

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **CHOPPINGTON FIRST SCHOOL**

Choppington

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique Reference Number: 122180

Headteacher: Mr. William J. Wood

Reporting inspector: Mrs Parveen Raja

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707674

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	First School
Type of control:	L.E.A
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Eastgate Choppington Northumberland NE62 5RR
Telephone number:	01670 823197
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Cutter
Date of previous inspection:	20-23 November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Parveen Raja Registered Inspector	English Art Religious education	Special educational needs Equal opportunity Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school
Derek Ashton Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Partnerships with parents and the community Support, guidance, and pupils' welfare
Philip Crookall	Design and technology Information technology Music Physical education	The curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Bimla Thakur	Mathematics Science History Geography	Under fives

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Makes very good provision for the children who are under five.
- Makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress and achieve standards in line with their capabilities.
  - Good quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress in English, art and physical education and achievement in art and physical education is high.
  - Teaching is satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons and good or very good in over half of the lessons.
  - Has established very good links with the community and local businesses.
  - Supports pupils in maintaining good standards of behaviour and discipline and sustains good attitudes to work
  - Provides well for pupils' moral and social development and offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.
  - Staff provide good guidance and support for the pupils and pay close attention to their welfare.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The school fails to meet the National Curriculum requirements for information technology and pupils achieve standards that are below national expectations.
- II. The monitoring and evaluation aspect of the curriculum co-ordinators' role is under developed.
- III. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
- IV. Lack of monitoring procedures to ensure consistency in the curriculum and assessment.
- V. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- VI. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is not as good as elsewhere with eight per cent of the teaching being unsatisfactory.

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has responded satisfactorily to the previous inspection in most of the issues raised, given its difficult circumstances but its response to two issues is unsatisfactory. The action plan, in response to the weaknesses, sets out clear objectives and timescales for development. Initial progress in achieving objectives within the set timescales was constrained by dealing with issues related to falling rolls and consequent loss of two teaching posts and the financial limitations imposed by loss of revenue. The response to the inspection has been accelerated in the last two years and measures to address the issues raised have been translated into actions. There are now appropriate policies and schemes of work for all the subjects, as well as a new planning framework to deliver the National Curriculum. Standards in science and design and technology have improved, but information technology is still a weakness. Although the school has exercised much effort in building good quality resources, the statutory requirements are not being met. Attainment and progress in information technology are below the national average. The school development plan sets out appropriate areas for future development in all the school's work but the objective related to developing the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the co-ordinators role has not been achieved and this aspect of their role is unsatisfactory. The issue of the staff, headteacher and governors working together to maintain good relationships and positive ethos in school has been well secured. The school has managed to maintain the good provision for the under fives and teaching and standards have improved since the previous inspection. The school has in place a sound leadership, high level of commitment and planning to secure steady rates of continued development.

**Standards in subjects**

*This table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:*

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
Reading	E	C	<i>well above average</i>	A
Writing	D	B	<i>above average</i>	B
Mathematics	C	B	<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E

The 1999 National Curriculum Assessment test results for seven-year-olds show a marked improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach Level 2 or higher in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show improvements in the standards achieved.

Inspection findings are that pupils achieve average standards in speaking listening and writing. In reading, standards are broadly in line with the national average. Standards of attainment in art and physical education are above average. In religious education, attainment is broadly at the level expected in the local authority’s Agreed Syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve average standards in mathematics and science. Key Stage 2 pupils achieve standards in science and mathematics that are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils achieve average standards in all the other subjects except in information technology. Standards in information technology are below average.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	8 - 9 years
English	Very good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	N/A	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	N/A	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Religious education	N/A	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Very good	Good	Good

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 92 per cent of lessons. In 23 per cent it is very good but less than satisfactory in 8 per cent. The quality is very good for children who are under five. The quality is better for the 5-7 year olds than 8-9 year olds. Teaching is less than satisfactory in some lessons for the older pupils. This represents some improvement on the previous inspection where teaching was judged to be good in 40 per cent; it is good or better in 54 per cent of the lessons seen.

*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' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
Attendance	It is satisfactory. Pupils arrive punctually and lessons start promptly.
Ethos*	Good; pupils have good attitudes to work, the school works hard to maintain the present provision. Relationships are good.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides a very good example of professional practice. Governors are involved in work of the school; there are weaknesses in the monitoring of curriculum development and assessment;
Curriculum	Broad but imbalanced due to weaknesses in information technology and some aspects in reading and religious education not covered.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for the pupils. Good target setting by all class teachers who know them well. Pupils make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good development in social skills and understanding of moral issues. Weaknesses in provision for spiritual and cultural development. Multicultural dimension is under-developed.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall; accommodation is good; very good resources for art and good for music and physical education; unsatisfactory for religious education and satisfactory for other subjects.
Value for money	Sound. Some inefficient use of accommodation to provide library facility.

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

**The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
• All the parents are very supportive of all the aspects of school's work.	• No significant numbers of issues were raised.

Parents said that the school keeps them well informed, is approachable and it achieves good standards of behaviour. This was confirmed by inspection findings.

**KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

**Raise standards of attainment in information technology [IT] by:**

- VII. improving teaching confidence;
- VIII. modifying the existing scheme of work to match school needs;
- IX. enabling the co-ordinator to monitor provision, attainment and progress;
- X. identify in planning how IT can be used in support of different subjects.

(paragraphs 130, 131, 134, 135)

**Develop the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the co-ordinators' role in order of subject/ aspect priorities, starting with IT, assessment and religious education by:**

- XI. providing appropriate resources and non-contact time;
- XII. drawing up an action plan for the area of development with clear objectives, timescales and evaluation criteria which can show measurable progress;
- XIII. set achievable targets for improvement in provision and practice.

(paragraphs 50, 51, 82, 92, 103)

**Promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development by:**

- XIV. improving teaching confidence in spiritual development;
- XV. ensuring that quality time is allocated for reflection in assemblies and religious education lessons;
- XVI. ensuring that pupils have planned opportunities to discuss issues, ideas and views related to spirituality;
- XVII. providing pupils with a good range of opportunities to develop their understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures especially those represented in Britain.

(paragraphs 23, 37, 40, 147)

**Develop appropriate procedures for moderating assessment practice so that clearer and accurate relationships between National Curriculum level descriptors and teachers' judgements are established in English, mathematics and science.**

(paragraphs 36, 82, 93, 102)

**Additionally, in order to address less significant weaknesses the governors and the school should include the following in their action plan:**

**Extend reading development by:**

- XVIII. ensuring that pupils regularly select books and research aspects of work from class and school libraries;
- XIX. providing a reading environment where pupils are heard to read frequently and have opportunities to read a range of materials and good quality books;
- XX. developing pupils' higher order reading skills systematically from reception through to Year 4.

(paragraphs 76, 81, 83)

**Ensure that data gleaned from assessments are used more effectively to provide work at the appropriate standard for the higher attainers.**

(paragraphs 24, 35, 76, 89, 120, 121)

**Establish and implement formal procedures to monitor the curriculum, its assessment and teaching to ensure that:**

- XXI. the quality of teaching is improved where weaknesses occur;
- XXII. the curriculum is balanced in all the National Curriculum requirements.

(paragraphs 21, 23, 27, 31)

## · INTRODUCTION

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### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Choppington First School serves the community of Eastgate in Choppington. Eastgate council estate is a former mining community but the area has been hit by recession. It has the highest rate of unemployment in the district and many families have chosen to leave the area. This has led to a large amount of empty housing, much of which is open to vandalism. The majority of the families live in council owned housing with most of the other families living in owner occupied housing. The general health in the area is a cause for concern. The area has high social disadvantage.
2. The number of pupils on the school roll has fallen since the previous inspection. During the previous inspection there were 169 pupils on roll and 52 children attended the nursery part-time. Now the school has 110 pupils on roll and 37 children attend the nursery part-time. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals at 56.3 per cent is well above the national average. Nursery children may start part-time in the term after they are three-years-old, but generally children are admitted during the autumn term; children in the reception class are admitted at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Baseline assessments show that attainment on entry to the nursery is below average and on entry to the school to be average. The school has registered 26 pupils as having special educational needs, three of whom have a statement of special educational need. The school and nursery staff consist of six full-time teachers, a full-time nursery nurse and three special needs support assistants to support the pupils with statements of need. The school has lost two full-time teaching posts since the previous inspection.
3. The school's aims are clearly stated and reflect equality of opportunity. The school aims to provide an education that meets individual needs and aptitudes, regardless of race, religion, gender or disability in order to assist each child to become a whole person, developing body, mind and spirit. The school continues to focus on literacy development. Literacy and numeracy strategies, as well as information technology, are set as key priorities.

3. **Key indicators**

3. **Attainment at Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key  
Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	10	11	21

3. National Curriculum		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	7	7	10
	Total	15	16	19
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	71(72)	76 (95)	90 (100 )
	National	80	81 ( 80)	84 ( 83)

3. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	6	6	8
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	12	12	15
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	57 (91 )	57 100 )	71 100
	National	81 (80]	85 (83)	86 ( 85)

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

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.4
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.35
	National comparative data	0.5

3.

### 3. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year.

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

3.

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	23
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

### 3. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

3.

### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

### 3. **Attainment and progress**

4. Children under five generally start nursery with attainment levels that are below the expectations for this age. Most children are on course to reaching the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. Most five-year-olds attain average standards in language and literacy, physical development and knowledge of the world. In mathematics and creative development, they are on course to achieve good standards. Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating activities that are well supported by high quality resources. The very good and well managed provision for these children is a significant strength of the school.
4. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in English, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or higher was well below the national average in reading and below the national average in writing; in mathematics the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 or higher was above the national average; the proportion reaching higher levels was very low in reading, below the national average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Comparing the averages of the school's test data with all schools, attainment in reading is very low, in writing it is below average and in mathematics, it is in line with the average. When these averages are compared with those of similar schools [schools which have a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals], they show that attainment in reading is average and in writing and mathematics, it is above average. In writing and mathematics, there was a significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys with boys doing better than girls.
5. Trends in attainment over the last three years show that attainment in reading and mathematics has been at the same level whilst in writing there has been some improvement. However, results for 1999 show significant improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science also show marked improvement. The whole-school development in promoting language development linked to the implementation of the literacy strategy, revised policies and schemes in mathematics and science and the introduction of a new planning framework have had a positive impact on standards and progress.
6. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in speaking, listening, writing, mathematics and science is in line with the national average. In reading, it is broadly average. In information technology, pupils' attainment is unsatisfactory. In religious education, attainment is broadly at the level expected in the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in all the other subjects except in art and physical education, where they attain good standards. In English, seven-year-olds listen attentively and respond appropriately to questions in lessons. Pupils read simple texts from reading scheme books with growing fluency and accuracy. However, they have limited opportunities to choose books from the library and seldom read for pleasure. They construct simple narratives and are familiar with the story format. They spell simple three and some four letter words accurately. Pupils recognise different coins and find different ways of making 10 pence. They know different shapes and discover how to make shapes by cutting corners in folded paper. In science, pupils find out about food decay and its harmful effect on teeth.
7. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 4, the majority of the pupils attain standards that are in line with expectations for this age in speaking listening and writing and broadly in line with expectations in reading, mathematics and science. This shows improvement since the last inspection report for English. In religious education, standards are broadly in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In information technology, there is little improvement and standards are still unsatisfactory. Pupils achieve above average standards in art and physical education. Attainment is sound in design technology, geography, history and music.
8. In English, Year 4 pupils listen with concentration and speak confidently in a variety of contexts for different purposes. The majority of the pupils read accurately, with fluency and understanding but some higher attainers read texts that present insufficient challenge. Pupils' writing standards are satisfactory; they develop their writing skills in imaginative narrative effectively but standards in handwriting and presentation are variable. In mathematics they make accurate use of the four operations with correct notation. Numeracy is integrated with

other subjects as part of the topic work. In science, most pupils have a sound knowledge of the three attainment targets and they carry out their investigations appropriately and safely.

