

INSPECTION REPORT

HEDWORTHFIELD SCHOOL

Jarrow

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108699

Caretaker Headteacher: Mr P Grice

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st June 2001

Inspection number: 196866

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Linkway
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Clr. P Waggott

Date of previous inspection: July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3639	A C Davies	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs The work of the Language Development Unit	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
	J Holmes	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
	R Greenall	Team inspector	English Art and Design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
	J Fairclough	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How well does the school care for its pupils?
	A Ellison	Team Inspector	Religious education The foundation stage of learning	
	M Heyes	Team Inspector	Science Design and Technology Physical Education Equal Opportunities	

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hedworthfield is a slightly larger than average primary school with 223 pupils, aged between 5 and 11 attending full time, and a further 77 nursery-aged children attending part-time. Less than half the nursery-aged children go on to attend the reception class at the school. There is a special unit for 24 pupils with speech and communication difficulties (Language Development Unit) and these pupils come from all over South Tyneside. The school serves an area where unemployment is high, resulting in the numbers of pupils who are entitled to school meals free of charge being well above the national average. A larger than average percentage of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register and all the pupils attending the unit have statements for special educational needs. Nearly all the pupils are white with only 2 children having English as an additional language. Both are fluent in English. The school benefits from being part of an education action zone. When they first start school the majority of children have poor communication skills. This results in academic and personal skills being well below that expected for their age. At the time of the inspection the school has a caretaker headteacher who is looking after the school until a new headteacher takes up the post in the new academic year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school that has experienced much difficulty in the past, with parents and staff being dissatisfied with the work that was taking place. There has been a tremendous effort put into improving this position and the dedication of the staff and several outside agencies has lately resulted in much improvement. The strengths now outweigh the weaknesses but standards remain low. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, the exceptions being the more able pupils and those with special educational needs. The teaching is now mainly satisfactory with impressive teaching happening in parts of the school and especially in the Language Development Unit. The caretaker headteacher has restored much needed confidence in the staff, pupils and parents. There is every indication that appropriate actions have been taken to help the school regain a clear educational direction after a period of uncertainty. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The caretaker headteacher has helped to restore morale in the school and provided staff, parents and pupils with a sense of purpose and direction.
- Pupils in the Language Development Unit make very good progress due to the quality of support provided by an excellent team.
- There is good use made of the expertise available from the Education Action Zone.
- All staff are committed to make this a better school and are working hard, showing a capacity to achieve necessary improvements.
- The pupils benefit from a range of additional activities provided for them by various organisations, such as the Education Business Partnership.

What could be improved

- Pupils' poor speaking and listening skills, especially those of boys, hold back their progress in English, particularly in writing
- Too many pupils have negative attitudes to learning and do not work hard enough.
- There is insufficient challenge provided for more able children, resulting in too many not achieving their full potential.
- The management and organisation of learning for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory.
- The pupils are not developing their literacy and numeracy skills well enough by using them to support learning in other subjects.

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 July 1997 and has had a difficult time since then. It has, however, made satisfactory progress overall. Standards have declined but are now on the way up. Too many pupils have underachieved in the past few years but standards have started to improve, particularly with younger pupils in the 5 to 7 age-range now making satisfactory progress, especially in their literacy and numeracy skills. The caretaker headteacher has ensured that the school now has a clear direction and that improving standards is the main priority. The main issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been given priority but there has been little headway made until the past few months. Issues related to parental perceptions about the mainstream part of the school and improving standards remain concerns.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E*	E*	E
mathematics	E	E*	E	D
science	B	E	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards have been low for several years. The 1999 and 2000 national test results for 11-year-olds show that the school's English results were in the lowest 5per cent nationally, as was the case for mathematics in 1999. The main problems relate to the fact that, for many years, less than half the pupils have attained the expected level for their age and very few have gone on to attain the higher levels. The performance of boys is particularly worrying. Although there are signs of improvement in the current Year 6 cohorts' standards, a significant number of older pupils are still not achieving their full potential.

There is a more positive view for younger pupils, with the national test results for 7-year-olds showing signs of improvement in 2001. Standards are still low but more pupils are now achieving their potential in this age group. The main difference between the youngest and oldest pupils is their attitude to learning. A significant few pupils in each of the oldest pupils' classes are taking up too much of their teachers' time by their inattentiveness. Too many older pupils are, therefore, not able to make the progress they should. More able pupils, in particular, are not sufficiently challenged and the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties is not having enough impact on the progress they make.

When they start school many pupils have low personal and academic skills. They make satisfactory progress throughout the foundation stage of learning but this still leaves their attainment in communication, language, literacy and mathematics being well below that expected for their age by the time they are 5. They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 even though their poor communication skills remain a serious concern. The progress is more variable as they move on through the school although there are signs of improvement. More able pupils do not achieve to their full potential, leaving too few 11-year-olds attaining beyond the levels expected for their age in English and

mathematics. Throughout the school the attainment of boys is very low. The school has tried to address this issue but has not yet been successful in improving their standards. The pupils attending the Language Development Unit make very good progress. The outstanding level of support provided for these pupils helps them to become confident learners.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The negative attitudes of a few pupils in each class take up too much of their teachers' time. This tends to dampen the enthusiasm shown by the majority of pupils, as there is insufficient time to build on their enthusiasm by encouraging their positive attitudes and desire to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour on the playground is pleasing and this is also the case in most lessons. Despite the negative attitudes that are apparent only a few pupils are badly behaved and most are polite, friendly and well mannered.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are not expected to take-on much added responsibility beyond a few routine tasks. There are examples of pupils being asked to think for themselves in lessons but this is not happening frequently enough.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is similar to most local schools but still remains below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is excellent in 2 per cent of lessons, very good in 15 per cent, good in 34 per cent, satisfactory in 41 per cent and unsatisfactory in 8 per cent. A significant amount of the excellent and very good teaching occurs in the Language Development Unit. The teaching in the main school is of a better quality than the pupils' learning because a significant number of older pupils, in particular, have negative attitudes. This is holding-back the progress they are making and is preventing the teachers from challenging the more able. The support that is now evident within the school from the caretaker headteacher is helping to improve the teaching. In Years 1 and 2, in particular, the teaching is making a positive impact on the standards attained. For pupils in the 7 to 11-year-range the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning is taking a little longer. Many pupils in this age group have not established good working habits and therefore too much of the teachers' energies are taken up with trying to motivate them. Although the teaching of English and mathematics is at least satisfactory, pupils are not able to use the skills taught in literacy and numeracy lessons in other subjects. The teaching is having very little impact on the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Too often, the introductions to lessons are too long and pupils become bored and this is badly affecting the attitudes of pupils.

