

INSPECTION REPORT

RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114183

Headteacher: Mr P Boddy

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Randall
1471

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th June 2000

Inspection number: 194268

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Headingley Crescent Darlington Co. Durham
Postcode:	DL1 2ST
Telephone number:	01325 254 770
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Woods
Date of previous inspection:	20 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Randall	Registered inspector	Under fives Art Religious education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs G Marsland	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs T Aspin	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Music	How well are pupils taught?
Mr A Allison	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs W Stenton	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language English Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Red Hall Primary School serves an area of local authority housing on the outskirts of Darlington. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is rising and the school is now in a higher band for comparison with similar schools than in 1999. The present percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 53 per cent. The school has 213 pupils and since the previous inspection a significant number of pupils transferred to the school from an area of housing in the town that was demolished. This increased the number of pupils with special educational needs and has had an impact on targets previously set. There are 97 pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs (45 per cent) and nine pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school caters for boys and girls from the age of three to 11. The attainment of pupils on entry to the nursery is very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school and is committed to improving standards in all it does. This is because the leadership and management of the school are very good. The systems in place for monitoring and evaluation of the schools' performance are excellent and support constant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Much is expected of pupils and the school rightly considers their personal development of great importance and this leads to the good behaviour that enables effective learning to take place. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' progress is good in English, mathematics and science and standards are rising.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The school cultivates pupils' personal development well and pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to school make a good contribution to their learning.
- The procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are excellent and lead to a clear focus on priorities for teaching and learning.
- The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and the effectiveness of action taken are excellent.
- Excellent financial planning and the partnership with the community to fund new initiatives significantly affects the quality of provision, particularly in information and communication technology.

What could be improved

- Attainment, planning and teachers' confidence in information and communication technology.
- Opportunities for pupils to write at length.
- Ensuring that the legal requirements for training in child protection issues are met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since then it has made very good improvement. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is now good. Detailed subject documentation is in place and consistent planning contains precise learning objectives. Assessment procedures are now excellent and provide meaningful data with which to assess progress and inform future planning. A high priority has been given to resources for information and communication technology and the school now has a plentiful supply of up-to-date hardware to raise attainment. The introduction of a handwriting scheme and the focus on this has resulted in a good standard of handwriting by the majority of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. The role of subject leaders has been extended and training has taken place. They are securely involved in the development of the school. Fire exits are clear and usable. Surplus accommodation has been used wisely to provide an integrated unit for children under five.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	E	B
mathematics	D	C	E	C
science	C	B	C	A

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

Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science in both key stages although some year groups have significantly more pupils with low prior attainment and special educational needs than others. At the end of Key Stage 1 the results of the 1999 tests and assessments were well below the national average in reading, writing and very low in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools they were below average in reading, writing and well below average in mathematics. The inspection findings are that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is approaching the national average. In science it is close to the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2 the results of the national tests in 1999 were well below average in English and mathematics and in line with the national average in science. In comparison with similar schools they were above average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science. Inspection findings are that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is close to the national average in reading and below in writing. In mathematics standards are improving rapidly and a majority of pupils has a very secure understanding of the skills required to achieve the national expectations and beyond. In science, the number of pupils likely to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 is average. The overall trend of improvement is in line with that found nationally.

Following its extensive procedures for tracking the progress of pupils, the school set challenging targets for raising standards in English and mathematics at both key stages. Pupil performance during the inspection indicates that these targets will be achieved and possibly exceeded at Key Stage 2 and that a majority of pupils has a very secure understanding of the skills required to attain the national expectations or beyond in mathematics.

Pupils use reading skills well when required. Where numeracy skills are used, they are sufficient to support the activities undertaken. Attainment in religious education meets that required by the Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. In all other subjects pupils make suitable gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils in the classes for children under five make good progress in all the nationally required areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are very good. Pupils are attentive, have high self-esteem and show an enthusiasm for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently very good and pupils respond well to the school's high expectations, clear values and firm guidelines.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with staff are good. Pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and contribute to the school community.
Attendance	Overall attendance rates are satisfactory. The school has made the raising of attendance rates and punctuality a priority and they are improving.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is good. This has a significant impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. Teaching is excellent in three per cent of lessons, very good in 28 per cent, good in 36 per cent, satisfactory in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent.

Teaching has many strengths and few weaknesses and has a positive impact on the rising standards. Significant in this improvement is the good grasp that teachers have of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. In the most effective lessons teachers communicate their enthusiasm to pupils, activities are imaginative and inspire pupils to learn. All teachers are aware of the need to extend pupils' vocabulary and to develop language skills. They have high expectations of pupils and exercise firm control when needed. Lessons are well planned and show a steady progression in the skills and subject knowledge that pupils with different levels of prior attainment are expected to learn. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, time is not well managed and lessons finish far too early. Too many pupils are disinterested or do not participate in whole class teaching, questions are addressed to and answered by a small proportion of pupils, and not enough work is expected of pupils in group tasks. Teaching of children under five is at its best when staff are working on social and language and literacy skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced and well-planned curriculum to which all pupils have equal access. There are weaknesses in the range of opportunities in information and communication technology and in opportunities for extended writing.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Pupils are identified early and good support is given.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school promotes this aspect very successfully through a range of activities that reflect the values within the school's aims. Promotion of pupils' awareness of other cultures is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress are excellent. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall but the designated person for child protection and the staff have not received the appropriate training. Effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place.

The quality of the school's partnership with parents is very good. The school maintains very effective links and the contribution of parents to their children's learning is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and his drive and enthusiasm motivate both staff and pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is fully committed to the school and provides very effective support. It is dedicated to raising the profile of the school and is appropriately involved in decision making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This aspect is excellent and leads to good progress and rising standards of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	The use of strategic resources is very good. The school improvement plan is based on astute financial management and clear priorities. The school is aware of the principle of best value and is very successful in gaining community support to finance improvements.

There is a good level of qualified staff who are generally deployed effectively although the reception class is sometimes insufficiently supported. The school building is spacious, attractive and welcoming. The new unit for children under five is a particularly good feature. Learning resources at all stages are very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are very supportive of all aspects of the school and expressed very positive views about it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents would like more extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team fully supports the positive views of parents about the school. The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities which is excellent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards in the school are rising in English, mathematics and science in both key stages although some year groups have significantly more pupils with low prior attainment and special educational needs than others. There is a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is rising and the school now falls into the next band for comparison with similar schools making comparison more favourable.
2. In 1999, the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average in reading and writing. When compared with the results in similar schools attainment in reading and writing was below average. Between 1996 and 1999 there is clear evidence of improvement in the reading and writing tests although results fluctuated from year to year. By 1998 standards were in line or exceeding the national average in writing. The inspection findings are that the attainment at Key Stage 1 is now approaching the national average in reading and writing. In mathematics the results attained in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 were very low compared to national average and well below those of schools with a similar intake of pupils. At the time of the previous inspection many pupils were not attaining the national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Since 1996 results improved faster than the national trend up to 1998 when they were in line with those found nationally. This level of attainment was not achieved in 1999 due to a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Inspection findings are that pupils make good progress in this key stage, and from very low standards on entry establish a firm foundation of numeracy skills on which to build. There is every indication that pupils currently near the end of Key Stage 1 will achieve the targets set for them and that attainment in national tests in 2000 will be better than that in 1998. The attainment of pupils in science shows a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. In 1999 teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 showed that 63 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2 or above, compared with 29 per cent in 1996. Evidence from the current inspection suggests that the percentage of pupils who will attain Level 2 or above this year will be close to the national average.
3. The results of the 1999 tests in English at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average. However when compared with similar schools, performance in the English tests was above average. This is a very significant improvement. The results also show that pupils are making good progress in English, from 34 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 in 1996 to 63 per cent of pupils achieving this in 1999. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are making good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards in English of the present Year 6 group are near to the national average in reading and below in writing. The results pupils attained at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 in mathematics were well below the national average, but in line with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards attained by most pupils at the time of the previous inspection were judged in line with those found nationally. National test data indicates that standards have improved steadily since the previous inspection until 1998 but there was a significant drop in 1999. This was due to the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group and some weaknesses in teaching which have subsequently been resolved. Inspection findings

are that standards are improving rapidly, particularly for those pupils in Years 5 and 6, and those with higher attainment in Year 3. In science test results in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2 identified that 86 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4 or above, of whom 26 per cent achieved Level 5. Results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average for the percentage of pupils who achieved Level 4 or above. They are broadly in line with the national average for pupils achieving Level 5. The results are well above average in comparison with similar schools. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above at the end of Key Stage 2 will be broadly in line with the national average. Whilst the percentage will be lower than in 1999 it can be explained by the increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the present group. The overall trend of improvement is in line with that found nationally.

4. Following its extensive procedures for tracking the progress of pupils, the school has set challenging targets for raising standards in English and mathematics at both key stages. The school has analysed previous data relating to Key Stage 1 and baseline assessment shows that pupils entering the school have a very low level of attainment particularly in English skills. The school has set ambitious targets for raising standards in reading and writing in the national tests for this year and the following two years. In Key Stage 2 the Local Education Authority has agreed targets for the national tests until 2002. In English and mathematics the school has set a target of 80 per cent of eleven-year olds to achieve the expected Level 4 in English and is in line to achieve this. In mathematics realistic targets for attainment in the national tests were set in previous years for the pupils who are now in Year 6, based on rigorous assessment and monitoring of progress from year to year. Pupil performance during the inspection indicates that this target will be exceeded considerably and that a majority of pupils have a very secure understanding of the skills required to attain the national expectations or beyond.
5. The use of literacy skills is limited in other subjects. Teachers teach subject vocabulary well and extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. The school is aware of the need to extend pupils' writing skills in subjects to provide more opportunities for writing for a range of purposes. Pupils use reading skills well. Where numeracy skills are used, they are sufficient to support the activities undertaken. For example, they are used in science for measuring and two-way tabulation. Mental arithmetic skills are developing well. The school is well aware of the need to plan more extensively for the use of these skills. Investigative skills in science are well developed.
6. Attainment in religious education meets that required by the Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1 pupils write their own ideas of the meaning of some Buddhist stories and use writing skills well for this. During the inspection pupils listened well to the story of 'The Prodigal Son' and related this well to ideas about forgiveness in their own lives. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Hinduism and learned something of the Sikh and Jewish faiths. Year 5 pupils learned about Pentecost, the meaning of the fish symbol for the early Christians and discussed 'building bridges' in life. They demonstrated good skills of thinking about extended life skills by using key words such as 'peace', 'caring', 'love' and 'apologising'. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 learned the significance of artefacts from the Hindu faith. They learned about Puja and worship and know about various Hindu Gods.