9. The previous inspection report found that the majority of pupils were achieving generally in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Pupils of average and lower ability achieved satisfactory standards but there was little higher achievement by higher attainers. Attainment in English was broadly in line and in mathematics it was slightly below expectations. Although, standards in science were generally in line, there was some under achievement by the higher attains. Attainment in other subjects was of satisfactory standard, except in information technology and design technology where standards were unsatisfactory.
10. The children under five make good progress in the nursery and the reception class. In Year 1 and in Year 2, progress is generally satisfactory and sometimes it is good. Most pupils achieve average levels of attainment. In Year 3, progress is steady but the pace tends to become slower in Year 4. Generally progress in the Key Stage 2 classes is satisfactory. However, higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged and their progress is adversely affected. Progress also varies between pupils of similar abilities in different classes.
11. The children under five, in the nursery and the reception class make good progress in all areas of learning and are particularly good to grasp number facts; they settle in quickly and play and work well together with other children. In Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4, pupils make good progress in English, physical education and art. Throughout the school pupils make unsatisfactory progress in information technology. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, science, design and technology, history , geography, religious education and music. Progress is better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 where sometimes progress is slow because the work provided is less demanding, does not always take account of pupils' interests, or meet the needs of higher attainers.
12. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good in both key stages. All pupils on the special needs register are given additional support by the class teacher when the headteacher takes the other pupils for teaching. This has a positive impact and pupils make good progress. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are well supported by support assistants and make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in the classes and benefit from the work done in the numeracy and literacy hours. They participate confidently; the repetition in these lessons and additional resources contribute effectively to their progress.
13. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
13. The consistently good standards of the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the good relationships make significant contribution to their progress.
14. The personal and social development of the children under the age of five is good. The children develop confidence, knowledge and independence in a variety of ways, including lesson times. They are attentive and eager to learn. They co-operate, share and take turns. Children behave well at all times and show consideration and respect for property and each other. They form good relationships with other children and adults. They work and play well together in different situations which provide opportunities to promote self-esteem. Children are both happy and secure at school.
15. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to work and are motivated to learn. In class, pupils generally concentrate well and persevere with tasks presented to them. They are keen to answer questions and most hands are raised. They listen attentively to teachers and eagerly volunteer to share ideas. Pupils show pride in their work, for example, when the teacher read individual responses in story writing or when in art lessons their work was demonstrated as a good example. Pupils identified as having special educational needs respond well to the additional help they receive.

16. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, which accords with the report of the previous inspection. In lessons, pupils settle quickly into well-established routines. They play well together at playtimes and during lunch breaks; they enter school and leave the premises in an orderly manner; behaviour is good around the school overall. Pupils are aware of the code of conduct and the school rules. Parents expressed positive views about the standards of behaviour in school. Pupils are courteous and polite, and treat other people's and school property with care and respect. No bullying was seen during the inspection period; there are no recorded incidence of bullying and there have been no exclusions in the past three years. Very occasionally in Key Stage 2, when lessons are not sufficiently challenging, a few pupils become restless and get a bit silly.
17. Pupils form good relationships both with each other and adults. Positive relationships are sustained through the many extra-curricular activities. There is a good sense of community amongst the pupils and adults; everyone shows regard and respect for each other. Adults provide good role models by the care and concern they show for them. Pupils are supportive of each other and work well together in groups. They help each other and when given the opportunity make constructive comments about each others work.
18. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of extra-curricular, sporting and fund raising activities and whole-school events, the older pupils contribute to assembly by the accompaniment of hymns by members of the penny whistle group and by enacting some of the stories. For example, the story of the Good Samaritan was retold by pupils in Year 4 in verse written by the headteacher. Although pupils are willing, there are limited opportunities for individuals to show initiative and undertake responsibility in the school. Pupils help with fund raising for charities. However, few pupils were showing any initiative in their learning and seldom raise questions of their own.

### **Attendance**

19. Levels of attendance are broadly in line with national average. Registers are well maintained in accordance with statutory requirements. Absences are effectively monitored and unauthorised absence is minimal. Punctuality overall is satisfactory, pupils come to school on time, there is little disruption to classes through lateness and lessons start promptly. Parents indicated that their children liked coming to school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

20. The quality of teaching is good and makes effective contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. In 92 per cent of lessons, teaching is satisfactory or better. In over half of the lessons, teaching is good or better; including 23 per cent which is very good. Teaching is unsatisfactory in eight per cent of the lessons. It is very good for the under fives. Teaching is better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 where the unsatisfactory teaching occurs. These figures are an improvement on the quality of teaching found at the time of the last inspection when 90 per cent was satisfactory or better and 40 per cent was good. The whole staff professional development in teaching of literacy skills and the growing emphasis on raising attainment in reading skills and updating of schemes and policies in all the subjects has been particularly effective. Teaching is good in English, art, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in mathematics, science, design technology, geography and history. In religious education, it is overall satisfactory with some lack of confidence in developing the spiritual aspect of the subject. The quality of teaching in information technology is unsatisfactory.
21. The teaching of the under-fives is very good. A calm, purposeful and orderly environment is maintained. The very good planning, particularly in the nursery, is based on detailed plans which identify learning objectives clearly and these link very well to activities including structured play. They have high expectations of the

children. Staff use their time very efficiently to support individual and small groups of children; to ask questions which often stimulate children in exploring their ideas; to teach new concepts and skills and to check pupils' learning. They use every opportunity to extend children's learning and to provide a wide range in experiences. They have very good procedures and employ good ideas to involve parents in their children's learning. For example, they have an information board with a copy of their planing to show what children are learning and display information about how parents can help at home. This is done in most attractive ways which generates a good response from parents.

22. Overall, teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge. Teachers understand the learning needs of pupils and are fully committed to pupils being successful. This is particularly evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Knowledge and understanding of how young children learn is good. The headteacher provides support to classes by teaching art, physical education and expressive writing, his knowledge and skill of teaching these subjects is very good and impacts well on standards of attainment and the progress pupils make; also, this has a positive influence on teaching of these subjects through the school. In religious education, although teaching is generally satisfactory, no development has taken place since the previous inspection. Teachers' lack of confidence in developing the spiritual dimension in religious education and provision for spiritual development continues to be unsatisfactory since the last inspection. There has been little improvement in the teaching of information technology. Teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge and their lack of teaching the full programmes of study in information technology, constrains the appropriate development of skills and understanding; information technology skills are not fully developed through other subjects. The introduction of a new scheme in music and whole staff development in implementing the scheme has increased teacher confidence and competence in teaching music.
23. The overall quality of planning is satisfactory. It generally provides good coverage of the programmes of study in all the subjects except information technology. The school is well advanced with the implementation of the literacy strategy and well prepared for numeracy strategy. Objectives in lessons are clear and well communicated to pupils. Teachers have appropriate expectations for pupils and objectives generally match pupils' needs especially those of pupils with special educational needs. However, on occasions there is insufficient challenge for higher attainers. Where lessons are a continuation of previous work, teachers revise and consolidate previous learning effectively before moving to the next step. They often plan use of a stimulus when starting a new topic and frequently provide planned concluding sessions at the end of lessons to revisit key points and check understanding.
24. Good and effective methods and organisation are used. Due to falling rolls, classes are organised in mixed age groups, except for the reception class. Pupils are generally grouped by ability rather than by age in all the classes. A good range of methods and strategies are employed which are well matched to the learning objectives and the nature of the curriculum being taught. For example, in an art lesson, pupils were provided with good opportunities for choosing materials and implements from a structured choice; they listened to clear instructions, observed demonstration and engaged in discussions about the quality of their work; good standards were reinforced through examples of good practice; as a result pupils achieved high standards in their finished work. Questioning to probe and deepen pupils' understanding and direct exposition are generally good, although very occasionally the time taken for exposition is long and some pupils lose concentration; practical activities are relevant and purposeful and sometimes investigations and problem solving are used effectively to help pupils apply and extend their learning, such as when pupils experimented with growing cress in sand, soil and water. In most of the lessons, teachers use resources well to stimulate interest and maintain enthusiasm. Visits are used appropriately.
25. Management of pupils is good and results in good behaviour. Teachers' intervention is well timed and helps pupils to stay focused on task. Their interaction with groups and with individuals takes place in a gentle caring manner which effectively sustains good relationships. In lessons where teaching is most effective, pace is brisk but generally lessons move at a steady pace. However, teachers seldom give responsibility to pupils and most of the organisation is done by themselves; pupils are rarely encouraged to show initiative and strategies for developing independence in learning are not in place.