There is far more time now being spent on checking how well pupils are doing on a term-by-term basis. Throughout the Language Development Unit and in Years 1 and 2 in the main school, pupils are provided with clear targets that are carefully organised to help individuals become better learners. However, the same system is taking a little longer to improve the work being produced by older pupils.

The teaching in the Language Development Unit is very good and this is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The pupils in the unit benefit from the expertise of very committed staff. These pupils work exceptionally hard and show a real joy in their achievements. The expertise that exists within the staff of the Language Development Unit is beginning to have a positive impact on the staff in the rest of the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils do not have planned opportunities to develop and use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. The pupils are now provided with many opportunities to be involved with outside organisations to help make their learning more interesting.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The management and organisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. This is in contrast to the exceptional provision for pupils in the Language Development Unit.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The vast majority of pupils are caring of each other and have formed appropriate relationships with their teachers. Most know what is, and is not, acceptable in the way they behave and respond positively to work they are given. They have a good understanding about the beliefs of people with different faiths but have limited knowledge of their traditions and way of life.
How well the school cares for its children	The pupils are well-known to the staff on a personal basis. However, the arrangements for checking on the progress that pupils make are not yet fully developed and staff are not able to build on what has been learnt previously.

Too many parents have a negative view of the school. This is mainly as a result of what has happened in the past few years. There is much to be done to restore their confidence in the school and to establish a good working partnership.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The caretaker headteacher, in a very short time, has helped to restore staff morale, provided a clear direction for the school and ensured that all are aware of the need to raise standards. A review of the roles and responsibilities of senior managers is still needed to help the new headteacher build on what has already been achieved.
How well the governors	The governors have not yet established appropriate committees to help

fulfil their responsibilities	them be more effective in recognising the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are, however, very caring individuals who want the school to succeed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The personnel from the Education Action Zone and Local Education Authority have helped the school to interpret and understand the significance of the test results. This is helping the school to establish procedures to help it target areas that need improving.
The strategic use of resources	The impact of the additional money spent on special educational needs is not yet having the desired effect on raising the standards of these pupils. The school does little to check on the effectiveness of its spending decisions.

The school benefits from much additional space because numbers have fallen in the recent past. The staffing levels are good with effective support available to most classes from nursery nurses and classroom assistants. The amount of books and equipment available in the school is about what is expected for a school of this size. The environment created in the Language Development Unit is very good and the staff have produced some excellent equipment to help assess individual children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The teaching is good. • The children are expected to work hard. • The new caretaker headteacher has made a big difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of the school have been poor for the past few years. • The range of after-school activities is not wide enough. • Standards in English and mathematics are poor. • The quality of information provided about how children are getting on.

The parents are very concerned about the quality of education being provided. They have rightly noted the positive impact made by the new headteacher. They have also accurately identified that the teaching is at least sound, with areas of good teaching being prominent. Although the inspection team did not see the school in the past few years, it is clear that many aspects were not right and these were associated with issues of leadership and management. The parents are right to point-out that standards in English and mathematics are not high enough. The reports that go home to parents do not give enough information about what the children need to do next in order to improve. The range of activities provided for children after school has improved and is now satisfactory. Too many children do not work hard enough.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and children's achievements

- 1 The standards attained by 7 and 11-year-olds in the national tests have been low for several years. In English the attainment of 11-year-old pupils has been in the lowest 5 per cent nationally for three of the past four years. For mathematics there is a similar picture with the attainment of 11-year-olds being in the bottom 5 per cent for two of the past four years. In science the results have been well below average for the past two years. Clearly, pupils' standards are therefore low when they are about to finish their primary education. However, the latest set of national test results (2001) shows some improvement in performance of 11-year-olds and is indicative of the school's new emphasis on raising standards. The two main problems relate to the fact that for many years less than half the pupils attained the standard expected for their age and very few went on to attain at the higher level. The standards of 11-year-old boys are very worrying, being almost half a year on average below the attainment of 11-year-old girls. The present Year 6 group is attaining at well below that expected for their age in English and below that expected for both mathematics and science.
- 2 Standards of work of 11-year-olds are at the level expected for art and design, design and technology and for physical education. They are below what is expected for their age in geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in music. This is almost the same position as that noted at the time of the previous inspection except that there has been some improvement in geography where standards were well below that expected for their age.
- 3 The national test results for 7-year-olds do not read much better. In reading and writing the school's results have been either very low, or well below the national averages, for the past four years. The mathematics results have not been much better with 7-year-olds' attainment being well below average or low for three of the past four years. There has been much improvement in the standards attained in writing and mathematics in the 2001 national test results. Overall, the present Year 2 pupils are attaining at well below the level expected for English and below that expected for mathematics and science. There is not such a great difference between the attainment of boys and girls at this age. Standards of work of 7-year-olds are at the level expected for art and design, design and technology and physical education. This shows good progress from the end of the foundation stage of learning. In other subjects, standards are below those expected for their age in geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education. No judgements were possible for music because it was not possible to observe music being taught.
- 4 When children first start in the reception class their academic and personal skills are well below the level expected for their age. Despite making satisfactory progress throughout their foundation stage of learning, many are not meeting the learning goals anticipated for them at the end of the reception year. This is particularly the case in respect of communication, language and literacy. The main difficulty surrounds children's inability to listen appropriately and to use a wide vocabulary when they are speaking. As the pupils move through the rest of the school they are restricted in the progress they make because their limited vocabulary is not helping their reading or writing. This is more noticeable amongst boys than girls. However, there has been an improvement this year in the progress made by 5 to 7 year old pupils in writing. This has helped to raise standards as is evident in the national test results for writing in

2001. The present groups of pupils aged 7 to 11 are not making comparable levels of progress as the 5 to 7 year olds. They have not been exposed long enough to the new rigour that now exists for younger pupils and therefore they have much more to catch up. There is, however, an improving trend but this has not yet had time to make a full impact on the test results for 11-year-olds.