7. Standards in information and communication technology are below expected levels at the end of both key stages, although since the recent acquisition of much new equipment the school is working hard to improve attainment. Pupils are already very confident in using computers. Very good levels were achieved in Year 5 when pupils demonstrated an understanding of how to use light, sound and moisture sensors to operate buzzers and lights using a system of linking electronic units and they explained what they are doing using complex technical vocabulary.
8. In other subjects pupils make suitable gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. In art and design and technology pupils make satisfactory progress and enjoy a range of experiences. In Key Stage 1 they design and make glove puppets and in Key Stage 2 the observational drawings of plants were of good quality. In history and geography pupils gain in knowledge skills and understanding as they move through the school. They use maps with increasing skill and learn about rivers through a local study of the River Tees. Younger pupils contrast life at the seaside in Victorian times, in 1930 and today. Older pupils learn about the Tudors, for example and Ancient Greece. In music pupils gain a breadth of experience in performance, appraisal and composition. Pupils learn to swim and engage in a variety of physical activities with a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body.
9. Pupils in the classes for children under five make good progress. They achieve the learning outcomes expected for their age in physical development but many pupils are still below average in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. Development and attainment is particularly restricted by the very low skills that pupils have on entry to the nursery in vocabulary and language development.
10. Pupils make good progress across the school. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with higher prior attainment are suitably challenged. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. The school is very aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through assessment, testing and tracking of progress. It is also aware, through its monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning and its analysis of test data of where it needs to concentrate its efforts on improvements in teaching skills. For example, the recent commitment to the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is becoming effective in raising standards.
11. The attainment of pupils on entry to the nursery is very low. Pupils have made significant gains by the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of leadership by the headteacher is a significant factor in the improvement in the school, together with the strengths in provision for social and personal development. The improvements in the standards in the school since the previous inspection are a significant achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection when attitudes were good. Pupils are attentive and follow instructions promptly. As a result, lesson time is used efficiently and the pace of learning is good. Pupils concentrate well and are eager to produce good work. Most pupils show enthusiasm for learning and have high self-esteem. This was evident in a mixed Year 3/4 English lesson when pupils were involved in writing persuasively for advertising leaflets or booklets. Pupils work well together in mixed gender groups. Pupils clear away resources swiftly at the end of lessons. They are willing to share resources and work independently in many lessons. Year 6 pupils were accompanied on a visit to a local event during the inspection and pupils were interested, involved and their behaviour was very good. Pupils in the classes for those under five learn to relate to adults and to share. They gradually learn to take turns and to understand classroom expectations. Positive attitudes to school contribute well to successful learning and the standards achieved.
13. Behaviour in and around the school is consistently very good and pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations, clear values and firm guidelines. This confirms the views of parents. Pupils are courteous and eager to speak to visitors. The school has suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies, which are understood by pupils. Pupils understand what is expected of them and know the difference between right and wrong. They understand the impact their actions have on others and behave accordingly. No incidents of challenging behaviour or bullying were seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions in the last reporting year.
14. The personal development of the pupils and relationships within the school are good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are caring and friendly. At lunch time pupils interact pleasantly with supervising staff, engage socially and play well together. They show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others, demonstrated during a Year 5 religious education lesson where pupils discussed feelings without embarrassment. Many pupils take responsibility for tasks around the school and are reliable and trustworthy. They act as dinner, door, library and litter monitors and assist with tasks in the classroom. The school operates a Playground Pals system, whereby older pupils apply for the positions to support younger pupils in the playground. The newly established School Council has made a valid contribution to the revision of the lunch time arrangements. In all of these ways pupils learn to contribute to the school as a community and take an active part in school life. Visiting specialists from the local secondary school were seen leading a drama workshop on relationships for Year 6 pupils during the inspection week. These sessions make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.
15. Attendance rates are improving and overall attendance throughout the school is satisfactory. During the last reporting year attendance was below the national average although unauthorised absence was broadly in line with national figures. The school has made the raising of attendance levels and punctuality a priority and is now targeting pupils with low attendance rates. Most pupils are punctual for school and registration is effectively undertaken, allowing lessons to start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good. This has a significant impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. Teaching is excellent in three per cent of lessons, very good in 28 per cent, good in 36 per cent, satisfactory in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent. The quality of teaching of children under five is good. It is satisfactory in 50 per cent of lessons, good in 25 per cent and very good in 25 per cent. In Key Stage 1 teaching is good, with six per cent of teaching excellent, 19 per cent very good, 44 per cent good and 31 per cent satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is also good. Teaching is excellent in three per cent of lessons, very good in 32 per cent, good in 38 per cent and satisfactory in 22 per cent. There is some unsatisfactory teaching (five per cent) in one of the classes for younger pupils in this key stage.
17. In the previous inspection the quality of teaching was described as 'usually satisfactory or better'. Since then the quality of the management and the inspiration of the head teacher has had a very strong impact on teaching. It has led to much improvement in teachers' confidence, skills and strategies and hence the quality of learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teaching now has many strengths. In almost all classes teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and exercise firm control when needed and little time is wasted during lessons and during the school day. Pupils are expected to settle down quickly when they come into the classroom, move rapidly from one activity to another without fuss and start their work without being told. From the nursery upward pupils are taught to listen attentively and join in whole class activities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and this contributes to a good working atmosphere. Teaching of children under five is best when staff are working on social and language and literacy skills. Teaching is less successful when support staff are not well deployed or when pupils are occupied with tasks that have little learning potential such as colouring in pre-printed pictures at the expense of more creative work. Activities such as working with sand and water are not monitored sufficiently to enable tasks and interaction to be designed to move pupils on from one stage of learning to the next.
18. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers know the pupils in their class well. In all subjects except information and communication technology and music, individual lessons and sequences of lessons are well planned, showing a steady progression in the skills and subject knowledge that pupils with different levels of prior attainment are expected to learn. Where teaching is best the outcomes of these lessons are carefully evaluated, pupils' weaknesses identified, and this information used to determine further work. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in most subjects and therefore understand how to help pupils learn. However some teachers lack expertise in information and communication technology and some in music and this adversely affects the pupils' development of skills. Good use is made of practical equipment, which is carefully prepared and easily accessible to pupils. Classrooms are clean and well organised, and little time is lost putting things away at the end of the lesson. Classroom assistants and volunteers are used well to support groups of pupils both in lessons and on educational visits. For example, during the week of the inspection, in one excellent lesson in Key Stage 1, four helpers were in the teaching areas. One parent was helping pupils to use a programmable toy; another was helping pupils use a word processor to describe their work; a grandmother was supervising pupils enjoying sewing as part of their design and technology project and a classroom assistant was supporting pupils making collages. In the most effective lessons teachers communicate their enthusiasm to the pupils, activities are imaginative and

inspire pupils to learn. For example, in a design and technology lesson pupils were fascinated by the fact that it was impossible to crack an egg using the palms of the hand when fingers were linked in a particular way. This reinforced the fact that a structure formed using apparently fragile materials could be strong in different situations. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, time is not well managed and lessons finish far too early. Too many pupils are disinterested or do not participate in whole-class teaching, questions are addressed to and answered by a small proportion of pupils and not enough work is expected of pupils in group tasks.

19. Marking is mostly supportive; however the quality of marking and its effect on the pupils learning is variable. In Key Stage 1 it is sufficient for the needs of younger pupils. In Key Stage 2, in some classes unfinished work is accepted and pupils do not respond to teachers' comments.
20. Teachers have a good grasp of the National Literacy Strategy and this is already evident in improvements in national test results, despite an explainable drop in 1999. Teachers have very secure knowledge and understanding of the skills to be taught and the strategies to be used. Teachers are aware of the need to develop pupils' vocabulary and identify and use subject specific language well, making sure that pupils understand the words. Although the skills of writing are taught well, there are too few planned opportunities to put these into practice, for example in extended and creative writing. The deliberate policy to retain separate group-reading activities is having a positive effect on standards, particularly in the levels of boys' reading. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. This includes specially designed activities, in-class support, and some withdrawal lessons in small groups. Teachers write specific, measurable targets for these pupils to achieve and monitor progress against those targets.
21. Teachers are developing an understanding of how to use the National Numeracy Strategy, and this is having a significant and rapid impact on standards of attainment. At present there is a lack of flexibility in some lessons, and occasionally activities are cut short at a crucial point when pupils are beginning to make good progress, because the teacher is too anxious to keep to time constraints. Most teachers have a sound understanding of how to use the mental activity. The central tasks are well prepared and in most lessons carefully matched to pupils' levels of attainment. In the least effective lessons pupils do not complete enough work during this session. Plenary sessions are used well to celebrate achievement and to assess understanding but not always used efficiently to develop speaking skills.
22. Teachers are beginning to use some of the very recently installed and carefully sited computer suites, although these are not fully operational yet. At the time of the inspection teachers had not had sufficient time to incorporate the use of all the new resources, which include digital cameras and scanners, into their planning. Prior to this there were insufficient resources to meet the demands of the required curriculum and to provide support for other subjects. Several initiatives are in place to ensure that all teachers have the skills necessary to raise standards. The school improvement plan recognises the need for teachers to link together different subjects, including information and communication technology, more efficiently to make the best use of time and provide a greater breadth of experiences in the full range of National Curriculum subjects.

23. Homework has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning. All pupils, including those who are under five, take books home. A recently developed, suitable homework policy is in place. The mathematics homework club offers families the opportunity to take home activities that they can do together to reinforce skills.

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

24. The school provides a broad, balanced and well-planned curriculum, to which all pupils have equal access, and which promotes the progress of pupils of all ages and abilities well. It has introduced the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies successfully to the benefit of all pupils. The provision for children under five is good and the curriculum provides experiences that are firmly based on the nationally identified Desirable Learning Outcomes. The school has successfully maintained all foundation subjects and religious education as quality learning experiences, despite limitations of time. Religious education meets the requirements of the Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus. There are some weaknesses as yet in information and communication technology. Carefully chosen topics enable the school to teach the curriculum in a way that makes good use of the time available. Good use of assessment and record-keeping enables pupils to build on previous learning. Detailed subject documentation is in place and consistent planning contains precise learning objectives. This is a considerable improvement since the previous report when it was a key issue for improvement.
25. Provision for special educational needs is a strength of the school. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified as early as possible and the appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs, write individual education plans and provide support. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and provide the necessary detail to enable teachers to plan appropriate learning experiences. Most of the support is within the classroom. In a Year 2 geography lesson a parent helper worked effectively with a group of lower ability pupils. This was good use of both support and time. By being well integrated into the classroom, pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. They also have full access to educational visits. They are valued as individuals. The school seeks to include these pupils in every aspect of school life.
26. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and this reflects the views of the previous report. The school provides more for its pupils than suggested in the recently issued national guidance. Sex and drugs education is taught through the science and personal and social education provision in line with agreed school policy. Healthy eating is promoted through the science curriculum. The school makes very good use of the time tabled 'circle time'. In a Year 6 lesson taken by visiting teachers from the secondary school, the circle activity, followed by the drama activity – being a robot on a space station – successfully promoted personal development, friendship and working together. The police also contribute to personal, social and health education. Police dogs are brought into school. Police give talks on road safety and 'Say No To Strangers'. The school is involved in the 'Healthy School' initiative, which also promotes personal development. The school nurse is included in this initiative. In addition to her other work in the school she holds health interviews for older pupils.

