, calligraphy and various sports including football, netball, cross-country, rugby and cricket. Sound opportunities are also provided for pupils to receive tuition in playing a range of musical instruments.

49. Visitors to the school and outside visits enrich the curriculum. An artist has helped pupils design bricks to be used for a local paved area and coaches from local sports clubs often assist with the teaching of games. Tynemouth Sea Life Centre and Washington Wildlife Park are among the places of interest that have been visited. The school organises a residential visit for pupils in Year 5 so that they can experience conditions in a different locality. There are sound links with the local community. Younger pupils recently attended the church for a Christingle service, the school supports many local sports events, and links with the local secondary school have included meetings between teachers to discuss curriculum issues to help ease the transition from primary school to secondary education. At present the nursery does not make use of the local area and this is recognised as an area for development.

Pupils' broader development

50. The provision for pupils' moral and cultural education is good. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and social development. Staff and pupils celebrate togetherness as a large family and use assemblies to promote spirituality through time for reflection and quiet prayer. Lessons in religious education move beyond factual aspects of religion and include consideration of spirituality. For example, a Year 6 class used the title 'I have a dream' to reflect on the world that they live in and discuss 'What is a peace-maker?'

51. Every opportunity is taken by the staff to promote a clear moral code of respect and care for others. Rules and expectations are discussed and drawn up together with pupils and these are prominently displayed in all classrooms. There is an appropriate system of sanctions and rewards in place. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and they are set clear expectations about everyday behaviour in and around the school. The school is vigilant in addressing any moral issues that might arise. For example, teachers keep a daily diary of any incidents that occur and the headteacher follows up any concerns by interviews with the pupils involved, often asking them to record in writing the ways they would propose to resolve the conflict. It is this attention to detail that contributes to the quality of provision for moral education.

52. Although the school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibility they do not provide enough situations in and out of lessons for them to use their own initiative. Pupils deliver messages, take responsibility for classroom tasks and support younger pupils during the lunch hour. However, too little use is made of collaborative and group work and open-ended projects to encourage independent research and organisational skills.

53. The school's provision for pupils' health education is very good. There is an appropriate agreed sex education policy and drugs education is part of the science curriculum.

54. The development of pupils' awareness of their own culture is good and includes looking at festivals, involvement in a variety of local traditional sporting events and detailed investigations of people, places and periods in history to explore values and beliefs. Visits have been made to a Roman Fort and to the Oriental Museum in Newcastle. A recent project has involved the introduction of traditional playground games during break and lunchtimes. Good opportunities have been taken to study other cultures and the multi-cultural nature of society in general. The school has developed an interesting and useful link using ICT with a school in St Lucia and has exchanged letters and photographs relaying information in relation to place, people and lifestyles. The pupils also sponsor the education of a child in India. All these activities promote pupils' cultural development well.

55. Overall the school has made some clear strides forward in developing its provision. It must now:

- ensure the time allocated for the subjects of the curriculum is balanced to allow fullest progress in all subjects;
- ensure the grouping of pupils for English and mathematics is used to effect the greatest impact on learning and that teachers match closely work to the identified and assessed needs of pupils in each set;
- increase opportunities for pupils to take the initiative and to be involved in group work and collaborative activities; and
- increase local activities off school premises for the under fives.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school has effective systems to ensure pupils' welfare and to support them in their learning. The school has a very caring ethos where pupils are valued as individuals, their personal needs met and their self-esteem promoted. Teachers know their pupils well and liaise well with other members of staff to ensure that pupils are provided with a high level of pastoral care. Lunchtime supervision is well organised and of good quality. Examples were seen during inspection where pupils were dealt with sensitively when they were unwell or upset.

57. Behaviour is well monitored. The school's behaviour policy places great emphasis on the reinforcement of positive behaviour. The policy is consistently applied and good communication between midday supervisors and teaching staff ensures that occasional instances of unacceptable behaviour are recorded and appropriate action taken. Parents agree that any incidents involving bullying are swiftly and effectively addressed.

58. The school is successful in promoting healthy living. Health education is an integral part of the curriculum. There are good systems in place to ensure the safety of pupils in and around school with clear guidelines for staff and pupils which are reinforced during lessons. The school monitors attendance very carefully both at whole school level and on an individual basis.

Assessment

59. The assessment procedures for the under fives, 'Flying Start', are used effectively as a basis for tracking pupils' progress across areas of learning. These are also used well to guide curriculum planning. Baseline assessment information has helped reception teachers identify a need for more personal and social education as well as a need for greater emphasis on numeracy and special educational needs. Writing targets in English are developed well from an analysis of teaching observations, work sampling and use of data.

60. Assessment information is soundly used in planning curriculum provision in English, mathematics and to some extent in science. For example, in mathematics, analysis of results of national tests has been used well to plan curriculum targets and identify a staff development need. Elsewhere, in foundation subjects, assessment procedures lack consistency – some being sound, some being weak.

61. Academic tracking for some subjects is in place and this is developing well in English and mathematics. However, formal arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and attainment are not yet in place in history, geography, art and design, design and technology or music. Where this is lacking, there is little evidence of assessment guiding curriculum planning.

62. The school is a very caring place where pupils' personal and academic development are monitored soundly. The school should now:

- continue to develop the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning and academic tracking in the foundation subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. The school works hard and successfully to develop its partnership with parents to ensure pupils' welfare and development. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel confident that the school is working well to provide a good learning environment, with good teaching and high expectations. They feel that their children enjoy school and are making good progress.

64. Information provided for parents about the school is good. Parents are made aware of what their children are doing in lessons and about their progress. Written reports are good with clear information on strengths, weaknesses and areas where children could improve. An adequate number of consultation evenings are held. The school also provides helpful information evenings for specific year groups where parents are kept fully informed about many aspects of school life including standards, targets and the curriculum. The school deals well with any queries or concerns which may arise from parents and tries hard to encourage parents to contact school with worries.

65. A small core of parents provide assistance in classrooms and on out of school visits. During the inspection a grandparent provided valuable help in the nursery. The school has a thriving Friends Association which provides substantial help for school events and funds for school resources. The current project, funded by the association, is to improve outdoor play areas and funds are presently being raised to provide additional ICT equipment. The additional resources provided by parents has had a beneficial effect on pupils' learning.

66. The school should now:

- continue to develop home school partnerships.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The headteacher is effective. She leads and manages the school well. She is particularly adept in managing people in gaining and developing their confidence and self-belief to get the most from them in terms of improving teaching and learning. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and bases her strategies for improvement clearly in terms of raised standards and improved provision for pupils. She is well supported by the developing senior management team. The senior management know the school's strengths well and have brought in clear actions to tackle the weaknesses and these

measures are beginning to reap success. For example, having identified writing in Key Stage 2 as an area in need of improvement standards are now beginning to rise as a result of the measures adopted to tackle this area. The headteacher and senior staff recognise that there are aspects still in need of improvement, such as those identified in this report, and have clear ideas about how to make progress in improving these weaknesses. For example, there are plans to improve and develop the role of subject co-ordinators, to alter the structure of the school day to balance the time for all subjects and to tackle teachers' lack of confidence and expertise where these exist.

68. The governing body is interested and supportive in the work of the school. They recognise fully their statutory duties and all statutory requirements are met. The governing body has an effective committee structure which promotes efficient working practices. It is involved in discussions about the school development plan and is aware of the areas in need for improvement. The budget is carefully planned in line with the school's educational priorities and the principles of best value are well embedded in practice. All financial controls and monitoring are secure. However, the governing body has yet to adopt procedures to evaluate the impact of its spending decisions on standards and provision.

69. The quality of middle management is mixed. The special educational needs co-ordinator role is effectively carried out and as a result provision is good. Co-ordinators in geography, ICT, religious education and science have good skills in leading and managing their curriculum areas although the school's focus on English and mathematics means that they are currently maintaining their subjects rather than actively developing and improving practice further. Co-ordinators in art and design, in design and technology and in music currently lack the necessary skills to be effective in leading and managing their subjects, with the result that these subjects have some clear weaknesses. Co-ordinators of the other subjects are developing their skills soundly but lack sufficient training opportunities to be fully effective. For example, some co-ordinators lack confidence and skills in monitoring and evaluating lessons through direct observation. Overall the role of co-ordinator is underdeveloped especially in the areas of monitoring and evaluating provision and standards.