- 5 The major issues for the school to deal with, in respect of the progress of older pupils, is that too many have grown used to the low level of demand made on them in the recent past and have not been able to react positively to the new demands that are now in place. This is particularly noticeable if a temporary teacher teaches a class. In these situations some pupils have negative attitudes to learning and are choosing to be disruptive instead of settling-down to hard work. This results in the progress they make being hindered. This is not the case throughout the 7 to 11 age range because there are examples of pupils making good progress which was observed in one Year 5 class taught by a newly qualified teacher.
- 6 There is a serious concern about the progress made by the more able pupils, many of whom are not reaching their full potential. The issue in some class surrounds the additional attention teachers are giving to pupils who are disruptive or likely to be disruptive, resulting in more able pupils not being challenged appropriately. In many cases the more able pupils are the disruptive influences. This is due to them finding the work too easy and to the tasks not being stimulating enough. The unsatisfactory organisation and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs has resulted in pupils with behaviour difficulties not being a main focus within the school. The unfortunate situation is that most of the disruption, but not exclusively, comes from older boys. This is then responsible for the gap in attainment widening as they move through the later years in the school.
- 7 Pupils are not using the skills taught in literacy and numeracy lessons effectively enough in other subjects. This has meant that the recorded work in history, geography and religious education, in particular, is of an unsatisfactory standard. There is, however, a great difference in the quality of work in tasks associated with outside agencies, such as the Education Business Partnership. In these lessons pupils use their mathematical and design and technology skills to good effect during problem-solving sessions.
- 8 As already noted, pupils' limited speaking and listening skills are restricting the progress they are making in other areas of English. Many pupils, but especially boys, are not good listeners. They find it difficult to listen to each other and during discussions there are too few occasions when pupils build on what has been said by someone else. Many pupils respond with one word or small phrase answers when involved in discussions or are asked questions. The other difficulty is that many pupils write as they speak, resulting in their written work containing many grammatical errors. There is a much-improved picture for pupils aged 5 to 7 with good progress now evident in their writing. This is confirmed by the improved results in this year's national tests. However, this level of improvement is not evident in the writing of older pupils and the more able pupils, in particular, are not making the progress expected. The school does not have a planned programme for helping to improve pupils' speaking. Many pupils tend to open their answers to questions posed in the lessons with remarks like, 'Cos why miss.' The pupils' limited spoken vocabulary is restricting the quality of their written work.
- 9 The school puts a great deal of effort into helping young pupils to read with expression and enjoyment. Most pupils are competent readers by the time they move to Year 3. However, there is, again, a lack of challenge for more able readers as they move through the school.

Most pupils are, however, able to use non-fiction books well to help them with finding out information.

- 10 The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. This is despite the hard work that is being done by individual teachers. The organisation and management for pupils with special educational needs is the problem and unsatisfactory. As a result the pupils rely heavily on the class teacher providing appropriate support. In most cases this is adequate enough to ensure they make satisfactory progress but this is not the case in all lessons.
- 11 The pupils in the Language Development Unit have a range of attainment which is mostly below, or well below, that expected for their age. However, they achieve very well. The progress made by these pupils is very impressive, especially in their ability to communicate effectively. They also show very good attitudes to work, which is helping their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 Pupils indicate that they enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed by the pre-inspection parental questionnaires. Too many pupils, however, have an unsatisfactory attitude to learning and do not listen to teachers and fellow pupils. The negative attitudes of a few pupils in each class are taking up too much of the teachers' time. This tends to dampen the enthusiasm shown by the majority of pupils, as there is insufficient time available to give them additional attention. This was seen at its worst during a geography lesson taught by a temporary teacher in Year 5. The pupils lost interest very early on and the teacher found it very difficult to retrieve the situation thereafter. In the majority of lessons most questions are answered sensibly and pupils will contribute to discussions, although sometimes by shouting-out instead of listening and raising their hands. However, the pupils' limited vocabulary means that they are not able to participate as fully in discussions as they would like. Unfamiliarity with words like 'estuary' in the geography lesson mentioned caused some of the problems. The negative attitudes are far more prominent amongst older boys but this is not exclusively the case. In lessons where attitudes are not positive, the teacher has to spend too much time dealing with minor disruptive incidents and this takes away from the time they have to devote to teaching and learning. There is a very different attitude amongst the pupils in the Language Development Unit. These pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are willing workers and keen to do well.
- 13 Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. The behaviour at lunchtime, both in the dining room and on the field, is pleasing and this is also the case in most lessons. However, pupils display an unsatisfactory level of self-discipline when not challenged and the pace of the lesson is slow. Discussions with pupils indicate that they would like less boring lessons. There was no oppressive behaviour observed in the school. There have been no fixed term, or permanent, exclusions in the past year. The behaviour of pupils in the Language Development Unit is very good. This is despite the fact that many started at the unit finding it difficult to settle to activities, to listen to instructions and to relate positively to other pupils.
- 14 Pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are satisfactory. There is an appropriate level of trust and respect between staff and pupils. Pupils are generally confident, polite, friendly and well mannered. The pupils in the later years are generally confident and communicate readily with adults. Pupils work together satisfactorily when called to share resources, as is seen in a good geography lesson for older pupils. Listening skills of pupils, particularly in the upper part of the school, are unsatisfactory with pupils not listening

when others are speaking. Pupils do not always listen to the teachers, which interferes with the learning of the class. Some responsibility is given to pupils for their own learning with homework assignments. The pupils take on the role of class monitors and help in the dining room. The pupils in the Language Development Unit are helped to feel good about themselves and this raises their self-esteem. When they work in larger groups within the main school they are often the pupils who most eager to contribute when questions are asked.