27. Extra-curricular opportunities are excellent and benefit pupils significantly. There is a choir and an information and communication technology club, the latter run by a school governor. The school participates in sports events with other schools such as the Durham Schools Cross Country Event, the Darlington Schools' Netball League and Tournament, the local sports, 'Football in the Community' competition, swimming galas and a 'Kwik Cricket' festival. Equal opportunities are a strong feature of these efforts to extend the experiences of pupils. The school also participates in national events such as 'Children in Need' and 'World Book Day'.
28. The school very successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of activities that reflect the values expressed in the school's aims. The school has maintained the overall quality of provision identified in the previous report and extended the opportunities for pupils to gain a greater understanding and insight into other cultures. In an assembly pupils listened and watched with amazement as the letters representing the initial sound of words that would relate to a perfect school were recognised as an anagram of Red Hall. Daily acts of collective worship have a significant influence on pupils' lives. In one assembly the prayer was preceded by an opportunity to reflect on how each pupil could help to make the school better. In a 'Good Work' assembly pupils were given the opportunity to reflect on how they might do something in the coming week that would earn them a certificate. In a mixed 4 and 5 Year lesson on Hinduism the burning of incense and a candle to set the atmosphere created a sense of awe and wonder. In a Year 5 design and technology lesson pupils were learning that certain shapes could be strong despite the fragility of the materials. There was a tremendous fascination when watching the head teacher try unsuccessfully to break an egg held in his palms with fingers interlocked. Some of the displays of art in the school are uplifting.
29. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils know right from wrong. From their first days in school they learn to take turns and to be fair in their dealings with others. Three basic school rules, illustrated with computer graphics, are clearly displayed in corridors, library areas and classrooms to reinforce good, polite behaviour. Teachers constantly reinforce good behaviour by praise and encouragement. Pupils also learn the rules of fair play through sport. They learn respect for the views and beliefs of others in religious education.
30. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. It is very effectively promoted through daily opportunities to work alone and in small and larger groups. Pupils relate very well to each other and move purposefully around school with good self-discipline. They are caring and sensitive towards peers who have special educational needs. Social development is also promoted through educational visits in connection with their topic work to, for example, a local nursery garden and the 'Science is Great' Exhibition, where their attitude towards each other and to others was exemplary. Pupils have a range of responsibilities, including lunch, playtime, equipment, door monitors and litter duty – with appropriate tools for picking up the litter.

31. Promotion of pupils' awareness of other cultures is good. Pupils learn about the religious beliefs of other people. In a Year 5 lesson on how the beliefs of Christians influence their lives, a visitor talked to the pupils and answered questions in a way that extended thinking about life skills and emphasised the key words of 'peace', 'caring' and 'love'. The artefacts on display included crosses, a chalice and candles. In a Year 4 lesson on Hinduism the teacher displayed a very good knowledge of the subject. Pupils learned the purpose of the Puja tray and the artefacts on it. They also know about Hindu Gods. Awareness of other cultures, past and present, is promoted in history, geography, art and music.
32. A particular strength of the school is the links that the school has established with the local community to enrich the curricular opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture. Artists in residence, visiting theatre companies, an Anglican curate from the Parish Church, a Christian Schools' Worker, teachers from the secondary school, staff from the Micro-electronics project, the school nurse and the police are only some of the visitors who have recently contributed to the provision in the school. Educational visits, for example, to a local nursery garden, to a theatre production – recently 'Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat' - and the 'Science is Great' event, have a strong impact on pupils' learning. The school also benefits significantly by being a member of the 'Eastbourne Pyramid', which is backed by over fifty businesses. As a result the school has been given computers, security cameras, office furniture, computer desks and a donation to the new outdoor classroom. These additional resources have a very strong impact on the quality of educational provision and learning. Other community links include the on-site provision for parents to learn computer skills with staff from Darlington College of Technology. Surplus classrooms have been taken over by the Darlington information and communication technology consultant and the Literacy and Numeracy Centre.
33. There are very strong links with the secondary schools, particularly the one to which most of the pupils transfer at the age of eleven. Liaison is excellent. The 'Mind the Gap' initiative is a cross-phase project that has focused on curriculum issues to raise standards. Science, English and mathematics have been targeted. Secondary teachers visit and teach in the school. The Red Hall head teacher has led a literacy session for secondary staff. Pupils from Red Hall are invited to concerts and plays. There is a well-organised induction day. The secondary school has held a numeracy school in the holidays. A new initiative this year is a Gifted and Talented Summer School. Links such as these familiarise pupils with the staff and the school and prepare pupils well for the next stage of learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school cares for its pupils well and this judgement reflects the findings of the previous report. A number of examples of this were seen during the inspection. One pupil in nursery was given breakfast as he had overslept and missed his own. Another child with behavioural difficulties has special provision made to play under supervision away from other children when he needs personal space. The caring attitude is a strength of the school. Pupils know they are valued by their teachers and respond accordingly.

35. In the previous report a key issue was that the school should develop an agreed approach to assessment in all subjects and use the information, including the results of national testing, to inform future planning. Assessment procedures are now excellent and are a strength of the school. Baseline assessment of each pupil takes place at the beginning and end of the reception year. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 the results of the national tests are analysed. In addition, the optional national tests are used for the core subjects of English and mathematics towards the end of Years 3-5. Other tests in reading and mathematics are also used from Year 2 onwards for issues such as the achievement of different groups of pupils. This information also identifies whether pupils are likely to achieve the nationally expected average Level 4 and whether the school is making progress towards its targets. The on-going daily and weekly assessments lead to termly assessments for English, mathematics and science and annual assessments for other subjects. This information has an immediate impact on the planning of work to meet the needs of all pupils. The strategy also provides relevant information for governors about the school's performance and for parents about their children.
36. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall. The school adheres to the governors' health and safety policy and fire precautions, electrical checks and whole-school risk assessments are carried out regularly. Pupils are well supervised by staff and ancillary assistants at breaks and at lunchtime. There are good arrangements for dealing with accidents and there is a sufficient number of qualified first aiders for a school of this size. Access to fire doors was an issue during the previous inspection that has now been resolved. Pupils are well aware of safety issues and these are mentioned regularly in lessons and during assembly. However, although informal and effective procedures are in place for child protection, the provision is unsatisfactory. The head teacher is the designated person responsible for child protection but neither he nor the staff have received appropriate training. The child protection policy has not been reviewed recently.
37. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place and incidents of challenging behaviour are rare, despite the larger than average number of pupils with emotional and social difficulties. The behaviour policy is understood by the pupils and consistently implemented by the staff. A scheme of rewards and sanctions is in place, which involves merit cards and certificates. Bronze, silver and gold badges are awarded in Key Stage 2. A staged approach to sanctions is used with isolation in the class resolving most incidents. The school awards a 'class of the week' trophy and pupils' self-esteem is promoted throughout the school, particularly in personal, social and health education lessons. No bullying or challenging behaviour was seen during the inspection and the head teacher records serious incidents of challenging behaviour or bullying. The school reinforces good behaviour using strategies such as the 'Smiley' awards and the 'Playground Pals' system to counteract bullying.
38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The educational welfare officer monitors attendance monthly. New strategies are in place to raise attendance levels, monitored by all staff, including the secretary and head teacher. The school has now targeted pupils with punctuality and attendance problems and this strategy appears to be effective and attendance levels are rising. Individual and class certificates are also awarded for good attendance.

39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The procedures are underpinned by the good relationships between the staff and pupils and the caring ethos of the school. 'Circle time' throughout the school makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers know their pupils, and often their families, very well. The school maintains effective links with outside agencies, such as the church, police and health care professionals who all help and support the academic and personal development of the pupils. The efforts that the school makes in support and guidance for pupils have a major impact on behaviour, attitudes and learning and contribute well to the raising of standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The overall quality of the school's partnership with parents is very good. The parents' questionnaires and meeting confirmed overwhelming support for the school. Almost all the Home/School Agreements have now been signed and returned. In the parents' questionnaire a few parents wanted more extra-curricular activities. The inspection team found these to be excellent.
41. The school maintains very good links with parents. Most parents attend parents' meetings. 'Good Work' assemblies are well attended and the school's 'open door' policy ensures that the head teacher and staff are accessible. Eleven parents attended the Good Work assembly during the inspection. The Parents and Friends Association provide good support by raising money for the purchase of resources. Last year they raised £350 during a sponsored spell and £200 at the Easter Fair. £1000 has been raised towards the outdoor classroom project. Parents assist as classroom helpers and were seen assisting staff on an educational visit during the inspection. Parents also listen to pupils read and were seen contributing to 'circle time' in Year 2. Several parents are involved in the computer literacy and information and communication technology course at the school, supported by a tutor from the local college. This develops home/school liaison through educating parents to help their children in learning at home and at school and has the potential to make a positive impact on pupils' academic progress. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is good. Parents support the homework policy and the tasks set and make useful comments in the reading record books. The reading record books provide another good opportunity for home/school liaison. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take mathematics games home to share with their parents.
42. The quality of information for parents is good. Frequent letters and newsletters are sent home to keep parents fully informed of school events and pupils' achievements. The school issues an informative prospectus and governors' report to parents. Some curriculum information is given to parents. Information sheets and a leaflet about increasing independence are available for the parents of nursery children. The school has also held a parents' meeting to explain national tests. There are two parents' evenings each year where parents can consult teachers about pupils' progress. These meetings are well attended. Pupils' progress reports are satisfactory. They are issued in the summer term and inform parents about pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects. They include the results of the school and national tests and targets for improvement. Parents are consulted about school policies, for example the attendance and homework policies, and are frequently asked for their opinions on school issues by questionnaire.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. Leadership and management of the school are very good. The school benefits from the excellent leadership of the head teacher. He has a clear vision for the school and his drive and enthusiasm motivate the staff and pupils. Governors and head teacher work closely together and share the aim of continuing to raise standards in this improving school. The school has been without a deputy head teacher for some time owing to recruitment difficulties and the head teacher carries a very heavy load. The role of subject leaders is developing successfully and they now contribute effectively to the management of the curriculum. Intensive professional development is undertaken that supports their role in school. This clear direction is shared by staff and underpins effective and rigorous planning, monitoring and quality assurance in implementing and achieving the aims of the school.
44. The school's ethos is very good and there is strong teamwork. Everyone involved in the school communicates high expectations and a firm commitment to extending pupils' learning and raising standards. Subject leaders give effective support and guidance to all staff, ensuring that pupils make good progress. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is efficient in ensuring that documentation is up-to-date and pupils' needs are met. Policy documentation includes statements about equal opportunities. Teaching and planning are inclusive of all abilities and genders. The school chooses resources carefully to reflect our culturally diverse society. Extra-curricular sporting activities include both boys and girls and this is a positive strategy by the school to ensure that stereotypes are not reinforced.
45. The governing body is fully committed to the school and provides very effective support, not only in its statutory duties but by giving time during the school day to support staff and pupils in activities such as reading or information and communication technology. It is appropriately involved in decision-making and the various committees make a positive contribution as the governing body fulfils its responsibilities for the current year, while taking a longer-term view of the school's development. It is dedicated to raising the school's profile, not only in the immediate community, but also within the Local Education Authority. The decision to site the Literacy and Numeracy Centres in the surplus accommodation, in addition to the handing over of the old nursery to the community underlines this commitment. Governors have a good relationship with the staff and a clear view of priorities for the school. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory requirements effectively.
46. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance is excellent. The tracking system of pupils' progress makes good use of information from baseline assessment and national assessment data. This leads to targeted support for pupils with the lowest prior attainment and a clear overview of the attainment of others, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Writing, however, is less well monitored and assessed but this is an area already identified for development. Pupils throughout the school make good progress, including those with special educational needs. 'Booster' classes have been effective for pupils who are on the borderline to meet their targets. The work of the school is reviewed through the senior management team's quality assurance procedures. These examine planning, documentation, assessment, marking, teaching, classroom organisation and display.

