

INSPECTION REPORT

St Pius Xth Roman Catholic VA Primary School
Consett

LEA area : County Durham

Unique Reference Number : 114249

Headteacher : Mr J.M.Quigley

Reporting inspector : Mr D A Wilkinson
3240

Dates of inspection : 11 – 13 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707259

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Junior and Infant

Type of control : Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils : 4-11 years

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Thornfield Road
The Grove
Consett, Co. Durham
DH8 8AX

Telephone number : 01207 503604

Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Rev. J. Doherty

Date of previous inspection : December 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D. A. Wilkinson Registered Inspector	Mathematics Information technology Art Design and technology Physical education Under-fives Equal opportunities Special Educational Needs	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Dr J. D. Cross, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Efficiency
Mr W. L-Bailey Team member	English Science Geography History Music	Curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Most of the teaching is good; no unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
- Pupils at both key stages make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Art and music are taught well, promoting high standards in these subjects.
 - Provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent.
- The very good behaviour of pupils and the very good relationships in school ensure a very good ethos for learning.
- The school enriches the curriculum by purposeful educational visits.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- Insufficient use is made of the information technology resources and procedures are not in place to ensure each pupil receives an appropriate breadth of the curriculum. Standards in information technology are below the national expectation.
 - Arrangements for managing the curriculum for the children under the age of five are inadequate.
 - In many areas of the curriculum the condition of the existing resources are such that they now need to be replaced.
 - The monitoring and evaluation role of subject co-ordinators is under-developed.

The school has many strengths and provides a good education for its pupils within a very caring setting where the best for each individual child is paramount. The strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. The weaknesses will, however, form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection in December 1995. On the evidence available standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained and in some instances improved - for example, standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Documentation to support the teaching of subjects has been improved and updated especially in subjects to the forefront of national developments - for example, mathematics and English. There is more formal evaluation of the work of the school through the annual self-review of curriculum areas. The headteacher monitors and evaluates the work of colleagues, but the role of co-ordinators in this area of subject management remains under-developed. Whilst lesson planning has improved the links with assessment remain a weakness. Pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society has been raised but pupils still lack knowledge of the other faiths often associated with these cultures. Alterations have been made to the accommodation in order to make better use of the space available. Safety improvements have been made to the joint pedestrian and vehicle entrance - for example, through line markings, and the situation is monitored carefully by the governing body.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

Owing to the small number of pupils in each year group, which in recent years has often been around 6 or 7 pupils, it is difficult to make comparisons between the school's test results and those of all and similar schools nationally. One or two pupils with special educational needs or of high attainment can distort the results of the whole year group in quite a considerable way. For this reason the table giving comparative attainment results, normally found in inspection reports of other Primary schools, are not included in this report. Standards in school at the end of both key stages are satisfactory in English and mathematics. Standards in science are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above average

at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in information technology are below those that are expected nationally due to the lack of breadth of coverage of the curriculum and the insufficient attention given by teachers to ensuring that pupils' skills build up in small steps of learning as they move through school.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	good	good	good
Mathematics	satisfactory	good	good
Science		good	good
Information technology		unsatisfactory	unsatisfactory
Other subjects	good	satisfactory	satisfactory

The teaching generally is good. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. In 3 out of 4 lessons it was good or better. One in ten lessons were very good or better. The judgement regarding the teaching relating to information technology is heavily influenced by teachers' lack of planning for the subject and the many opportunities missed to enhance pupils' learning by use of the computer systems.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils are very well behaved at all times of the school day, whoever is teaching or supervising them.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. There are no unauthorised absences and pupils generally arrive at school punctually.
Ethos*	The school is committed to enabling all pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and the very good relationships established throughout the school community significantly contribute towards the standards achieved.
Leadership and management	The headteacher and governors provide the school with good leadership. They are capable and committed in leading the school forward.
Curriculum	Generally the breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory apart from weaknesses in the planning for information technology and the early years curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being successfully implemented.
Pupils with special educational needs	These pupils make good progress. A combination of individual planning together with small group and individual teaching ensures they have good support.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Excellent provision is made to heighten pupils' spiritual awareness. Moral and social development are promoted very well. Pupils' self worth and self confidence are boosted effectively by the staff who set very good role models for the pupils. Provision for raising

	cultural awareness is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is adequate. Teaching groups are often small. In many instances resources are beginning to look dated and worn. The accommodation is very good
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>According to the responses to the parents' questionnaire the vast majority of parents agreed that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the values and attitudes promoted by the school had a positive effect on their child(ren) • their child(ren) enjoy coming to school • the school achieves high standards of good behaviour • parents find it easy to approach the school if they have problems related to their child(ren) <p>During the parents' meeting, many positive points were made including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents are very satisfied with the standards their child(ren) are achieving • there is a strong family ethos in the school • the staff are very supportive and approachable • parents and the community are actively encouraged to support the work of the school 	

Twenty questionnaires were returned from thirty families (the school sent each family 2 forms). Five parents, representing five different families, attended the parents meeting. They in turn represented approximately 20 per cent of the pupils in the school. According to the responses to the parents questionnaire the overwhelming majority of parents indicated no area of dissatisfaction. Likewise there were no areas of dissatisfaction expressed at the parents meeting. The inspection findings fully support the positive views of the parents.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards and enable pupils to make better progress in all age groups, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

raise the standards of attainment for all pupils in information technology by:

ensuring all pupils receive teaching across the full breadth of the subject as set out in the National Curriculum

ensuring that teachers' plans identify when and how information technology will be taught using existing computers more regularly in lessons

introducing a recording system for each pupil so that year-on-year pupils' experiences and skills can be monitored

monitoring teaching and learning frequently to identify areas for improvement.

(Paragraphs: 6,10,14,17,27,73,82,109,115, 127-134)

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

planning, provision and oversight of the curriculum for pupils under the age of five.

(Paragraphs: 24,34,72,92,101,102)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 St. Pius Xth Roman Catholic VA Primary School is a very small primary school serving the parish of St. Pius Xth, comprising the settlements of the Grove, Moorside and Castleside. It is situated in Consett South in north west Durham. There are 43 pupils on roll, 19 boys and 24 girls. Generally about 7 pupils are admitted into the school each year but year groups do vary significantly from a high of 14 in Year 2 to a low of 3 in Year 1. Recently overall numbers have been fairly static. At time of the previous inspection in 1995 there were the same number of pupils on roll as now. Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. Most pupils, but not all, experienced some pre-school education in a local playgroup or nursery. At the time of the inspection the children had been in school for nearly half a term and 5 pupils were still under the age of five. They are accommodated in a class which is made up of reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. As they enter school at Key Stage 1, the attainment of pupils is quite wide between individuals and varies year on year but is usually below average.

2 Eleven pupils (22%) are on the register for special educational need and one pupil (2%) has a statement of need. The intake of the pupils is from a lower than average socio-economic background. Thirteen pupils (29%) are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is above average.

3 *Main aims*

The school has its own mission statement. The motto of the school's Patron Saint, Pius X, is "To restore all things in Christ". The school's aim is therefore to teach the whole of the National Curriculum in 'Christ'. The school's list of aims is lengthy but essentially the school seeks to promote and nurture the whole child and to teach the National Curriculum within this framework. The school aims to form school, home and Parish into one caring community. It seeks to provide a stimulating environment for its pupils, share its resources and value all staff.

4 *Current priorities*

There are five main targets within the current school development plan:

the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy

the continuing implementation of the National Literacy Strategy

further development of information and communications technology through the National Grid for Learning initiative

further develop links with local business to establish their use of information technology

developments in religious and environmental education through celebrations for the millennium by producing a millennium garden that will incorporate both spiritual and environmental objectives.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1

for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999			6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	83(83)	83(83)	83(83)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	83(83)	83(83)	83(83)
	National	82(81)	80(85)	86(86)

Data regarding the number of boys and girls has been omitted so that there is no chance of the individual results of pupils being identified within such small year groups.

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2

for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999			7

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71(20)	86(40)	100(60)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	57(20)	71(60)	71(40)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

Data regarding the number of boys and girls has been omitted so that there is no chance of the individual results of pupils being identified within such small year groups.

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)			%
missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year	Authorised	School	8.3
		National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0
		National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :		%
	Very good or better	10
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5 Pupil attainment indicators gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results are unreliable given the very small numbers in each age group in the school. Over the past few years the size of the age groups has been around 7 pupils. The results of one or two pupils may therefore alter the school's average results considerably and consequently no comparisons have been made with schools nationally or with similar schools.

6 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is average in English, and mathematics. They attain above average standards in science by the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of both key stages standards are below the national expectation in information technology.

7 In English, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is broadly average in speaking and listening. Pupils express themselves appropriately. They listen well and answer questions willingly. Attainment in reading is average within a wide range of attainment. Pupils' reading benefits from the systematic phonic work that is undertaken. Writing has improved since the previous inspection and is now broadly average. Standards of spelling and punctuation are satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, are all broadly average. Most pupils answer questions clearly and the more able offer sustained accounts of what they are doing. Most pupils read text at their own level with sound understanding. The less able pupils show some weakness in their phonic understanding.