26. When teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are provided with work which has limited objectives. Resources to support the activities are few and the lesson moves at a slow pace. This generates a lack of interest amongst pupils and considerable amount of time is spent on behaviour management. Pupils spend time doing low level activities such as colouring worksheets. On occasions, the teachers' knowledge of the topic being taught is limited which constrains the scope for extending pupils' ideas and understanding.
27. Teachers assess the special educational needs of pupils by applying early identification procedures efficiently and are effectively responsible for monitoring individual progress, drawing up and reviewing individual educational plans and ensuring that the objectives for the plan are met. They keep detailed records and are well informed of the special needs. They provide appropriate support; ensure that these pupils are well integrated and that support assistants work effectively to maximise this resource. Pupils identified as having special needs are well settled and develop confidence; most have growing self-esteem and make good progress.
28. Teachers know their pupils well and often use this knowledge to adapt their teaching and response in lessons to the different levels of attainment in the class. They provide evaluative feedback and make constructive comments in lessons which help pupils to improve their work but pay less attention to the quality of presentation. These informal assessments are generally used to inform planning of future work. Some homework is used and this contributes well to pupils' learning. A significant majority of pupils who were heard reading said that they read to their families when they took their books home. Some parents noted remarks in their child's reading record card.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

29. The curriculum for children under five is broad and balanced and forms a good basis for the National Curriculum. Staff use a good range of visits and outside visitors to provide insights for children on the world around them. Planning for under-fives is very good. Clear targets are set and staff ensure that all children have good access to the opportunities provided.
30. The school provides a broad curriculum but there are imbalances in the subject coverage, planning and teaching in aspects of English, religious education and in information technology. At both key stages there is no common practice on how frequently pupils are heard reading. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to choose books for a variety of purposes, including reading for pleasure; and to develop the higher order reading skills of skimming and scanning. Information technology does not meet all the requirements laid down in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils are presented with appropriate opportunities for developing word processing skills but insufficient opportunities are provided for data handling, work on spreadsheets and control technology. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to promote spiritual development.
31. The school makes good provision for health education including sex education but does not provide effectively for teaching about the harmful effects of drugs. A good range of extra curricular activities provide enrichment of the curriculum which impacts well on attainment in physical education, social and personal development. These activities occur during and after school and include participation in soccer, cross-country-running and cricket. Key Stage 2 pupils attend swimming lessons each week and coaches from neighbouring Premier League football clubs make frequent visits to the school. The school also arranges field trips and visits to museums. Visitors to the school include people who serve the community, such as the representatives from the local churches and the police.
32. In response to the key issue raised in the previous inspection, the school now has policies and schemes of work for all the subjects and religious education. Some of these policies and schemes have recently been revised and others replaced by commercial schemes. A new planning framework has been introduced which provides an effective outline structure for teachers' planning. The subject policies, schemes and the planning framework

together provide a secure basis for delivering the curriculum. However, due to a lack of monitoring inconsistencies in continuity are not identified to ensure a balanced coverage.

33. All pupils regardless of race, gender or socio-economic circumstances are given the same opportunities. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. It identifies pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. Support includes a careful match of tasks to the individual needs of the pupils both in class lessons and in withdrawal groups. Pupils are assessed regularly and reviews in their progress are detailed and thorough. The Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs is followed appropriately. Reviews are completed at appropriate times.

### **Assessment**

34. Procedures for assessment are generally satisfactory. Sound procedures are in place for assessing English, mathematics and science but practice in assessment of other subjects is variable. Regular assessments to inform short-term planning are an inconsistent feature of general practice in Key Stage 2. Work for higher attainers is not always well matched and this adversely affects their rates of progress. Baseline assessment procedures and data is used effectively to inform planning. Teachers use standardised reading tests, assessment activities from commercial schemes of work, end of unit assessments and half termly reviews of progress to inform medium term planning.
35. The school's current arrangements for the administration of end of key stage assessments and reporting to parents meet statutory requirements. End of year reports are compiled appropriately and targets are discussed and agreed with parents. However, there are some inconsistencies in the final assessments of attainment levels. There is little effective moderation of pupils' work. Although there is an English portfolio with a few pieces of pupils' work up to Level 3, there are no other portfolios of pupils' work to aid moderation. There are no opportunities for teachers to discuss marked work with each other to reach agreements on National Curriculum levels. The team of assessment co-ordinators do not monitor assessment practice through the school. This has resulted in teachers' lack of confidence in assessing work at appropriate levels, particularly at Level 4 in Key Stage 2 and are generally cautious when making final assessments.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

36. Within a supporting and caring ethos, the school successfully promotes the moral and social development but is less effective in making provision for spiritual and cultural development. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory and there has been little improvement in this provision. The daily assemblies provide time for pupils to consider moral and social issues through listening to bible stories and some time is given to prayer. The overall quality of assemblies during the inspection was satisfactory. The assemblies included hymns sung by all pupils, a bible story and the Lord's Prayer said together. Although, during the inspection, the stories used were parables, there was little time given to the spiritual dimension. The pupils are taught Christian values through providing opportunities to think of other people and their difficulties through raising funds for charities and giving out food at harvest festival, but have few opportunities to reflect on matters that are of deep concern in their lives. Religious education provides a secure foundation for the study of the Christian faith. Pupils are taught about respect for other religions and develop their understanding of religious beliefs but have less experience of the spiritual traditions.
37. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The consistent application of the school rules by all the staff ensures a good framework for the pupils' moral development. The school provides clear teaching on what is right and wrong and the behaviour of the pupils is good. They are encouraged to understand the consequences of their actions, to be honest and contribute to the welfare of others in the immediate and wider communities. Stories are frequently used to illustrate moral issues and pupils show a good understanding through them. All adults working in the school provide good role models. They are friendly, helpful and very supportive and caring towards the pupils in their classes. They know the pupils well. The honesty of one

pupil was clearly demonstrated when, finding money in the playground, he immediately took it to the teacher on duty.

38. The provision for pupils' social development is also good and is reflected in the good relationships around the school. Social development is pursued by a programme of health related activity. Pupils are encouraged to help each other in class and to support each other in team games, both in school and in away matches against other schools. Older pupils assist with the fruit shop at playtime and dinner time and collect and distribute registers. Pupils generally display good social skills in school and offer to help visitors spontaneously.
39. Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. The school has a strong community involvement developing from its history as a mining community. The pupils take part in fund raising for charities and recently sent boxes of dried foods to Kosova. In subjects such as geography, pupils learn about the cultural traditions of others. However, multicultural education and opportunities to teach this aspect are sometimes missed. There is some widening of pupils' interest and cultural awareness through field trips, educational visits to local museums, places of interest and musical and sporting activities. However, there is too little work planned to give pupils access to the richness and diversity of cultures other than their own. The extent to which the curriculum routinely contributes to pupils' cultural and spiritual development is under-developed.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

40. The school's systems for providing support and guidance for pupils are good overall and contribute effectively to pupils' attainment and progress. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory with appropriate assessment and record keeping to track pupils' progress. Records of achievement are kept; annual reports to parents include detailed comments and some targets are set for individual pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and pupils know that they can turn to them or to the headteacher for support. Parents feel pupils are well supported and teachers are helpful. Two parents' meetings are organised annually to give feedback on progress. Parents receive the end of year report before the meeting and are encouraged to discuss all aspects of the report. The learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs. This is undertaken in close co-operation with teachers. Parents who have children with special educational needs, feel very well supported and are very satisfied with the provision and progress that their children are making. There are very well established procedures and links between the nursery and the reception class for smooth transition at transfer. Year 4 pupils visit the local Middle school at the end of summer term to ensure pupils feel safe and secure when they transfer between schools.
41. The school has good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The policy provides comprehensive guidance on how to deal with unacceptable behaviour and is implemented consistently through the school. Teachers follow a warning system to deter pupils from misbehaving by noting the number of times any pupils needs to be checked. Parents are very supportive of the school's strategies and behaviour policy.
42. Pupils individual attendance is monitored well through regular checks. Parents are well aware of the procedures to follow when their children are absent from school; they inform the school promptly when it occurs. Parents are encouraged to take their children for appointments only for the time that is required and not take whole or half days off. This was evident when pupils were allowed to leave with parents in school time. Regular links are maintained with the education welfare officer.
43. Child protection procedures are good. The deputy head is the named person and staff awareness of the procedures is good. The headteacher maintains good links with support agencies. The school provides a safe and caring environment which makes an effective contribution to the standards pupils achieve. The health and safety policy provides an effective framework for ensuring that the school offers a safe and secure environment. Good procedures are in place for carrying out risk assessments. Procedures for dealing with minor accidents, illness and administration of medicines are good; pupils are familiar with routines related to these aspects. Health education and physical fitness are given a high priority; this is achieved through physical

education and the science curriculum; good eating habits are fostered through the school selling a selection of fruit at break-times. However, no policy or programme of drugs education was seen. The physical well-being of the pupils is given a high priority and strict attention is given to the safety of all the school.

44. **Partnership with parents and the community**

44. The partnership with parents is satisfactory and links with the community are very good. Links and general communication with parents is satisfactory. The information given out by the school is clear, comprehensive and informative and is welcomed by the parents. Parents at the meeting held to raise issues before the inspection and responding to the questionnaire were satisfied with all the aspects of the school. They feel their children do well and are happy at school. The school benefits greatly from the support given by parents in fund raising activities such as coffee mornings held each half term and the main Annual Family Fun and Fitness Day which has become an established highlight of the community.

45. There are appropriate opportunities during the year for parents to discuss their children's progress. The headteacher and staff are readily accessible and parents' comments are treated with respect. All parents are encouraged by the school to support their children's learning and development at home. Some pupils sometimes take their reading books home and some parents write comments when they have heard their child read. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend formal reviews of their children's progress, but attendance is variable.

46. The school's links with the local and wider community are a strength of the school. The school has continued to strengthen its links with commercial organisations in the community, services and other agencies since the previous inspection report. The school operates an open door policy which has strengthened its links with the community. Effective links are established with the local church, police community liaison officer, neighbourhood watch and charities. Students from the University of Northumbria work with pupils as part of their project. Several organisations, for example, the Guidepost Bowling Club hold their annual events and donate their profits to the school fund. Parents and friends of the school collected vouchers from supermarkets which enabled the school to acquire musical instruments for the school. Finance and sponsorship from local industries all help to make a very positive contribution to the pupils' social development and understanding of citizenship.

47. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

47. **Leadership and management**

47. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall. They are effective in some areas, but are less effective in others. The governors, headteacher and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to raising standards of attainment and providing quality education to pupils. The headteacher provides a very good role model for professional practice. In close collaboration with the staff and with support from the governing body, he is effective in creating a caring and purposeful environment. The school is successful in fostering a positive ethos which is reflective of its values and aims. The headteacher has a high teaching commitment which keeps him in touch with the strengths and weaknesses in teaching.

48. The governing body, which has a clear committee structure, is very supportive of the school. Governors have their own policy and procedures for monitoring the work of the school. Individual governors make termly visits to the school with a clear focus agreed by the governors. Governors then report back to the full governing body. Governors are actively involved in decision-making and are becoming more informed about the work of the school. The named governor for special educational needs provides valuable support by hearing special educational needs pupils read.