70. The senior management team carries out regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through a programme of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and data analysis. The information gained from this programme is used effectively to diagnose weaknesses and guide the creation of the school development plan. This plan is sound and the targets for action are well judged. The plan is well prioritised to ensure that whilst actions are challenging they are both manageable and achievable. The plan contains most of the appropriate points to enable it to be carried through effectively although it lacks criteria against which the changes made can be evaluated in terms of the impact they have on bringing about improvements and raised standards.

71. There are adequate staff to meet the needs of the curriculum but there are weaknesses in the skills and confidence that exist for teaching design and technology, art and design, music and ICT amongst many staff. Opportunities for professional development in these and most other subject areas have tailed off owing to the focus and amount of training that has been undertaken in English and mathematics over the recent past. As a result many staff have not kept up to date with developments in these other subjects with a consequent negative impact on the development and improvement of teaching skills. The exceptions to this are in geography and religious education where the co-ordinators have taken the initiative to keep up to date and have shared such information with other staff which in turn has enabled good provision in these subjects to be maintained. Performance management is on track and the school plans to address the issues of staff training and development through this process. Support for newly qualified teachers is good and is valued by these staff.

72. Education support staff levels are good and these staff have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Learning support staff also have a positive impact on the progress pupils with special educational needs make.

73. Resource levels to support teaching and learning are good in most subject areas and are having a positive impact. However, ICT is under-resourced with a consequent negative impact on teaching and learning and on standards pupils are able to achieve. The school is due for significant funding this year through the National Grid for Learning project and has clear and detailed plans to improve provision in ICT with these funds. Resource levels for art and design and for design and technology are inadequate

to enable the fullest development of these subjects and the raising of standards, especially in Key Stage 2. In the nursery there is a lack of large play equipment. The library stock is limited but again the school has plans in place to improve this resource when funds permit. Class provision of fiction and non-fiction books is sound. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich the curriculum across the school – for example, in geography – but nursery pupils do not get opportunities for outside visits. Accommodation throughout the school is good and the spacious classrooms have a positive impact on learning. Outside hard play space is limited, however, and the reception pupils do not have a dedicated play area and there is inadequate large equipment for outside play for the under fives.

74. Overall the school is well led and is managed effectively. Developments are carefully planned within a clear vision for the future development of the school and are aimed at raising standards and improving provision for pupils. The school should now:

- improve the skills of co-ordinators and develop fully the role of co-ordinator;
- develop the processes of evaluating the impact of actions put in place to tackle weaknesses and of spending decisions on standards and provision;
- ensure staff are able to improve their teaching skills and subject knowledge through training and development opportunities in all subjects but particularly ICT, design and technology, art and design and music;
- improve resources where weaknesses exist; and
- seek support to improve outside hard play space and the facilities for reception pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to improve standards and the quality of provision further, the governing body, the headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the confidence and expertise of staff in teaching ICT, design and technology, art and design and music, and improve resources in ICT, design and technology and art and design so promoting fullest progress and attainment;
- (2) improve the balance of the curriculum ensuring English and mathematics have appropriate time allocations as recommended in the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies, and that the other subjects have adequate time to promote pupils' fullest development;
- (3) ensure planning for teaching of pupils in setted groups in English and mathematics takes close account of pupils' differing needs and promotes fullest achievement by pupils of all abilities;
- (4) increase opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking skills and provide more situations where pupils can take initiative and show independence in their learning;
- (5) develop the role of subject co-ordinators fully and ensure all co-ordinators have appropriate training to develop the necessary skills to be fully effective.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	77

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	18	40	37.5	1.5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51	424
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	32	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	26
	Girls	31	31	32
	Total	56	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (88)	97 (86)	100 (84)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	24	25
	Girls	31	30	32
	Total	56	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (86)	93 (84)	98 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	37	27	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	24	30
	Girls	24	24	25
	Total	50	48	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (75)	75 (75)	86 (80)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	28
	Girls	24	23	23
	Total	48	48	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (66)	75 (81)	80 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	5
White	419
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126.4

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161.6

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	682,396
Total expenditure	712,005
Expenditure per pupil	1,649
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,525
Balance carried forward to next year	11,916

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

526

Number of questionnaires returned

182

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	36	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	55	2	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	48	16	4	2
The teaching is good.	45	53	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	53	10	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	40	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	41	15	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	40	49	2	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	49	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	37	8	5	13

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

76. Baseline assessment of pupils on entry to the reception class show that pupils' attainment is close to the average for pupils in the Durham baseline assessment scheme. During the inspection evidence from classroom observations, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils confirmed that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Pupils achieve well in all six areas of learning both in nursery and reception in relation to their prior attainment and achievement for pupils with special educational needs is good, because these pupils are well supported.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Pupils' attainment in personal, social and emotional development is average. Pupils know routines and are settled and confident in both the nursery and reception classes. Pupils generally listen well in whole class and small group sessions. They make choices and get involved in the full range of activities which are on offer. At the end of sessions they help to tidy up. Pupils are interested and well motivated by the activities available. They enjoy participating in counting activities using counters and different faces, counting the spots and taking away and adding different numbers of spots. Pupils participate well, are motivated and attentive. In the nursery they help to deploy the resources to turn the role play area into the house of the three pigs and are thrilled by the pink tabards and pig face masks which enable them to take on the role of the pigs. However, in some sessions in reception pupils' attention span is taxed by the sessions led by the teacher that are unnecessarily long and during the group tasks sometimes pupils fail to settle to activities and flit about because of their limited skills in sharing, in co-operating and in working independently.

Communication, language and literacy

78. Pupils' attainment in language and literacy is average. In reception pupils listen well to stories, follow instructions and are generally attentive when the teacher teaches the whole class for literacy. Pupils are confident about speaking at circle time, making an individual response and reporting one or two things which they have done over the weekend, when it is their turn to hold the teddy. Pupils enjoy listening to stories, have good recall and can sequence some of the events in the story of Noah's Ark. Pupils in the reception classes make satisfactory progress in learning to read. Reading books are chosen at an appropriate level and pupils are developing a sight vocabulary of key words. They know the sounds for letters, demonstrating the actions which go with these from the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme. They are able to use their knowledge of sound and letter symbol relationships to write captions for their drawings, using their emerging skills as writers. In literacy activities they begin to hear the initial and final letter sounds of words, such as "fr" in frog and enjoy playing 'Swap Shop' and changing places with another child whose object has the same ending. Pupils can write their own names in reception and form letters correctly. In the nursery pupils listen well to stories. They participate in acting out the story of the three little pigs and help to deploy resources to support their play in the role-play area. They are involved in appropriate writing activities, copying their names from a name card, composing captions for pictures and paintings and writing letters to the Big Bad Wolf telling him "what big eyes you have".

Mathematical development

79. Pupils' attainment in mathematical development is average. Most pupils can count up to ten and recite numbers up to twenty. Pupils can recognise numbers to ten and some can recognise them up to twenty. With the teacher's support pupils can count backwards using stories and games and can count small groups of objects accurately. In practical situations they can add and subtract and say how many more farm animals they need to add to three to make five, or how many will be left if they take one coin away from five and if it will be "more" or "less" than the number they started with. Pupils in the reception class can name common shapes such as circle, triangle and square and identify them by feel in a 'feely

box'. They recognise and name three-dimensional shapes and sort them into sets. Pupils can recognise colours and make patterns using two and three repeating colours. Through carefully structured play in the sand and water they demonstrate the meaning of "full" and "empty". Pupils in the nursery know the number sequence and recognise if a number has been missed out when the teacher recites numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Pupils' attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is average. This area of learning includes aspects of science, history, geography, design technology and information technology. In reception pupils have been learning about water. They know what water can be used for and can sort items into those which are used for washing and those which are not. They carrying out a simple experiment to find out if soap is more effective for washing hands than plain water and test this out by rubbing chalk and clay onto their hands, enjoying the feel of these different substances. Pupils in the nursery investigate wind power, blowing on their hands, blowing windmills round and using sheets of card to create enough air force to move paper pigs across the playroom floor.

81. Pupils have some understanding of the passage of time and change and can sequence a series of pictures into the correct order. They have developed some understanding of the past through appropriate activities such as comparing old photographs with modern photographs and digital images. They have some understanding of the meaning of "old" and "new" and have compared an old teddy bear with a new teddy bear. Pupils are developing a sense of place. They can name features such as hill, stream, water, trees, fields, and buildings in photographs. They have learned about the environment through topics on water and farms and about people's occupations through a series of visits from people who help us such as the nurse, policeman and fireman. Pupils can talk about different types of weather such as sunshine and rain and know what clothing would be appropriate such as Wellingtons and socks in bad weather.