8 In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are average. Most pupils can add and subtract numbers to 20. The majority of pupils identify number to a certain criteria - for example, odd numbers between 10 and 20. Numeracy is developing well and the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive influence. Less time is now spent, than in previous years, on the commercially prepared worksheets that failed to challenge many pupils. Pupils have a good knowledge of number to 100 and understand place value. Through this they are able to partition double digit numbers into their component parts as an equation. They interpret graphs correctly - for example, simple block weather graphs. In work related to science they use measuring skills to record the rate of growth of a plant. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are average. Pupils are competent in the four operations of number especially in the area of traditional recorded methods. They draw shapes using protractors, rulers and compasses to extend their knowledge of angles. They calculate accurately the area of irregular composite figures by a variety of methods.

9 In science at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average. Pupils recognise and name the various parts of a plant and describe the purpose of the different parts. They know how essential water, sunlight and soil are to the growth of a plant. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average. Pupils often conduct experiments for themselves on the lines of a fair test and show a clear understanding of what they are doing. They study the life cycle of plants and how other elements within nature are involved in seed dispersal.

10 In information technology the attainment of pupils varies between the individual strands of the subject at both key stages. In the strand relating to communicating information, which involves work with drawings, pictures and word-processing, standards are at least in line with the national expectation. Some pupils show higher levels of attainment especially within Key Stage 2. In other aspects of the subject - for example, control technology, standards fall below the national expectation.

11 Within the remaining subjects there are particular strengths in art and music. In art pupils receive a wide range of experiences and often work on large scale projects with both the staff and visiting artists. In music pupils listen carefully and repeat a musical phrase at the correct pitch. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils recognise, compose and record musical phrases successfully.

12 High standards are attained in the swimming component of physical education where all pupils make good progress and usually attain at least the nationally expected target.

13 Literacy forms an important part of many lessons. Teachers maximise the opportunities to use and develop the appropriate language in for example, science lessons. In subjects such as religious education there is good use of descriptive writing. Numeracy is developed satisfactorily in other subjects such as science. For example, pupils measure and record the growth of plants and draw graphs from collected data. Some work in practical measure is less in evidence - for example, pupils' own work in comparing weights of objects.

14 Children enter the reception class with attainment levels that are often below average. Pupils make good progress over their time in school and by the age of 11 most pupils have attained standards in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Progress is good at both key stages in these three core subjects together with art and music. Pupils' progress in all other subjects is satisfactory apart from information technology where it is unsatisfactory and inconsistent between various elements of the work. No judgements have been made about progress in geography at both key stages and physical education at Key Stage 2, due to the lack of sufficient first-hand evidence.

15 Children under the age of five make good progress in all areas of learning and very good progress within their personal and social development. By the time these pupils reach the age of five the majority have achieved average levels of attainment in the nationally identified areas of learning.

16 There is nothing within the work seen by inspectors in school to suggest that there is a significant variation in the progress of boys and girls or pupils with differing abilities.

17 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting the targets set for them. Often these targets relate to literacy or numeracy skills. These pupils are also well catered for in other areas of the curriculum and make at least satisfactory progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18 Pupils under the age of five are quickly embraced into the family of the school and soon settle into everyday routines. They blend effortlessly with older classmates in lessons and take part fully and successfully in the many whole-school activities that are undertaken, such as assemblies, educational visits and Christmas productions. The school's youngest pupils establish very good, trusting relationships with all the staff and co-operate well with their peers, particularly when working in small groups. In the playground they are confident enough to join in games such as 'Mr Wolf' with the rest of the school, showing great pleasure and glee in taking part. Pupils under the age of five are very well behaved.

19 Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are compliant in lessons, attentive during teachers' explanations and stay focused on their work for the required length of time. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson on numeracy, pupils continued to find palindromic numbers time after time until the end of the lesson and showed a high level of perseverance and diligence. Most pupils present their work neatly and show pride in it. They work well together in small groups, sharing ideas and equipment sensibly. When working independently they apply themselves equally well to the tasks and get down quickly to any written work helped by the regular practise they have in speed writing.

20 Parents are correct in thinking that the pupils are very well behaved at all times of the school day no matter who is teaching or supervising them. No lesson is marred by teachers having to call order. This factor contributes significantly to the standards achieved. In assembly, pupils behave impeccably and show reverence and respect for the occasion. They occupy themselves well in the playground, needing very little encouragement from the staff on duty to do so. For example, during the inspection period some of the older boys and girls organised a game of football on the field whilst others took part in large numbers in traditional games on the upper green. In keeping with the Victorian theme of their work in lessons, pupils had fun trying to master the technique of wheeling metal hoops down the grassed slope, taking turns sensibly to use the equipment. Friendship groups abound and older pupils look after the younger ones well. There are no exclusions from the school.

21 Pupils' personal development is of a very high order. They relate very well to each other and to their teachers and all the other staff who help them during the day. Particularly noteworthy is the manner in which the school's oldest pupils are at ease with the younger ones in their class and the rest of the school. They do not dominate them in lessons or at other times. Pupils are friendly, well-mannered, courteous and polite. They think about others before themselves and show respect for all. Pupils look after the school's and their own property well, do not drop litter or cause deliberate damage. Fragile artefacts of sentimental value can be safely left on display along the corridor due to the orderliness of pupils as they move around the school and their trustworthiness. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for various minor duties in their roles as librarians and monitors. They are proud of their school and eager to show visitors around the premises. They are also proud of their heritage, keen to point out specific trees in the grounds that members of their family planted a generation ago and the heathers that they themselves have recently set in the Millennium garden. Pupils gasped in awe during an assembly as the magnificent Millennium 2000 stone, the centre piece for the garden, was revealed to them for the first time.

Attendance

22 Attendance is satisfactory. In 1997/98, the latest year for which national comparisons are available, the attendance level of 91.7 per cent was well below average. The poor attendance that year, however, is not typical and was largely influenced by a family whose children no longer attend the school. These pupils frequent absence markedly affected the figures for this small school. During the period of the inspection attendance was excellent, every pupil was present each day. There are no recorded instances of unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual in their attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

23 The teaching is good and is the major factor in the good progress pupils make and the maintenance of standards in the school. In the lessons observed, the teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in three out of four lessons. One in ten lessons were very good or better. On balance there is a higher proportion of good teaching found in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, but in both key stages the good teaching outweighs the satisfactory teaching. Comparisons with the previous report are difficult due to staff changes but generally teaching remains a strength of the school and, if anything, there is now a greater proportion of good teaching. The teaching of information technology however is unsatisfactory, in that teachers pay too little attention in their planning to ensuring both full coverage of the curriculum and that pupils' learning is built up step by step.

24 The teaching of children under the age of five is generally good. They are taught within a small mixed age class containing reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. On occasions this means that the children's learning is more formal than it should be. The work is very structured. Too few opportunities exist for the children to engage in self-generated activities working either by themselves or with others.

For example, there are too few opportunities for the children to undertake role-play in the home corner or work in the sand and water trays. Staff give very good attention to the children's personal and social development and for many of the activities their integration with older pupils in the class successfully supports this work. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies are used effectively. A classroom assistant leads the activities effectively but there is too little oversight from the class teacher who is therefore not able to monitor the children's progress effectively. The way planning is undertaken compounds the problem. Lesson plans give too little emphasis to learning targets for these children and make no reference to the nationally agreed learning outcomes for children of this age.

25 Teachers demonstrate a secure subject knowledge in the lessons they teach. There is particularly good expertise in art and music. For example, in one art lesson the teacher succeeded in enthusing pupils about Art Nouveau. In a lesson linked to the school's Victorian topic, one group of pupils sculpted leaves in papier-mâché whilst another group worked on a large William Morris style hanging panel. There is some weakness in teachers' knowledge of the design and technology curriculum, particularly in the design and make elements of the work where pupils have insufficient opportunity to design and make for themselves. This occurred for example in a lesson where pupils were making a picture frame to a whole-class and teacher directed design.

26 Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and encourage them to succeed. This was particularly evident in a numeracy lesson that worked well, for example, the teacher challenged the pupils to apply their knowledge of factors and doubles in order to discover for themselves ways of finding the product of two numbers. In contrast in a physical education lesson the teacher needed to raise the levels of expectation by requiring pupils to show more polish in their movements. Since the previous inspection higher expectations have led to an improvement in the handwriting and presentation of pupils' work.

27 Teachers' planning is satisfactory but is a relative weakness when compared to other aspects of lessons. On a lesson-to-lesson basis teachers' jottings and notes are often effective. However, when it comes to medium-term planning there is a lack of attention to detail in identifying the different levels of work needed for the wide range of ability taught within the same class. This remains a weakness from the previous inspection. Planning for information technology is the major weakness as there is no system in place to secure progression for pupils in various elements of the work as they move through the school.

28 Teachers' ability to organise and use a variety of strategies in their teaching is good. The school has successfully adopted the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The teachers are particularly keen and enthusiastic about the teaching of number. The predominant way of teaching most subjects is by whole class teaching which is then followed up by pupils working as individuals or within a group. On occasions, in the second part of lessons, teachers miss the opportunity to use examples of individual pupils' work to make whole class teaching points.