49. Management has been successful in addressing some of the key issues raised in the previous inspection but ineffective in ensuring that requirements for information technology are met and in developing the role of the co-ordinators. Good progress has been made in formulating and revising policies and schemes of work which has had a positive impact on standards and progress. There has been improvement in school development planning. The school has clear general aims which are included in the school prospectus and more specific short term objectives which are included in school development plan. The objectives are broadly timescaled and costed but are not in any order of priority. The evaluation criteria are generally vague. One of the objectives identified is related to enabling subject co-ordinators to monitor their subjects by providing supply cover for releasing them from classroom duties. Inspection evidence shows that this objective has not been achieved yet. There are no monitoring and evaluation procedures in place. Although, the school uses baseline assessments and other assessment data to identify needs, long term planning is restricted by financial limitations. The school is concerned about falling rolls and anticipated reductions in the base budget.
50. The roles and responsibilities of all the staff are defined and updated job descriptions are in place, but the monitoring function of the co-ordinators role is not specified. Teachers are enthusiastic about their work but have no non-contact time nor are they required to follow any set procedures in order to carry out the range of co-ordination functions. The monitoring of standards and progress is under-developed and there is over reliance on informal discussions between staff. The small number of support staff work closely with teachers and are appropriately informed about the additional support they give to the pupils with special educational needs. All support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and work collaboratively and effectively with teachers.
51. The school has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Provision for special educational needs is managed effectively. Good early identification procedures are in place. Pupils move within stages and from the special needs register in line with their needs requirements and the rate of progress that they make. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and integrated well in the mainstream. The school meets the Code of Practice requirements.
52. Statutory requirements are not met in implementing fully the requirements laid out for information technology. End of key stage assessments are not included in the handbook for parents.
53. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
- 53.
53. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of all the pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Since the previous inspection report, the school has lost two full time teaching posts due to falling rolls. All teachers take responsibility for the co-ordination of the subject areas and other aspects of the curriculum. Overall, co-ordinators' qualifications are not closely matched to their responsibilities however, inspection findings show no weaknesses in the subject knowledge for leading subjects.
54. Appraisal is well established. Appraisal outcomes are used to inform in-service training and staff development. The school has focused mainly on targeting its resources on implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. Procedures for disseminating training outcomes are in place. Good relationships form a secure basis for informal support to each other. Where opportunities are available staff attend subject co-ordinator meetings organised by the local authority.
55. The school accommodation is good. The school is housed in a maintained building providing good accommodation to teach the National Curriculum. The nursery is housed in the old infant school. It is spacious and bright and has an enclosed outdoor play space which is well used. The outer area includes grassed and hard surfaces for play; the school has its own large field which is used effectively for sport and games. The kitchen and the dining hall are housed in a separate building which is in a state of disrepair. The

accommodation has improved since the previous inspection. A wall between two classrooms has been removed to create more space for learning; a vacant classroom has been converted as a secure storage area for computers, other resources and staff room; another classroom is now used as storage area for art and history and teaching area for the headteacher. The buildings manager is also responsible for repair and maintenance and this arrangement is working well. The school building is the focal point in the community. Various meetings are organised at the premises. For example, during the inspection period, a meeting was partly held between the local residents and the police. Throughout the school purposeful displays are an attractive feature and enhance the visual environment.

56. Resources for learning are generally adequate. A wide range of good quality, readily accessible resources are available for art, physical education, information technology and for the under-fives. Resources are adequate in other curricular subjects except religious education. Library books are organised on shelves in the main hall. In collaboration with library services the school has reviewed the book stock, new books have been added but these are mainly from commercial reading schemes and some big books for group reading. Overall the quantity and range of books is limited.

57. **The efficiency of the school**

57. The school is clearly focusing on raising pupils' attainment. The financial decision-making is well informed by financial data and based on the school's aims and values. The headteacher and the full governing body together set the annual budget. Priorities for development are generally supported through financial planning which also includes funds raised by the school, parents and the community. Long term planning which takes account of foreseeable circumstances such as expenditure exceeding income is dominated by concerns about loss of income due to falling rolls. Funding provided for special educational needs is prudently and effectively allocated. Specified funds for staff development and other designated areas are used and monitored appropriately. The funds raised by the school and parents are well targeted to support the work of the school, to enhance resources and supplement staff costs.

58. The teachers are appropriately deployed. The learning support assistants are well used and make a valuable contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher who is the special educational needs co-ordinator allocates his teaching time to all the classes and teaches English, art and physical education which releases class teachers to work with pupils who have special educational needs. This contributes very well to the progress of these pupils.

59. Resources are generally used effectively and efficiently to promote learning. There has been significant improvement in the range of high quality equipment for information technology since the previous inspection but the use of this resource is unsatisfactory. Visits out of school and visitors enhance the quality of provision. The accommodation is generally used efficiently and appropriately for teaching the National Curriculum and meeting other requirements. However, organisation of accommodation to provide a library facility is unsatisfactory. Some shelving around the hall is used for displaying library books and a corridor is organised with two tables and chairs as a study area, this space is narrow and books are not readily accessible. During the inspection period, it was used for small group work; no pupils were seen choosing books or using this area for independent study.

60. Financial control and administration are good. The internal audit report identified several areas of good practice. Its recommendations have been addressed effectively. Governors are much more involved than at the time of the previous inspection. They are engaged in all aspects of the local management of schools. There are clear terms of reference and there is a register of pecuniary interests. The school office has due regard for value for money when spending on services and supplies. Office routines and procedures are efficient. The school secretary is welcoming and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

61. In terms of the educational standards achieved and the quality of education provided in relation to its context and income, the school gives sound value for money.

62.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **62. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

62.

62. The school admits children into the nursery in the term after their third birthday. The main intake is during the Autumn term. Children can start on a part-time basis at the age of three. Children are assessed on entry into the nursery and into the reception class, using the Northumberland Early Years' Profile. There are useful policy statements for various aspects of the early years' provision. There are detailed schemes of work for each of the six areas of learning. Children are admitted in the reception class at the beginning of the Autumn term in the year they are five. In reception class there are currently 22 under-fives who attend full-time. Children under five in the reception children follow schemes of work which give due regard to the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' but are mainly linked to the Key Stage I National Curriculum programmes of study. There are very good systems of transition between the nursery and the school, and there is a good level of co-operation and partnership between staff involved with early years.

63. The school has done much since the previous inspection to adjust the curriculum for the younger children to the new requirements, and to challenge the older and higher attaining children by providing work related to National Curriculum programmes of study. The provision in the nursery is very good and is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. Children are happy and secure and settle very quickly into the daily routine.

64. The quality of teaching in the early years is very good. The teachers in the nursery and the reception class have good knowledge of how young children learn and are very sensitive to the individual circumstances of the children which contributes very effectively to children settling down quickly; forming good relationships and being responsive to what is offered. A warm, purposeful and friendly ethos is created and the children feel safe and secure. There are detailed long, medium and short-term plans, which guide the work throughout the early years. A wide range of highly stimulating activities is provided, which combine learning objectives in imaginative ways and show high expectations. The activities are well linked to the six areas of learning. Good opportunities are planned which provide repetition in a variety of ways to consolidate learning and reinforce ideas. Children's individual progress is recorded systematically and the parents are well informed about their child's progress. Children are challenged to draw on their developing skills in different aspects of the provision through simple problem solving activities. Their thinking is well developed through the use of skilful questioning by staff. Non-teaching staff and voluntary helpers are actively involved in supporting planning, teaching, and in assessing children. They make a positive contribution to the work with under fives. Accommodation overall is good and the space well organised and used. The nursery is very well equipped and good use is made of the resources to enhance children's learning.

65. Children respond well to the adults. They concentrate on the activities that are set and are keen to learn. They select activities on an independent basis and have the necessary enquiry skills. They make good progress from nursery through to the reception class where they consolidate and extend their skills. Progress is good throughout their time in the early years. By the time they are five, most pupils reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all six areas of learning, except in mathematics where they attain good standards. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their targets. 'Records of Experience and Achievement' are used well to record children's progress, and parents are fully involved in the process. Parents are also involved in setting targets for their child related to all areas of learning.

## **Personal and social development**

66. Personal and social skills are developing well. Children self-select activities that interest them and concentrate for appropriate periods. Children co-operate well and share their activities and resources willingly with others. Milk and snack times are used well to develop social skills. Children understand right from wrong. They are sensitive to the needs of other children and form good relationships with adults. They display good manners through using words such as 'please' and 'thank you' and show an awareness of the feelings of the others, including people from other cultures. They show responsible attitudes during tidying up times. They learn to feed and take good care of small creatures, such as the little chicks that were hatched in the nursery. Pupils take part in Christmas celebrations and have some opportunities to listen to the bible stories, which focus on themes such as, helping others, friendship and thanking God for senses and the world around us.

## **Language and literacy**

67. Attainment in language and literacy is sound. Pupils listen attentively, respond well to the instructions and communicate their ideas with growing fluency. Some pupils are very fluent and ask adults sensible questions confidently. 'Kim's Game' is used well to train pupils' visual memory, for example, through describing the less familiar objects. Role-play is developed through imaginative play such as the home corner and the classroom café. Good use is made of the audio equipment for listening and re-telling stories. However, less opportunities are provided for talking about own experiences and for making up stories. Reading skills are progressing well. Children enjoy reading big and small books from the book-corner and show interest in listening to stories. Stories such as 'The Enormous Turnip', 'The Little Red Hen' and 'Scare Crow's New Clothes', provide a good context for a range of activities for language development. On occasions, children give their own response to poems, stories and non-fiction, such as books about animals. Parents are well involved in supporting their child's reading at home through books that are brought from the nursery, and they write comments in their child's reading diary. The children in reception class progress appropriately towards learning initial sounds of words and letters of the alphabet. Many children read and write their own name and can say initial sound of a word, such as 'wuff-wuff'. The higher attaining children read words from their work sheet and give their own logical responses. They draw writing patterns and practise writing own name, using upper and lower case letters and copy sentences written by their teachers. Children learn to use their writing materials correctly from the writing corner, which is equipped well with black-boards and writing materials.

## **Mathematics**

68. Attainment in mathematics is good. Children have many opportunities to count, match and sort different objects and shapes, according to set criteria. They enjoy playing simple number games. Children use beads and cotton reels for threading and for arranging them in different ways. They recognise simple patterns and some repeat patterns with two or three colours. Many children name geometrical shapes and most say what a shape looks like and match it with real life objects, even if they cannot remember the name. Children use simple mathematical vocabulary such as, 'bigger', 'smaller' to describe bricks. Progress is good overall. Many pupils count up to 20, by the time they are five years old. They sing number and finger-rhymes such as 'Five Little Ducks' and 'Ten Little Soldiers' and develop a sound understanding of addition and subtraction in a practical context. They learn to write number names and use positional words such as, 'in front of' and 'behind'. Pupils use every day language to describe properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They count and arrange objects according to their size and make comparisons using appropriate terms, such as 'bigger than', 'smaller than' and 'heavier' or 'lighter'. In the reception class, they also learn about time, weighing, measuring and use money in their classroom café.