- 15 Attendance, whilst similar to local schools, is below national average and is unsatisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence is above the national average for the last reporting year. Whilst the majority of parents do notify the school of absence, there are, unfortunately, some who fail to do so.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 16 Teaching is satisfactory overall but there is considerable variation across the school. Pupils' learning is satisfactory for the younger pupils but unsatisfactory for older pupils. The most impressive teaching occurs in the Language Development Unit, where a significant amount of excellent and very good teaching happens. Overall, teaching is excellent in 2 per cent of lessons, very good in 15 per cent, good in 34 per cent, satisfactory in 41 per cent and unsatisfactory in 8 per cent. This shows an improved position compared with the previous inspection with more high quality teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching now noted. A significant amount of the unsatisfactory teaching occurred in lessons taught by temporary staff.
- 17 Teaching is generally of a better quality than pupils' learning. This is particularly the case with older pupils because a significant number have developed negative attitudes to learning. This is badly affecting the teachers' ability to work with the whole class or to challenge the more able pupils. Older pupils are not working hard enough, do not give of their best and have very little knowledge about what they need to do in order to improve. By contrast, the teaching in the Language Development Unit is highly focussed and helps pupils to learn well. The staff working with these pupils have high levels of expertise and use assessment very effectively to help them work-out what is required to help pupils learn more efficiently. The lack of appropriate use of assessment information is a major handicap to pupils in the main school.
- 18 In the lessons observed the teaching of English is good. However, there are concerns about the teachers' ability to help pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills effectively in other lessons. This, together with a lack of planned opportunity to help improve the quality of pupils' speaking and listening, is inhibiting the progress that pupils are making throughout the school. The same applies to the use of information and communication technology. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to support work in other subjects, although good examples were seen in geography and history where pupils used e-mail and the Internet to find out information.
- 19 In the foundation stage of learning the teaching is satisfactory overall. It is however, stronger in aspects of personal, social and emotional development than it is in other areas, especially knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. The staff in the foundation stage have worked hard to take full account of the new guidance for the foundation stage of learning but still have concerns about finding the right balance. There are good examples of the teaching having an impact on children's personal and social skills. However, there are too many lost opportunities to move the children's learning on in other areas. This is

particularly the case in the nursery. The teaching is weaker in the nursery than it is in the reception class. At the time of the previous inspection, the better teaching was noted in the nursery. This is no longer the case, with some shortcomings associated with the way the children's learning is not always enhanced through play. There are concerns about the quality of play in the nursery. During an observation of the 'fruit shop' it was evident that children lacked direction in their play. The children's learning was not helped by the lack of appropriate resources being available to them. Some of the children playing in the fruit shop could not find a role for themselves. The lack of appropriate intervention resulted in one child eventually deciding to use the vacuum cleaner to clean the bed. There is a very good range of resources available to children in other areas in the nursery and this has resulted in children being well occupied. However, there are times when children flit around from one activity to another without purpose. The quality of teaching is better in the reception class. The teacher has embraced the new foundation stage of learning and there is good quality intervention from the support staff. This has resulted in better attention being given to developing children's speaking and listening skills.

- 20 In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is making a positive impact on the standards attained. Overall the teaching is satisfactory and there are particular strengths in the way the teachers handle the basic skills associated with literacy and numeracy. The teaching of literacy is good, with some very good lessons seen in this area. The teachers handle basic skills well with the pupils and this is helping to improve their reading and particularly their writing. However, there are times when there is not enough challenge provided for more able pupils in this age group. At its most extreme the teaching varies from satisfactory to very good. In one mathematics lessons the teacher successfully used the interactive white board to help pupils gain a better understanding of the 5x times table and to help them with giving change when dealing with money. However, in another lesson the same teacher failed to deal appropriately with the few children who were determined to be disruptive. This meant that pupils were not able to learn as effectively as they should. The variation is due to the full impact of the support that the staff are now getting from the caretaker headteacher not having had time to embed itself in the everyday practice of all staff. There is little doubt that the new caretaker headteacher's impact has been very important in improving the teaching but it has not yet achieved consistency in all the lessons. One of the weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 is the failure of teachers to use the plenary session appropriately to help pupils consolidate their learning. In some cases the overlong introductions to lessons is leaving too little time for the plenary to happen. In other cases the plenary is not handled well and the pupils gain very little from it. There is, however, effective use made of additional adult support in Years 1 and 2. The staff work purposefully together to ensure that the needs of most pupils with learning difficulties are being met. This is ensuring that these pupils are making satisfactory progress despite the management and organisation for special educational needs being unsatisfactory.
- 21 The quality of teaching for older pupils is more variable and this is in part responsible for their learning being unsatisfactory. Many pupils within this age group are finding it difficult to settle to good working habits, despite examples of very good teaching being evident. Too many pupils are finding it difficult to respond appropriately to the lessons provided for them. The exception is in one of the Year 5/6 classes where a newly qualified teacher is able to challenge pupils appropriately. One of the strengths in lessons in this class is the way the teacher managed to focus on pupils' speaking and listening. During a poetry lesson this teacher manages to improve the pupils' expression without destroying their confidence to read aloud to the rest of the class. This led to one pupil contributing that a phrase from the poem had a sense of 'personification'. Pupils who normally could so easily be disaffected by poetry were contributing with well thought-out opinions and views. Indeed one or two pupils were so keen

to make contributions they are about to 'explode' with excitement. During an art the same teacher lesson raised the level of debate that was happening about the work of Rembrandt and Monet by getting the pupils to focus their answers on style, colour and brushwork. This led to a lively debate where pupils listened to each other's point of view and expressed themselves confidently using an appropriate range of adjectives when doing so. This is in contrast to many other lessons when pupils were not prepared to allow others to finish making contributions before interrupting, often with sarcastic or inappropriate remarks.