29 There is very good management of pupils by all teachers. This is true in both the oral and activity parts of lessons. Much of this behaviour management is unobtrusive and is without recourse to punitive sanctions or harsh words. All adults are very good role models for pupils and the standards expected are consistent throughout the school day and between classes.

30 Teachers use time and resources effectively, although sometimes the oral parts of lessons lack pace - for example, when pupils show by their answers that they have grasped a topic and need to move forward. The school is committed to giving pupils first-hand learning experiences through visits to such places as Beamish Museum and by bringing visitors into school. The school has recently purchased an appropriate range of new hardware and software for the teaching of information technology. This has considerably increased accessibility for pupils. However, during the inspection period, too many opportunities were missed by teachers to use this equipment in subjects like mathematics. By contrast the subject co-ordinator used the computers effectively to support the work in

design and technology. In this lesson the pupils accessed images from the computer to use as part of their project.

31 Assessment in its formal sense of testing is used well. Teachers regularly test pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers conscientiously mark pupils' work and make the necessary interventions to encourage pupils to improve. By contrast teachers give insufficient praise to work that is often showing improvement. Assessment linked to teachers' planning is less well developed, a weakness also identified in the previous report.

32 The school's procedures for sending work home are consistent and very good. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 take mathematics homework home twice a week. There are close links with the activities undertaken in class. Through this programme the school encourages parents to become more involved in pupils' learning and this has a positive impact on raising standards of attainment.

33 Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs take a full part in school life. Timetables indicate provision for these pupils to receive small group and individual teaching in a regular way. Teachers and support staff liaise well and this has a positive impact on learning. Individual programmes of work are well thought out for these pupils who find learning more difficult.

The curriculum and assessment

34 The curriculum is broad: all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. The curriculum provided for children under-five is satisfactory, although the teacher's planning does not sufficiently reflect the six areas of learning that are nationally recommended. This results in a lack of attention to the detail of provision for these young pupils who are taught within a mixed age class of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

35 The curriculum provides very good opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual and moral development and social issues receive good attention. Within cultural issues insufficient coverage is given to the study and appreciation of the richness and diversity of other faiths.

36 In general, there is a good balance within the curriculum, except in information technology where pupils lack opportunities to develop skills and knowledge and where there are poorly established cross-curricular links between information technology and other subjects. There is also inconsistent coverage of the key elements of the programmes of study in information technology.

37 A special importance is placed upon the development of pupils' skills in English, which is emphasised wherever possible in cross-curricular areas in order to facilitate the raising of standards. This stress on language development is also met within the Early Years where time and attention is given to this in most activities.

38 There are policies and guidelines in all subjects; most of which have been recently reviewed. The review of the assessment policy is being addressed this term. Provision for sex education, within the overall scope of health education, is well established.

39 The introduction and development of the literacy and numeracy programmes are well in place and, in general, the areas prescribed for action in the previous inspection have been addressed.

40 The school has established adequate procedures to plan what is taught to all the age groups. However, the acquisition of knowledge is over emphasised in the planning at the expense of understanding and the study skills to be developed. There is satisfactory longer and medium term planning which appropriately assist in structuring the proposed learning activities. Further development should centre on the placement of a more effective structure to monitor and evaluate curriculum planning and policies.

41 Short term planning is inconsistent and often brief, thus lacking some detail of provision. It does not always sufficiently build upon pupils' previous progress. The planning of the curriculum for children under five does not specifically provide or sequence the targets to be met. The nationally recommended guidelines of desirable learning outcomes are insufficiently used as a basis for planning.

42 In both key stages planning is beginning to focus satisfactorily on learning targets and pupils' activities. The prescribed pattern of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are appropriately highlighted. Further the school recognises the need for longer-term strategic plans. The current proposals include a review of perceived strengths and priorities with standards, the quality of education provided, the pupils' progress and learning and the impact of leadership and management. Once in place, this intended monitoring should begin to strengthen the school's assessment and evaluation processes. Presently the small amount of on-going, dated and assessed evidence of pupils' work that is retained limits the teachers' opportunities to reflect on the future planning of work in order to raise standards of attainment. The school's use of voluntary national test material does provide valuable comparative benchmarks, although the results are not analysed sufficiently to inform the future planning of teachers and the targeting of pupils' progress and understanding.

43 In general teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning and research across the curriculum or for the pupils' writing across the curriculum to match the quality and variety demonstrated within English. There is some discussion with pupils of their achievements and teachers make suggestions as to the way forward. However, this encouragement is not always obvious within the marking of the pupils' work where a ticked response predominates. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to reflect upon their own work and to diagnose their personal strengths and weaknesses.

44 Homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. At Key Stage 1 it consists of reading, spelling and number problem practice while, for older pupils, regular homework includes finishing incomplete classwork, extension work and occasional research in preparation for future lessons. Through the use of reading diaries pupils are encouraged to form a reading habit by enjoying a free flow of suitable literature between home and school. Progress, observations and celebrations are communicated between home and school, through the reading diary, with parental contributions being highly valued. Where maintained, monthly profiles also record informal assessments of changes in attitudes, friendships and general well being and may identify certain trends of positive or negative behaviour.

45 The school makes very good provision for visits and extra-curricular activities which effectively enrich the curriculum and make important contributions to the pupils' experiences and personal development. The use of the expertise of visitors is a strength in music, art and other subject areas. The school participates frequently in musical and sporting events and the pupils benefit from these experiences generously provided by the staff.

46 Pupils with varying levels of special educational needs are given good support, based upon well-matched learning targets, which are identified by the teachers and the visiting support staff. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

47 The school is acutely aware of the need to establish effective procedures for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate learning activities in addition to that undertaken by the headteacher but they are not yet in place. The headteacher carries out a curriculum audit at the end of each school year.

48 The school makes good arrangements to meet parents and gives frequent and useful information regarding their children's progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

49 Pupils' personal development is promoted very well, a particular strength of the school being the excellent way in which pupils' spiritual awareness is heightened. Central to this are the school's mission statement and motto, the trusting relationships established with the staff and the very positive role models set by them. Parents greatly value the positive effect that the school's provision has on their children.

50 During collective worship pupils are given very good opportunities to participate, both formally and informally. For example, during the inspection, on an impromptu basis, pupils chose the hymns which were sung unaccompanied by the whole school from memory. Pupils reveal their personal concerns and innermost thoughts through prayers, for example, for members of their family or wider school community who are ill, in hospital or have died. The supreme trust built up within the school enables pupils to be open, natural and spontaneous about praying out loud. The headteacher responds very sensitively to these prayers by briefly explaining the circumstances behind them, or by asking for further information, so that everyone has the opportunity to reflect upon them more meaningfully. The school's youngest pupils are skilfully embraced into the worship and made to feel extra special. Occasions to express awe and wonder take place, for example, when the headteacher showed pupils his family Bible, when the Millennium 2000 stone was unveiled and when pupils saw the results of using the printing blocks they themselves had made in a Reception and Key Stage 1 art lesson.

51 Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are very effectively taught traditional Christian values and to distinguish right from wrong behaviour. The school's rules are prominently displayed and written in the first person in simple child-friendly language. These help pupils to understand the high expectations set for them regarding their conduct. Minor infringements of the rules are seized as opportunities to reinforce moral messages. Pupils are actively reminded to put other people first, for example, when small cakes brought from home for the whole school community to enjoy were being distributed. They are encouraged to help others both known and unknown to them and raise significant funds for international organisations such as the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and the Little Sisters of the Poor.

52 Pupils' social development is promoted very well. Older pupils are encouraged to relate positively to the younger ones, for example, by playing games with them in the playground and by sitting with them and helping them at lunchtime in the dining hall. The many whole-school events, such as assemblies, educational visits and the annual Christmas production contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. It helps to become second nature to the pupils that no-one is left out. Termly off-site visits successfully help pupils to make social contact with the wider community and there are extra-curricular activities such as the Key Stage 2 computer club which enable pupils to meet up purposefully but less formally than in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to write personal invitations to school events and thank you letters following educational visits. They are encouraged to take responsibility for one of a large number of minor duties around the school. This system gets them used to offering their assistance, a valuable asset throughout life. The three team captains are entirely responsible for tallying the points which lead to awards.

53 Provision for raising pupils' cultural awareness is good, chiefly through art and music, the humanities, visits to museums and the theatre and visiting performers such as theatre groups and musicians. Year 5 pupils have successfully attended a European Day held at County Hall. In addition to learning about their own Catholic, western cultural heritage pupils are taught effectively about different cultures through, for example, the recent visit of the Liberian boy soldiers football team, displays of African artefacts around the school and different cultural settings for the annual Nativity production. The multi-cultural aspect of the school's provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection, but heightening of multi-faith awareness remains a weakness.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

54 The headteacher and teachers are long serving at the school and know the pupils and their families well. Generations of some families have attended the school. As a result of the mutual trust established, parents and pupils alike are confident to talk about concerns and difficulties, safe in the knowledge that everything possible will be done to give them help and support. Care and consideration for the pupils is paramount.

55 Pupils under the age of five visit the school twice before admission and are invited to Sports Day and the Fun Day in the summer. This succeeds in easing the transition by helping the children to get to know the staff and future classmates and by familiarising them with the building before they start school.