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

69. This area of learning is a significant strength of the early years provision and children are progressing well. A good range of activities is provided to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world. It lays good foundations for the future history, geography, science and technology related learning. Children have many opportunities for taking part in scientific experiences, using all their senses. Most children observe carefully, ask suitable questions, predict outcomes and test out their ideas. Children have many opportunities to explore sand, water, colour, texture and shape and form in two-dimension and three- dimensions. They experiment to find out about the properties of various objects and materials and experience the concepts of weight and volume by observing objects in the water to see which float and which ones sink.. They use funnels, tubes and objects with holes, to find the best way of getting sand or water into a bottle. They investigate what things are made of, for example, when looking at a rolling pin. Children learn about the properties of various materials such as wood. They investigate the process of freezing water into ice cubes and later floating ice cubes on water. They fill balloons with coloured water before freezing and predict what will happen when the ice-balloon floats on the warm water.
70. Opportunities are provided for them to visit places of interest such as, the farm, the fire station and the riverside park to learn about their environment. Activities following the visits are used for developing appropriate language and literacy skills. Many children follow simple directions and name familiar features in the local area. Some children name parts of a plant, for example, flower, leaf, petal, stem, root. Children know common words used in history, such as old and new and describe these when sorting out toys and artefacts. Children listen to stories about the past. They find out about how horses were used as a means of transport in the past and how children travel today. They help to make toast and observe changes made by the electric toaster. They observe and take part in baking bread buns and experiment with yeast. They are confident in using their tape-recorder to listen to favourite music. They find out about what happens when a tape recorder is not plugged in. Children have access to a computer and are developing skills such as controlling the mouse. They use a battery-operated truck and move it in different directions, using their remote control. Discussions take place about safety issues, including road safety.

## **Creative Development**

71. This area of learning is one of the strengths of the nursery. Children use paints, dough, clay and textile materials to express their ideas and feelings. Children enjoy a variety of materials and techniques in art and craft. They use different printing techniques, using objects with different shapes and textures, such as a sponge, cotton-reel and fruits and vegetables. They explore mixing of colours and paints, for example, with added sawdust, sand or glue, to create texture. They enjoy cutting and sticking pictures and use a variety of re-cycled materials to make their models. They explore new ways to express their creative ideas. Children are encouraged to create group pictures for their classroom display. For example, they use different printing techniques on a net curtain to create their desired effect for the nursery-frieze. They learn to explore sounds and use a variety of percussion instruments, that are available in the nursery, such as tambourines, triangles and chime bars. They imitate simple rhymes and listen attentively to short pieces of music. They move well in response to music and enjoy singing songs from memory. They sing a variety of action songs, such as the 'Hello Song' and are encouraged to sing in time and in tune, loudly or quietly and with clapping or tapping. They make good use of imagination through role-play in the 'home corner' and in their 'music shop'. Children's imagination is also developed through activities such as, 'a pretend journey to the moon by a rocket'.

## **Physical Development**

72. This area of learning is developing well. All children have good opportunities to develop their manipulative skills as they cut, stick and join objects together. Children use scissors appropriately to cut along a straight, curved or a zigzag line. They use different types of pastry cutters and rolling pins to mould their play-dough

into different shapes and enjoy the feel of its texture. They use large and small construction kits imaginatively. The nursery is well equipped with a variety of balancing and climbing apparatus, large and small, which is used well to develop their physical skills. Children use large apparatus with confidence. Children's records show that they run, jump, climb and balance with a degree of confidence and control. They swing, slide, hop and skip, moving in and out of the apparatus, taking different directions. Children are encouraged to think of new ways of using their apparatus. They enjoy all aspects of gymnastics and dance and are developing their co-ordination and control appropriately. The teachers' records show that they are increasing their spatial awareness and developing their hand and eye co-ordination appropriately through ball games. Teachers' records also show that through physical activities children are given opportunities to develop their 'positional' vocabulary. Physical activities are also used to teach qualities such as sharing, caring, working together, turn-taking and problem solving. Safety issues are emphasised and children observe simple rules of safety. In the reception class, appropriate game-skills are encouraged. Children use large and small balls, hoops, skittles and skipping ropes, to extend skills. By the age of five, children's physical development reaches the expected standards for their ages.

### 73. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### 73. English

73. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, standards of attainment in speaking, listening and writing are in line with the national average. Standards of attainment in reading are broadly in line with the national average with some under achievement by higher attainers. The majority of pupils make good progress with most higher attainers making satisfactory progress, except in reading where progress on occasions is slow. This is an improvement from the previous inspection report when standards of attainment in English were broadly in line with the national average and pupils made satisfactory progress. In the 1998 tests for seven-year-olds, 71 per cent of pupils attained Level 2 compared to 80 per cent nationally; the performance of pupils in reading was well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools it was average. Over the three years up to 1998, there has been little improvement and standards in reading have been well below the national average. However, assessments for 1999 show a significant improvement, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 or above has increased. In writing, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, it was average. Over the three years up to 1998, standards in writing have fluctuated with standards reaching national average in 1997. The 1999 results show a significant proportion reaching Level 2 or above with some pupils reaching Level 3.
74. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is average. Younger pupils relate events and share feelings about their special objects. By the age of seven, pupils listen attentively to stories. They respond enthusiastically to questions and appropriately to instructions. Throughout the school, pupils participate well in discussions during the literacy and numeracy hours. For example, Year 2 and Year 3 pupils predict outcomes, share their observations and use mathematical terms confidently when they watch the teacher demonstrate making quadrilateral and other shapes from cutting folded paper. In mental arithmetic sessions, pupils engage in lively discussions. Year 4 pupils listen carefully to each others' contributions in lessons and in assemblies. They listen to introductions in lessons with concentration and respond to questions appropriately. Most pupils initiate conversations with unknown adults confidently. They speak with clear diction when for example enacting a story in front of parents and pupils in the assembly. However, pupils are less confident in posing their own questions or starting discussions during lessons.
75. The findings of the inspection show that the majority of pupils' attain standards in reading that are broadly in line with the national average. By the age of seven, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of phonics. Most read unknown texts confidently and use appropriate skills to read unfamiliar words. Many pupils retell the main parts of the story and predict what might happen next. Pupils in both key stages have some experience of evaluating texts and reviewing books and are becoming familiar with the concepts of skimming and scanning through the 'literacy hour' work. By the end of Year 4, pupils choose books from a structured

choice of commercial reading schemes and read texts with appropriate fluency and accuracy. Higher attainers read with expression and regard to punctuation but on occasions read texts that are below their capability. This has an adverse effect on their progress in reading and many higher attainers read below their capability level. Pupils read a range of texts in other subjects such as geography, history, science and mathematics with accuracy and understanding and this is reflected well in their writing for these subjects. However, higher order skills of skimming and scanning to retrieve information, library skills and research skills are under-developed. Pupils rarely read for pleasure in school and their experience of reading books is generally limited to books from commercial reading schemes. Few pupils said that they read for enjoyment.

76. In writing pupils achieve average standards. By the end of age seven, pupils write in sentences making appropriate use of full stops and capital letters. Most pupils are aware that a story has a beginning, middle and an end and few pupils write independently at length. They write in different forms for different purposes. For example, writing postcards to imaginary people. Year 3 pupils develop the characters in their stories by using adjectives and adverbs. Their narrative writing skills are developing well; they write in different forms for a variety of purposes and audiences. By the end of Year 4, pupils write stories and construct imaginative narratives with good use of descriptive vocabulary. For example, in their writing about Choppington in the colliery which 'stood black against the sky, the giant wheel clanked and groaned' and use the brainstormed words confidently in their compositions. Pupils have a sound knowledge of story making techniques. They know that writing can be built over time, they add paragraphs to their writing in lessons, listen to teachers' and pupils' comments carefully and improve their writing by editing and redrafting to incorporate these comments. Some higher attainers write imaginatively with good descriptions. Spelling is satisfactory. Handwriting is not developed systematically across the school. Joined writing style is introduced gradually in Year 2; some pupils take long to develop this style. Standards in handwriting are variable for independent writing but generally satisfactory when pupils write their final copy of a piece of work.
77. Pupils generally make good progress in developing their language skills. In the literacy hour sessions, the repetition and the inter-relatedness of all the aspects of language in activities draw on pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills which consolidates their development, consequently most of the pupils make good progress. Progress is good when pupils work from a stimulus linked to the current class topic or interest and this is well supported by additional resources. Group reading from big books and discussing, the main plot, characters and the format of a book in lessons makes effective contribution to reading development. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Additional teacher and adult support in small group situations makes class work more accessible to them. This is also reinforced through work related to appropriate individual educational plans. They gain in confidence and participate in discussions and activities just as enthusiastically as the rest of the class.
78. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils participate enthusiastically in discussions and are eager to answer questions. They have good understanding of classroom routines and teachers' expectations of them. They behave consistently well, are courteous and considerate, and show respect for the resources and equipment they use. Pupils concentrate on their tasks well. Pupils with special educational needs respond to the work with interest and try hard. They are confident and ask for help from other pupils and support staff. They join in 'literacy hour sessions' and enjoy listening to stories and poems.
79. Pupils use language appropriately across other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are taught technical vocabulary and encouraged to use it in their written response. For example, pupils wrote thoughtfully about their visit to Beamish Museum. In mathematics, pupils' use of language through mental, oral and written work, particularly during the introductory and concluding activities, makes a positive contribution to their development of literacy skills. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to explore some their own ideas independently.
80. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages with some being satisfactory and occasionally very good. The literacy hour is used well across the school to extend pupils' knowledge of language and to consolidate

developing language skills. The activities within the hour are thoroughly prepared and teachers generate good response from the pupils. They manage the time and pupils well and sustain a brisk pace. They use good questioning techniques to develop pupils' learning and understanding. Planning is linked to programmes of study but is not always informed by assessment and some aspects of reading are not taught systematically. Teachers hear pupils read but this is not done regularly in every class. Pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to choose books either for reading for pleasure or for research purposes; consequently pupils' library skills are generally under-developed. During lessons, teachers give evaluative feedback and make constructive comments which help pupils to improve their work. Some use is made of homework when pupils learn spellings or sometimes take reading books home.

81. The focus on literacy development in the past year has contributed effectively towards raising standards. The revised policy and scheme of work provide clear guidance, together with literacy training and external input into staff development have boosted confidence in subject knowledge. The policy provides a secure framework for learning and recording of assessment. Assessment of the subject is satisfactory. There are sound procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress. However, teachers do not share assessments with each other and there is some lack of clarity in the depth and breadth within each level of attainment. This has resulted in teachers being cautious in their formal assessments. Consequently, there is a significant disparity between teacher assessments and the National Curriculum test results at Key Stage 1. A school portfolio of annotated work is available but this provides a few examples of work up to Level 3 only. Assessment at Level 4 is insecure. The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring standards and assessment practice is under-developed.
82. The library is under-used. There is no set practice of pupils selecting books regularly or using the library for research purposes. Most pupils who were heard reading were familiar with the library set up but some had not visited the library since the school started this term. A few knew the classifications used for library organisation. Many pupils lack the confidence in choosing books for themselves and rely heavily on the structured choice available to them. No library sessions took place during the inspection period. Resources for learning are adequate. The school recognises the need for more fiction and non-fiction books and has injected a substantial amount of money to increase the book stock but there is still a limited range, particularly for reference purposes. All classes have book display areas but the quality and use of these areas vary. Displays in the classrooms and around the school provide good resources for reading and writing. Book fairs are held twice a year and are well supported by parents. No evidence was available to show that information technology is used systematically to support work in language development.