- 22 Although the teaching of English and mathematics is generally satisfactory for the older age group, the teachers do not use the plenary session effectively. This leads to lost opportunities for pupils to think about what they have learnt. In addition, pupils are not able to use the skills taught during literacy and numeracy lessons in other subjects. As with younger pupils, the introductions are often too long and pupils become bored and this is badly affecting their attitudes.
- 23 Every effort is made to share the learning objectives (what they are going to learn) with the pupils. However, there is little opportunity for older pupils to know exactly what it is they need to do next in order to improve. Although the marking is generally comprehensive, there is a lack of consistency in the setting of formal targets for individual pupils. This adds to the lack of challenge for more able pupils. There is far more time now being spent on checking how well pupils are doing on a term-by-term basis. Throughout the Language Development Unit and in Years 1 and 2, pupils are provided with clear targets that are carefully organised to help individuals become better learners.
- 24 There is generally good use made of learning resources. The model of the lock used with Years 5 and 6 in geography lessons helped pupils gain a better understanding about the way boats are able to move through hillsides. There is occasional good use made of information and communication technology. The interactive board in Year 2 has already been mentioned and there is appropriate use of the Internet with the same age group when looking-up information about the Great Fire of London. However, this is not a consistent picture, with many opportunities being lost to develop work using information and communication technology due to a lack of computers and different levels of staff confidence in using the equipment.
- 25 The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is not helping them to become effective learners. When pupils are withdrawn for special help there is a lack of clarity about what it is they are going to learn and there are lost opportunities to help to develop pupils' language. During one lesson with a small group of Year 3 pupils there was no systematic questioning to help pupils to think more deeply about the text being read. The teachers (and particularly support staff) try to ensure that these pupils make satisfactory progress when being taught as part of a whole class. However, the main issue surrounds the lack of clear direction provided for staff to help make the most effective use of their time.
- 26 The teaching in the Language Development Unit is very good and this is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The teaching in the unit ranges from good to outstanding with most of the teaching being of a very good quality. The staff working with these pupils have a level of expertise that is most impressive. One of the teachers has developed a very effective assessment process to help gain better understanding about the pupils' reading knowledge. There are many examples of them effectively challenging pupils by using interesting and exciting ideas, such as puppets to stimulate pupils' thinking. The pupils work very hard and are very proud of their achievements. They have a very good understanding about what they have

learnt in a lesson and use a 'dart board' style target to indicate how well they feel they have done.

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

- 27 The previous inspection found weaknesses in most areas of curricular provision. As a result of action taken since that time, the school's provisions now comply with local requirements in religious education and with National Curriculum requirements in all other subjects. Teachers now plan better and their planning is more consistently supported across the school by national guidance and up-to-date policies. Improved provisions for pupils' moral and social development are creating a better climate for learning. Pupils also benefit significantly from a much greater range of activities provided by organisations in the wider community. However, the school has not entirely recovered from the profound difficulties it has experienced since 1997 and most developments are too recent to have raised attainment by improving pupils' progress over time, although there are clear signs of an improving trend in the 5 to 7 age group. Important weaknesses still remain, especially in the quality and range of learning opportunities for the more able pupils and also for the many pupils who have special educational needs.
- 28 The adults working with the youngest children have embraced the new guidance for children in the nursery and reception classes. Their planning takes full account of the six areas of learning for this age group and work is prepared that is aimed at helping them to prepare for the National Curriculum. Staff working with these children are still trying to get the balance right in terms of the amount of time devoted to each area.
- 29 In most respects the school offers its pupils sufficient breadth and quality of learning opportunities. However, pupils aged 7 to 11 are not provided with enough opportunities to build on their earlier learning in information and communication technology. The school has adopted the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and has worked hard and successfully through a period of turmoil to ensure that every pupil has a daily lesson in each of these areas of basic skills, in accordance with the frameworks recommended nationally. However, these strategies are not yet effective enough in raising standards. This is largely because there is no concerted policy to ensure that all pupils practise and develop their skills in literacy and numeracy by using them to support learning in other subjects. Opportunities for pupils to write freely and at length to record and express their learning in a variety of situations are far too rare.
- 30 The lack of learning opportunities of this kind particularly constrains the progress of the higher attaining pupils, so that very few of them achieve the higher than expected levels. Whilst all pupils are treated equally in the day-to-day life of the school, their learning needs are not always met equally or adequately. Teachers' planning increasingly seeks to match work to prior attainment. In practice, however, assessment information is not used consistently enough, either across the school or over time, to make this effective. Moreover, the negative attitudes of some pupils, usually older boys, claim unequal attention and divert teachers' energies away from the needs of the most able pupils. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is also unsatisfactory in both its organisation and its management. When groups of these pupils are withdrawn for intensive support, the sessions work to the same plan as that followed by their classmates, but are not organised and conducted well enough for the pupils to make as much progress as they should. Furthermore, outside these sessions they receive too little other support that takes effective account of the targets on their

individual plans. For these reasons, the curriculum does not yet have enough balance and relevance to meet the needs of all its pupils and some grouping arrangements only add to teachers' difficulties in planning for inclusion. The school has rightly identified the attainment and progress of boys as matters of concern. It has sought advice and taken action to modify provisions in an effort to rectify the problem, so far without clear success, although the measures taken do make aspects of the curriculum more relevant to boys.