Creative development

82. Pupils carry out design activities such as planning the materials they will use to represent their faces using items such as wool, paper and buttons. In the nursery they have made coaches for Cinderella from boxes and other found materials and they are developing skills in joining paper and card using a variety of different ways such as split pins and paper clips. Pupils are developing skills in using information technology. They can use the Colour Magic program to make marks and to create images of Noah's Ark and the animals which went into it. Pupils can control the mouse and use it to move the cursor to click on shapes and move them about the screen. In the nursery pupils can create pictures and patterns on the computer and some have enough control to achieve recognisable representations of faces.

83. Pupils' attainment in creative development is average. They are introduced to a sound range of media. They have used paint, chalk and crayon to represent images and they have explored other materials such as tissue paper, cellophane and straw to create collage. In reception pupils have produced delightful paintings and drawings of tigers and lions and they have contributed to class wall friezes using a variety of painting techniques. In the nursery pupils learn to mix red and white paint to make different shades and they have made pictures out of contrasting materials which are shiny and dull, or rough and smooth, incorporating glitter, foil, Hessian and corrugated card into their designs. Pupils in the nursery can recreate snowmen using finger paints and printing and in reception they can paint a snowy day using white paint on black paper. In reception pupils have produced observational drawings of their teddy bears and in the nursery they have executed some vibrant paintings of daffodils. Pupils enjoy musical activities, making sounds and listening to the sounds being made by others. They know the names of the instruments and can recognise the instrument which makes the sound. In the nursery pupils explore a collection of wind instruments playing them soft, or loud, appreciating the sounds which they make and knowing that all these instruments are blown, unlike the guitar which is plucked.

Physical development

84. Pupils' attainment in physical development is average. Pupils can move in a variety of ways. In a physical education lesson in reception pupils moved in a variety of ways skipping, hopping on one leg, running and jumping with both feet together. They know the names of body parts and can respond to instructions from the teacher to put a body part on the mat when she shouts "stop". Pupils can use the space, change direction and move about the hall showing some awareness of one another. They use paint brushes, pencils and scissors with increasing control. They can manipulate construction materials such as Lego and they are able to pour water and fill containers with sand with good co-ordination.

Teaching

85. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. In the lessons observed in the nursery and reception classes, teaching was never less than satisfactory and in over half of the lessons observed teaching was judged to be good or very good. Planning is good and activities are well chosen and interesting and motivating for the pupils. The learning environment is well organised with colourful displays and activities which are changed daily to offer variety of experience. Resources changed in the sand so that pupils could garden with plant pots and flowers, or fill paper bags with spoons. The water tray was used to test how water-proof a range of footwear was, to enjoy pasting wallpaper with large paste brushes and to experience the texture and feel of soap flakes. Teachers generally manage pupils well, set clear expectations for behaviour and there are well established routines. There is good team work between teachers, teaching assistants and special support assistants and this ensures that pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, are well supported. Staff ensure that pupils with a range of disabilities and learning difficulties are as fully included as possible in the activities available. Teachers assess pupils through activities in literacy and numeracy and use this information to guide planning. The baseline assessment scheme forms a good basis for assessing the six areas of learning.

86. In the reception classes the daily literacy and numeracy lessons have been introduced too early in the year, before pupils are able to cope with the structure of the lesson or before they have developed appropriate social skills. The part of the lesson directed by the teacher is sometimes over long and pupils lose concentration. In the main part of these lessons group activities are often poorly matched to the pupils' capacity to co-operate and work independently at tasks. All pupils do the same tasks rotating round in groups and the higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently, while the lower attaining pupils do not engage with activities to any extent without adult support. The setting arrangement for literacy and numeracy were judged to be inappropriate for these pupils.

Curriculum and management

87. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage covers all six areas of learning and the Early Learning Goals for pupils at the end of the reception year. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but insufficient emphasis is given to developing pupils' personal and social skills in reception. Pupils are provided with worthwhile experiences in all areas of learning. However, the local environment is not being exploited fully to enrich their experiences.

88. The Early Years Manager offers good leadership in the nursery, but her role across the Foundation Stage is underdeveloped. Current responsibility for monitoring is limited to checking planning. Her role overall is underdeveloped to ensure that there is good continuity and consistency of practice in the early years classes and that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored effectively.

89. Resources are good for all areas of learning. However, these are not always stored appropriately to ensure that pupils can get them out and put them away for themselves. Furthermore resources are not organised effectively so that pupils can see what is available and make choices about the materials and equipment which they would like to use. Outside provision is adequate for the nursery, but reception classes do not have access to a designated outside area and there is inadequate large equipment for outside play.

90. In order to improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage the school should:

- reconsider the setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy in the reception classes;

- improve the organisation and management of sessions to ensure that pupils are engaged more fully in their learning;
- develop pupils' personal and social skills particularly their ability to share, co-operate and work independently on tasks;
- establish a secure, designated outside play area for the Foundation Stage which can be used by both reception and nursery aged pupils;
- improve the storage and organisation of equipment to enable pupils to access resources and make choices about what to use; and
- use the local community and local environment more effectively to enrich the curriculum.

ENGLISH

91. Attainment in speaking and listening, based on teacher assessment in 2000 was above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards based on the national tasks and tests in 2000, at the end of Key Stage 1, in both reading and writing, were well above national averages and compared well with similar schools. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2, based on tests in 2000, showed pupils' attainment to be near to the national average, but the results were very low compared with similar schools and attainment in writing was significantly below that of reading. Reading at the end of Key Stage 2 was a strength, but writing was a weakness and attainment for boys was particularly low, with only just over a quarter of boys attaining the expected level for pupils in Year 6 compared with over half of girls.

92. There are no results prior to 1999 because the school was newly amalgamated in 1998, but the results for 2000 compared with the results in 1999 show a significant improvement in English at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2 results were similar in both years. The school's targets for English are challenging but achievable.

93. During the inspection attainment in listening was judged to be above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils listen carefully, concentrate well and their attention is held by the teacher's exposition. In Year 2 the teacher introduces a glossary in a very clear and structured way, building on what pupils already know about the contents page and the index in non-fiction books and pupils concentrate well and know what they are expected to do to create their own farmyard glossary. Attainment in speaking was judged to be below national expectations. This weakness is linked to teaching, with pupils being given limited opportunities to present their ideas, discuss and argue, because many literacy lessons are over teacher directed, teacher's questions often do not encourage pupils to offer an extended response and too much time is spent in whole class sessions at the expense of interactive group work. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher offered opportunities for pairs to quickly discuss ideas during the whole class input, but 40 minutes elapsed before the class engaged with the group activities. In Year 6 in a lesson on humorous verse there were limited opportunities for discussion and the teacher stuck slavishly to the questions suggested in the text book, with little in-depth analysis and few opportunities for pupils to share opinions.

94. Attainment in reading based on observations of pupils in lessons and listening to pupils read was judged to be at least in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, with a large proportion of pupils attaining above national expectations. Pupils have a positive attitude to reading, are able to share their likes and dislikes and talk about their favourite authors. In Year 2 pupils read accurately with reasonable fluency and expression. They are able to talk about the plot and the characters in a story and to predict what will happen next and to talk about other books they have read in the full class feedback. In Year 6 pupils in the middle set are eager to perform poems into the microphone and read these with fluency and confidence and in the reading interviews pupils answer questions about their books showing a depth of understanding. However, some pupils in the lower set in Year 6 have difficulty inferring meaning and comprehension is limited to finding the answers as they appear in the text.

95. Attainment in writing, based on an analysis of pupils' work, is at least in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 with a significant proportion above average. Pupils in Year 2 can write for a variety of purposes such as an account of a special day, instructions for cleaning out a

hamster's cage and stories. Pupils can write independently. Letters are well formed and sentences are structured correctly with correct use of capital letters and full stops. Higher attainers are able to use a bigger range of punctuation and their writing contains more complex sentences with a range of link words and more imaginative use of vocabulary. In Year 2 pupils had written entertaining and imaginative excuses for not bringing their homework to school. They spell key words such as 'where', 'when', and 'why', accurately on their white boards, know the order of letters in the alphabet and use dictionaries competently to find the definitions of farm words for their glossaries.