56 Pupils' academic progress and personal development are monitored effectively. The local education authority is suitably involved in tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for them. Teachers have a strong knowledge of each individual's capabilities and support them well in lessons and through homework. Pupils with specific learning difficulties receive very good additional support. Where appropriate, outside agencies such as educational psychologists are involved and a specialised peripatetic teacher occasionally teaches these pupils.

57 Procedures for monitoring and promoting high standards of behaviour are good. The school's behaviour management policy is very good and perfectly complements the mission statement. A positive approach is taken towards disciplining the pupils. The rewards and sanctions system is highly appropriate and operates effectively. Dated records are kept of serious behavioural incidents such as bullying. Staff are asked to avoid negativity as this undermines the school's emphasis on fostering self-worth and self-confidence. Parents indicated that they have no concerns about bullying. This is confirmed by their very clear opinion that their children are happy at school.

58 The school's procedures for checking that pupils attend regularly and punctually and for following up concerns are very good. Weekly class attendance figures are calculated and reported termly by the headteacher to the governors. The education welfare officer visits weekly to monitor attendance. Parents, through the prospectus, are strongly dissuaded from taking holiday in term time and are encouraged to send written confirmation about all absences on their child's return to school. This is in addition to telephoning or making personal contact on the first day of absence and reminders to do this appear from time to time in the newsletters. At parents' request the school now contacts home if a pupil is not in school by half past nine without explanation. This system promotes the zero rate of unauthorised absence effectively and is an important safety measure. Pupils are given a small reward for full annual attendance.

59 Staff and governors work well together to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. A key issue of concern in the previous report was the shared vehicular and pedestrian entrance. This is now well marked out to reduce the danger. In addition, staff on duty are posted to keep an eye on the drive when it is necessary, through inclement weather, for pupils to play on the small adjacent playground. This and all aspects of the school's premises are assessed periodically for risk by the headteacher and governors. Detailed records are kept and suitable action taken to minimise danger. Fire precautions, first aid and medical arrangements are appropriate. Matters relating to child protection meet statutory requirements. The school follows the local area child protection policy and procedures. It does not, however, have its own policy as strongly recommended in the most recent government circular. This and updated training for the designated teacher should be given consideration. During the period of the inspection afternoon registration was on occasion overlooked. Measures should be put in place to ensure that this important procedure, which has safety implications, is not forgotten.

Partnership with parents and the community

60 The school enjoys a successful partnership with parents and the wider community. Outside expertise is harnessed effectively and the locality used well to give pupils very good opportunities for first-hand experiences. Parents are very supportive of all aspects of the school.

61 The quality of information received by parents is sound. Frequent newsletters update parents and governors suitably about everyday routines. Parents are welcome to deliver their children to the classrooms each morning and wait inside school for them at the end of the day. This enables many of them to make informal contact with the staff on a regular basis. The parents' notice board is used effectively to draw attention to pertinent information such as the homework timetable and is the main channel of communication through which parents learn about other curriculum developments. The prospectus gives detailed information about the curriculum and this is supplemented by a brief general statement in homework folders about the work to be covered by different year groups. Parents are not, as a matter of course, notified in advance about forthcoming topic themes.

62 Parents of pupils under the age of five meet the headteacher and class teacher when their children first start school. They are successfully informed about school routines, including homework arrangements and are actively encouraged to get involved in their children's learning. The reading tips booklet is very helpful but parents are not told enough about the six areas of learning for the under-fives.

63 There is just one formal opportunity for all parents to discuss their children's progress with class teachers. Informal contact is strong for parents who are available during school hours. Those whose children have newly entered Years 2 and 6 have a useful meeting with the staff to talk about preparation for the national tests at the end of the year. The annual written reports satisfactorily inform all parents about attainment and progress and include general targets for improvement. Liaison is good with parents whose children have special educational needs. This takes place informally and through quarterly notes.

64 The level of involvement of parents is good, particularly through homework which is set through a structured programme. Occasionally letters are issued to parents explaining the work to be completed. This is a good feature which helps parents to feel more confident about supporting their children's learning at home. Recently parents have been consulted about the Home School agreement and invited to comment on the draft. Parents and governors generously volunteer their assistance to the staff in many practical ways, for example, by helping in classrooms or with the library, sport and educational visits. There is an active 'Friends' association which organises fundraising and social events, often off-site to involve the wider community and raise the profile of the school in the parish. Parents have also successfully helped the school to save money by partially redecorating it along with staff and governors. The considerable efforts of all such volunteers are much appreciated by the staff and benefit the pupils greatly.

65 The school makes very good use of the locality to raise standards, particularly in art, history and geography and to promote pupils' personal development. Very strong links are established with the church through the parish priest who is Chair of Governors. Educational visits are undertaken termly to places such as Beamish, the Tees Barrage and a local farm. These visits significantly enrich the curriculum for all pupils including the children under the age of five. Links with feeder nursery schools have strengthened since the previous inspection through meetings to pass on relevant information. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to work with visiting artists, drama groups and storytellers, sometimes through cluster initiatives with other schools in the area. Visiting performers include puppeteers, theatre companies and musicians. Older pupils have recently visited a local factory and the Job Centre to find out about the use of information technology in the workplace and are to use their own e-mail site to contact other firms.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

66 The leadership and management of the school is good. The school has clear aims most of which centre on the development of the whole child, the respect for each individual within the school community and the valuable contribution each can make to the life of the school. The school successfully achieves these aims. This ethos permeates the whole of the school life. The headteacher provides caring, thoughtful and capable leadership. He displays great commitment to the school, its foundation and its community. In the words of the governing body, it is more than a school, and they are keen to ensure that it continues to serve the community for many more years to come. The governors give good support to the headteacher. The governors are also committed to the school and many of them have had strong connections with the community over many years.

67 Recent staff changes have meant the reallocation of staff responsibilities and the headteacher has continued to make effective use of staff expertise. Realistic efforts have been made to up-date policies and guidelines. Sensibly, more has been done in those subjects that have been to the forefront of recent national initiatives.

68 The governing body is efficient in its role of monitoring the school's development. The headteacher's style of management is listening and co-operative. This leads to fruitful discussion in governors' meetings so that they are able to influence school developments in a positive way in their role as a critical friend. For example, governors greatly influenced the syllabus for religious education to secure more comprehensive coverage of the work. The governors have listened to parents in order to take on their views when drawing up the homework policy. Each governor oversees a subject area. The literacy and numeracy governors have undergone training. All governors visit school, many on a regular basis. The Chair of Governors, Chair of Finance, the English and religious education governors are particularly active.

69 The school development plan is a sound document produced in co-operation with the headteacher and staff, and advice from the local authority. It sets realistic targets for school development. The school is very prudent with its income. The headteacher and governors are keen to retain a sensible cushion within the school budget should there be a drop in pupil intake in any one year.

70 The headteacher keeps the governors well informed about standards in the school and they understand clearly the fluctuations that may occur year-on-year with such small numbers in each year group. However, realistic targets have been set for individual pupils and are shared with parents.

71 Leadership of the school has been effective in moving it forward since the last inspection, apart from minor exceptions. It has continued to raise standards and has implemented a policy of self-review that takes the form of an annual audit of curriculum areas to identify strengths and weaknesses. This results in a formal annual appraisal of the school in order to establish priorities. The way in which individual co-ordinators monitor and appraise their subjects is ineffective. For example, co-ordinators do not monitor the planning of colleagues or the work of pupils in any formal way. The headteacher regularly monitors work in classrooms and in evaluative discussion with colleagues seeks to improve practice. There are still weaknesses in resources relating mainly to physical education, Early Years and the condition of existing resources in other areas of the curriculum. Developments have taken place in assessment procedures but they have some way to go yet. There are plans in hand to update the assessment policy in the current term.

72 The special educational needs' co-ordinator ensures the school's provision meets the recommended guidelines as laid down in the national code of practice. The weekly timetable makes

good provision for additional individual and small group support for these pupils. Non-teaching assistants, teachers and visiting specialists work in close co-operation with each other to secure continuity of provision. There are weaknesses in management of the curriculum for children under the age of five. There is too much responsibility placed on the classroom assistant and the teacher gives too little oversight to the assistant's work.

73 The governing body meets its statutory obligations except for the full implementation of the information technology curriculum. Statutory requirements for collective worship are met.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

74 The small staff are appropriately qualified to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teacher of Key Stage 1 has a good understanding of the needs of young children. The special educational needs co-ordinator works well with the visiting support staff. Those who teach pupils with special educational needs have well organised learning programmes which inter-lock with the provision for the set literacy and mathematics learning programmes.

75 Policies for staff development and appraisal ensure that staff have clear job descriptions. The classroom assistant, who is a trained nursery nurse, works effectively in the Key Stage 1 class and in supporting some pupils with special educational needs. The limited support staff and the trained nursery nurse are effectively employed within the two classrooms. Others including administrative, dining and cleaning staff make a significant contribution to developing and maintaining good relationships with pupils and other staff. All staff reflect the aims of the school in their work.

76 The school buildings are in good condition. They are cleaned and maintained to a high standard by a hard working caretaker and cleaning staff. The teaching staff work well to provide a stimulating environment. The hall is multi-purpose and is used for assemblies, physical education and music activities. The accommodation for both key stages is very good and the staff make positive efforts to provide surroundings in which pupils feel secure.