47. The school's use of strategic resources is very good. The school's improvement plan is linked to the budget and is based on astute financial management and on the clear priorities that have been identified, such as updating information and communication technology by the introduction of computer suites. Although very efficient use is made of information and communication technology in the day-to-day administration of the budget, dinner monies and correspondence, its use in lessons is still underdeveloped.
48. The improvement plan uses the available resources very effectively in support of pupils' learning and the head teacher's innovative ways of attracting financial support or equipment to the school enhance pupils' learning even further. Very good financial management by the school secretary and her meticulous attention to detail enable the head teacher and governors to have regular updates of the spending in order to monitor the finance in the most effective way. The school uses additional grant money very well and has actively sought sources of further grants to support learning. Financial decisions are made as a result of careful auditing of needs and prioritisation and ensure that purchases are cost effective. The school is aware of best value principles and seeks quotations for large purchases.
49. There is a good level of suitably qualified teaching staff. Support staff are generally effectively deployed although the reception class has an insufficient share of the support for the needs of children under five. Structured professional interviews are used successfully in staff development. The school makes good use of available funds to support the professional development of all staff. Subject leaders have developed their roles and help teachers to be more rigorous in their self-evaluations.
50. The school building is attractive, welcoming and cleaned to a very high standard by the caretaker and her team. The environment is enhanced by displays of work that celebrate pupils' achievements and provide an interesting and pleasant place to work. The best displays of work are interactive and stimulate language and vocabulary skills. All the classrooms are of a suitable size; the Under-Five's Unit is particularly spacious and has a well-equipped kitchen area. The libraries are well organised and enhanced with plants, displays, pictures and books arranged with the title page outwards to encourage pupils to browse. The gymnasium and hall areas have folding doors for maximum flexibility in the use of space. Good provision for children under five supports learning in all the nationally expected areas of the curriculum. The grounds are attractive and playground areas allow sufficient space for pupils to play safely. The Under-Five's Unit has its own secure play area. Some of the accommodation has been adapted for pupils with special educational needs but stairs prevent access to all areas. Learning resources are very good at all stages of the school and this has a positive effect on effort and achievement.
51. All statutory requirements are met by the school with the exception of child protection requirements. Neither head teacher nor staff have been trained in the necessary procedures. The school has made very good progress in improving the issues specified in the previous inspection report and the strength of the leadership means that the school is well placed to continue its development and improvement. Since the last inspection very good progress has been made in developing the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Attainment in all three subjects has improved significantly. New schemes for reading, handwriting, spelling and English, whole-school reading records, new banding and storage of books, two new libraries, new planning formats and new evaluation and assessment strategies are all contributing to the rise in standards. The issue of surplus accommodation has been

resolved with bold and innovative initiatives, mainly the development of an extensive Under-Five's Unit. This provides for interchange of pupils according to need. The existing nursery building has been given to the community and the community leader serves on the governing body. Further surplus space has been converted to a Literacy and Numeracy Centre for local teachers. High priority has been given to information and communication technology with many new computers and networking facilities.

52. The school has many strengths in providing a good quality education for its pupils and these contribute to good overall progress, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Considering the pupils' very low attainment on entry, and the effectiveness with which staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used and the progress that pupils make, the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. Improve standards information and communication technology by:
- planning effectively to make efficient use of the excellent newly installed suites when they are fully operational;
 - incorporating information and communication technology into planning in all subjects;
 - ensuring that information and communication technology skills are systematically developed in all classes;
 - implementing the planned in-service training programme to ensure that all teachers have secure subject knowledge.

(paragraphs 22, 70, 78, 86, 106-110)

- provide more opportunities for extended writing and exploit all opportunities in other subjects to support this.

(paragraphs 20, 62-74)

- ensure that the designated person for child protection receives the appropriate training and that the information is disseminated to all other staff by training and through a revised school policy.

(paragraph 36)

The first two of these areas for improvement are securely contained within the school improvement planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	28%	36%	30%	3%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	213
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	113

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	97

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	13	35
	(1998)	(17)	(21)	(38)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13 (15)	15 (16)	16 (16)
	Girls	10 (13)	11 (15)	10 (13)
	Total	23 (28)	26 (31)	26 (29)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (74)	74 (82)	74 (76)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16 (15)	16 (15)	12 (15)
	Girls	11 (15)	11 (15)	10 (14)
	Total	27 (30)	27 (28)	22 (29)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (79)	77 (74)	63 (76)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	20	43
	(1998)	(20)	(20)	(40)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12 (13)	14 (11)	21 (17)
	Girls	15 (14)	11 (13)	16 (16)
	Total	27 (27)	25 (24)	37 (33)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (68)	58 (60)	86 (83)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11 (12)	14 (11)	21 (15)
	Girls	15 (14)	11 (13)	17 (15)
	Total	26 (26)	25 (24)	38 (30)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (65)	58 (60)	88 (75)
	National	68 (65)	69 (68)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	187
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	495,304
Total expenditure	472,716
Expenditure per pupil	2,046
Balance brought forward from previous year	71,138
Balance carried forward to next year	93,726

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	236
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	44	5	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	36	10	3	6
The teaching is good.	64	31	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	34	11	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	54	33	7	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	33	3	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	42	6	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	30	14	6	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. The provision made for children under five is good. The nursery and reception classes provide a secure and safe environment in a very new, purpose built unit for children under five. Pupils begin nursery soon after their third birthday and attend for five half-day sessions per week. Pupils visit the nursery with a parent and the staggered start into both reception and nursery classes ensures that they settle well. Parents are encouraged by activities such as coffee mornings to learn more about the nursery and how children learn. The integrated unit means that equipment and facilities are shared and for work on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, pupils join groups most appropriate to their learning needs and this is a real strength. An analysis of assessments on entry to the nursery confirms the inspection findings that the majority of pupils enter the nursery with skills very well below average. This particularly applies to social development and language and vocabulary skills. By the age of five pupils have made good progress but most are still below average on entry to Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
55. The Under-Five's Unit is very well equipped and organised and staff have made a good start in using the facility. All areas of learning are well covered and the curriculum provides experiences for pupils that are firmly based on the nationally identified Desirable Learning Outcomes. As yet, small steps of learning are not firmly built in to the use of work areas such as sand, water or construction activity, although these are often used well to develop vocabulary when support staff interact with pupils. For example, reception pupils often choose activities and are occupied without support or direction while a group works with the teacher on a focused task. The quality of teaching is good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is best when staff are working on social skills and language and literacy skills and when focused on groups. Teaching is less successful when support staff are not well deployed or when pupils are occupied with tasks that have little learning potential such as colouring in pre-printed pictures at the expense of more creative work. The nursery often has an abundance of adults to work with pupils while the reception class is unsupported. For example in an outdoor session, four adults were supervising pupils while the reception class remained unsupported. The balance between teacher-directed activity and child-initiated activity is not fully established to include open-ended but focused tasks for older pupils. For example, pupils are rarely set challenges such as "Can you find out.....?" and pupils' progress in practical areas is insufficiently monitored and assessed in order to plan future tasks. The results of baseline assessments have been used well to identify areas of weakness and teachers now focus more clearly on these. For example, an understanding of rhyme was identified as a particular weakness and now has more attention.

56. Personal and social development rightly has a firm focus in both classes. All staff work hard to help pupils to make progress and teaching is good. Relationships are good. Nursery pupils are encouraged to gain confidence in choosing what they would like to do and to use activities sensibly. They learn to relate to adults and to other children and to share. They learn to take turns and to have a sense of right and wrong. By the age of five most pupils understand classroom expectations in line with the expectations for their age and their behaviour is good. They often collaborate in groups and play and work together although a significant number of pupils are still below expectations in this area of learning and some younger pupils have individual educational plans relating to social skills, including toilet training.
57. Good progress is made in the skills of language and literacy and teaching is good. By the age of five, however, most pupils have still to reach the nationally recognised standards, although reading standards are average with most pupils ready to begin work on the National Curriculum. Speaking skills are still low although great efforts are made by all staff to work on this aspect. Many pupils still show immature speech patterns. On entry to the nursery, many pupils have very limited vocabulary and are not yet speaking in sentences or phrases. They do not have the ability to communicate learning. All staff rightly concentrate on this area of learning. In the nursery, pupils join in games and discussion. Listening skills are clearly taught through songs, games and story. Pupils take part in story sessions in groups and listen to tapes. They learn to recognise and join in with rhymes and learn the names of colours. Parents are encouraged to share books with their children and library books and 'story sacks' are readily available. Pupils learn to use books sensibly and know that print has meaning. 'Big books' are used very successfully with both classes. There is a wide range of good quality books for pupils in both classes to enjoy. Towards the end of their time in nursery, pupils are introduced to the sounds of letters and begin to recognise these. Teaching here is good when games and discussion sessions are used but less effective when time is spent colouring pictures to represent letter sounds at the expense of other, more valuable, activities. Pupils begin to learn early mark-making skills but role-play areas such as the class 'office' are insufficiently developed and used to support this in both classes. Many opportunities are lost in both classes to use incidental opportunities such as writing labels or lists when using construction kits or blocks for example. In the reception class pupils learn to copy writing and to form letters more accurately. Pupils with higher prior attainment use phrases to convey meaning, with many simple words spelled well in relation to the sounds of letters, particularly those at the beginning and end of words. They are beginning to use capital letters and full stops. Average pupils copy words with letter formation mainly correct. They use simple mark making to convey meaning. Pupils with below average prior attainment make attempts to copy words and engage in simple, independent mark making. Focused teaching helps pupils to make good progress but there are too few opportunities for pupils to write for themselves. Pupils can retell stories but are insecure in alphabetical order.
58. Pupils make good progress in developing mathematical understanding and teaching is good. In the nursery they learn number rhymes and play counting games. They experiment with water and sand and gain an early understanding of capacity. Pupils begin to learn number recognition and to match one object to another. In the reception class pupils engage in a good range of practical activities for number work and these are well matched to pupils' learning needs. Work with sand and water is less well structured to ensure that pupils think about what they are doing. By the age of five pupils with higher attainment count reliably to ten and write numbers to 20. They add numbers to ten and make sums of money to 10p using 1p and 2p coins.

They recognise and repeat simple patterns. Average attaining pupils count objects to 15 and copy figures to ten but these are not yet well formed. They show some early understanding of addition when supported. Pupils with low prior attainment have some early strategies for adding to ten using objects. Some can identify numbers to ten and count to ten. All groups are insecure in naming shapes and in using 'tallest', 'shortest' for example. They do not make choices in sorting activities but wait for instructions. They are unfamiliar with the concept of large numbers. All groups are secure in matching one to one and in using positional vocabulary such as 'under' or 'on top'. Only the pupils with the highest prior attainment are achieving the learning objectives for this stage and understanding is often limited by the poor vocabulary and language skills with which these pupils begin.

59. Progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Pupils have very little knowledge and understanding on entry to the nursery. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils have a wide range of construction equipment and building materials with which to explore how things work. They use role-play areas such as the home corner and the model house. Pupils in both classes discuss and explore the natural world. In the reception class, pupils experimented with stones in a jar to see if they made the level of water rise. This followed a session where they enjoyed the story of 'The Crow and the Pitcher'. In this session the teacher made pupils think by asking good questions and by extending pupils' vocabulary but pupils working on other activities were not monitored or supported. Pupils learn about citizenship in discussions about pollution and about living safely in a discussion about danger and signs used to indicate danger. In both classes pupils use computers to develop a variety of skills and even very young pupils use the mouse in a variety of programs to support other learning. Pupils cook food and learn about different tastes and textures. By the age of five pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is still below that expected nationally and again, this development is often influenced by pupils' lower language and vocabulary skills.
60. Physical skills develop well and by the age of five pupils meet the national expectations in this area of development. Teaching is satisfactory. There is a secure outdoor activity area but this was under-used during the week of the inspection despite the good weather. Pupils in the reception class use this area only occasionally. During the outdoor session observed there was good quality interaction with the nursery nurse and this helped pupils' imaginative play in a fire engine. No direct teaching took place in this session and many pupils were occupied rather than being taught and the objectives of the session were unclear. Pupils use space well and show confidence in using the equipment but much of this has limited learning potential, for example a slide and a seesaw. Nursery pupils use the school hall for an activity session but only during the short time that the rest of the school is outside. In the reception class pupils change quickly and quietly for a physical activity lesson and are reminded of the way to behave before the lesson begins. Lessons have a clear structure, with suitable warm-up and cool-down activity. Pupils jump and run over and through rope 'puddles'. They learn about safe landing skills and how to control balls in a dribbling activity and the majority of pupils do this successfully.

61. Creative skills develop well and pupils make good progress. Teaching is satisfactory but better when teaching assistants interact with pupils to develop understanding and associated vocabulary, demonstrated for example when nursery pupils were working on a big paint/collage piece of work based on a water theme. Much emphasis was given to the word 'blue' and pupils were encouraged to mix colours and to experiment with shades. In this session the teaching assistant taught skills of using brushes and glue spreaders correctly. Despite the very limited language skills of some of these pupils, much valuable discussion on colour and texture took place. Reception pupils did not mix their own colours and work was immature. For both classes there is a good range of paint, crayons, modelling materials and construction kits to develop pupils' creative skills. By the age of five pupils' work is still immature and for most pupils, skills are below those normally found. Pupils use instruments to make music and listen to music and songs. They enjoy singing and have a good repertoire of songs they know well.

ENGLISH

62. In 1999, the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average in reading and writing. When compared with the results in similar schools attainment in reading and writing was below average. Between 1996 and 1999 there is clear evidence of improvement in the reading and writing tests although results fluctuated from year to year. By 1998 standards were in line with the national average in writing. During the period 1996 to 1999, there was no significant difference in boys' and girls' performance in reading and writing. The inspection findings are that the attainment is now approaching the national average in reading and writing.
63. The results of the 1999 tests in English at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average. However when compared with similar schools, performance in the English tests was above average. The results also show that pupils are making good progress in English, from 34 per cent of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in 1996 to 63 per cent of pupils achieving this in 1999. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are making good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing. There is no significant variation between boys' and girls' attainment but the school has focused attention on any slight variations in attainment between boys and girls and is working systematically to address this issue. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the present Year 6 group are close to the national average in reading but below the national average in writing. Since the previous inspection standards in English throughout the school have greatly improved.
64. The school has set challenging targets for raising standards in reading and writing in the national tests for this year and the following two years. The school has analysed previous data relating to Key Stage 1 and baseline assessment shows that pupils entering the school have a very low level of attainment particularly in language and literacy. At Key Stage 2 the Local Education Authority has agreed targets for the national tests until 2002. The school has set a target of 80 per cent of eleven-year olds to achieve the expected average Level 4 and is in line to achieve this. The school has very clear group tracking systems in place to achieve these targets and has a very clear focus on constantly improving standards.

65. The attainment of seven-year olds in speaking and listening is average and reflects the good progress they have made from when they enter the nursery. Pupils extend the range of vocabulary during discussions with the teacher and other pupils. Pupils can express their views clearly, demonstrated for example when a Year 2 class talked about which of three books by Martin Waddell they preferred. Listening skills are of high quality and pupils listen carefully to the teacher during the literacy hour. In a Year 1 class, pupils were able to suggest alterations to the names of animals in a poem read together. Views and opinions of other pupils are treated with respect and sometimes applauded. Many pupils speak clearly, though some lower-attaining pupils are less articulate and more reluctant to speak.
66. By the age of seven, pupils of above average and average prior attainment are reading either independently or with occasional support from an adult with more difficult words. They are building strategies for using the sounds of letters and groups of letters and they look at pictures or the text for clues to help with unfamiliar words. Pupils are beginning to correct their own errors. The use of expression is developing well. Pupils predict what will happen next in a story, talk about the main characters and retell the story with confidence. They have the necessary skills to use non-fiction to find information and use the contents page, index or glossary either independently or with a little help. Their enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading are obvious and pupils of all levels of attainment can select a book and talk about why they have chosen it. Lower-attaining pupils recognise simple key words and are developing the skills to read words by putting sounds together with increasing confidence.
67. Seven-year olds attain standards in writing that are slightly below national expectations, although higher-attaining pupils are reaching an average level. These pupils are writing short stories with a beginning, middle and an end. Handwriting is legible and early punctuation skills are beginning to develop. The spelling of more complex words is usually correct; for example, 'setting', 'farmer', and 'geese'. Sentences are constructed correctly and the presentation of work is good. Pupils with lower attainment write sentences independently or with assistance from adults. These pupils usually write quite clearly although letters are not always consistent in size. The spelling of two or three letter words is usually correct but capital letters and full stops are not always used consistently. Pupils sometimes use the computer to word process their writing.
68. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is close to national expectations. All pupils in this key stage listen very well to their teachers. Pupils in Year 6 listened intently in the literacy hour to an extract from 'The Secret Garden'. They identified with Mary's experiences and expressed their thoughts about how she was feeling when greeted by the butler and left to eat alone. Choices of words to explain meanings of unfamiliar words were suggested and listened to with respect for the views of others. In a Year 5 lesson 'A Choral Poem' was read and discussed as to how best to use different combinations of voices to perform the poem. Groups of pupils read the poem in their chosen style with very good diction and intonation to represent the instruments in the poem such as the drum or the flute. They were able to appreciate the humour of other pupils trying out different pitches with their voices and laugh at them without any disrespect or criticism. Pupils then discussed different poems and suggested a number of ways in which these could be performed. They listened to each other's views and valued their opinions.

69. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards in reading that are below national expectations. The school is well aware of this and has effective tracking systems and intensive support for those pupils who are in the lowest band of attainment for reading. The use of group reading boosts confidence, particularly amongst boys, and pupils find this activity enjoyable. The school is promoting reading effectively and this is having an impact on results. Optional national tests during Key Stage 2 show that reading is improving year by year. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining standards close to the national average. They read for enjoyment, some read the sports pages in their newspapers at home, others have favourite authors such as Roald Dahl. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 use the school library although fewer pupils use a public library. These pupils use the school system to locate books and retrieve information. In Years 4 and 5, pupils can analyse advertisements and identify persuasive text and adjectives. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 read together 'First Night in Apton Magna' and identify the use of exaggeration, double adjectives, subordinate clauses and the separation of complex sentences by commas so that they make sense when read. They identify the genre of the book and are aware of the author's intention to build up to an atmosphere, which one pupil described as, "Coming up to the cliff hanger bit". When reading independently these pupils read with expression, talk about the characters and the plot, and have good strategies for tackling new words although some pupils' skills in comprehension and retelling the plot are less well developed. Familiar authors, favourite stories, newspapers and characters are discussed. Pupils use their individual reading records well to track their progress and write book reviews. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 read with a degree of fluency but lack confidence.
70. Attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 is below national expectations and the school has this area identified for development in the near future. Key skills are being systematically learned, for example, punctuation using exclamation marks, question marks and speech marks. By the end of the key stage pupils of average and higher attainment sometimes write in paragraphs. They relate sequences of events logically, write in dialogue, include apostrophes and use different styles of writing. Handwriting skills have been developed since the previous inspection and all average and higher-attaining pupils show a fluent, joined script. Opportunities are provided for them to practise the skills of handwriting and this has proved successful. Year 6, when writing stories about entering a building for the first time, made good use of planners and in writing their first draft had chosen either real or imagined accounts such as a recent first visit to the local secondary school, 'Haunted House' or 'Buckingham Palace'. In Year 6, writing contains different styles and forms; for example, stories, reports, note writing and letters. Year 3 and 4 pupils designed school brochures using persuasive styles of writing such as 'Hurry along to Red Hall' but choices of vocabulary are often limited. Year 3 pupils write endings to a story based on a book called 'Taking Care of Henry' and use adjectives to describe feelings. However, there are too few opportunities for extended writing for pupils to develop their skills fully. Pupils draft, edit and rewrite their work but the use of information and communication technology to support English is insufficient.
71. The extended use of literacy is limited in other subjects. The school is aware of the need to develop these skills in all subjects and to provide more opportunities for extended writing. Opportunities are given to use literacy skills, for example in assembly, where there was the use of an anagram and in geography where the identification of initial sounds and the use of glossaries in pupils' geography books supports learning. In all classrooms, reading is very well promoted, with stimulating reading areas and good stocks of books. The new libraries also support reading and

research skills. Information books, thesauruses and dictionaries are easily accessible.

72. Behaviour is usually good and often very good in lessons. In both key stages pupils listen to their teachers, respond well in lessons, and work co-operatively in groups and pairs. They discuss and put their point of view in a sensible way. Pupils in Year 5 planned the performance of a poem, exchanged viewpoints and reached agreement about how it should be read. Pupils work hard, showing enjoyment and concentration in their lessons.
73. The quality of teaching is good. In Key Stage 1, all lessons were good or better. Three quarters of lessons in Key Stage 2 were at least good, with some being very good or excellent, and a quarter of lessons were satisfactory. Almost all teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the format and purpose of the National Literacy Strategy and ensure that tasks are planned to provide for the needs of pupils with all levels of prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons, either by the class teacher, support assistants or parents, ensuring that they are able to access the full curriculum and make good progress against the individual targets set in their individual education plans. In Years 5 and 6 these pupils are withdrawn on occasions to have a literacy hour more suited to their individual needs. This is boosting their self-esteem as the lessons are usually planned to cover at least one of the texts that the whole class will be using the following week. As a result of this preparation pupils do not feel isolated in their learning. Where there were shortcomings in teaching, the teacher was less confident or tasks were not sufficiently matched to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers have a very clear focus on raising standards. They use correct vocabulary and take time to explain unfamiliar words such as 'unceremoniously' or 'ice rink'. Teachers use opportunities within lessons to develop pupils' very limited range of vocabulary, for example in the use of adjectives. In almost all lessons, pupils make good progress, particularly in reading skills, as teachers encourage these very effectively. Expectations, particularly of behaviour are very high and this ensures that pupils produce work to a satisfactory standard. Relationships with pupils are good and this has a significant impact on the interest and concentration shown by pupils and has a direct effect on behaviour. The skills that teachers use to interest pupils, the way in which activities are managed and the way in which the school's behaviour policy and strategies are used are very supportive of good learning. Homework also makes a good contribution to pupil's learning.
74. The co-ordinator for English has provided excellent leadership in this subject. He is enthusiastic, energetic and committed to raising standards. Year groups are carefully monitored in reading to ensure that support is provided for those that need help. This careful analysis of progress is having a very significant effect on results by the end of Key Stage 2. He is aware of the need to apply this monitoring to the analysis of writing and is looking at ways in which teachers can assess writing and set targets for improvement. The effective leadership has ensured that all staff are well trained in the implementation of the literacy hour, making most teachers confident and competent. The school has totally renewed its resources for English and new reading schemes give continuity through both key stages. New libraries, plentiful resources of 'big books', group readers, non-fiction and fiction texts are to be found throughout the school. This emphasis on reading has ensured that pupils enjoy reading, talk freely about books and take pride in doing so. The link governors with responsibility for special educational needs and literacy are also well informed and take an active part in supporting teachers and pupils. The teaching of English makes a good

contribution to the personal and social education of all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