96. Attainment in writing is slightly below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. However, there is evidence that standards are beginning to rise in Key Stage 2 as a result of the measures which the school has put in place to raise attainment in writing. Pupils in Year 6 have personal targets for improving the quality of their story writing. Punctuation and spelling are satisfactory, but the style of handwriting is very variable and even the higher attaining pupils do not write in complex sentences, though many are beginning to include more imaginative vocabulary. Writing is well organised and appropriate for purpose, but the content often is not sufficiently lively or thoughtful. Pupils have written for a variety of purposes such as a diary entry, a play script, a biography and Haiku poems and have composed newspaper headlines. Pupils have covered a sufficient quantity of grammar and sentence level exercises in their exercise books but there is limited evidence of this developing understanding of the structure of English feeding through into their writing.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in English are good, with over half of the lessons observed during the week of the inspection being judged to be good, or very good. Planning is thorough and well matched to the National Literacy Framework. Teaching is closely linked to learning objectives and teachers often use a tightly structured approach during the whole class sessions and this intensive teaching with close teacher control often leads to rapid learning. In Year 5 lively and enthusiastic teaching, supported by the teacher's confidence in the subject matter, led to a brisk start, enthusiastic responses from the pupils and good concentration in a lesson on myths and legends. In lessons which were judged to be good teachers used effective questioning techniques, which made pupils think and used pupils' ideas effectively so that pupils were keen to participate and contribute. For example, in Year 1 in a lesson based on the Three Billy Goats Gruff the teacher used pupils' ideas well and used all opportunities to reinforce learning points. Sessions where the teacher works directly with the whole class are well structured to ensure that pupils are introduced to key concepts and literary structures, as in a lesson in Year 4 when the teacher introduced pupils to the key features of planning a chapter for a book, including the setting, mood, characters, events, problems, resolutions and "cliffhanger".

98. Most lessons are too long, sometimes being up to 20 minutes longer than recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. In many lessons observed, the part of the lesson directed by the teacher went on too long and as a result pupils had only limited time to carry out group activities. This restricted the amount of time available for pupils to complete the activities to the best of their abilities. In the main part of some lessons the group work was not sufficiently focused and all pupils were given the same tasks resulting in a lack of challenge for some pupils and tasks which were over demanding for pupils with special educational needs. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on drafting a four paragraph story where pupils with special educational needs found the task daunting. In most lessons pupils with special educational needs are given additional support and individual education plans are detailed and implemented systematically.

99. Teachers know pupils' levels of attainment in reading and writing well and use this information to help shape teaching. Pupils are successfully involved in their own learning through the setting of group targets and they have these to refer to in the back of their exercise books. Targets are working well in some year groups and are having a positive impact on pupils' progress, especially in Year 2. However, targets for writing have not yet been fully implemented in all year groups. Marking is developmental and where targets are being used successfully teachers' comments focus on giving pupils useful feedback on strengths and areas for development.

100. Pupils generally have good attitudes to English and respond well in lessons. They usually listen well and are attentive for the teacher directed part of the lesson and are eager to contribute ideas and answer questions. In some classes pupils work co-operatively in pairs and groups and support one another's learning well, as in a Year 2 class where pupils checked one another's spellings and in Year 5

where pupils worked co-operatively and quietly in groups in the main part of the lesson. In most lessons pupils are well motivated and work hard.

101. The school has fully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and a daily literacy hour is well established in all year groups. The setting arrangements are not having a consistent impact on learning in all year groups, because pupils within sets and between sets are not offered sufficiently different activities to ensure equally rapid progress. There is heavy reliance on commercial schemes which do not always challenge higher attainers.

102. English is managed satisfactorily by the literacy co-ordinator who is beginning to develop her role of strategic planning for the subject and has clear ideas for future developments. The school analyses information from national tests effectively and uses this information to plan measures to raise attainment. The current school priority to raise attainment in writing across the school is a good example of evaluation leading to action. The co-ordinator is beginning to monitor planning, teaching and pupils' work, but lacks confidence and skills to help her to use the information gathered to plan further actions to effect change and raise attainment. She needs to raise her profile as expert amongst the staff by developing guidelines for teaching, identifying suitable texts to replace heavy reliance on schemes and developing opportunities for practising writing in other subject areas.

103. Overall the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily and pupils are making sound progress. In order to raise standards in English the school needs to:

- further develop the role of the literacy co-ordinator as subject expert and develop her skills in using information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' work to produce effective action to raise standards;
- improve the quality of work for setted groups; and
- follow more closely the recommended times for lesson length given in the National Literacy Strategy.

104. In addition the literacy co-ordinator needs to:

- develop guidelines for teaching English across the school to support those who are not specialists in English in choosing appropriate texts and activities, so that they are less reliant on commercially produced schemes; and
- develop the cross-curricular application of English across the school by identifying the opportunities for pupils systematically to practise skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

MATHEMATICS

105. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 are good. In the 2000 tests all pupils achieved Level 2 or better which is well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. At Key Stage 2 three-quarters of pupils reached the expected Level 4 or better in both 1999 and 2000. These results are close to the national average but low for similar schools. Inspection findings suggest that by the end of both key stages the attainment of many pupils will be in line with national expectations with a significant minority of pupils set to attain above the level expected for their ages. The school's target for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or better is challenging but achievable. Many pupils in both key stages are achieving appropriate standards for their prior attainment and their progress is mostly sound. Pupils with special educational needs make effective progress.

106. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to count on and back with confidence, multiply by 10, know addition and subtraction facts to 10 and have a good grasp of place value. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to partition, use doubles and near doubles, use grid multiplication and chunking for division in order to help them calculate. Many are also able to use compact standard written methods when appropriate. Most can handle fractions, decimals and percentages and can use them to describe proportions of a whole. Pupils at both key stages attain appropriately in shape, space and measures and in Key Stage 2 in data handling although these aspects are not as strong as number.

107. Teaching and learning in all lessons observed were at least satisfactory and often were good and progress was clear. In a few lessons teaching and learning were very good or excellent and progress was swift.

108. The planning of lessons is detailed and clear and follows the National Numeracy Strategy programmes and guidance for the three-part lesson. However, in some years there is little difference in the work prepared for the main part of the lesson for different classes even though the classes have been formed by grouping pupils of similar attainment together in a class. Furthermore, even within this grouping arrangement the range of attainment is still quite wide and yet work is not always closely enough aimed to meet the range of needs that pupils present. In Year 4, for example, all pupils in both classes covered the same work on capacity even though one class contained all the highest attainers and the other class less able pupils. Therefore whilst pupils remain well behaved their individual progress is not being maximised. Good practice does exist, however, where the work prepared for the classes and within the classes is different because it is closely targeted to the needs of the pupils in each class and results in good progress for all pupils – for example, in Years 2 and 5.

109. Teachers share the learning objectives of the lesson well with the pupils at the start and reflect carefully with pupils on how well the objectives have been achieved at the end of the lesson in good full class sessions. For example, in Year 6 the teacher outlined the objectives for the lesson as converting fractions, decimals and percentages and in the full class conclusion to the lesson checked and talked through with the pupils what they had learned about these in the lesson. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and so explanations of mental calculation strategies are clear and resources to aid learning are used well to help pupils make progress. For example, digit fans were used well in a lesson in Year 5 to involve all pupils in the oral mental starter. The school is well resourced for mathematics with many of the aids recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy available. However, ICT is not used to any great extent across the school to develop pupils' numeracy skills. Praise is well used to encourage pupils and teachers are mostly enthusiastic in their approach to mathematics which has a motivating effect on the pupils. Questioning, however, sometimes hinders the pupils' development of skills of explaining their methods and more expanded answers as it is insufficiently open in style; too often closed questions are asked which have a single right answer and this restricts the pupils' answers to a single word or number. These factors do not maximise the involvement of all pupils and result in stilted answers or a lack of engagement from some pupils. Pupils are good listeners but when asked to explain how they got their answers they often struggle to give a fluent, well-structured response, often needing a lot of help from the teacher. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to work together in pairs and do so well and sensibly but chances for group work are more limited. In some classes there is too heavy a reliance at times on a published scheme with the result that pupils spend too much time on their own passively completing written exercises rather than actively developing their mental calculation skills. More generally lessons are sometimes too tightly controlled which suppresses initiative and hinders the development of independence in learning.

110. The oral mental starter sometimes lacks crispness and goes on too long. This results from lessons which are too long overall. In all classes lessons last much longer than the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy and in some cases these unduly long lessons are counter-productive in terms of motivating pupils, in pace and crispness and in progressing pupils' learning as they lose fullest concentration. For example, lessons in Key Stage 1 often last for 70 minutes instead of the recommended 45 minutes and in the later years of Key Stage 2 lessons can last 80 minutes instead of the 60 recommended. These times are far too long for efficient learning in mathematics but because pupils are well behaved, have positive attitudes towards mathematics and are keen to achieve, progress is usually satisfactory. Overall, mathematics receives a disproportionate amount of time to the detriment of other subjects of the curriculum.

111. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. There is a detailed and appropriate action plan in place to raise standards and many of the actions in it are being tackled effectively. The monitoring of planning and pupils' progress is developing soundly and the co-ordinator is developing her skills for these tasks effectively. Assessment information is used well to guide planning and staff training and to give closer focus to identified weaker elements of teaching. However, as yet the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are underdeveloped and the co-ordinator lacks confidence in these aspects.

112. Overall the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily and pupils are making sound progress in developing their numeracy skills. In order to increase the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of mathematics and raise standards further the school should now:

- follow more closely the recommended times for lesson length in all years;
- ensure planning takes fullest account of the attainment of pupils in terms of matching work more closely to the differing needs of pupils both between and within the classes;
- use more open questioning styles to promote pupils' skills of explaining their methods and to encourage maximum involvement from all pupils;
- develop the oral mental starter further to improve the crispness and structure in order to promote the consolidation of pupils' mental calculation strategies;
- increase the use of ICT in mathematics teaching and learning;
- ensure the published scheme is used to support rather than drive mathematics lessons; and
- provide training for the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluation skills to enable the role of co-ordinator to be developed further.

SCIENCE

113. The results of the teacher assessments for 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated standards were above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in national tests was close to the national average. Inspection findings confirm these standards. Observations and recorded evidence suggest that standards in scientific enquiry are now higher than those recorded last year but they are not so high in the work relating to physical processes. Significant minorities of pupils in Year 2 demonstrate characteristics in their knowledge skills and understanding that are typical of the higher Level 3. This pattern is repeated for Year 6 where increasing numbers of pupils are approaching the higher Level 5.

114. The school has done well to maintain the standards as the percentage of time allocated for teaching the subject is low. There is a clear capacity for further improvement if additional time is provided. There is no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls. Decisions made by the co-ordinator to provide planning boards to guide investigative work and to monitor planning linked to the use of the adopted national guidelines are both contributing to a consistent approach across the school and consequently improved standards. The analysis of data related to the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 has helped to identify weaknesses in teaching and led to better targeted provision.

115. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have covered a broad range of topics. They are building a sound knowledge base of living things, materials and physical processes. They know that an appropriate diet, exercise and sleep are all necessary for them to grow and stay healthy. Over one weekend they conducted a survey to identify what foods they consumed and then classified them into different types using a colour code for identification. They know that some substances can damage the body and that medicines are also drugs not foods, and can be dangerous. A few have a more detailed understanding and can explain that humans inhale air containing oxygen into the lungs and that it is then carried around the body in the blood. They understand that wheels and axles are used to make the movement of heavy loads easier and that pushes and pulls are both examples of forces. As early as Year 1 pupils use experimental and investigative skills to perform simple tests and with help they can record their results. In a unit of work on sorting and using materials they used syringes to drop water onto different fabrics, papers and plastics to test if they were waterproof. They can provide reasons why a material may or may not be suitable for a particular purpose and can communicate their ideas using appropriate terminology.

116. At the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils are able to make predictions based on their knowledge and understanding. They use the appropriate technical vocabulary to describe their findings and understand the importance of fair testing and accurate recording of evidence, through the use of diagrams, charts, tables and graphs. Opportunities for scientific enquiry are carefully woven into the different units across the other three attainment targets. However, recorded examples show no evidence of systematic enquiry being channelled into contexts where pupils, particularly higher attainers, can hypothesise and then plan and carry out their own experiments, and then draw conclusions which are consistent with the evidence. In lower Key Stage 2 pupils have undertaken fair tests to identify magnetic materials. Their understanding of materials has moved forward to the point where they recognise that the choice of materials for manufacturing an object or part for a machine depends on the purpose for which it will be used. For example, they can identify why wood would be a suitable material for making

a board game but recognise that if the game were to be stored or carried from place to place thick folding card would be more suitable. A Year 6 class demonstrated their understanding of how to help a solid dissolve more quickly. Three separate groups conducted experiments having first discussed a number of variables that needed to be controlled in order that results would be valid. Groups worked co-operatively and safely. They were able to communicate their findings using appropriate scientific language. Discussions included words such as dissolve, solid, solution, volume and evaporate.

117. Progress is satisfactory. Well- planned activities ensure that pupils are kept active and fully engaged with tasks that lead to clear gains in knowledge and understanding. Pupils have a natural curiosity and are anxious to learn. In Year 3 when looking at a model of a tooth, they were fascinated by a demonstration of how tooth decay started. Pupils have positive attitudes. They listen carefully and pay close attention to the teachers. Almost everyone is keen to answer questions and take part in discussions. They are courteous, show respect for equipment and safety and work well collaboratively to support each other's learning.

118. Teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and in half of the lessons observed was very good. Lessons have clear learning objectives that are shared with the class at the beginning, and then revisited at the end. Teachers have a clear understanding of the new National Curriculum requirements. Praise is used judiciously to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Examples of very good teaching seen during the inspection were characterised by the way in which the teachers add excitement that fires interest and enthusiasm and then effectively manage and organise the class when undertaking the work that follows. Good teaching was also observed in classes where an instructional approach was adopted in order to relay and reinforce information and knowledge. In these lessons the pace is brisk, expectations are high and control is excellent. However, day-to-day assessment to guide short term planning is underdeveloped, and as a consequence in some lessons more able pupils are not given tasks that challenge their thinking. Open-ended project work that would encourage independent research and organisational skills is also underused. There is insufficient use of ICT for research and for recording evidence and data. Homework is used appropriately to support the work undertaken in class. For example, a Year 3 class in a unit of work on healthy eating and teeth was asked to find the sugar content in packaged foods.

119. The school has a suitable policy for science and the recently adopted Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) scheme of work provides breadth and balance in the subject. Scientific enquiry is now effectively incorporated into all medium- term units of work. The subject co-ordinator has very secure knowledge and is often consulted to ensure lessons engage pupils in content that is scientifically correct. A subject audit followed by the production of a useful action plan has been effective in providing a structured programme for development. However, the role as subject leader is underdeveloped because there is no system to monitor and evaluate the impact of decisions on teaching and learning. The co-ordinator lacks additional training for this responsibility.

120. Classroom accommodation is suitable and well maintained. Equipment is sufficient in range and quality to support work across all the units of study but the library does not contain sufficient reference books for independent research. Storage space is limited but well used.

121. In order to improve further the school should now:

- increase the amount of time available for teaching the subject;
- provide training for the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluation;
- introduce classroom observations of teaching and learning to judge the impact of any decisions taken;
- ensure that planning includes opportunities for day-to-day assessment that is used to shape teaching; and
- provide opportunities for higher attaining pupils to initiate and develop their own research and experiments.

ART AND DESIGN

122. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is in line with the national expectation. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is below expectations. There are strengths in some year groups in drawing and in painting. For example, the work on colour mixing and observation drawing in Key Stage 1 is of good quality. Their drawings of plants have good proportions and line definitions and are often an accurate representation of what was observed. Some creative use of ICT - the digital camera - enables pupils to examine the complexities of weaving and identify the warp and weft to help them with their weaving work. In Key Stage 2 pupils build on their experiences of Key Stage 1 and sometimes use a wide range of creative techniques and different mediums. Pupils use blending and tonal effects quite creatively to present an abstract collage using oil pastels. They have also enhanced the presentation of some literacy work using chalk pastels to illustrate a poem or a story. Pupils have produced some stunning masks using 'Modroc' a material similar to plaster of Paris. The masks have been designed to illustrate feelings such as fear and anger and are really quite dramatic and beautifully made. Pupils have used line well to describe form and space in the Egyptian project making drawings of people, buildings and artefacts. Also an experiment with watercolours has given pupils an opportunity to consider the concept of foreground and perspective. Some creative use of chalk pastels to define tone and illustrate the characteristics of plants are particularly effective. Pupils' control of this medium is generally good and their ability to combine colours produces the desired effect. Pupils' skills in working in large scale in two- and three-dimensions and combining different materials to produce quite dramatic effects, are generally not well developed, however, because this aspect of the art and design curriculum receives insufficient emphasis at present. There is also little evidence of teachers using the work of other artists to provide inspiration.