83.

### **Mathematics**

83. Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the national average and by the end of Year 4 they are broadly in line with the national expectations for this age. Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection when they were below the national average throughout the school.
84. Analysis of the 1998 national tests for seven-year-olds shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above is in line with the national average and above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, attainment at the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. Taking the last three years into account, performance in mathematics was below the national average. Boys do better than girls in mathematics. The 1999 national test results show that there is marked improvement in the results, as compared to previous years. All the pupils have reached Level 2 and a third have reached Level 3. Teacher assessment for 1999 also shows higher results overall. However, there is marked difference between teacher assessment and test results.
85. Inspection findings are that by the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils attain standards that are in line with the national average in all aspects of mathematics, including application of mathematics to solve simple problems. Pupils have a sound understanding of place value of each digit in a three-digit number. They estimate and measure objects to the nearest centimetre and use money for buying things in every day context.

They name 2 and 3-D shapes with different number of sides, and explain the links between the two. Pupils in the reception class count numbers to 20 and add and subtract numbers to 10, in practical contexts. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 find different ways of making 10. They recognise and match different coins to £ 1 in value, and add and subtract small numbers mentally.

86. The majority of Year 4 pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the expectations for this age. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 use real money for problem solving. They use all four operations and use the correct form of notation when solving problems or calculating numbers. They use the £ symbol and the decimal point to two places. They figure out the largest and the smallest number in three and four digit numbers. They round up numbers to four digits and work out the perimeter of shapes and use six, seven and eight times tables to explore different types of number patterns in a number square to 100. When opportunities arise they use these skills appropriately to solve simple problems.
87. Numeracy is integrated with other subjects, such as art, history, geography and science, although numeracy is not well developed in any subject. The introduction of the school's numeracy strategy is making a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Standards of numeracy are beginning to improve. The numeracy hour has been introduced recently and is now established throughout the school, giving teachers more confidence in teaching different aspects of the numeracy framework. As a result, teachers are beginning to reflect on their lessons and refine their planning and teaching.
88. Starting from a low prior attainment, pupils make sound progress throughout their time in school. They build on previous knowledge of number rhymes and numbers up to 10, and use their knowledge of number bonds in simple problem solving. In Year 1, pupils solve simple problems, using numbers up to 20 and begin to learn place value of numbers up to 100. By Year 2, as the tasks become more challenging, they begin to make better progress. On the whole, progress is better for pupils in Years 2 and 3 than for pupils in Years 3 and 4. This is due to the different levels of expectations in these classes. There is generally a lack of challenge for the older and more able pupils. Limited progress is made in using and applying mathematics and in handling data. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets. Girls make slower progress than boys. In lessons observed during the inspection, no reasons were evident for this.
89. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well and are keen to learn and demonstrate good levels of concentration. They enjoy calculating mentally and responding orally to the teachers' questions. Younger pupils use counters and fingers to support their calculations and are gaining confidence as they succeed. Pupils enjoy the use of resources in practical activities, such as dice and real and plastic money to solve number problems. They are beginning to use mathematical terms confidently, especially when encouraged by their teachers. Pupils work well collaboratively and ask each other for help as necessary.
90. The quality of teaching overall is sound, with some examples of good teaching. Lessons are well planned and structured for the numeracy hour. The introductory activity gives due regard to pupils' mental and oral work and to developing their mental calculation strategies. There is good level of direct teaching. Explanations given by teachers are generally clear. Pupils are involved through discussions and questioning. Group activities are well organised and, generally, there is suitable work set for the majority of pupils. However, there is a tendency to provide less challenging activities for the older and more able pupils. This is largely due to the lack of a shared understanding of the expectation levels for each year group. Teachers are not yet used to making a reference to the numeracy framework, to provide appropriate level of challenge in activities. Homework is not used effectively to support pupils' learning. As a result, parents are not fully involved in supporting the subject.
91. The co-ordinator for mathematics is enthusiastic and has an action plan to ensure the effective implementation of the numeracy strategy in school. She has a clear view of her responsibilities, particularly in relation to attending courses and providing training for staff. There is no monitoring of the subject to ensure that all the

National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in a balanced way, and the key objectives from the numeracy framework for each year group are met through planning. Teaching is not monitored to evaluate the impact on attainment and progress.

92. There are sound procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress. However, assessment is not shared between teachers to form a common understanding of the National Curriculum levels. There is no moderated portfolio of pupils' assessed work, to develop consistent practice in assessment of mathematics.. As a result, the teacher assessments are on occasions unreliable and generally lack consistency through the school.

93. Resources for mathematics are good and used well. However, information technology is not used well to support or to extend mathematics. Literacy skills are developed adequately through mathematics.

94. **Science**

94. Owing to time-table constraints and the structure of the curriculum, it was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection. Judgements on pupils' attainment and the progress made by pupils are based on an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work, teacher planning and records, interviews with staff and pupils. Standards of attainment have improved at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection when they were below average for some pupils and low for higher attains generally. The oldest pupils continue to reach standards that are close to national expectations for this age.

95. The 1998 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds show that, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above was below the national average. The higher Level 3 was well below the national average. Overall, pupils' results were well below the national average. Pupils' results were also below the average for similar schools. The 1999 results are much improved. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 and the higher Level 3 has increased significantly. The results are also improved for 'experiment and investigative science' and for 'materials and their properties'. However, girls have achieved lower results than boys at the higher Level 3. There is no evident explanation for this.

96. Inspection findings are that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is now in line with the national average. In Year 2, pupils explain the process of food decaying in the mouth and harming the teeth. They investigate and record a plan of their upper and lower jaw. They also investigate the efficiency of various potting materials to grow cress seeds, such as cotton wool, compost, sand, soil and sawdust and observe and record their findings. They begin to appreciate the need for a fair test. Pupils in the reception class sort and classify fruits and vegetables, according to the set criteria and find out that some things float and some sink. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study plants and animals in a variety of local habitat and sort living things into broad groups, according to similarities and differences.

97. By the end of Year 4, most pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with expectations for this age. In Years 3 and 4 pupils understand the functions of muscles and tendons in moving their body and use appropriate scientific vocabulary to explain this. They understand how the skeleton is formed and supports their body. By the time pupils are ready to leave the school, attainment broadly matches national expectations for the age. Many pupils have a sound knowledge of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. They carry out their investigations effectively and safely. This is an improvement on the previous inspection findings.

98. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress in understanding the scientific ideas that are taught and are acquiring scientific skills, knowledge and vocabulary. Progress is good for pupils in Years 2 and 3, as they are fully motivated and enjoy making their own investigations. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with additional support and structured work to match their needs, and make good progress in science.

99. Pupils have positive attitudes towards science. Pupils in all classes take keen interest in their work and are enthusiastic in their responses to practical activities in science. They concentrate well and co-operate willingly in group-tasks. Pupils use equipment and resources with care. They are eager to contribute ideas to discussions.
100. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and use questions effectively to enhance pupils' learning. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary and encourage pupils to do the same. Work is carefully planned and the learning intentions are clear. Assessment is used to adjust teaching and to provide suitable work for pupils of different abilities. Good use is made of resources in practical activities, including the school grounds. Science is related to every day life. Limited opportunities, however, are provided for pupils to plan and to carry out their own investigations. The idea of fair testing is under-emphasised. Both literacy and numeracy skills are developed through science. Information technology, however, is not used to support or extend work. Good use is made of the local environment to gain knowledge about animals and plants.
101. There are sound procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress both ongoing to inform teaching and at the end of a unit. However, assessment is not shared between teachers so that a common understanding of the National Curriculum Levels is underdeveloped. Pupils' marked work is not discussed. There is no portfolio of pupils' assessed work to moderate teachers' assessments. As a result, the teacher assessments are inconsistent across the school.
102. The revised scheme of work is sound and provides a satisfactory basis for work throughout the school, including the reception class. The scheme takes account of the needs of the mixed-age classes. Science is mainly taught through topics, which are chosen to include all areas of study. However, there is no monitoring of the subject to ensure that all National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in a balanced way. Teaching is not monitored to evaluate its impact on attainment and progress. The action plan for improving science is clear and has helped to bring about some improvements which has contributed effectively to raising standards. The co-ordinator has a clear view of her responsibilities, but is constrained as science is not on school's list of priorities at present. There are limited training opportunities for staff to keep abreast of developments in the subject. Resources for the subject are adequate and well used.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

103. The standards of attainment reached by the oldest pupils are good for their age. Overall, pupils make good progress. This is generally in line with the findings of the last inspection report.
104. Younger pupils develop the use of wax resist technique to create pictures from house shapes and use texture rubbings and ink wash for effect. Reception pupils experiment with colour mixing. Many know that mixing of two colours creates a different colour and a variety of shades. Displays show that pupils use collage, model making, printing and painting to illustrate stories such as 'A House for Hermit Crab'. By the age of seven, pupils show clear understanding of some of the elements of art. They use their observational skills to represent a variety of objects, events and living things fairly accurately. They experiment with colours, line shape and form when drawing leaves which match the plant leaves in colour and design. Year 3 pupils make clay tiles and create superb individual designs by using slip trailers and other implements to 'drag' the slip clay which is mixed with rust to achieve a different shade to increase effectiveness. They are familiar with a good range of art vocabulary and respond to questions with understanding but are less proficient in using this vocabulary when discussing their own work. Year 4 pupils explore a range of media and use tools and materials with growing precision to achieve good standards. For example, in observational work on drawing bicycles, they used charcoal and chalk to build an accurate picture by viewing small parts through a view finder; similarly they used old rubber tiles to carve out patterns and created pictures in ink block prints. They use a variety of

stimuli such as stories, visits to the museums, real paintings and topic work to paint, draw, print, explore textures and experiment with combining techniques to achieve a variety of effects.