- 31 The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. There are popular after-school clubs for football, netball, dance and cricket. Some parents felt that the range of these activities was too narrowly concentrated on sports, although further outdoor activities, such as orienteering, are being introduced. The good use of a wide range of visits and visitors significantly enriches the curriculum for all pupils. The school generally, and the Language Development Unit in particular, have organised very successful visits to such places of interest as Bedes World, the Glass Centre, the Environmental Centre and the Roman Fort. The regular visits of various authors, artists and storytellers contribute well to pupils' development. For example, pupils in the Language Development Unit have been inspired by excellent opportunities to work with artists on major projects to create glass sculptures and a stained glass window. Recently, the entire school benefited from a very well-organised writers' week in which a wide range of visitors, including a plumber, a secretary, a chemist, a travel agent, an engineer, a fireman and two calligraphers, showed pupils how the skills of writing played a central role in their daily work.
- 32 The school's provisions for personal, social and health education are unsatisfactory, although good initiatives have been taken to improve this aspect of its work. It has taken good steps to use 'circle time' as a regular and structured opportunity for pupils to take equal turns to share thoughts and feelings on issues that affect their lives. Some opportunities are taken, in subjects such as science, religious education and design technology, to develop themes of social relationships and values, healthy living, bodily awareness and the dangers of drugs. However, none of this is sufficiently co-ordinated, coherently planned or consistently carried-out across the school.
- 33 Vigorous efforts to involve the wider community in the work of the school have developed good links which contribute significantly to pupils' learning, both within and beyond the academic curriculum. The writers' week and the artists in residence projects are good examples of this. Other examples include a visit by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) which challenged pupils in Year 6 to design and make a bridge structure for a particular purpose and an arrangement with the education-business partnership which enabled pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 to develop their skills in information and communication technology by using the computer suite at Port of Tyne. There are also constructive links with schools and colleges in the area. For example, pupils in Year 6 work with high school students to make story sacks for use in Year 1 and good work with South Tyne College has developed very successful programmes in Family Literacy and Family Numeracy. These have already led to the award of over twenty academic qualifications. Such initiatives are strongly supported by the Education Action Zone, which also promotes improved systems of mutual support and development between primary schools in the locality.
- 34 The school's provisions for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory in all four areas. This represents a significant overall improvement since the last inspection, particularly in moral and social provisions, which were then judged unsatisfactory.

- 35 The satisfactory provisions for spiritual development include daily acts of collective worship which fully meet statutory requirements. All teachers plan these well and enable pupils to share thoughtfully in simple, relevant prayers and reflections. Small assemblies in the classroom make effective use of the conventions of 'circle time' to engage pupils in discussion of a theme, perhaps based on a word from the Lord's Prayer, and to set the moral and social tone for the day. Larger assemblies are well planned and conducted and make good use of moral tales and familiar hymns. Work in religious education reinforces fundamental human values and beliefs, whilst art and music raise awareness of beauty and special talents. For example, pupils in the Language Development Unit were astonished by the beauty of the stained glass window and the glass sculptures they had helped to create. The experience gave an immeasurable boost to their self-esteem and caused them to recognise the potential of their own talents.
- 36 The school has developed a much more positive and effective approach to the management of pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection. A well-written behaviour policy reflects the effort that has been put in to ensure that procedures are clear, fair, consistent and co-operative and that they always place the emphasis on self-discipline. In relation to the general code of conduct, pupils negotiate the rules for their own class. As a result, they increasingly understand the difference between right and wrong and learn to appreciate the order and security which comes when everyone respects this difference. Observance of these rules is reinforced by 'circle time' discussions and the use of an award scheme, a house-points system, privilege time and a record system for monitoring behaviour. In relation to the latter, a system for sending letters home is designed to promote a positive partnership with parents in these matters.
- 37 The celebration of pupils' moral achievements is part of the school's satisfactory provision for promoting social awareness, interpersonal respect and a happy, purposeful community. Each Friday the school assembles to celebrate pupils' various efforts and achievements in caring and sharing ways. A 'Golden Book' also notes achievements and the many detailed tributes in this book witness the consistent push to improve the quality of the social environment. The development of closer ties with the broader community aims to extend pupils' social awareness and commitment. Pupils are involved in fund-raising events for charity. Each year the pupils choose which causes they will support. This year they have decided to work for the South Tyneside Special Baby Care Unit and recently they raised £1,000 to help a fellow pupil in extreme difficulties. Inviting elderly citizens into school to talk to pupils also extends community ties. Activities such as the bridge-building venture with the CITB are organised to teach pupils the essential skills of interdependence and to move them from self-centred thinking towards co-operation and team-bonding. The aim is to plan into the curriculum increasing opportunities for pupils to take decisions. Currently, however, most curricular activity is teacher-directed and pupils have few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning or to develop the skills of independent research.
- 38 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own cultural heritage. Visits to local organisations such as Port of Tyne, and to places of historical and cultural interest, such as Bedes World, the Customs House, the Roman fort and the Stadium of Light, all extend their sense of locality and belonging. This is reinforced by visitors who include storytellers, local authors and artists, and by the opportunity to participate in school parties, or in performances such as 'The Lambton Worm' and the Jarrow dance festival. Opportunities to learn about other cultures are less powerful, though still satisfactory. Pupils learn through the curriculum about European and British artists, composers, environments and important historical figures and epochs. They benefit from