123. Progress is patchy at both key stages - particularly in relation to pupils' knowledge and understanding of observation drawing and three-dimensional work. The work observed in lessons, around classroom walls and in the school art and design portfolio indicates that overall progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but less secure in Key Stage 2. The time allowed for art and design is inadequate. Because the school gives a larger proportion of time to English and mathematics than most schools, this limits the time available for other subjects. This limitation on time is restricting achievement.

124. Pupils responded well to work in art and design in the lessons observed. They are keen, enthusiastic and work hard. They discuss their work with interest and when encouraged to do so can begin constructively to evaluate their own work and that of others.

125. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons were lively, focused and very well planned. For instance, in a Year 3 lesson on blending and toning for effect the teacher demonstrated the technique very well enabling pupils to see best practice; they used this knowledge to produce good quality pictures. Adult helpers, when present, gave good support by working with groups of pupils. However, some lack of confidence and expertise in teaching art and design means, for example, that sketchbooks are not used consistently to encourage pupils to observe, record and experiment with techniques. There are also missed opportunities for developing pupils' ICT skills through art and design, in both key stages. Insufficient focus is given to using ICT to help pupils improve the quality and standard of their artwork, or to help them develop their drawing, research and investigative skills.

126. The art and design co-ordinator is enthusiastic but currently lacks the time and the skills to co-ordinate the subject effectively. There is insufficient support and guidance given to colleagues both in informal discussion and through the use of guidance sheets - for example, on planning progression through areas of experience and providing stimulus by celebrating the work of other artists on a regular basis using corridor displays. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject are not being fulfilled and the scheme of work needs reviewing to bring it in line with the National Curriculum requirements for art and design. Assessing and recording pupils' work is unsatisfactory and teachers therefore do not know what is required in order to move pupils of different abilities onto higher levels of attainment. A good portfolio of work does provide some sound evidence of pupils' experiences, however. Resources for art and design are inadequate and this is having a negative impact on standards and progress.

127. In order to improve further the school should now:

- improve teachers' confidence and skills in teaching art and design;

- develop pupils' observation skills, using a wider range of mediums and different grade pencils;
- encourage the use of sketch books;
- ensure the time provided for art and design is adequate to allow pupils to achieve fully;
- further develop the role of subject co-ordinator to ensure that she gains the relevant skills to review and monitor the coverage of the scheme of work and evaluate the qualities of teaching and learning in both key stages in order to set targets and improve standards further;
- develop assessment procedures and use the outcomes to set targets for improvement;
- develop more opportunities for pupils to use ICT; and
- develop more opportunities for pupils to produce more large-scale, three-dimensional work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. Most design and technology lessons took place outside the period of the inspection. The following judgements are based upon one lesson observation, discussions with pupils, teachers' planning and an analysis of pupils' work.

129. In Key Stage 1 Year 1 pupils have appropriate experiences to develop their designing and making skills. For example, a healthy eating project enabled pupils to prepare a fruit salad using appropriate techniques and procedures such as selecting the correct utensils and paying due regard to health and hygiene. In this activity the levels of attainment were in line with expectations. However, insufficient evidence was available during the inspection for a judgement to be made on pupils' attainment at the end of the key stage.

130. In Key Stage 2 many pupils attain standards broadly in line with national expectations in designing and making. By the end of the key stage pupils generally put their knowledge of working safely with materials, ingredients, tools and processes to good use when making products. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge of nets to design and make packages for a Christmas gift. Pupils have produced some good quality designs and products on the theme of moving toys using their knowledge and understanding of cams and rotary motion. These products have been well made and work efficiently. Some pupils use more advanced skills of designing and making to make buggies. In this task of designing and making they use their knowledge and understanding of designing for a purpose; they use their scientific understanding of how motors work and how to control speed and direction well. Again these products are made accurately, are well finished and fit for purpose. Most pupils are able to talk about their work confidently but their use of technical vocabulary is weak. Furthermore there are no examples of work using textiles or of combining materials in more creative ways. Overall standards therefore are slightly below average.

131. In Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress. However, Key Stage 2 teachers are not fully aware of pupils' prior attainment as assessments are not embedded sufficiently in practice. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress in moving onto the more advanced skills in designing and making as they move through the key stage.

132. Pupils in both key stages respond with enthusiasm and commitment and concentrate to master the practical skills of cutting and joining basic materials and in planning and evaluating their work. They have sensible, mature and safe approaches to design-and-make task and behave well. Most pupils respect each other's point of view. They will often talk sensibly and with a degree of understanding about their designs - for example, when discussing the designs for buggies in Year 6 and pop-up cards in Year 4. Pupils take responsibility for managing their own resources and have pride in their work.

133. Only one design and technology lesson was observed, in that lesson teaching was good. The session was well planned, prepared and resourced. This ensured that learning objectives of making a pop-up storybook were reached. A notable feature was the good selection of pop-up books made available to the pupils; these provided a good stimulus and helped them with their design work. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, from discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory in some classes but weak in others. However, teachers' subject knowledge and expertise for teaching aspects of design and technology is insecure particularly in relation to the more advanced areas in Key Stage 2.

134. ICT skills are not sufficiently developed through design and technology in both key stages to help pupils develop their designing, research and investigative skills and to help them control models they may have designed and made. The design and technology co-ordinator is committed but the skills to lead and manage the subject are underdeveloped. Little monitoring and evaluation takes place. Assessing and recording pupils' work is undeveloped and therefore teachers do not always know what is required in order to move pupils of different abilities onto higher levels of attainment. Resources for design and technology are inadequate and this weakness is having a negative impact on standards.

135. In order to improve further the school should now:

- provide training for teaching design and technology;
- ensure the time allowed in the timetable for design and technology is adequate to allow pupils to achieve fully;
- develop pupils' designing and making skills in particular in communicating how an idea has developed, and in using a wider range of materials and processes;
- develop the role of subject co-ordinator and provide training in the relevant skills of reviewing, monitoring and evaluating ;
- develop assessment procedures and use the outcomes to set targets for improvement; and
- develop more opportunities for pupils to use ICT.

GEOGRAPHY

136. Standards in geography are in line with the national expectations at the end of both key stages. By the end of Year 2 pupils have developed a secure grasp of using appropriate vocabulary to describe features of both physical and human landscapes. They can easily pick out the hills, streams, woodland, farmland, slopes and settlements from photographs and can distinguish between different types of buildings, transport and land uses from simple maps and aerial photographs. They cannot always accurately name and locate places, however, on maps of various scales, such as the UK or the world. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to use maps, diagrams, photographs (ground level and aerial views) and other quite complex sources of data and information to identify and describe pattern and features in the places they study. The highest attainers are working above the levels expected in this respect. Most have developed a good geographical vocabulary and here again the higher attainers can use this to explain quite complicated processes such as exploration, condensation and other elements of the water cycle with impressive accuracy. Locational knowledge is not always secure: pupils are not always able to name and locate the main countries, cities (including capitals) uplands or seas around the UK with any consistency and at global level their knowledge of continents, countries, seas and oceans is weak in too many cases. However, their knowledge of particular places which have been studied is better and emphasises the need for teachers to put greater emphasis on developing wider geographical knowledge throughout the key stage. Currently the subject receives too little curriculum time to make this possible.

137. Very little geography teaching was seen during the inspection. However, that seen in the upper years of Key Stage 2 was of high quality: it brought a very positive response from pupils and ensured that good progress was made in lessons. In Year 5 pupils were involved in drawing down coloured street maps of the local area using the classroom computer, to enhance their awareness of the value of such sources to their own study and to everyday life. These maps were then used alongside other maps and aerial photographs to develop their knowledge of local features and land use patterns. Throughout, the teaching was well directed to pursue specific learning targets which the pupils had clear in their minds. Pupils in Year 6 were keenly involved in creating a photographic journey from the source to the mouth of a local river. High quality aerial photographs together with very well sequenced questions and crisp explanations enabled pupils to move forward rapidly in their knowledge and understanding of river patterns and features. Teaching of this quality ensures that progress in lessons is good. However, the limited curriculum time available to geography results in pupils making only satisfactory progress against the national expectations throughout the whole key stage.

138. The subject is very well managed by a skilful, effective and forward-looking co-ordinator. An academic qualification in geography to degree level and pursuing a personal interest through active

membership of the Geographical Association, enables the co-ordinator to bring secure knowledge of current approaches, resources and best practice into the school to bring about improvements and to provide on-going support for colleagues. A thorough auditing of needs has been carried out. Furthermore selective use of guidance such as the QCA units of work, together with a clear view of the next steps for development that the co-ordinator has bodes well for future development of the subject.