105. Throughout the school, pupils use a good range of techniques and media to represent and communicate their ideas effectively. Many show a developing ability to depict three-dimensional form in their work. Pupils demonstrate awareness of the different styles of recognised artists like creating a garden in Monet's style effectively. However, they have few opportunities to explore the art of cultures other than their own. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills and understanding of elements of art. Their work and displays show progress in exploring and experimenting with a wide variety of materials and techniques. Pupils develop confidence in handling a range of tools and implements in their work. They listen to comments carefully and many modify their work accordingly. Pupils approach their work with care, have high self- expectations and enjoy art. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, most achieving standards at least as good as their classmates.
106. The quality of teaching is good and in some lessons it is very good. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations, the subject knowledge is very good and enthusiasm for art is high. Teachers plan and prepare art activities thoroughly. Planning is well linked to National Curriculum programmes of study but planning for knowledge and understanding of the multicultural dimension is less secure. A good range of high quality materials are available to make choices for individual response within a clear framework; art work is sequenced and developed over time providing pupils opportunities to modify and improve their work as a consequence of discussions with one another and constructive criticisms from the teacher. Pupils are taught well a variety of techniques and encouraged to use these in combination with the skills of drawing and painting. Detailed explanations and explicit instructions extend pupils' imagination and develop their ideas; they experience art vocabulary and are becoming familiar with art terminology. For example, when making clay tiles, the teacher told the class 'See how pliable it is, beautiful material, don't be too severe or you will puncture the surface'. He introduced terms such as 'leather clay', 'oven baked with all the impurities burnt out'. Teachers use their time in lessons well, they monitor individual response and give evaluative feedback. Concluding sessions at the end are used to encourage pupils to comment about each others work. They highlight the positive aspects and use pupils' work as good examples which raises esteem with some pupils feeling very proud of their work. However, assessment of art over time is inconsistent.
107. The art co-ordinator's knowledge and enthusiasm for art has impacted well on the subject. The policy and scheme of work provide appropriate guidance. His resourcefulness at making and collecting tool, implements and all kinds of materials has built a very good bank of high quality art resources which are well organised and easily accessible. Throughout the school pupils' work is displayed skilfully with care; it contributes effectively to raising their esteem and confidence and enhance the visual environment.
108. **Design and Technology**
108. The standards of attainment reached by the oldest pupils are satisfactory for their age. Since the last inspection efforts have been made to make the policy and schemes of work for design and technology more relevant to the needs of the pupils. Standards have improved in Key Stage 1, since the previous inspection when they were below the expectations for this age.
109. By the age of seven, pupils use a variety of materials to design and make products. Through the construction of simple models they develop skills in the use of reclaimed materials and foods and gain knowledge about their properties. Activities include designing Christmas cards and picture frames and a display of lighthouses and ships complete with simple battery and bulb circuit. Good picture frames were designed from mathematical shapes observed in the environment, selected and arranged by the pupils and finished using a simple printing technique. Pupils are encouraged to develop their design skills by discussion and re-arranging components. They consider ideas as they develop and identify strengths and weaknesses.

110. By the end of Year 4, pupils develop further their skills in designing and making. A wider range of components and materials is available for their use. Activities include the designing and making of cameras with bulb circuit to act as a flash and clown faces with bulbs for eyes. Most recent work involved pupils in the design of a money container. The pupils design and plan the chosen product after considering various products and select their own materials for making and fastening. This work is well linked with the money topic in mathematics. However, the recording of design stages is under-developed.
111. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages and have opportunities to develop skills in designing and making. Attention is given to the development of language and use of the correct vocabulary to describe materials and components.
112. Pupils enjoy working with materials and attitudes are good. They behave well, and are interested and enthusiastic in lessons. They concentrate well on their work, collaborate well in groups and show respect for the feelings of others. Many suggest design modifications when discussing and planning their work and help each other in designing their products. They use equipment with regard to safety and work well to keep it tidy.
113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is a clear progression in the work planned although the evaluation aspect is not planned rigorously. Lesson objectives are clear. Health and safety procedures are consistently observed and pupils are carefully supervised when using tools. Instructions are clear and teachers manage their pupils well in practical activities. They encourage pupils to evaluate their work and improve it further in the feedback they provide during lessons. The recording of design stages is under- developed with insufficient emphasis on the outline planning and strategies for completing the design.
114. There is an effective policy document and scheme of work to promote and guide the teaching of the strands of the National Curriculum incorporating procedures for assessment. The co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring continuity and progression; staff say that this is carried out informally and through staff discussion, but there are no set procedures or records of monitoring outcomes to inform future development. The school has good resources for teaching design and technology and good accommodation for practical activities. Materials and tools are stored centrally but can be delivered to classrooms on a trolley designed for the purpose.

## **Geography**

115. Owing to time-table constraints and the structure of the curriculum it was possible to observe only two lessons, both in Years 3 and 4, during the inspection. Judgements on pupils' attainment and progress made by pupils are based on an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and records, interviews with staff and pupils.
116. By the time pupils leave school, their attainment in geography is satisfactory for their age. Overall, pupils are developing an appropriate range of geographical skills. Throughout their study, they are following the key aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils in Key Stage 2, study themes such as weather, settlements and in Key Stage 1, topics such as journeys, homes and buildings. They are gaining good understanding of maps and diagrams, and from time to time, make use of visits to broaden their knowledge.
117. Younger pupils in Key Stage I, become aware of their own address and identify features of their house, school grounds and their immediate locality. They identify features of the seaside and learn that different people come from different countries, and have different jobs. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 identify similarities and differences between their own locality and the locality they have encountered in a story and draw a map of the two localities. They learn about life on an island and on the mainland. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 ask and respond to geographical questions. They learn map skills and identify their own locality on the map of the U.K. They name and identify the capital cities of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are aware of the key physical and human features of their immediate locality, and how these features might be different from the village of Chembakolli in India. They compare the climate of the two places and discuss the effect of the climate on the plants that grow there. They locate India on the world map, and identify and name some of the continents and oceans of the world.

118. Progress overall is sound over a period of time. This is due to the clear guidance provided through schemes of work for the school, including the reception class. Both girls and boys make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards their targets and are given additional support.
119. Pupils' attitudes to geography are satisfactory and they said that they enjoyed the study of different places and localities. They like to locate countries and capital cities on relevant maps and enjoy pointing to the direction, as appropriate. In one of the lessons seen where work was less challenging and failed to stimulate pupils' developing interests pupils became restless. Although, most of the time was spent on set tasks, the distractions and lack of motivation resulted in the lesson moving at a low pace and some pupils marking time in low-level activities, such as colouring in worksheets from the text books or colouring maps. In the other lesson at times, pupils were over-dependent on the teacher to provide them with new information, and lacked the necessary skills to undertake the relevant geographical enquiry.
120. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in one and unsatisfactory in the other. Planning of lessons matches the school's schemes of work. Key skills in geography are taught systematically, so that by the time pupils leave the school, they have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge and understanding expected for this age. Useful links are developed with subjects such as history to broaden pupils' understanding and skills. For example, geography is used well while learning about the Romans in Britain. However, pupils' work and teachers' planning show some differences in learning outcomes between different classes and year groups. This was supported by the quality of activities in the effective lesson, in which pupils were curious and keen to learn new geographical terms, enquiry skills and new mapping skills. In the less effective lesson, the planning was less detailed and the tasks lacked challenge for the older and more able pupils. Insufficient resources and information were provided to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of places, and to make geographical comparisons between the two contrasting localities studied.
121. There are revised schemes of work for each year group, which are detailed and provide a sound basis for quality work in geography. The staged development of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding contributes well towards ensuring progression and securing continuity in pupils' learning through the school. However, the implementation of the new schemes of work is inconsistent, particularly for the older pupils. There is a lack of monitoring of the subject as a whole; the lack of monitoring of teaching to evaluate the effectiveness of lessons or to ensure breadth and balance in the taught curriculum results in the quality of work being varied between classes and year groups, with better results for the younger pupils than the older pupils. Record keeping and assessment in geography are under-developed and do not always inform curriculum planning. Although there is a limited range of up-to-date books and resources to support work in geography, overall resources are adequate.

## **History**

122. The attainment of the oldest pupils is satisfactory for their age. Owing to the time-table constraints and the structure of the curriculum, it was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection, both in Years 2 and 3. Judgements on pupils' attainment are based on an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and records, interviews with staff and pupils.
123. Pupils develop a sound understanding of events in the past. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about famous people, such as Grace Darling, and distinguish between holidays in the recent and more distant past. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are developing sound sense of chronology. They explore different ways of sequencing past events in a

chronological order, using photographs brought from home and discuss changes in different periods in time. They describe the main features of the period they have studied through different periods in history, such as Ancient Greeks and the Romans in Britain. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make comparisons that illustrate change from the Victorian period. For example, in jobs and give reasons for these changes. They communicate historical changes through pieces of extended writing.

124. Pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1, learn about similarities and differences between old and new items of clothing, transport and toys and learn how to decide whether an object is old or new. In Years 1 and 2, they identify the key features of a home built a long time ago, and discuss differences between two homes built in different times. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 appreciate the range of different sources of information that can be used to find out about the Romans or the Ancient Greeks. They find out information about an aspect of the Greek way of life from pictures of buildings and texts. By the end of their time at the school, pupils have learned about the key features of the Victorian Britain, including the experiences of rich and poor and the beliefs and attitudes of men and women. Girls and boys do equally well and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Activities are well matched to their needs. They are well supported by adults.
125. Pupils' response to history is good. They enjoy lessons and are particularly interested in activities which are closely related to their own experiences, such as comparing old family photographs with new ones and discussing particular features of a period. They like answering questions, listen well and are ready to discuss issues. They are curious about the past and ask questions about why people in the past acted as they did. They apply themselves well to the work they are given, and work together to explore issues.
126. The quality of teaching in history is satisfactory. The lessons are generally planned well and make good links with previous topics covered. The key elements in history are taught through the planned history topics. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure but the expectations for the older pupils are not high enough. This is due to the lack of systematic assessment and record keeping of the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. Good use is made of visits to museums, places of interest and artefacts to help pupils to acquire a developing picture of the past. There are opportunities to visit places of interest, such as Arbeia Roman Fort at South Shields, and to listen to talks about the Romans from specialists. They compare similarities and differences with the present through their study of life during the Roman times. However, limited opportunities are available for the pupils' to make their own enquiries and interpretations. Teachers overuse worksheets in some lessons, for example, when studying life during the Victorian times.
127. History is used effectively for the teaching of literacy both in terms of extending pupils' reading and writing, and for developing their speaking and listening skills. Useful links are made with other subjects, to illustrate particular features of a history topic. For example, effective links were made between art and history through a study of 'Locomotives'. Historical artefacts are being acquired and developed continuously to support history topics and to stimulate learning. The recent updating has improved schemes of work for each year group, which provide a sound basis for quality work in history and for making appropriate progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the implementation of the schemes of work is not rigorous. There is a lack of monitoring of teaching and of the range and depth of the taught curriculum. As a result, the quality of teaching and the work varies between classes and year groups, with better results at the lower end of the school than at the upper end. Pupils study a good range of history but the record keeping and assessment are 'under-developed'.
128. **Information technology**
128. Due to timetable restrictions, it was possible to observe only one lesson in information technology in Key Stage 1. Further evidence was collected from the scrutiny of work, displays around the school and discussions with teachers and pupils. The attainment in information technology is unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Not all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered adequately. Standards in information

technology have not improved since the last inspection. Considerable investment in hardware and software has been made recently but most class teachers are unfamiliar with these resources and are unable to deploy them effectively for developing knowledge and skills.