77 The outdoor hard-surfaced areas and playing fields are very attractive and well maintained. Throughout the year the playground and grassed areas are clearly marked for outside activities. Other attractive out-of-doors features are the Millennium 2000 garden, the meadow and the extensive wooded grounds around the school buildings.

78 Displays throughout the school make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Many of them are used as a point of reference for teaching and support pupils' learning in the topics they are studying.

79 In many curriculum areas there are resources that look dated and worn - for example, the practical equipment for measurement in mathematics and role-play equipment for the young children. The present resources for role-play are unlikely to inspire these children to use them creatively. This equipment requires renewal - the recent purchase of modern computers is a very good example of resource replacement which has enthused and encouraged pupils to use them.

The efficiency of the school

80 The teaching and support staff, including mid-day staff who work a little longer each day helping pupils with literacy, are well deployed. The headteacher has a significant teaching commitment which increases from time to time when supply cover is needed. This is an example of the prudent management that has enabled the school to make very considerable savings over the years and to accrue a substantial surplus.

81 Financial planning is sound. A suitable outline plan has been formulated by the headteacher to

reduce the large budget surplus by setting a deficit budget this year and spending to benefit all pupils. The plan for extra spending has yet to be brought before the governors. The headteacher has rightly ensured that this plan includes a cushion against falling future rolls. Forward planning is very difficult because of the uncertainty regarding projected numbers and given the impact that a variation of one or two pupils on roll can have on the overall budget. The baptismal roll has been used fairly effectively to predict numbers in the past but new house building in the vicinity of the school adds to the uncertainty. The school wisely plans for the worst scenario.

82 Financial control is sound. The most recent auditor's report was satisfactory and the day-to-day administration of the school's finances and routines is satisfactorily managed. Problems have arisen in the continuity of administration, through the long-term illness of the school's secretary. She had considerable responsibility for financial management and successfully operated the school's systems. The headteacher has had to expend much time and effort in recent months familiarising himself with procedures to enable income and expenditure to be monitored effectively against the budget. He is now confident that the finance committee of the governing body can more closely control the budget. The earmarked funds for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately and the school makes additional provision from within its own budget to support these pupils. The training and development budget is used effectively and is closely linked to the school's identified priorities.

83 The accommodation is used well, a major improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection when the available space for physical education and for teaching the school's youngest pupils was too limited. This has been achieved by relocating partitions along the length of the school and by the headteacher now sharing a small part of the large classroom, used when upper and lower Key Stage 2 pupils are taught separately with his office. This makes much more effective use of the accommodation, not only for lessons but for dining purposes and for whole-school community occasions. Very good use is made of the school's extensive grounds for environmental studies in science and for physical education.

84 Off-site visits and visitors to school contribute greatly towards enrichment of the curriculum and making learning fun for the pupils. Most of the school's own resources are utilised effectively but opportunities are being missed to use the new computers for a broad enough variety of purposes throughout the school. The 'Friends' association provides invaluable extra support towards the school's funding and help the school to save money through self-help projects such as redecorating.

85 The average cost per pupil is high, as is typical of small schools, but when balanced against:

the below average attainment of pupils on entry and their relatively unfavourable socio-economic circumstances;

the good quality of education provided;

the broadly average standards attained;

the good progress made; and

the very good ethos,

the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

86 Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were five children in school under the age of five. These children under five years of age are taught in a small mixed age class of reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. This creates difficulties for the appropriate provision of activities matched to their needs and at times the children's learning is more formal than it should be because of the needs of older children. The present balance of work is towards 'teacher directed' learning with few opportunities for 'child directed' learning. However, there are also benefits especially where they work alongside the older pupils and quickly learn from them.

87 Since the previous inspection there have been two main improvements in provision for pupils under the age of five. The school appointed a part-time classroom support assistant to work mornings with these reception children and an area within the classroom has been created to cater for some of these young children's needs.

88 Most children attend a local nursey or playgroup before they start school. The evidence from the baseline assessments carried out by the school, together with the information passed on from the nursery, indicate that whilst there is a range of attainment, overall the children's achievements are below average. Generally the children make good progress and by the time they are five the majority of them will have attained the desirable learning outcomes identified nationally for five year olds in the following six areas of learning.

Personal and social development

89 The personal and social development of children permeates all areas of work and the children make very good progress. The fact that these children are taught alongside older Year 1 and 2 pupils makes a very positive contribution to their progress. In addition these young children mix freely with the older pupils at playtimes, lunchtimes and in other activities such as Christmas productions and school visits. All these experiences make a significant contribution to the children's development. The ethos of the school encourages very good behaviour. Older pupils, teaching staff and other adult helpers are very good role models. Already these children are able to sit and listen for considerable periods of time. They are eager to learn and work well together amongst themselves and within groups of older pupils.

90 The quality of teaching in this area of the curriculum is very good. Staff give due attention to matters of health and hygiene in lessons such as physical education and food technology.

Language and literacy

91 The linguistic development of children is good. Children are beginning to listen attentively to each other, the teacher and other adult helpers. They listen and respond well to stories read to the whole class. They are beginning to associate sounds with patterns in rhyming words. They made a commendable contribution in choral speaking when acting out the story of "It's a bear", for example. The regular opportunity to share their own experiences in such activities as 'circle time' is effectively increasing their language capability. They make a sensible contribution in class discussions and they are becoming confident in talking about their own experiences - for example, what they do when they go on a picnic. Children take reading books home to share with parents. They know that words and pictures carry meaning and that print is read from left to right. Within the short time they have been in school they have already begun to recognise a number of alphabet sounds and can associate for example, certain letters with their own name.

92 The teaching of language and literacy is good. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy

is having a positive effect on the teaching. The teaching of the subject also permeates the whole of the school day. The classroom assistant makes a major contribution in this area of learning each day when she teaches the under-fives as a separate group within the class. The class teacher gives too little oversight to this arrangement in order for her to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and the children's progress.

Mathematics

93 The mathematical development of children is satisfactory. They learn about number in practical situations. Recently, as a group, they have created a painting of a sunflower. They are able to remember how many handprints they made for the petals and how many leaves they put on the stem. They sing enthusiastically a range of number rhymes and act out the songs whilst displaying the numbers with their fingers. In a group they count confidently to 10 and are beginning to recognise the numerals 1 to 9 when shown to them at random. In activities designed to place things in order of size or colour they can place objects into their correct sets and count how many in each. Collectively they have created a pictorial graph of favourite fruits. Through such activities they are developing satisfactorily a correct use of language, such as more or less when comparing two quantities.

94 The teaching is sound. There has been a satisfactory start to initiatives associated with the national numeracy strategy, which are proving effective and much of the pupils' early learning is in oral and practical work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

95 All children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. First-hand experiences such as the recent trip to Beamish Museum make a significant contribution to this area of learning. The children often become involved in projects undertaken by the older pupils. During the period of the inspection the children under five participated in a discussion on seeds and plant growth and then worked with the class teacher whilst the older pupils recorded their work. The youngest children, on the encouragement of the class teacher dramatised the awakening of the seed, the development of its roots and the eventual plant growth. The children are fully integrated with the rest of the class in many activities. During the period of the inspection they played their part alongside other pupils in a food technology lesson to make a fruit salad. The children's knowledge of colour and the names of a wide range of common fruits are good. They have access to a computer and there is appropriate software for their needs, but they have too few opportunities to use them.

96 The teaching is good. Teachers make good links with other areas of learning such as language and literacy.

Creative development

97 Children make good progress in all elements of the work - for example, art and music. In art children work with a variety of media including paint and mouldable materials such as plasticine. The helpers showed the children a range of techniques for rolling, pressing and drawing mouldable materials. Their compositions of a flower made with various coloured pieces of plasticine are commendable. Their colour recognition is already good. They can match colours accurately with various fruits. In music children experience the pleasure of sound. They clap beats and successfully maintain the correct tempo whilst saying a nursery rhyme.

98 The quality of teaching is good. The class teacher's own expertise and enthusiasm in this area of the curriculum are significant factors in the good standards attained.

Physical development

99 The children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. In movement sessions they respond effectively to the teacher's instructions. They change direction or stop quickly on command. They respond imaginatively to more challenging tasks such as when they practised a range of rolling movements. The more able are beginning to combine two ideas into one movement when they stretch and roll at the same time. However, there are no opportunities for them to play outdoors with large toys such as tricycles or tractors that would further develop their control skills and awareness of others using the same space. Their use of tools is satisfactory. Most of the children use paintbrushes, scissors and knives with the correct grip and develop dexterity through activities such as cutting fruit into slices or cubes when making their fruit salad.

100 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher and other adult helpers give the children plenty of encouragement. Often they will demonstrate or assist children to help them gain confidence in these activities.