75. In 1999 the results attained in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 were very low compared to the national average and well below those of schools with a similar intake of pupils. At the time of the previous inspection many pupils were not attaining the national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Since 1996 results improved faster than the national trend up to 1998 when they were in line with those found nationally. This level of attainment was not achieved in 1999 owing to a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In that year group inspection findings are that pupils make good progress in this key stage, and from very low standards on entry establish a firm foundation of numeracy skills on which to build. There is every indication that pupils currently near the end of Key Stage 1 will achieve the targets set for them and that attainment in national tests in 2000 will be better than that in 1998. Teachers have a secure understanding of the levels of attainment of pupils and teacher assessment generally matches test results.
76. The results pupils attained at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 were well below the national average but in line with those of similar schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards attained by most pupils at the time of the previous inspection were judged in line with those found nationally. National test data indicates that standards have improved steadily since the previous inspection until 1998 but there was a significant drop in 1999. This was due to the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group and some weaknesses in teaching which have subsequently been resolved. Performance was higher in science and English. This reflects the higher priority placed on these subjects since the previous inspection. A current priority in the school improvement plan is to raise standards in mathematics following the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in September 1999. Inspection findings are that standards are improving rapidly, particularly for those pupils in Years 5 and 6, and those with higher attainment in Year 3. Realistic targets for attainment in the national tests were set in previous years for the pupils who are now in Year 6, based on rigorous assessment and monitoring of progress from year to year. Pupil performance during the inspection indicates that these targets will be exceeded considerably and that a majority of pupils has a very secure understanding of the skills required to attain the national expectations or beyond. Teacher assessment closely matches that of tests.
77. By the end of Key Stage 1, although recall of simple addition and subtraction sums is not always rapid, almost all pupils have strategies to calculate mentally without using practical materials to help them. Those with average and high prior attainment order and use numbers to a hundred and are already beginning to develop an understanding of multiplication. They name and describe simple two and three-dimensional shapes, and use non-standard and standard measures. Those with low prior attainment have a good grasp of simple number skills and recognise many different words for shapes, although they cannot always recall specific vocabulary. All pupils tackle practical tasks with confidence and record their work appropriately.
78. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils with higher attainment have a thorough grasp of most of the key skills required at Level 5 of the National Curriculum. They answer oral questions on any aspect with confidence. For example they calculate fractions of numbers or multiply decimals by a hundred mentally. They calculate compound areas and perimeters involving rectangles and understand the importance of units of

measure. Pupils with average and lower prior attainment have sound mental and written calculation skills and a breadth of knowledge of shape and space. Although pupils have a good grasp of simple probability and interpret graphs well, their work in data handling is not extended sufficiently through the use of information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs in both key stages make good progress through the effective system of support.

79. Teachers place a good emphasis on the development of numeracy skills in mathematics lessons. There is evidence of their use in science, for example in measuring, and two-way tabulation. Where numeracy skills are used, they are sufficient to support the activities undertaken. Since the previous inspection there has been a deliberate, appropriate and successful policy to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. Teachers are aware that the next stage of development for mathematics is to develop numeracy skills in other subjects where relevant and to help pupils learn how to use and apply the knowledge and skills they gain more effectively. Literacy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons. Teachers identify key vocabulary, and in most lessons use it consistently. On some occasions, pupils produce written explanations of their strategies used to solve problems. In the most effective lessons pupils explain their reasoning orally. For example, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class, pupils were expected to test mathematical statements for their validity, developing their comprehension skills, and to adapt the statements to make them true. Owing to the previous lack of equipment, information and communication technology skills are not used sufficiently to support or teach mathematics in either key stage. However, some good practice has already begun in Year 5, where pupils are extending their data handling skills by learning how to use spreadsheets. The graphs they produce from data they have collected themselves are also being used very well to help pupils to make informed choices about the best way to present certain types of data.
80. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils listen to their teachers and are keen to answer questions. In some lessons behaviour is excellent. When the lesson is well organised and pupils are given a high degree of responsibility, they respond well and make good progress. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 5 lesson when some pupils needed to move around the room to collect data from their friends, others used a wall display to answer questions, some were working from books and another group was being taught how to use a computer program. Although the teacher could see all pupils, she did not need to look up or correct pupils for misbehaviour and they all remained on task and were able to explain what they were doing and why. On the rare occasions when behaviour is less than good the teacher does not make sure that all pupils are sufficiently involved in whole-class activities by asking questions that suit pupils with different levels of attainment. Occasionally pupils do not complete enough work in group tasks and are quietly lazy. The presentation of work is mostly satisfactory, although in Key Stage 2 there is some unfinished and untidy work in some pupils' books. In this key stage pupils are not taught to present their diagrams and drawings with sufficient accuracy for their age, for example in their work on symmetry. This lets them develop bad habits and limits their development of concepts. There is an over-reliance on the use of templates that give pupils a false impression of true shape and the importance of concise vertices.

81. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is good or better in about two thirds of lessons. One lesson seen in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1 two thirds of lessons are good, and teaching is never less than satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 teaching is good or very good in about two thirds of lessons and satisfactory in a quarter. Teachers have a sound and developing understanding of how to use the National Numeracy Strategy. The development of teaching skills and subject knowledge is having a significant and rapid impact on standards of attainment. At present there is a lack of flexibility in some lessons, and some activities are cut short when pupils are really beginning to make good progress. This is because teachers are too anxious to keep to time constraints. Most teachers have a sound understanding of how to make best use of mental activity. The best practice was seen in a Year 3 and 4 mixed age group class where pupils moved rapidly from counting up in threes to trying to identify missing numbers in the six and twelve times tables. Pupils responded well to the enthusiastic teaching and the challenge to do something even more difficult. The main activity is well planned and general targets for the lesson are clear. Tasks are usually carefully matched to pupils' levels of prior attainment, although it is not always clear what different groups are expected to know by the end of the lesson. Teachers expect pupils to be on time for lessons, start promptly and not waste time moving from one activity to another. Behaviour management is very good and, although there are some pupils with behavioural problems, they seldom disrupt the learning of others. Resources are well prepared, easily accessible, and chosen to help pupils to develop an understanding of concepts. For example, in a lesson leading up to the need for, and use of standard measure, pupils were given a range of small items with which to weigh objects, showing that comparative measure has limited value. Teachers are beginning to use plenary sessions to assess understanding and to extend pupils' understanding further. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils' responses to questions were not used to develop skills or understanding, time was not managed well, and too many pupils were inattentive and completed insufficient work.
82. The subject is well co-ordinated. External advice is sought and used appropriately and teachers have undertaken suitable in-service training. Teaching is monitored well and support given where necessary, although this does not yet involve the monitoring of written work in books. A high priority is placed on the use of non-statutory National Curriculum and other tests to measure individual pupils' progress from year to year and to identify specific needs. This information is used particularly well to track individual progress, to identify pupils who underachieve in any year, and to inform grouping and planning. The recently formed homework club is an excellent initiative that offers parents the opportunity to support their children by borrowing well-prepared and carefully resourced games that can be played at home. Suitable provision is made for booster classes for pupils in Year 6. Good links are established with the secondary schools. This includes the use of a specially designed workbook carried through from primary to secondary school.

SCIENCE

83. The attainment of pupils shows a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. This is reflected in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments. The 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that 63 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2 or above compared with 29 per cent in 1996, which is very low compared with the national average. Evidence from the current inspection suggests that the percentage of pupils who will attain Level 2 or above this year will be close to the national average. Test results in 1999 at the end

of Key Stage 2 identified that 86 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4 or above, of whom 26 per cent achieved Level 5. Results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average for the percentage of pupils who achieved Level 4 or above. They are broadly in line with the national average for pupils achieving Level 5. The results are well above average in comparison with similar schools. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above at the end of Key Stage 2 will be broadly in line with the national average. Whilst the percentage will be lower than in 1999 it can be explained by the increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the present group. Three of the pupils with special educational needs have been admitted to the school during the current academic year.

84. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their knowledge and understanding and very good progress in their skills of investigation. They are beginning to use appropriate scientific vocabulary. They know that light comes from many sources including the sun. They know about light and dark and day and night. They know the difference between living and non-living things. Through their experiments, they know that plants require light and water for growth. They identify parts of flowering plants such as leaf, stem, flower and root, labelling their drawings correctly. They are also developing an understanding of electricity. They know, for example, that it would be dangerous to touch an electric plug with wet hands and can list appropriately items that are mains or battery powered. Pupils are beginning to understand how to make a test fair, as shown in their work on the germination of seeds. Work is recorded in a variety of ways, including lists, simple charts and descriptive writing. Higher-attaining pupils present their work more neatly and their written work is more detailed and uses descriptive phrases such as the 'leaves have gone crunchy and brown'.
85. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know the main organs of the body, including the work of the heart and the difference between veins and arteries. They discriminate between solids, liquids and gases. Through investigations, they understand that some changes are reversible whilst others are not. They possess a sound understanding of food chains, habitats and life cycles. They know that micro-organisms can be helpful or harmful to humans. The work on electricity shows an understanding of how to draw simple circuits, using appropriate symbols for switches, lamps and batteries. When pupils revisit a topic their knowledge and understanding is deepened by the amount of detail incorporated in their studies. This is shown in the work on 'Green Plants as Organisms' where stamen, sepal and anther are used in the labelling of more accurately drawn diagrams. The use of scientific vocabulary is appropriate. When describing the water cycle, Year 6 pupils used 'condensation', 'evaporation' and 'precipitation' accurately. Year 5 pupils, designing their own investigation into evaporation, showed a good understanding of fair testing. Working in small, mixed gender groups they made decisions about what they would do, predicted outcomes, and knew what would remain constant and which factor would be a variable. Particularly noteworthy was the way in which three pupils with special educational needs, who had chosen to work as a group, were able to plan an investigation, choosing to use water, cherryade and wine. One boy predicted that the cherryade would take longest to evaporate 'because it has more gas in it', whilst another was able to give his reason for wine being the liquid which would take longest to evaporate. Each group accurately recorded their observations, describing the outcome. They then used their numeracy skills to plot the results on graphs, with some pupils using a simple spreadsheet program on the computer. However, the use of information and communication technology to support learning in science is

insufficiently developed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science. Teachers use the individual education plans when planning to match tasks to the needs and levels of pupils. Support assistants are also used effectively to enable pupils to make progress during lessons.