129. By the end of age seven, pupils show competence in mouse control and knowledge of the keyboard layout. They draft written work, using a number of fonts and formats with a variety of background and font colours. They also use the mouse to select from a menu or palette. In one class these skills were used to display sentences about God in very interesting ways. These pupils use their word processing techniques to communicate their ideas in ways that attract the attention of an audience. However, the use of the computer is limited to the general use of the keyboard, but pupils do not understand the use of control and modelling.
130. Key Stage 2 pupils also use the word processor to create a variety of fonts within the text and change colour, size and alignment, but there is little progression from earlier work. The development of keyboard skills shows progress in Years 3 and 4, with an emphasis on typing skills. In Year 4, pupils receive instruction and practice in the familiarity of the arrangement of letters and the use of both right and left hands in typing. There was some evidence of data- handling skills being used to make comparisons in graphical representation but pupils do not use data bases to help them with their own research. Evidence of controlling, monitoring and modelling is also absent. Calculators and tape recorders are used occasionally to support work in other subjects.
131. Pupils are not on course to attain the necessary skills and understanding by Year 4; they make unsatisfactory progress in information technology and do not acquire the appropriate range of knowledge and understanding in all the aspects of the programmes of study. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress with the computer and have the same access as other pupils to opportunities for skills development.
132. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They enjoy the opportunity to use the computer, show interest in their work and treat the equipment with care. Pupils learn from each other and work collaboratively when asked to do so.
133. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory and lacks a rigorous approach. The subject co-ordinator has introduced direct teaching of some aspects of the subject. The direct teaching of skills in information technology is a positive aspect of provision in the subject Exercises are well planned and progress is charted. Some progression and continuity is evident in word processing but is not evident in other aspects. Teachers do not consistently plan to use information technology or take opportunities to integrate it into other subjects, such as mathematics, science and technology. Sometimes, a record of use of information technology programmes is kept, but assessment to chart progress or to plan future work is very patchy and inconsistent. Class teachers lack the skills and knowledge to fulfil the demands of the National Curriculum.
134. The management of the subject has had only a limited impact on its development. The action plan for addressing this key issue in the previous inspection report set out appropriate plan of action and targets, but these have not been met successfully in teaching and learning. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and clear view of the direction for moving the subject forward but is restricted by the lack of non-contact time and commitment from the senior management team. There is a brief policy statement and an outline scheme of work. There is no overall subject map to ensure coverage, continuity and progression and no whole school approach to assessment, recording and reporting.
135. The quality and range of computers is adequate to deliver all the requirements of the National Curriculum. All classrooms have a computer and printer but these are left unused. There has been recent acquisition of appropriately useful resources, but there is a lack of resources to support control technology and too few programmes related to problem solving.

## **Music**

136. Overall attainment, by the end Year 4, is average. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school but many opportunities to enrich learning are overlooked.
137. By the age of seven, pupils listen carefully to music and respond well, both individually and in groups. From the early stages, they learn to sing simple songs from memory and to develop a sense of pitch and the rising and falling scale. The good use of chime bars establishes an awareness of pitch which is reinforced with hand movements. Pupils learn to make different sounds from percussion instruments. They compare dynamics, length and speeds of sounds. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop pitch awareness further by playing and listening to intervals on the glockenspiel. They sing simple pitch exercises and rhythm patterns. In Year 3 robots drawn by the pupils were given tasks to perform which could be identified by rhythm. Pupils created simple compositions using a combination of rhythms and recorded them with appropriate symbols. The quality of singing in the school is satisfactory but lacks development and tuition in techniques of voice production.
138. The pupils' attitudes to music are good. They behave well, are interested and enthusiastic in lessons. They concentrate well on their work, collaborate well in groups when required and listen attentively to others' singing or playing instruments.
139. The quality of teaching is good with well structured lessons. All members of staff are willing to promote and teach music and the subject is led by a competent musician and pianist. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned; they provide ample opportunities for pupils to experiment with sounds and instruments. Resources are accessible and well used and the pupils are taught to handle instruments with care and play them correctly. There is an effective policy and a new scheme of work produced by the local authority which ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught. They include appropriate detail of how pupils' attainment and progress are to be assessed. Members of staff have received training to help them use the new scheme of work. Teachers monitor pupils' progress by carrying out reviews every half term.
140. There is no instrumental tuition and no choir in the school but older pupils have the opportunity to play the penny whistle. Pupils arrive into the hall for assembly each day to the sound of classical music. The school has adequate musical resources available and good accommodation for musical activities. The range of tuned and untuned percussion is well looked after and in good condition. Recent collections of shopping vouchers by parents and friends have enabled the school to enhance its musical resources. The role of the subject co-ordinator in monitoring standards through the school is 'under-developed'.

## **Physical education**

141. The high standards attained in the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 4 is above the expectations for pupils of similar ages. Progress throughout the school is at least satisfactory and often good. Lessons seen were limited to games and gymnastics. Years 2, 3, and 4 pupils receive weekly swimming lessons. Pupils get good opportunities to take part in competitive sport. They compete against other schools in football and cricket and take part in cross-country races.
142. By the end of age seven, pupils perform simple skills such as running, jumping and landing with increasing control on the floor and apparatus. They use space well when moving about the hall and land properly and safely. They can control, catch and pass a ball with growing accuracy and follow instructions accurately. They recognise the characteristics of good quality performance. At Key Stage 2, pupils work confidently and safely in groups in both co-operative and simple competitive situations. They display good progress in throwing and catching and general ball skills. They run and step over low hurdles and are developing good control of body movements. Throughout the school, pupils sustain energetic activity over a period of time and are aware of the short-term changes that happen to their bodies during exercise. They understand the need for

warm up and cool down activities. Pupils make good progress in both key stages in developing control in their movements when balancing, jumping or throwing and catching. Pupils practise, improve and refine their skills and put these in practice in playing football, cricket and team games.

143. Pupils participate enthusiastically and apply themselves well in lessons. They concentrate on their work, collaborate well in groups. They show respect for the feelings of others whilst performing competitively with one another. They take pride in winning trophies and awards in competitions and league games. They get changed appropriately for physical activities and are able to borrow shoes and shorts from the school store if necessary.
144. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good, with some teaching being very good; this has been maintained since the last inspection. Best lessons are characterised by very good subject knowledge and high expectations; lessons proceed at a brisk pace. There is a clear progression in the work planned; lesson objectives are well matched to individual needs providing good challenge for higher attainers. Health and safety procedures are observed and pupils are carefully supervised when using apparatus. Teachers demonstrate skills with proficiency, challenging pupils to concentrate and produce their best performance. Pupils are praised and given constructive feedback which provides opportunity to improve their performance.
145. The school places high emphasis on developing physical skills as part of its drive towards health and fitness. All pupils follow the National Curriculum programmes of study for physical education. The subject is well managed and organised throughout the school. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and has high levels of enthusiasm for the subject. The policy and scheme of work are comprehensive and include games and activities devised by the subject co-ordinator. The provision and use of resources and accommodation for the subject are very good. The hall is fully equipped with gymnastic equipment which is well used. There is a range of clubs and these activities, together with competitive fixtures and participation in local championships extend the range of curricular provision. In addition, professional coaches from local premier league football clubs make regular visits to the school to provide coaching sessions in football and cricket. These activities make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

## **Religious Education**

146. The school timetables religious education for one lesson in each class every week. The distribution of lessons permitted observation of only a few lessons during the inspection period and only a small sample of work was available for scrutiny. Standards achieved in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Younger pupils explore their own feelings and develop understanding of why some things are special. By the end of age seven, pupils know the difference between old and new testaments. They know that Jesus is special and have some understanding of the significance of prayer. Year 3 pupils form a basic understanding of Judaism. Year 4 pupils are introduced to Hinduism. By the end of Year 4, pupils have an understanding about Christian beliefs and practices. They know the symbols, festivals, place of worship and why the Bible is important to Christians. In assemblies, pupils listen to stories from the Bible and respond to questions with a secure knowledge and understanding of the main points. Some Year 4 pupils confidently enact a Good Samaritan story in the school assembly and answer pupils' questions appropriately. However, pupils have few opportunities for reflection or to discuss their views on religious issues. The spiritual dimension of religious education is under-developed.
147. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the distinctive features of their own religious traditions and how these have an effect on peoples' everyday lives. But, in lessons where objectives are unclear and lessons are dominated by teacher talk, pupils soon become disinterested and make slow progress. In lessons which involve personal experiences and opportunities to share feelings with others, pupils develop an understanding of deeper meaning in relationships. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.

148. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with some unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers' planning is closely linked to the Locally Agreed Syllabus programmes of study appropriate for the age groups but is not informed by assessment to match individual needs. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to stories, to think, to question and to comment about the facts, but fewer opportunities are given to consider questions about how the teachings of other religions can relate to them. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, especially in Christianity but where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is lack of confidence in teaching other world religions. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and with each other. Teachers make little use of any resources because these are not available in school. Consequently, pupils have limited experience of seeing and touching symbols, artefacts and other items of religious significance in their own and other religions.
  
149. The recently revised policy and scheme of work are well linked to the Locally Agreed Syllabus, provide appropriate guidance and a clear framework which ensures continuity. Although the school recognises the need for further development, religious education is not identified as a priority in school development planning since all the time and resources available are targeted at implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies. Resources are inadequate; these are limited to a few books and some worksheet materials to support the work in the subject. Very little use is made of visits to places of worship, or visitors from diverse religious backgrounds. The lack of resources has a negative impact on progress and standards of attainment.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **150. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

150. The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors over a combined total of 10 days in the school. During the inspection thirty nine lessons or part of lessons covering all year groups and all teachers, were observed. Other observations covered, registration, assemblies, display work, pupils' written work, playground activities and lunch-times. Inspectors also heard some pupils read from each class; representative samples of pupils' work were scrutinised in each year group. Some of the individual educational plans of pupils with special educational needs were read and their work scrutinised.
151. In addition, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, teachers, governors and administration staff. A range of documentation was studied before and during the inspection. Before the inspection a meeting attended by three parents was held to seek their views. Questionnaires returned by 11 parents were analysed and used to inform the inspection.

## 152. 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 - Y4	110	3	25	62
Nursery Unit/School	19	1	1	0

### Teachers and classes

#### 153. Qualified teachers [YR - Y4 ]

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	22: 1

#### 153. Education support staff (YR- Y4 )

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	70

#### 153. Qualified teachers (Nursery class)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	19

#### 153. Education support staff (Nursery class)

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	33

Average class size:	27.5
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153. **Financial data**

Financial year:

1998-1999
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	£
Total Income	246,666
Total Expenditure	263,425
Expenditure per pupil	2232.42
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3000
Balance carried forward to next year	-19,759

153. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	111
Number of questionnaires returned:	11

*Responses (per centage 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	40	53	0	7	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	80	13	0	7	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	53	33	7	7	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	47	40	7	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	40	53	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	53	40	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	33	40	20	7	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	36	43	0	14	7
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	67	33	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	60	33	0	7	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	40	0	0	0