increasing opportunities to learn about non-Western faiths, ways of life and artistic traditions. For example, they have read stories by non-Western writers and enjoyed the visit of 'Grassroots', an African dance company. However, the school could do more to prepare its pupils for life in a multi-cultural society that they do not witness in their own locality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 39 The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is satisfactory. This was also the position at the time of the previous inspection. Health and safety matters are given appropriate priority. The school is a safe place for pupils. Electrical equipment is regularly checked and equipment is clearly marked. Fire notices are clearly displayed in classrooms and around the school. Fire exits are clearly signed and fire equipment is regularly serviced. An external contractor regularly checks physical education equipment.
- 40 The systems for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The attendance levels, whilst below national averages, are in line with other local schools. The local Educational Welfare Officer comes into school each week and checks attendance through the registers. Where attendance is a concern, the Education Welfare Officer will visit the home to talk to parents. Any suspected truancy is reported to the headteacher and appropriate action taken.
- 41 At both key stages the procedures for monitoring the academic progress of pupils is unsatisfactory. The assessment coordinator has not long been in the school and the assessment policy is currently under review. Whilst there is a range of formal assessment tests, this information is not used sufficiently well to inform planning. There are some good examples of pupils knowing the lesson objectives and teachers' marking acknowledges when objectives have been met. Some pupils also have the next objective on their desk in front of them. Sometimes group objectives are displayed in the classroom. However, the practice of young pupils copying-out the objective in their books wastes time and slows the pace of the initial part of lessons. The school satisfactorily carries out the required National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of both key stages. The pupils in the Language Development Unit benefit greatly from the precision that is given to assessment procedures and the use made of the information. Pupils are given an initial assessment on entry to the nursery but the information gathered is not used in grouping pupils.
- 42 The effectiveness of the school's measures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour is satisfactory. The school has a behaviour policy which, in the main, is applied consistently. There is a system of rewards including stamps, stickers and certificates which teachers give to pupils for good work or behaviour. Pupils worthy of special mention have their names put in the Golden Book. There is a weekly awards assembly when pupils are presented with their certificates. There also exists a clear procedure for dealing with negative behaviour. The school adopts Green and Red books to record unsatisfactory behaviour. The support of parents is sought when pupils are involved in incidents of serious misbehaviour. The system of rewards and sanctions is clearly explained to parents in the information handbook for parents. However, there are some unsatisfactory elements of behaviour within lessons. The behaviour of some pupils in class is poor. There is a high level of interrupting and talking out-of-turn, chatting to other pupils or shuffling about. This behaviour is not dealt with effectively by many teachers and thus prevents many pupils making satisfactory progress. This is not true of the Language Development Unit where the behaviour of the pupils is consistently very good in lessons. In contrast, the behaviour of all pupils at lunchtime is good. The field and playground provide ample space for the pupils to play. Imaginative playground markings provide the pupils

with stimuli for play. These include steps, hopscotch squares, compasses, king squares and metre marks. The school also provides a range of small equipment, balls, cones and hoops to use at lunchtime which the pupils use well in a range of games. All pupils use these sensibly. Boys and girls of different ages play together well, with very little conflict or aggression. The pupils are well supervised at playtime and lunchtime. Pupils say there are few instances of bullying and these are dealt with effectively.

- 43 The school's provision for the health, safety and well being of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are given appropriate sex education with support from the school nurse. Regular 'circle time' in all classes provide opportunity for discussion about self and feelings. This has an important part to play in pupils' personal and social development. Procedures for dealing with accident and injury are satisfactory. There is a sufficient supply of First Aid equipment which is safely and securely stored in clearly marked cabinets. The procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The caretaker headteacher is the named person but has only recently joined the school and has received no training. Child protection procedures meet legal requirements and issues are dealt with in a sensitive and caring manner.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 44 The school's partnership with parents and carers is unsatisfactory and it is an area that requires immediate attention. Eighteen parents attended the parents meeting and 144 returned the questionnaires out of 262 sent out. The majority of responses indicated that parents felt their children enjoyed school, the teaching is good and the children are expected to work hard. However, the parents indicated they were unhappy with the leadership of the school over the past few years, the range of after school activities and the quality of information on children's progress. The parents who have pupils in the Language Development Unit feel very positive about the work that takes place in the unit. They are made to feel welcome and are very happy with the level of involvement that is expected of them.
- 45 The inspection confirmed that the pupils enjoyed school, the teaching was satisfactory and teachers had satisfactory expectations of the pupils. In the past the leadership of the school did not deal well with issues raised by parents but the new caretaker headteacher has made a difference. Those parents who help in the school observed that the school had a changed atmosphere and they were made to feel more welcome. The level of extra curricular activities is satisfactory with a number of recent initiatives providing a better range. The reports to parents that are provided each year contain useful information about their child. The quality of the reports is inconsistent in reporting progress made and targets needed for the future.
- 46 A regular newsletter and letters to parents provide satisfactory general information to parents. A termly diary of dates of future events is sent to parents at the start of each term. The annual report to parents is satisfactory and meets all requirements. There are a number of parents who help in the school on a regular basis making a significant contribution to school life. Parents also help in class as well as in preparation for lessons.
- 47 The school provides story sacks, which contains books and toys, for the pupils to take home and share with parents. Pupils take home reading books and have some homework, although the homework is not consistently applied across the school. There have been a number of initiatives to involve parents with their child's learning. Literacy, numeracy and computer courses have been run which have been well received and supported.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 48 The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. The school has made significant improvement due to the dedicated and hard work of a caretaker headteacher who was brought into the school for a term before a newly appointed headteacher was to take up her post. The impact of the caretaker's leadership has made a significant difference to the quality of relationships amongst the adults working in the school. The staff have welcomed the clarity that the caretaker headteacher has provided for them.
- 49 The previous inspection, although declaring that leadership was broadly sound, did indicate that there were weak areas. It is therefore unfortunate that the school has taken so long to deal with these weak features. At the time of the previous inspection there was an issue relating to relationships, with a lack of co-operation amongst staff evident. The caretaker headteacher has resolved this issue in a relatively short time with all staff now being dedicated to improving standards and being willing to play a full and active role in achieving these.
- 50 Only recently have staff been in a position to develop more fully their subject management role. Many are still not being able to fulfil this role as well as they would like. Some still lack the expertise to do so. However, there is undoubtedly a new determination amongst the staff to play a more active role in the co-ordination of subjects. Similarly, the appointment of a new deputy headteacher has provided the school with opportunities to review its management structure; another feature that was criticised at the time of the previous inspection. As the new headteacher takes up her post this is an area that will need to be looked at.
- 51 The management of the school has benefited greatly from the involvement of personnel from the education action zone. The school has worked closely with various people to analyse data and target future areas for improvement. The Local Education Authority personnel have also played their part in helping the school in this respect. The caretaker headteacher has carried-out a thorough analysis of the recent national test results and has been able to share his findings with the staff. However, in the short period of time that he has been in the school, he has not been able to draw up a strategic plan to help with focussing on future developments. Despite this, the way in which he has drawn staff attention to the shortcomings outlined from his analysis has already had a positive impact on the standards being attained. This is reflected in the latest set of national test results.
- 52 The caretaker headteacher has continued with the programme of checking on the quality of teaching and learning taking place in the school. He has also scrutinised pupils' work and checked teacher planning. Staff from the education action zone and the Local Education Authority have also been involved. Teachers are now being provided with comprehensive information about the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching and they have specific targets to aim for. This is only a recent innovation, however, and, up until the last two years, there has been very little information available to staff about the quality of their teaching. There is little doubt that the information now available to staff is beginning to have a positive impact on the way they are working. However, it will take some time before the full effects of the action will be felt. The caretaker headteacher has successfully introduced the performance management arrangements in the school. He led the staff through the school-based training. Prior to this initiative no staff review or target setting operated in the school. However, due to the delays that the school has experienced, the full cycle will not be in place until the spring term of 2002.