Conclusions

101 Whilst much of the provision for the under-fives is good and the children make good progress, there are some weaknesses. The teacher gives insufficient attention to the needs of these children when planning the curriculum in order to identify clearly the targets for learning which match the desirable learning outcomes that are recommended nationally. Too little note is taken from the time the children enter school of the assessments provided by the nursery schools and how this might influence planning. Too few opportunities are planned for them to experiment for themselves, in areas such as language, for example, in role-play in the home corner. The quality of resources specific to such areas of work is unsatisfactory. For example, many of the items in the home corner are unlikely to inspire them to be creative. The school is fortunate to have the support of one or two parents who give of their time on a regular basis to work with the teacher in this class. More often than not the focus of their attention is with these young children.

102 The classroom assistant has the major responsibility for the mathematics and language work undertaken by these children in the morning session and she also undertakes the planning for these activities. The assistant carries out this work effectively and conscientiously but the teacher gives too little oversight to the work. This results in the teacher not being sufficiently aware of the children's progress or to be in a position to advise and intervene in the teaching process. However the teacher and assistant do have half an hour together on a weekly basis to discuss their work, although this is insufficient to compensate for inadequacies in the present arrangements.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

103 Pupil attainment indicators gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results are unreliable given the very small numbers in each age group in the school. Over the past few years the size of the age groups have been around 7 pupils. The results of one or two pupils may alter the school's average results considerably and therefore no comparisons have been made.

104 By the end of Key Stage 1, the standard of pupils' listening and their ability to express themselves in speech is typically average. Pupils concentrate well and follow instructions carefully; they willingly answer questions and offer reflections drawn from their own experiences. Although there is an unusually wide range of reading ages, by the end of the key stage the standard of reading is broadly average. Pupils read texts matched to their levels of attainment with satisfactory fluency and understanding. Their reading benefits from the systematic work in phonics that is now carried out from

early within Key Stage 1. The writing of pupils by the end of the key stage has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are beginning to write at reasonable length in their own words in different styles; standards of presentation, spelling and punctuation also show improvement and most pupils benefit from opportunities to re-draft and revise their writing.

105 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' listening skills and their speaking skills remains typically average. While levels of confidence and fluency vary, most pupils answer questions clearly and give an accurate account of what they are doing. The more able pupils offer clearer and more sustained explanations and accounts. Some pupils are less at ease in formal situations or when they are the focus of attention and would benefit from more opportunities to gain confidence speaking in formal contexts. The standard of reading is close to the national average. The more able read more demanding texts with some fluency and a sound level of understanding. Some less able pupils, though slightly hesitant when reading relatively simple texts are capable of self-correcting while others miss the meaning and have difficulty in decoding the words on the page into sounds; some of these need additional phonic instruction. The general standard of writing has also improved since the previous inspection. Pupils write in several forms using their own words; some produce narratives or historical accounts of considerable length, often showing a good command of appropriate terminology. Standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are close to the average. The overall standards in English at the end of both key stages is average.

106 The progress pupils make through both key stages is generally good. They learn to sustain their concentration and to listen to more complex explanations with understanding. Over time they develop confidence and more fluency by taking part in classroom discussions and question and answer sessions. Good practice is provided in reading; books are matched to pupils' levels of attainment with some care and pupils are heard to read at regular intervals. This well planned provision helps pupils to make good progress in their reading. Weaker pupils are heard more often and records are maintained of pupils' reading performance. However, these are not usually diagnostic and only on occasions indicate in any detail what is needed to improve performance. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to write in their own words and through regular practice and good stimuli they progress in the quality and range of their writing. Many of the poems produced on National Poetry Day show signs of a sensitive response to vocabulary and an appropriate level of maturity and confidence. The close attention given to pupils with special educational needs, with work carefully tailored to meet their needs, helps them to progress well.

107 Pupils are well motivated to learn and generally apply themselves to the tasks prescribed, stay on task and work with sustained concentration. They are mostly keen to take part in discussions and to answer questions. They read willingly to adults, respond to encouragement and are capable of learning from their mistakes. They have a positive attitude to English and are keen to make progress and develop their skills. Episodes of chattering or time wasting are very rare.

108 The general quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well presented but planning is not as well detailed. In Key Stage 1, the Victorian display helped inspire pupils' writing and the teacher was able to draw out from the pupils some good vocabulary. The teacher circulated to assist pupils during composition, insisting on complete sentences and appropriate standards of presentation. The result was that most pupils produced writing of creditable quality, using their own words. The reading and writing of pupils, including the accuracy of their spelling, are assisted by the systematic teaching of phonics and letter strings in both key stages, closely linked to the pupils' active engagement in writing.

109 In Key Stage 2, teachers provide pupils with a broad range of activities geared to developing their skills of speaking, reading with comprehension and writing in a variety of styles. Their expectations are realistic and they expect good standards of presentation and accuracy. For example, in one good lesson the teacher helped the pupils to grasp such elements of narrative as plot, character and setting in order to guide their own efforts. A special educational needs support assistant worked well with the lower attaining pupils, providing them with the structure that enabled them to work competently at their

own level. At both key stages there is no systematic use made of information technology to help pupils draft and redraft their work.

110 The teaching of the subject is effectively supported by guidance material provided by the County Council's advisory service as well as by a good range of materials and resources supporting the teaching of phonics and other English activities. Reading books have been colour coded in order to guide pupils and teachers and effectively supports the development of reading through the reading scheme. The library has also been organised well and books sensibly classified in order to facilitate their use in support of the curriculum.

Mathematics

111 Pupil attainment indicators gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results are unreliable given the very small numbers in each age group in the school. Over the past few years the size of the age groups has been around 7 pupils. The results of one or two pupils may alter the school's average results considerably and therefore no comparisons have been made.

112 During their time in Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and by the end of the key stage standards of attainment are broadly average. The present Year 2 pupils already have a good understanding of number to 100. They recognise odd and even numbers readily. The average and higher ability pupils confidently select numbers from within a hundred number square to certain criteria. For example, when pupils are asked to select an odd number between two other numbers. Pupils have a good understanding of place value to 100 and make up their own number equations by partitioning two-digit numbers into tens and units. The pupils' work that was scrutinised from the previous year indicated a high reliance by the school on worksheets and other commercial material. Some of this work placed too little demand on pupils. However, these same pupils were working confidently with addition and subtraction sums for totals up to 20 and beyond that number for the higher ability pupils. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has already led to pupils recording more mathematics for themselves. There is an appropriate emphasis on number development and pupils are able to develop mental as well as written computation. Pupils undertake shopping sums related to problems usually within 100 pence, and tell the time to at least the half hour. They construct simple graphs - for example, about the weather and make interpretative statements about the graphs they have drawn. They learn about simple shapes and identify their properties with reference to sides and angles. Work in measure is less well represented and especially pupils' own recordings of first-hand experiences in practical activity.

113 The good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 and by the end of the key stage standards are broadly average. In recent years less reliance has been placed on the commercial scheme and many initiatives associated with the National Numeracy Strategy were introduced in previous years. Clear progression can be seen as pupils move from Years 3 and 4, to Years 5 and 6. For example, in the work on shape pupils progress from mainly observing basic properties to a successful study of area, perimeter and symmetry. By the end of Year 6 pupils are able to use the four operations of number especially in the traditional ways of recording by paper and pencil methods. They have an appropriate competence in fractions and undertake work on vulgar, decimal and percentage fractions and the more common equivalents. A good emphasis has been placed on pupils' interpretation of number lines with useful work that helps pupils read scales. Pupils study data presented to them in a variety of ways - for example, statistical information on world populations and they represent data successfully in tabular and graphical forms. Pupils have satisfactory recall of number bonds and higher ability pupils are quick with mental recall of multiplication tables. Recent work on factors of numbers, doubling, and square numbers is being used effectively to enable pupils to approach calculations in a variety of ways.

114 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. For those who find learning most

difficult the teachers often break down the work for them into small steps of learning in their own books.

115 Insufficient use is made of information technology to support the teaching of the subject at both key stages. For example there is no systematic progression of work through the school for pupils to use the technology in data handling.

116 Pupils' response to mathematics is good at both key stages. There is an enthusiasm for the subject, especially the oral work at the beginning of lessons. Pupils present their work well and this supports accuracy in their calculations. There are good relationships between pupils and their teachers. This results in pupils being confident enough to ask for help when they are having difficulty. Behaviour is very good and pupils often work with perseverance for extended lengths of time.

117 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Sensibly the school recognises that in order to monitor and evaluate standards and pupils' progress in mathematics, given the small numbers in the group, the focus has to be on individual pupils' progress rather than year groups. To this end targets have been set for individual pupils based on their attainment on entry to the school. Regular checks are made through both formal and informal testing of pupils' progress. There is the appropriate breadth of coverage of the subject and the teachers are enthusiastic regarding the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Management of pupils is consistently a strength of teaching. Pupils benefit greatly from the small teaching groups. The marking of work is conscientiously undertaken and often challenges pupils about their presentation and accuracy of calculations. However, by contrast too few opportunities are taken to give pupils encouraging feedback when they have made commendable efforts to succeed. Teachers successfully hold the attention of pupils in the introductory sessions by good use of voice, eye contact and dramatic gesture. Teachers make regular and very effective use of homework to support the work. Resources are well prepared. The display of number lines, mathematics vocabulary and hundred squares is used to good effect by the teacher in Key Stage 1. Within Key Stage 1, the pace of work in the introductory session is often too slow for pupils who have grasped concepts and are ready for a greater challenge. An improvement on previous years in this key stage is the greater emphasis given to pupils recording work for themselves rather than by the use of worksheets which predominated in past.