139. The school should now:

- ensure sufficient teaching time is available to promote fullest progress; and
- develop fully the role of co-ordinator.

HISTORY

140. Standards in history are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve a good balance in acquiring historical knowledge and understanding and in developing the skills of historical enquiry throughout both key stages. Pupils in Year 2 are able to use photographs and paintings of the past to pick out details to create an understanding of how life was different to the present day. In a study of Florence Nightingale and the hospital at Scutari, the higher attainers could link together the evidence of poor hygiene with the likely effect in terms of infection and the actions taken to increase the likelihood of recovery for soldiers at that time. They could go on to make accurate comparisons with modern medicine in most cases, though the quality of their written ideas did not match that of their spoken ideas. This was generally the case in the written record of their work and reflected a lack of curriculum time to complete such tasks. By the end of Key Stage 2 the skills of historical enquiry are well established. Pupils can ask pertinent questions to guide their learning and are well schooled in their use of historical sources. They can make clear observations when handling historical artefacts to build up a picture of the skills, the technology, the lifestyle and to some degree the beliefs of some people in the past. Their knowledge of periods, events and famous people is sound but not all pupils can place such knowledge accurately in terms of time. The understanding of the passing of time is satisfactory in terms of overall sequence of periods studied, but less so in the detailed use of the language used to describe the past. For example, in Year 6 the concepts of decade or century are well established with the higher attainers but significantly less so with others. Organising and recording their learning in ways which support this understanding of chronology at a detailed level require greater emphasis. Currently there is only limited curriculum time available to history to allow such relatively advanced skills to develop. Consequently, progress overall remains satisfactory.

141. Some very skilful teaching of history was seen during the inspection and the great majority of lessons were either good or very good. Lessons reflect the enthusiasm which both teachers and pupils have for the subject. Learning resources such as pictures, photographs, computer programmes, drawings, labels and artefacts are well selected, well prepared and well used to bring the subject to life. Pupils made good progress in a Year 6 lesson because of the impressive collection of replica artefacts from Ancient Greece and the well-judged prompt-sheet used to guide the use of this historical evidence. Where possible, visits to museums and historical sites add to pupils' understanding of the subject. Many lessons featured skilful explanations and careful sequencing of questions to move learning forward in a well-ordered way. Effective teaching was seen in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were able to gain a detailed picture of Roman weapons and clothing and to match accurately labels to objects in their record of the work. An area of weakness is the absence of more open-ended questions and enquiries, designed to practice and develop collaborative organisation and research skills, and for higher attainers to dictate the pace of their learning. This again, however, would require more curriculum time.

142. The subject co-ordinator has guided the use of recommended units of work within both key stages and this is helping to improve the consistent and progressive teaching of the subject for all year groups. Similarly, a useful start has been made to gather evidence of the progress in pupils' learning through a collection of pieces of pupils' work. However, other necessary aspects of subject management lack development: there is currently no clear view or overall strategy for monitoring the subject within the school or for developing the use of ICT to support learning. The subject does not have a clear action plan to guide further developments.

143. The school should now:

- ensure sufficient curriculum time is available to promote fullest progress;
- develop the use of ICT to support learning;
- develop fully the role of co-ordinator including monitoring and action planning; and
- develop the use of open-ended questioning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. During the inspection there was very limited evidence of pupils using ICT in their work. From the scrutiny of pupils' work, and from talking to pupils and teachers, it is evident that pupils' attainment overall at the end of both key stages is below national expectations. From this evidence, however, it is also clear that some pupils, when given the opportunity, are able to handle and communicate information to a standard more in line with national expectations when using simple word processing and graphics packages to present work. Infant pupils collate data in the form of a chart then producing a pictogram; they then convert this into a bar chart to compare them. Pupils use electronic mailing via the Internet to communicate with a neighbouring school. This work has been usefully extended with another school in a collaborative writing project, writing fairy tales. Pupils are able to use a simple on-screen program, produced by the teacher, to convert length and to make simple calculations. These are effective applications of ICT in support of numeracy but unfortunately such practice is all too infrequently seen across the school. Pupils use word processing techniques to test their knowledge and understanding of pronouns where they edit and re type text and they use the spell checker to test spelling skills. These are some effective applications of ICT in support of literacy. Whilst pupils are able to follow simple instructions to access a particular software package and produce a piece of work, their understanding of the process they have followed is weak. Few are able to describe accurately the process or predict the effect of experimenting with simple software applications on their work. Pupils' keyboarding skills are limited to very basic data or letter entry.

145. Some pupils use information technology successfully to research topics using the CD-Rom - for example, My World science investigations and seeking historical facts. In Year 3 pupils model effects through the use of the Romans CD-Rom and in geography they use the BBC weather site to compare the weather in St Lucia to Newcastle. Internet access is limited and research tasks are generally of a very low level. Most pupils can use the roamer for programming a sequence of movements but again this is generally at a low level in comparison with national expectations.

146. The school has planned an appropriate range of experiences for pupils across both key stages. However, in reality, too few pupils make use of this provision owing to inconsistencies in approach and teachers' lack of confidence and subject expertise as well as limited access to computers. The school is to take full use of National Grid for Learning (NGfL) grants for the development of ICT in school this financial year. Currently there are insufficient up-to-date computers in use for a school of this size. The opportunities for all pupils to develop their ICT skills in line with national expectations are therefore inadequate with the effect that most pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

147. The scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and the limited teaching observations indicate the quality of teaching and learning of information technology is unsatisfactory. However, teachers have worked hard to produce guidance sheets for pupils to help them with the planned exercises. The problem is that too often these tasks are mundane, very narrowly directed and are not flexible enough to meet the needs of all pupils. The result is that pupils do not fully understand their relevance and lose interest.

148. A few teachers have a sound knowledge of what the computer and software can offer pupils to help them attain higher standards in other subjects and in developing their ICT skills. The current resource provision does not enable these teachers to make best use of their expertise or develop pupils' ICT skills progressively, however. Other teachers lack the confidence and competence to provide even the basic planned opportunities and have yet to be trained to enable pupils to move onto the higher levels of skill and to become more independent in how they use ICT.

149. When given the opportunity to use ICT on challenging tasks pupils remain on task; they persevere and show interest but they do not have the skills to take risks and model different scenarios. Frustration

creeps in at times when the higher attaining pupils are not able to make as much progress as they might because there are too few computers. Overall, however, many ICT tasks set are bland and do not stimulate pupils' interest and so progress is slow.

150. The school has produced a satisfactory interim scheme of work, which fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. In reality, however, pupils do not have sufficient access to opportunities to control sequences of instructions or capture sounds. The time allocated for developing ICT in the school is unsatisfactory. The school has a very good ICT improvement plan in place to tackle all the issues identified.

151. The school uses ICT well to prepare teaching materials, in administration and to promote its activities. The protocols for using the Internet in school have been agreed by governors, parents and pupils.

152. In order to achieve better provision and move onto more acceptable levels of attainment, the school should now:

- fully implement its strategic plan for the development of ICT;
- implement and extend staff training in the use of ICT;
- monitor the coverage of the scheme of work and evaluate the qualities of teaching and learning in both key stages in order to set targets and improve standards further;
- ensure that planned activities are challenging and matched to make certain that pupils have the optimum condition to succeed at the highest levels; and
- improve opportunities for pupils to control sequences, model effects and capture sounds.

MUSIC

153. As no music lessons were observed during the inspection period and there was little evidence of previous work in the subject, judgements cannot be made with regard to the standards of attainment and progress in music at either key stage. Other judgements have been made from the scrutiny of displays, resources, the co-ordinator's management file, portfolio of evidence, listening to pupils singing in assemblies and from discussion with the subject co-ordinator.

154. Pupils sing to taped music as the school has no music specialist. However, pupils from both key stages participate with obvious enthusiasm and are able to sustain rhythm and tone. Pupils listen attentively as music is played as part of the collective worship but during the two assemblies observed, the piece of music and composer were not identified.

155. The quality of teaching and learning cannot be judged securely owing to insufficient evidence. Planning is satisfactory and shows breadth. However, the dominance of literacy and numeracy in the timetable means that there is insufficient time available for music education. This increases the teachers' lack of confidence and subject knowledge in teaching music as reported in the co-ordinator's subject audit.

156. Pupils' response to music is satisfactory. In both assemblies, pupils eagerly participated in singing and were well behaved when listening to music.

157. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and support staff are deployed to work with these pupils during music.

158. There is evidence of some appropriate use of ICT within the subject and Year 5 pupils have used 'music explorer' software.