86. Pupils' attitudes are good at both key stages. They are interested, enthusiastic and respond positively to the tasks set. They are eager to answer questions and put forward their own ideas, including predictions and conclusions, with a growing confidence. Pupils listen well to each other and value each other's opinion. There is a high level of collaboration and co-operation in investigative work. A sensible, caring and supportive attitude towards each other is evident. At the 'Science is Great' event Year 6 pupils were particularly supportive and caring towards a pupil with special educational needs when he was trying to test his cylindrical model powered by elastic bands. Behaviour is good. Equipment and materials are handled sensibly. The ethos for learning science is very good.
87. The one lesson seen in Key Stage 1 was very good. In Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall with teaching in upper Key Stage 2 being always good or better. The foundations for the high standard of teaching lie in the good subject knowledge and understanding of the teachers. Planning, in which clear objectives are set, is good and the tasks lead to outcomes that can be assessed. This assessment influences subsequent teaching to best meet the needs of the pupils. Questioning, particularly that which is open-ended, is used to promote and consolidate pupils' learning. Teachers use praise to encourage and support pupils. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher used questioning very effectively to develop pupils' knowledge of electrical circuits. In a human chain representing a circuit, with two pupils identified as battery and buzzer, the teacher asked what would happen if she kept holding then releasing the hand of the boy acting as the buzzer. Involving all pupils in tasks in this way promotes good scientific thinking, helping pupils to make predictions, test hypotheses and draw conclusions. Activities are well prepared and resourced. In a mixed Year 4 and 5 lesson pupils were learning about water being transported up the stem of the plant to other parts. They were challenged to think about how this could be investigated. Good management and organisation, clear instructions and high expectations of pupils enabled the teacher to promote learning. Support for pupils with special educational needs during the investigation ensured that they made progress during the lesson. A strength of the school is the way in which teachers are developing the investigative skills of pupils. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were challenged to plan their own investigations into evaporation. When a group chose an inappropriate method to test evaporation – by hanging on a clothes line different materials on which water had been poured – the teacher chose not to intervene, but waited until after the experiment. As a result of this, by careful questioning, pupils realised for themselves why their results were invalid. This encouraged pupils to think through future investigations more carefully at the planning stage.
88. The subject is well co-ordinated. In the previous inspection, key issues relating to subject leaders were identified. These have been acted on. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed and she now contributes to meetings of the senior management team as necessary. She is involved in monitoring both planning and teaching, and in advising other staff. For example, when attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 fell in 1999, the co-ordinator provided advice and guidance to develop the teachers' skills in assessing pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 to involve teaching and learning. Assessment is now very detailed and influences both medium and short-term planning to ensure appropriate provision for all pupils. The scheme of

work, based on the national guidance and a commercial scheme has been amended and adapted to meet the needs of school and covers all requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has good resources, including the grounds in which three different environments are being created to further opportunities for practical science.

ART

89. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in art in both key stages. Although few lessons were time tabled during the inspection, evidence was also available from work displayed, planning and records. Pupils gain sufficient experiences to meet the requirements in both key stages. Pupils work with a variety of media, including paint, pencil, clay and collage. In Key Stage 1, pupils use sketchbooks to design and test ideas before working. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils were encouraged to evaluate and modify their work. They examined a real starfish carefully and discussed colour and texture before beginning starfish collages. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrated the use of viewfinders to select small areas of landscape for careful sketching. They looked carefully at the foreground and learned how to draw the horizon. They blend and shade colours in the style of Van Gogh. The highest quality work was observed in Years 3, 4 and 5 in the observational drawings of plants where work was linked well with the science topic.
90. Pupils enjoy their work and treat equipment and materials with care. They settle to work quickly and usually try hard. The study of the work of famous artists adds to pupils' spiritual and cultural development well and the work of these artists is displayed attractively around the school. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' work is valued particularly when special efforts are framed and also displayed around the school, adding to their self-esteem. The behaviour of Year 6 pupils working independently outside was excellent.
91. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement on teaching. Most teachers develop pupils' literacy skills by teaching the vocabulary needed to discuss work. Lessons are usually well planned and there is appropriate progression in the tasks as pupils move through the school, although work in the younger Year 3 class is less challenging. This is because the tasks set were more suited to a younger age group. In Year 5, good links are made with information and communication technology when work on pattern is undertaken. However this medium is insufficiently used across the school.
92. Art is well co-ordinated within the school with the subject leader having a clear view of its development. The subject has not been a focus for development for some time owing to the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy but the co-ordinator does give informal advice to teachers. There is a number of forthcoming objectives in the school improvement plan and the coordinator monitors work on display. Observation of teaching is one objective for the near future. The co-ordinator keeps an album of work to show progression of skills. Some outside visits take place, for example to the Arts Centre in Darlington. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. These contribute successfully to the standards achieved.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to draw a design, for example, a glove puppet, and then select appropriate materials to make it. The quality of the finished product and the ability shown in the design process indicate good progress across the key stage. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make picture frames using card, various pastas and gold spray. They also make simple models of aeroplanes flying over bridges, houses and clouds using their knowledge of pivots, levers and linkages. In a mixed Year 4 and 5 class, pupils design a bird feeder and make decisions about the materials that they will use when making their artefact. This links with science as the properties of the materials have to be known because the feeder has to be strong and waterproof. Year 5 pupils are able to construct from straws and card a bridge over a one-metre gap, which will support a car. By the end of the key stage Year 6 pupils choose appropriate materials and use tools safely. At the 'Science is Great' event, visited during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were very confident in their ability to construct a cylindrical model powered by elastic bands. They used the knowledge gained in science to explain how the length and thickness of the elastic bands affected the performance of the models. They were also able to design and make a craft to float on a large-scale model of the river Tees. In a competition with other schools, a craft made by Year 6 pupils from this school won. Pupils use micro-electronic technology to make working models. Photographs of previous work on designing and making a jungle in which, for example, by activating a switch, a monkey went up and down a tree, illustrate this.
94. In describing and discussing designs and finished products, pupils develop skills of literacy. Designs become more detailed towards the end of Key Stage 2. Measuring skills are promoted by some tasks. Pupils list materials and tools and evaluate the finished product. They are enthusiastic about practical aspects of the subject. They concentrate well on the task and handle materials and equipment sensibly. Behaviour is good. Pupils work well together in pairs or small groups. Older pupils in particular provide sensitive support for peers with special educational needs as at the 'Science is Great' event.
95. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 1 the teaching was good. Of the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 the teaching was never less than satisfactory and usually good or very good. Planning is good and facilitates assessment. The subject knowledge of teachers is never less than satisfactory. Opportunities are provided for pupils to make decisions for themselves and teachers move around the classroom, interacting with pupils in a way which enhances understanding and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make progress. Teachers promote social skills by ensuring that pupils collaborate. Resources are well organised. Teachers expect good behaviour and this has a positive impact on learning, so good progress is made over the key stages by all pupils. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is undeveloped except where pupils use sensors as part of the Micro-electronics Project.
96. The co-ordinator, who has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, has a clearly defined role and carries this out effectively. An audit of resources enabled deficiencies to be made good. There is an appropriate policy and scheme of work, which is a combination of the new national guidance, aspects of the local scheme and the school's own documents. This ensures that pupils build on skills as they move through the school, meets the needs of all pupils and fulfils National Curriculum requirements. The scheme links with other subjects. The glove puppets in Key

Stage 1 links with the seaside topic that covers history, geography and science. In Key Stage 2, the designing and making of bird feeders support the science work on habitats. As a result of the previous inspection, assessment and recording have been improved significantly and more emphasis has been placed on the design element of the subject. This promotes learning. The school is very well resourced to support learning. The school's involvement in the Micro-electronics Project has not only furthered pupils' interest and enthusiasm, but has enhanced learning opportunities on which the school has capitalised.

GEOGRAPHY

97. Pupils make good progress in knowledge and understanding across both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have begun to develop a geographical vocabulary. Through their study of the topic 'Seaside' they are aware of differences in localities. They locate England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland on maps as well as places such as Darlington, Middlesbrough and London. They draw simple maps and know that blue represents sea and green, land. The term coastline is used correctly and they label a map appropriately. In lower Key Stage 2 pupils develop mapping skills further, locating more places, including Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast on maps. They also begin to use simple Ordnance Survey symbols such as those used for churches, bridges, post offices and telephones and place a key at the side of a map they have drawn. Comparing a settlement in this country with a settlement in India extends knowledge of the world. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of maps has been further developed. They understand 'equator', 'latitude', 'longitude' and 'prime meridian'. They identify points of reference on a map using latitude and longitude. Through a study of the River Tees they learn about the features of rivers and know terms such as 'source', 'gorge', 'tributary', 'estuary', 'meander', and 'waterfall'.
98. Pupils have a positive attitude. They listen attentively, are keen to respond to questions and concentrate well on the activity. They are able to select information from the resources provided using literacy skills. Behaviour is good. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups, sharing resources sensibly.
99. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning is also satisfactory, although the tasks set do not always challenge the higher attainers. Teachers manage pupils well and support the learning of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs by working these pupils or by using a parent helper. Teachers have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of the subject and this, combined with the range of teaching strategies employed, contributes to pupils' learning. They also take opportunities to use tasks to consolidate learning in other subjects such as English. In a Year 5 class, pupils had a glossary of terms relating to the topic at the back of their notebooks. In a Year 2 class, pupils were reminded how to use a contents page. Work is marked regularly and in line with school policy. The progress of pupils is assessed at the end of each topic and it informs subsequent planning. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support learning.
100. The co-ordinator has a clearly defined role and this is carried out effectively. The priorities identified by the co-ordinator for the development in the subject are appropriate. The policy is scheduled for review this year. The scheme of work, based on the latest national guidance and adapted to meet the needs of the school, ensures coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. There are sufficient resources of good quality to ensure learning and teachers make good use of the local area. Planning and assessment, identified as issues in the previous report, have

been reviewed. The system of assessment now in place, its link with planning, and the monitoring of the planning, are now good. These have a beneficial influence on pupils' learning.

HISTORY

101. Some teaching was seen in Key Stage 1, but not in Key Stage 2 as this was not timetabled during the week of the inspection. From the teaching observed in Key Stage 1 and looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning and observations of displays in Key Stage 2 it is evident that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both key stages.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have begun to develop a sense of the past and its difference from the present. Through their study of the topic 'Seaside' they are aware of differences in dress, eating habits, customs, buildings and entertainment provision today, in Victorian times and around 1930. Good links with other subjects are a feature of history. The 'Seaside' topic included links with geography, science and, through well designed and made glove puppets, design and technology. In lower Key Stage 2 pupils learn about the Tudor period. They know the kings and queens. They compare the lives of the rich and the poor and contrast a Tudor kitchen with a modern kitchen. In upper Key Stage 2 pupils learn about ancient Greece. They know about the Gods and Goddesses, the Greek alphabet, the Battle of Marathon, the Olympic Games, buildings such as the Parthenon, people and the Greek settlements in the Mediterranean. The work is linked with geography, design and technology and religious education. A Greek Trireme was made. Literacy skills are consolidated in Year 3 by encouraging pupils to make their own glossary at the back of their notebooks.
103. Pupils have a positive attitude to history. They listen attentively, are keen to respond to questions and concentrate well on the set task. In a lesson where a visitor was telling pupils about visits to the seaside around the time of 1930, they asked appropriate questions to elicit information or clarification. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups. Behaviour is never less than good.
104. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. No teaching was observed in Key Stage 2. Planning is also satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well and support the learning of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs by working with these pupils or by using a parent helper. Teachers have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of the subject, which they use to promote interest well and enhance learning. Good use is made of resources, particularly visitors to promote learning. Teachers take opportunities to use tasks to consolidate learning in other subjects. In a Year 2 class, pupils develop literacy skills by recording facts in a sequenced paragraph. Work is marked regularly and in line with school policy. Progress is assessed at the end of each topic and this informs subsequent planning, which has an impact on learning. Information and communication technology is insufficiently used to support learning.