118 Resources for the subject are adequate apart from a lack of suitable balances for use in Key Stage 1 for weighing in non-standard units. However much of the practical equipment is coming to the end of its useful life.

Science

119 Pupil attainment indicators gained from examining the school's test results and comparing them with the national test results are unreliable given the very small numbers in each age group in the school. Over the past few years the size of the age groups have been around 7 pupils. The results of one or two pupils may alter the school's average results considerably and therefore no comparisons have been made.

120 Attainment in science is in line with the national average by the age of seven and pupils make good progress. By the age of eleven attainment is above the national average: pupils make good progress over the four years of Key Stage 2.

121 Pupils at Key Stage 1 have a satisfactory idea of the processes involved in experimenting to reach a considered conclusion. For example, they study life cycles of plants and consider the best conditions in which they would grow and flourish. They make clear drawings of the inside of fruits, as they study seeds and growth cycles, using techniques developed in art. Pupils at this level sort objects into different categories accurately and say why they have placed items together. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their understanding of the processes involved in experimenting. Younger pupils at this key stage study the human skeleton and joint movements. Within Key Stage 2 pupils set out their

own tests of how sound travels, using a variety of kitchen equipment and glass containers. They worked through the experiment with a clear idea of what they were doing.

123 Pupils use their knowledge of the scientific process in new projects, with an increasing measure of independence. Within Key Stage 2 they re-visit core skills as they move from soil tests and growth to the human skeleton and on to forces. Pupils thus deepen their understanding of how to set out an experiment, conduct it accurately and record their findings in a variety of ways. Pupils at all levels have confidence in their ability to break down a task into manageable jobs, and plan logically how they will accomplish them. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; work is well matched to their needs and enables them to achieve success.

124 Pupils respond well to their science investigations. They display a lively, enquiring approach to the subject, which they demonstrate as they work sociably but effectively together in pairs and small groups. During experiments and discussions of possible happenings pupils listen carefully to each other and value the opinions of their peers. On one occasion, the results within Key Stage 2 were not as the group expected. They were very keen to share this with their teacher and friends in other groups and from their discussions a consideration of "What is a fair test?" followed.

125 Teaching is at least satisfactory and on occasion good. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and plan lessons with care to include a wide variety of challenges and tasks for their pupils, recognising that stretching each group within the class is always a priority. Teachers have a very good rapport with their pupils and manage both the time and discipline well. Although teachers offer pupils the freedom to conduct their own experiments they are always on hand to intervene where they can see the need, to help a group move forward by skilful questioning and suggestions. Within Key Stage 2 teachers plan on a four-year cycle and work together to maintain a high level of performance.

126 The subject has a new co-ordinator who took on the responsibility this Easter. An audit of equipment has already been carried out and the co-ordinator has a clear idea of future needs.

Information technology

127 Recently the school joined the second phase of the National Grid for Learning through a substantial investment in new hardware and software to support the teaching of information and communications technology. This resulted in a considerable move forward in provision for the subject and much time and effort has been spent in installation of equipment, planning developments and arranging training. Although most of the equipment arrived during the previous summer term it has only effectively been fully operational from the beginning of this school year.

128 During the inspection period there were too many missed opportunities, by all teachers, to use these computers. As a result the progress pupils make at both key stages is erratic and overall standards fall short of the national expectation. Nevertheless in conversations with pupils, looking at the limited work on display and observing some pupils working with computers there is evidence of some good practice.

129 All pupils in Key Stage 2 have their own disc and have begun to save their work. Pupils in this key stage are able to start up the computers for themselves access their own work and have a good working knowledge of such skills as saving, retrieving and amending their work. All pupils within the key stage have recently word processed their own piece of poetry for National Poetry Day. Displayed work includes pupils use of software to compose pictures in the style of the artist Mondrian. The skills they have acquired in both of these areas of work matches that which is expected nationally for pupils of their age. From conversations with the pupils it is apparent that they have other experiences - for example, they have taken part in interactive decision making adventures with software linked to their World War II topic. In the last educational year they recall conducting a traffic survey and using the technology to produce graphs.

130 In Key Stage 1 all pupils have had the opportunity to use software that enables them to create a scientific picture of a plant and label its constituent parts. They have printed out their work as covers for their topic books and older pupils have word processed some additional information. Within this element of the work standards meet the national expectation.

131 There is some use of computers to support the work of pupils with special educational needs. Within both key stages pupils successfully use programmes to improve their spelling.

132 The current range of work falls short of the breadth of coverage required within the National Curriculum and statutory requirements are not met. All teachers have at least a basic expertise and are confident within the present range of work that is undertaken. However, teachers' planning both long term and short term for the subject is unsatisfactory. There is no evidence of a structured approach that will enable pupils to experience their full entitlement to the curriculum or to ensure that essential skills are built on step by step. To this end there is the need to record pupils' experiences. Additionally systems need to be put in place to maximise the use of the very good resources that are available. The teaching of the subject is unsatisfactory.

133 Pupils enjoy their work on the computers. Many of them are keen to come in before morning school to use the equipment. They are careful with the new resources and use them sensibly even when not directly supervised. They support one another when they are not sure how to proceed and they are also confident enough to experiment and find out for themselves if need be. This term an after-school computer club has been introduced and is run by the husband of one of the governors. He has made a commendable contribution to the school in ensuring professional oversight to the installation of the networked system. The attendance at the weekly club attracts fifteen pupils and these pupils have broadened their experiences to include control and monitoring technology.

134 The school has been involved in links with industry which are still ongoing in order that pupils can become more aware of how computers are used in the wider world. This is a good initiative. There is a good policy which links the school's software to the varying strands of the curriculum and the subject co-ordinator has been very active of late to ensure that the school has progressed so far.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

135 Art is taught well and pupils make good progress at both key stages. Pupils' work is valued and celebrated alongside the work of adult artists in displays around the school.

136 The school provides pupils with many opportunities to explore a wide range of different media and techniques to suitably develop their skills in art. The weaving of paper in shaded tones, formed into bed covers on the 'Ten in a bed' montage is very effective. There are excellent biro sketches by a higher ability pupil from last year's Year 6 of bridge and building structures seen on the Tees Barrage visit. Pupils demonstrate they are able to recognise and emulate the style of famous artists. This is seen in the very effective Key Stage 2 paintings in the style of Jackson Pollack. Other work features the style of Kandinsky, landscapes of Paul Klee and pupils' computer generated images in the style of Mondrian and Warhol.

137 Pupils' progress is enhanced by the opportunities they have to work alongside visiting artists. This is seen in the large scale three-dimensional papier-mâché wildlife sculpture which hangs from the hall ceiling. There is also a very attractive whole-school produced wall hanging in textiles, which employed the technique of screen printing.

138 The teaching of the subject is good throughout the school. A good lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 on printing, for example. Pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of printing techniques and in this lesson were encouraged to experiment with colour and its application when printing the image of a flower with small polystyrene tiles. The teacher showed good knowledge of the subject and allowed pupils to consider how they might compose their own image by looking at the work of others. They were shown flowers woven into fabric and represented in the form of a brooch. Resources were well prepared with large sheets of paper to enable pupils to try a variety of sketches before proceeding. The pupils were overjoyed with the results of their prints and were keen to celebrate their own and others' success.

139 Pupils made very good progress in their lesson in Key Stage 2 where the focus was Art Nouveau linked to the theme Victorians. The work was on a grand scale and was part of a series of lessons devoted to composing a William Morris style hanging panel. Other pupils were engaged in three-dimensional papier-mâché work sculpting large leaves for a stylised tree using knowledge of the vein structure gained earlier through observational drawings in their sketch books. The teaching was very good and pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work. The teacher moved around the groups making suggestions for improvement and, because of his own secure knowledge of the subject, helped pupils develop their own appreciation of art. Pupils took pride in what they were doing and persevered well in the time consuming large scale work.

140 There has been extensive and systematic development in the subject over the past ten years. Presently the development of other subjects has higher priority but the school is keen to maintain the present good provision for the subject. The work in art is a strength of the school. The co-ordinator makes a significant contribution to the provision for art through her own enthusiasm and expertise.

Design and technology

141 Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and often undertake work closely linked to the whole-school topic. The inspectors based their judgements on the two lessons observed and recent teachers' planning for the subject as no previous pupils' work was seen. The teaching in both lessons was satisfactory and the pupils' response to the lessons was good.

142 Within Key Stage 1, pupils were preparing a fruit salad. The teacher's planning notes indicated a clear approach. Pupils had first looked at pictures from magazines of fruit salads made by other people. This led pupils to discuss the variety of fruits to use, the effectiveness of presentation and which fruits would be in season at the time. When pupils were questioned it was apparent how well they had understood these principles. They knew the need for variety in order to cater for both the overall appearance and the different tastes of people who might eat the salad. Pupils suggested different shapes to cut the fruit into and the type of utensils to do this. Older pupils made lists of suggested ingredients and utensils. In the lesson observed pupils shared the tasks amongst themselves and the making of each salad became a team effort. Considering their age, pupils worked within the team with a mature sense of responsibility. The class teacher paid good attention to the hygiene issues and two parent helpers gave her good support. The pupils used a variety of cutting, slicing and chopping techniques. Staff helped pupils at an individual level and demonstrated how to hold the fruit and the utensils correctly. Adults asked the pupils to show others their own techniques - for example, the different ways of removing the stone from a peach. Pupils' behaviour was very good. In teamwork they co-operated well with each other. The pupils took pride in their finished work with some groups giving great thought as to how to arrange the prepared ingredients in the bowl. At the end of the lesson the teacher led the pupils through an evaluation of what they had learned, although this was relatively unsuccessful as too little guidance was given to the pupils.