159. In both key stages, resources for the teaching of music are satisfactory. They are well managed and include instruments from different cultures.

160. Lessons in violin, cello and clarinet are taught by peripatetic staff to older Key Stage 2 pupils.

161. The music co-ordinator, who has had the responsibility for two months, was appointed to the school last September and is not a music specialist. She is aware that the subject needs development. She has organised the school's music resources in both key stage halls and has audited staff as to their training needs. However, she, herself, lacks subject expertise and has yet to undertake professional development to help her fulfil the role as well as find strategies for supporting the rest of the staff.

162. The school should now:

- undertake staff training to develop teachers' confidence and subject knowledge; and
- ensure curriculum time is sufficient to promote fullest development of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. Attainment at the end of both key stages is broadly in line with national expectations with a significant minority of pupils in both key stages achieving standards above the expected level. In Key Stage 1 it was only possible to see lessons in gymnastics and games and in Key Stage 2 in dance, gymnastics and indoor games. Scrutiny of long- and medium-term plans indicate that swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities at Key Stage 2 and dance and swimming at Key Stage 1 add appropriate breadth to the curriculum and ensure it meets statutory requirements.

164. At Key Stage 1 most pupils are aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies. They know that exercise is part of being healthy and that a warm-up should precede the lesson. In gymnastics pupils show good body management skills and spatial awareness when running about the room and balancing on different parts of their body. They demonstrate the ability to take weight on their hands by performing 'bunny hops' on the floor and by jumping from side to side along a bench. Throwing and catching is less secure. For example, they enjoyed limited success when throwing quoits over short distances to a partner. Opportunities are taken for planning, composing and making judgements about performance. Pupils were asked to replicate good examples of travelling, having watched a demonstration and discussed with the teacher some of the points that led to success.

165. At Key Stage 2 the knowledge and understanding of older pupils have been expanded although there is a wide range in levels of attainment within classes and between aspects. In a gymnastics lesson, for example, they perform a variety of short sequences that contain a jump, a balance and a roll with satisfactory control and precision. Most pupils are able to perform at least two different types of roll but balances lacked variety and creativity often being limited to standing on one foot. The performances achieved on the floor have not been extended onto the large apparatus that is available. Most pupils have the ability to evaluate the work of a partner and then produce a matching routine. However, only a few have developed the necessary technical vocabulary to communicate their thoughts and ideas to others. In a set dance routine to music the majority of pupils demonstrate skill acquisition appropriate for their age. Girls interpret the music better than most boys and show good control in footwork and a clear sense of shape and pattern when performing right and left hand turns and a 'do-si-do'. The majority of Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of health related exercise. They can explain basic safety principles in preparing for physical activity and know the effects of exercise on their bodies. By the time they leave Year 3 a high percentage of pupils have achieved the Key Stage 2 expectation in swimming. Work observed in extra-curricular netball with a small group of girls demonstrated standards in ball handling, footwork and knowledge of rules and tactics at a level above the expectation for this age. Outstanding success in the local cross-country event provides further evidence that a significant number of the older pupils have high levels of fitness and stamina.

166. Progress is satisfactory overall in both key stages. It varies from good to unsatisfactory depending on the class, time provided, and which aspect of the subject is being taught. The best lessons provide more than thirty minutes of activity, identify a focused area for the work and provide opportunities for repetition to improve control, co-ordination and accuracy. One lesson that included less than twenty minutes of activity was too short to make a significant impact on standards. Another failed to provide pupils with activities in a way that would make the work progressive.

167. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take satisfaction from improving their work. This view is confirmed by self-evaluation sheets that the pupils have completed. They enjoy the challenge of achieving new

skills and being able to use them in different situations. In almost all lessons pupils listen carefully to instructions, show perseverance when asked to repeat practices and co-operate well in pairs and small groups. In one lesson where the activities were not well matched to the needs of the pupils, the poor behaviour of a small group interrupted continuity in learning.

168. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. A third of lessons were good and one was unsatisfactory. The most effective teaching is characterised by clear learning objectives supported by well-planned activities and appropriate resources. Class management, organisation and attention to safety are strong features in all lessons. Most teachers understand the subject to a point where they can ask questions that challenge thinking and move learning forward. Good use is made of demonstrations to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance of skills, and to identify the key features on which the pupils should concentrate in order to improve. Conversely, where teaching is not so effective demonstrations are often used only to celebrate success, and more general comments like, "well done", or "that was good", while recognising achievement, fail to progress learning. The pupils' ability to plan and evaluate their work was a positive feature in some lessons but generally this feature is missing from teachers' short-term planning and learning objectives. Day-to-day assessment does not always ensure that provision is made for different ability groups and that lessons build on work that was undertaken previously.

169. The co-ordinator is a good role model for the subject and works hard. A number of additional extra-curricular opportunities have been added to enrich the curriculum and the school enjoys considerable success in local festivals and competitions. The use of funds to promote physical activity through traditional playground games during morning break and lunchtimes is an exciting initiative to promote health and cultural awareness. National training as a tutor to deliver the 'Tops' programmes has updated the skills of the co-ordinator and the equipment and cards are being used to support learning across the school. However, only teachers of the infant years have received training in use of the materials. The role of the co-ordinator remains underdeveloped; monitoring and evaluation are not yet undertaken nor have staff training needs been assessed. The current long- and medium-term plans have yet to be updated to ensure that they provide a balanced and cohesive curriculum across both key stages. Overall the limited time available for physical education is hindering fullest achievement and attainment.

170. Accommodation is good and well maintained. Sufficient space is available in the two halls for indoor work but they are under-used in the mornings because all classes study English or mathematics. The hard surface playground is in need of re-painting to facilitate its use for both playtime and curriculum games. There is a suitable range of gymnastics equipment and small apparatus to deliver all areas of study.

171. In order to improve further the school should now:

- introduce monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to identify aspects of the subject where staff need further training;
- update long- and medium-term plans to ensure balance and progression between years and key stages;
- ensure that planning includes opportunities for day-to-day assessment and that information gathered is used to shape teaching; and
- make more efficient use of the indoor accommodation by considering adjusting the timetable and give more time for teaching the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

172. Standards of attainment in religious education across the school are high at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with the expectations of the Durham Agreed Syllabus at the end of Key Stage 2.

173. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have begun to understand religious issues and have developed appropriate knowledge of other religions such as Judaism. They appreciate that different religions keep

different 'special days' for various reasons. Pupils are also developing an awareness of how these special days differ from the ones they observe, such as Christmas. Pupils study 'special people' such as St Cuthbert and St Bernadette and the qualities that make them special. They can relate these qualities to their own 'special people'. Pupils study different celebrations and understand what it means to belong to the Christian church. They study people, past and present, whose life work has been directed by their faith such as a vicar and Mary Jones. Year 3 pupils consider leadership qualities and can relate these to bible characters and then to people in their own lives who are leaders. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have consolidated earlier learning and extended their knowledge with regard to other world religions. They know about the basic beliefs of Hinduism and Sikhism and have looked at rules and laws. Pupils demonstrate some understanding of values and attitudes held by themselves and can relate these to people who have stood up for others who are less fortunate. Year 6 pupils could consider how they would improve life for others if they 'had a dream' after studying 'Peacemakers' such as Terry Waite and Martin Luther King. Pupils of all abilities, in both key stages, make satisfactory progress.

174. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are generally good. Pupils discuss issues thoughtfully, either as a class or in pairs, but no group discussions were seen. In both key stages, pupils showed awareness of the subject and the language used showed sensitivity and understanding. Pupils were attentive throughout and were on task for the majority of the time.

175. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection but in all lessons, teaching and learning was judged to be at least satisfactory. Lessons were well planned and followed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 1 and Year 3, teachers observed used skilful focused questioning to draw out and extend the pupils thinking but there was little use of open questioning. Pupils with special educational needs were specifically planned for and given appropriate support.

176. An enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has only been the subject manager for six months, works very effectively and is aware of areas still to be developed. A revised agreed syllabus will be published in March, 2001 and this is to be used, alongside previous policies, to develop a policy for the new primary school. Resources are well organised and managed and external agencies help to supplement and enrich these, thereby helping to raise standards. Useful websites, that could enhance the quality of teaching, are circulated by the co-ordinator. She has undertaken professional development on assessment in religious education and this is to be disseminated throughout the staff. Although teachers' planning is seen by the co-ordinator, as yet monitoring of religious education teaching is undeveloped.

177. The school should now:

- carry through plans to develop the subject further; and
- develop fully the role of co-ordinator.