105. Co-ordination of history is carried out effectively. The priorities identified by the co-ordinator for its development are appropriate. The scheme of work, based on the latest national guidance, is adapted to meet the needs of the school, and ensures coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. Resources are sufficient to meet subject requirements. There is an appropriate collection of books and materials, including video recordings. Books and other resources are well organised, up-to-date and of good quality. Planning and assessment, identified as issues in the previous report, have been reviewed and developed. The system of assessment now in place, its link with planning and the monitoring of planning are now good and support learning and progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106. Since the previous inspection a high priority has been given to provision for information and communication technology. A brave and wise decision was made to remove all outdated equipment and replace it with up-to-date systems, so that pupils throughout the school can develop their skills systematically from year to year. The buildings have been modified extremely well to make efficient use of space to give all pupils easy access to a computer suite during all lessons. Pupils can be supervised easily by the class teacher from within the classroom if necessary. Provision of computer hardware, peripherals and software is now excellent and continuing to improve as a result of many links with the community and support from industry. The next stage of development is to make efficient use of all the resources available.
107. By the end of both key stages attainment is below the levels expected. Pupils are beginning to use the new equipment but there has been insufficient time since its installation for standards to show much improvement. However, all pupils are remarkably confident using computers and willingly explain what they are doing. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good mouse control. They drag and drop with ease and click onto symbols to help them understand the text on the screen. They have not developed basic software management skills such as load, save and print and activities have to be set up for them. Although they use a word processor to type their work using capital letters and full stops, keyboard skills are very slow. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have very little experience using computers and little knowledge of the different types of programs that can be used. However in one aspect of control technology standards are above those normally found. Pupils understand how to use light, sound and moisture sensors to operate buzzers and lights using a system of linking electronic units and they explain what they are doing using complex technical vocabulary.
108. Pupils have very good attitudes to activities involving information and communication technology. When given the opportunity to use the computers or programmable toys they concentrate well and enjoy their work. Even when there is only light supervision by the teacher, they get on with their tasks and show a high level of independence.
109. Only two lessons were observed where the quality of direct teaching could be graded during the inspection. These were very good and excellent. In one lesson in Year 2, which also included design and technology and art, very good use was made of voluntary help to develop key skills and, as a result, pupils made rapid progress. However, where activities are used to support other subjects, the information and communication technology skills required are generally at a very low level and little progress is made. In some classes pupils are beginning to undertake the tasks expected in the most recent subject guidance. For example in Year 5 pupils create

pictures in the style of a modern artist and are beginning to use spread sheets to analyse data. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they use computers as part of their support programme. The school improvement plan recognises that there is a need to review subject planning. Current planning does not ensure that skills are developed systematically from one year to the next and that they are used effectively to support other subjects, including literacy and numeracy. Some teachers have insecure subject knowledge. Teachers have already undertaken a variety of courses to develop their own expertise. A detailed in-service programme of training is planned for all staff to raise awareness further.

110. The co-ordination of the development of information and communication technology is very good, mainly as a result of the work of the head teacher, school secretary, and the working party. They provide clear educational direction for the subject. Many targets on the very well devised action plan have been met and the school is well placed to move forward rapidly. Others, such as the assessment of attainment, have target dates for completion. Professional expertise and services and commercial materials have been carefully selected and purchased to improve provision since the previous inspection. Resources are being used well to support parents in their development of computer skills.

MUSIC

111. Progress in music is very variable throughout the school, but is satisfactory overall when taking into account the necessary and appropriate time restraints placed on the subject, as a result of the recent focus on English, mathematics and science. Pupils continue to enjoy their music and join in all musical activities with enthusiasm. However, there is no consistent progression of pupils' skills, knowledge, and understanding owing to the lack of subject expertise of some teachers, although a well-resourced commercial scheme is used to support lesson planning. All pupils are given a breadth of experience in performance, appraisal and composition and this is a subject strength. All pupils have the opportunity to play the good quantity of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils know and sing a suitable selection of hymns in assemblies. They have good attitudes to music and express their likes and dislikes clearly. They listen carefully and have suitable appraisal skills. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and the early stages of Key Stage 2 try to join in singing along with the taped music lessons, although they rarely know enough words to make sufficient progress in pitch and diction. They develop a good sense of rhythm and enjoy listening to songs from different countries. Pupils in both key stages treat musical instruments with respect and collect them and put them away without fuss. In most lessons behaviour is very good. Older pupils who participate in a voluntary choir activity sing songs with difficult rhythms and awkward intervals well.
112. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 lessons are equally very good, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. The best lesson was extremely well planned and resources well prepared. Background music was chosen carefully to stimulate pupils' interest and provide a strong pulse to support the development of formal notation, and note value. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge to develop their skills and work together as a class. The enthusiasm of the teacher and her relationship with the class had a significant impact on the participation of the pupils and the progress made. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, time was used ineffectively and pupils collected their coats to go home far too early before the end of the school day. Other weaknesses in teaching include a lack of planning to develop skills, a random choice of songs in a singing lesson that

gave no opportunity for development and insufficient attention given to the correct use of musical instruments. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

113. Visiting musicians give pupils a wider appreciation of music and school productions and concerts play an important part in the life of the school, giving pupils an opportunity to perform publicly. Library resources are being built up steadily. Pupils have the opportunity to take guitar lessons and the school has purchased some instruments to help meet the cost of this extra-curricular activity. The co-ordinator is well informed but monitoring of standards and the development of the subject have taken second place to the school's need to improve standards in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Although it was not possible to see a wide range of lessons in physical education during the time of the inspection, lesson observations, scrutiny of planning, discussion with the subject leader and pupils all indicate that the school teaches an appropriate curriculum. Dance, gymnastics and games are taught in Key Stage 1, with swimming, athletics, gymnastics and games taught in Key Stage 2. Pupils also have opportunities to enjoy basketball, 'Kwik cricket' and cross-country running in addition to more traditional work. There are some limited opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities.
115. The National Curriculum requirement that all pupils swim safely for at least 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2 is partially met this year with 40 per cent of pupils meeting this requirement. Many pupils do not have the opportunity to swim out of school hours. In the swimming lesson the quality of teaching was good. Both the Local Education Authority instructor and the class teacher teach pupils. Most pupils observed were able to swim a minimum of 10 metres. Appropriate warm-up activities prepared pupils for a variety of water activities, sculling, pushing and gliding, swimming underwater and practising breaststroke. Presently Year 5 and 6 pupils go swimming.
116. Attainment is above that expected of pupils at the end of each key stage. By the age of seven pupils know and understand the need to warm up their bodies before starting physical activities. They know that they have warmed up properly if their heart is beating fast. The youngest pupils are increasingly aware of others when running around the gymnasium and use the space safely and effectively. They are learning appropriate ways of landing and dribble balls with good control. Year 2 pupils jump lightly and sequence two or three movements together successfully. In Years 4 and 5 pupils support their own body weights on ropes, use controlled landings and finish movements gracefully from the apparatus. Pupils with more advanced body control balance safely whilst walking along the rungs of a horizontal ladder a metre away from the floor. In Years 3 and 4, pupils showed imagination and sensitivity in their dance lesson, linking movements on the theme of 'The Olympics' to the music of 'Fanfare for a Common Man'. Evaluation of their own performances led to improved facial expressions and stillness during their sequence of movements. Standards continue to reflect those at the time of the previous inspection.

117. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good although the lack of correct kit by some Year 4 and 5 pupils led to them watching the lesson instead of taking part. Pupils behave well in lessons and work well together in groups. Pupils work enthusiastically and show consideration for each other.
118. Teaching of physical education is good. A feature of good teaching is the reinforcement of safety rules before or during the lessons as appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to practise skills and evaluate their own performance and that of others. Where teaching is best, pupils who perform well are invited to demonstrate their skills to other members of the group to emphasise teaching points. The co-ordinator is a trainer for the "Top Sport Scheme" and has undertaken several training courses. Her expertise is used to support colleagues with lesson planning and schemes of work. Skills in physical education are assessed and recorded after lessons and planning is in place to introduce more pupil evaluation after lessons.
119. There are a very large number of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils and the school participates in a number of competitive sports fixtures. There is an evident enthusiasm for physical education in the school and pupils are representing the town at basketball in the Millennium Youth Games. This subject is very well led and the overall provision is very good. A well-equipped gymnasium, a smaller hall, level playing field and hard surface areas on the playground provide good facilities. Excellent use is made of qualified coaches to help develop pupils' skills - football from Darlington Town Football Club and coaches from the Local Education Authority or Darlington College for cricket and basketball. The opportunities provided for physical education are strength of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards in line with those required by the Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus. This reflects the standards described in the previous inspection report. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have studied some aspects of Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. Pupils write their own ideas of the meaning of some Buddhist stories and use writing skills well for this. During the inspection pupils listened well to the story of 'The Prodigal Son' and related this well to ideas about forgiveness in their own lives. Some pupils know what a Bible is and what kind of stories it contains. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Hinduism and learned something of the Sikh and Jewish faiths. In a discussion group taken by a local Christian Worker in Schools, pupils learned the story of the 'Anointing of David', and considered a number of examples about brand named goods and the value being unrelated to the price. They then related this to their own thoughts and ideas about not judging by outward appearances. They demonstrated satisfactory skills in speaking and listening and gave good examples of what 'looking at your heart' might mean, gaining an understanding of the concept of 'living with yourself'. Year 5 pupils demonstrated a sensible attitude when a visitor talked about what being a Christian meant in her life. They learned about Pentecost, the meaning of the fish symbol for the early Christians and discussed 'building bridges' in life. They demonstrated good skills of thinking about extended life skills by using key words such as 'peace', 'caring', 'love' and 'apologising'. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 class learned the significance of artefacts from the Hindu faith. They learned about Puja and worship and know about various Hindu Gods.

121. Pupils respond well to the well prepared and presented lessons. The school uses many opportunities in religious education to support its vital work on personal and social development. From the earliest years pupils relate work to daily life and behaviour. They demonstrate reverence for the beliefs of others. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
122. Teaching is good in both key stages. Work is interesting and well planned and has a clear religious focus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are confident with a variety of subject matter. In a very good lesson on Hinduism, the artefacts presented fascinated pupils, particularly with the incense burner, which was alight to set an atmosphere of reverence. A good range of pictures and artefacts was used to gain interest and to further understanding. Tasks were interesting and well matched to pupils' prior learning and attainment. For example, pupils with special educational needs made a zigzag book together with the support of a teaching assistant.
123. The subject is very well co-ordinated. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and knows well how the subject might develop further. She has already rewritten the school policy to have regard for the newest national guidance. This reflects an improvement since the previous inspection. A link governor, who is the curate of the local Anglican Church, supports the subject. This is very beneficial to the school in many ways, both in subject support and in personal development. Resources for the subject are very good and include artefacts, pictures and library books. Teachers' reference books are of good quality and up-to-date. The school visits the local Church for services and to learn about the Christian faith. As yet there are no visits or visitors to enhance pupils' understanding of other faiths.