143 The lesson within Key Stage 2 featured some work on stable structures in the context of the pupils making a free standing photo-frame. Just like the lesson in Key Stage 1 the teacher led the

pupils successfully through the early stages of a design process by identifying stable structures around them in the classroom and reasoning why this was so. Using cardboard the pupils had modelled their own base for their structure in triangular form. The teacher taught pupils the process of measuring, scoring and folding accurately. The teacher paid good attention in the lesson to ensuring the quality of the finished product and pupils recorded the process of their activity through diagrams and writing. However, pupils themselves had far too little input into the design proposals and this resulted in a teacher led activity in its design and make stage of development. Nevertheless pupils did have some autonomy in the design of a border for the frame. Pupils made good use of information technology at this stage of the work when they accessed for themselves a compendium of stored images. The teacher successfully helped pupils to size the images and showed them how to repeat the images in a border form. Pupils behaved well throughout the activity and when recording work for themselves made good efforts to do so in an independent way.

144 The school has a very good policy and guidelines for the subject that clearly reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers should ensure that their teaching consistently follows these guidelines. Teachers maintain good records of pupils' experiences in the subject. Over the years this has helped to ensure balanced provision - for example, pupils in Key Stage 2 have undertaken work in pneumatics, bridge structures, textile work and projects involving simple electric circuits.

Geography

145 During the inspection period there were no geography lessons taking place. There was insufficient other evidence available to support a judgement about pupils' work in geography. Nevertheless the four-year cycle of topics and teachers' planning indicate an appropriate amount of work is undertaken at both key stages in geography.

History

146 Within Key Stage 1 no history lesson was observed during the inspection period. Evidence from examining teacher's planning, discussions with pupils and staff and scrutinising previous recorded and displayed work, including photographs, are used to make judgements of progress within Key Stage 1.

147 Within Key Stage 1 much of the work is based on first-hand experiences which help the pupils understand more about the past. Pupils develop a sense of chronology and make meaningful comparisons between past and present - for example, houses and homes when " We visit Beamish". They are able to sequence pictures and place them on a time line. Their understanding of different interpretations of history develops through stories, eye-witness accounts, drama and role play. By the age of eleven pupils have a good knowledge of historical events, investigate local history through - for example, a trip to Durham city, they use resources well and can identify, examine and discuss different features of particular periods and civilisations.

148 Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. By the age of seven pupils show a development of their observational skills and begin to verbalise their findings, which they record in an appropriate, informative manner. By the age of eleven pupils discuss and evaluate historical ideas and events well. They further develop their skills of historical enquiry through the use of well-matched books and artefacts to discover information which they represent in a thoughtful, constructive style which, on occasions, develops into productive, cross-curricular studies - for example, "The Tudors" - which included successful links with art, drama, and design and technology.

149 Pupils respond positively to their tasks. They work well together, help each other within groups and show a sense of enjoyment and purpose in their activities. Most pupils are well motivated and confident when answering questions.

150 The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was good. Planning is effective and the teaching methods are varied and thoughtful. Relationships are very good and valuable guidance is given within class, group and individual studies. The teacher's own local knowledge was good and together with the use of a video the teacher was able to capture for the pupils the harsh conditions of Victorian times. A scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates that the pupils' own writing in this subject area has progressed since the previous inspection

151 A policy and scheme of work are in place to promote consistency and progression. The headteacher: co-ordinator, effectively monitors planning and there are opportunities for the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues and give meaningful support.

152 Apart from the lack of artefacts, resources are good, readily available and easily accessible.

Music

153 Pupils in Key stage 1 sing a repertoire of songs from memory and most pitch their voices accurately, controlling dynamics and rhythm to meet directions and to improve performance. By the end of the key stage they compose simple rhythmical phrases, perform their compositions for an audience or for recording. Pupils listen quietly to music and offer good observations of mood and style. They show a good sense of rhythm and successfully follow musical sequences and patterns. In Key Stage 2, pupils sing with greater control of pitch and dynamics and in their use of tone and diction. By the end of the key stage, pupils recognise, compose and record musical phrases and are aware of certain techniques such as repeated patterns of rhythm - for example, in their 'Clock' compositions and their melodic phrases. Across the school, pupils develop skills of listening, appraising, composing and performing to a standard at least satisfactory, often good and on occasion very good. They use a wide range of instruments, using hand chimes, electronic keyboard and a range of both tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

154 Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Within Key Stage 1, pupils show a developing competence in using a variety of percussion instruments. They develop an awareness of how different objects can produce different timbres and qualities of sound and on occasions use their own bodies as musical instruments. When composing, pupils show increasing technical and expressive control of instruments and voice. They show a growing confidence in trying out various instruments to achieve the best sound for expressing a particular mood and use a variety of ways of banging, tapping and scraping instruments to achieve the right effect. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills of creating more complex rhythms and patterns and repeating them correctly. Progress is best where pupils are encouraged to reflect on and analyse their performances and compositions and plan ways of improving them. In most groups, pupils are showing an improving confidence in performance. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in music.

155 Pupils are enthusiastic about the musical activities and show obvious enjoyment and pleasure in their learning. Within Key Stage 2 pupils show a sense of pride in their compositions and when singing, express a readiness to improve the quality of their performance.

156 The teaching of music in both key stages is good. In general, lessons within Key Stage 1 are well prepared. They are effectively structured and enable pupils make progress. In Key Stage 2 the best teaching occurs where a variety of teaching approaches are employed and the specialist musician has high expectations of the pupils' performance. Lessons move at a sharp pace and appropriate and sensitive teacher intervention helps pupils pause, listen and identify aspects of composition or performance that need to be improved. Good use is made of a commercial scheme and the musical expertise of the headteacher is effectively deployed to improve pupils' learning.

157 The co-ordinator has very good musical expertise and has a significant influence on the teaching of music and developing its standards in the school.

Physical education

158 During the inspection period it was only possible to see the one lesson and this was an educational gymnastics lesson at Key Stage 1. The pupils within each of the three age groups made satisfactory progress. During their warm up session the pupils made good use of the space available to them. In the main activity, a lesson on body shapes, pupils were able to demonstrate a wide variety of movements and combined stretched position with curling actions. By watching others, listening to the instruction of the class teacher or using their own imagination pupils developed the complexity of their sequences. However, very few pupils work with the grace and poise that would typify higher levels of attainment.

159 The teaching was satisfactory. The activity was managed well by the teacher. Pupils had the opportunity to see the work of each other and the teacher gave the pupils words of encouragement. However evaluation of the work was missing to enable pupils to look critically at their own and others' movements. This element of the teaching, which would improve the quality of pupils' movements, was a weakness highlighted at the previous inspection.

160 The pupils' attitudes to learning were good. They enjoyed their lesson. They were uninhibited in their work. The pupils changed appropriately for the lesson and the teacher reminded them of the effect that the vigorous exercise was having on their bodies.

161 Pupils receive swimming lessons in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. They make good progress. On the completion of the series of lessons the overwhelming majority of pupils have attained the national targets set for the end of the key stage with some pupils attaining higher standards, a strength identified in the previous inspection.

162 There is a balanced programme of work at Key Stage 1. However, there is a lack of balance in the programme at Key Stage 2. The swimming and games activities leave little time for pupils to gain a worthwhile experience of dance and gymnastics.

163 The indoor and outdoor facilities for the teaching of the subject are good. However there is insufficient apparatus to support the teaching of educational gymnastics, an observation made at the previous inspection. There is no regular extra-curricular activity but the school takes part in inter-school team competitions.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

164 A team of three inspectors carried out the inspection over a period of three days, during which:

20 lessons or part lessons were observed

pupils in each year group were heard reading books

pupils were informally questioned about their understanding of subjects

a collective act of worship was attended

(●) pre-inspection meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, governors and parents

(●) all documentation forwarded by the school to the team was read in order to inform the inspection process

(●) two videos were viewed of recent school events

(●) interviews were held with subject co-ordinators and the headteacher

(●) questionnaires completed by the parents were analysed and comments noted

(●) the school's web site was visited.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	43	1	11	13

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.3

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	19.6

Financial data

Financial year: 1998/99

	£
Total Income	126 895
Total Expenditure	126 163
Expenditure per pupil	2 934
Balance brought forward from previous year	22 231
Balance carried forward to next year	22 963

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent	58
Number of questionnaires	20
Percentage return rate:	34.5

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	55	45	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems	55	45	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	67	13	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	45	50	5	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	40	60	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	45	55	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily work	60	35	0	5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at school	55	40	0	5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	90	10	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	70	30	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	75	25	0	0	0

NB: Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.