- 53 The management and organisation for special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is not in a position to have an overview of the way the pupils are being supported and the staff in the school feel that there is limited support in place for them. The caretaker headteacher has not had enough time to improve the situation since his arrival and knows that there is much to be done to improve on the present position. At present, the co-ordinator does not have any release time to help him manage the system. He is not always involved in review meetings and only has superficial overview of the individual plans that are drawn up by staff. His main role is to liaise with outside agencies. The role of the special needs co-ordinator will have to be reviewed as a matter of some urgency. At present the unsatisfactory situation is putting undue pressure on staff and causing the learning for pupils with special educational needs to be unsatisfactory.
- 54 The caretaker headteacher has inherited the school development plan that had been drafted by the previous headteacher. The plan, as it stands, does not represent what the school needs to do in order to improve. The caretaker headteacher has concentrated on the information that he has obtained from his own analysis of national test results and from his own scrutiny of pupils' work to draw-up his immediate priorities. There is a need for the school to review its current development plan to take account of this report's findings. This needs to be a high priority for the new headteacher as she takes up her appointment.
- 55 The management of the Language Development Unit is outstanding. This is an improvement from the very strong position reported at the time of the previous inspection. A talented individual, who has a deep level of expertise in her field, leads the unit very effectively. She provides clear leadership for her staff who work effectively as a team. There is a very comprehensive development plan in place that sets out priorities for the future. This plan is used as a reference point by all staff and there is a deep commitment to achieving the priorities outlined. It is a great shame that the whole school has not, until very recently, been able to take advantage of the expertise that lies within the group. Recent initiatives have been taken to ensure that the unit's work is fully understood by all staff. The new headteacher will need to continue to draw on the expertise that exists within the unit's staff to help with staff training throughout the school. The problems outlined in this report relating to pupils' speaking and listening could be improved if good quality liaison existed between the main school and the unit. The unit's staff is very keen to be more involved in such initiatives and have welcomed the recent initiatives that have seen them work more closely with all staff.
- 56 The governors have not yet established appropriate committees to help them be effective and efficient in their role. The present situation sees them working as one whole group to make most of the decisions associated with the school. They are therefore not able to take advantage of a more in-depth look at issues that could be done if they did have committee arrangements. They are very caring individuals who want the best for the school. They recognise that the school has a great deal to do in order to improve the standards being attained and the quality of provision for the pupils. They do, however, appreciate that the school is beginning to make positive in-roads into the weaknesses that have been identified.
- 57 The governors have approved the school's financial proposals but do not have systems in place that are aimed at helping them understand how successful their spending decisions have been. They are therefore not at present linking the use of the budget with raising standards. The unsatisfactory management and organisation for the school's special educational needs provision shows that the school is not able to make the most of the money allocated to specific areas. There are good systems in place to help the school to keep check on the money it

spends. There is good day-to-day administration with the school's secretary working extremely hard to ensure that people visiting the school are made to feel welcome.

- 58 The school is on a split site with the older pupils being taught in a building that is approximately 50 metres away from the building where the younger pupils are taught. This has not made it easy for the level of liaison between staff to occur that the school now desires and needs. However, the accommodation provides the school with a great deal of space and there are plans to use one room for setting up a computer suite in the near future. The school is reasonably generously staffed. There are good numbers of support staff available and there is additional staffing for supporting pupils with special educational needs. There is an adequate amount of learning resources in the school although more up-to-date computers are needed to help with the anticipated developments in this area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59 The school has made some very important improvements in the recent past. It must continue to progress in this way when dealing with the main issues identified in this report. In order to improve still further the governors, new headteacher and staff need to:

- **Seek ways of improving pupils' speaking and listening, giving particular attention to raising the standards of boys. (Paragraphs 1, 4, 8, 12, 14, 18, 21, 30, 71-75, 82, 83, 109 and 116)**
- **Consider ways of improving pupils' attitudes to learning and helping pupils understand what is and is not acceptable by way of the amount of work they complete; (Paragraphs 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 30, 42, 114, 123 and 135)**
- **Provide more challenging work for more able pupils throughout the school; (Paragraphs 5, 6, 9, 13, 17, 19, 20, 27, 30, 107, 116 and 133)**
- **Review and improve the arrangements for managing special educational needs provision; (Paragraphs 6, 10, 20, 25, 30, 53 and 112)**
- **Ensure that there is more effective use made of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. (Paragraphs 7, 18, 22, 29, 113, 127, 149, 151, 152, 156, 160 and 180)**

60 As well as the urgent issues that have been identified above, the school also needs to give attention to the following areas:

- Continue to improve the provision for information and communication technology, especially for older pupils. (Paragraphs 2, 18, 24, 29, 126 and 162-166)
- Make greater use of assessment information. (Paragraphs 17, 23, 41, 81, 100 and 124)
- Continue to build-up better relationships with parents.(Paragraphs 44 and 45)
- Ensure that governors work more efficiently by creating appropriate committees. (Paragraphs 56 and 57)
- Ensure that the expertise in the Language Development Unit is used to help improve the skills of all staff in the main school. (Paragraphs 17, 26 and 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	79

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	15	34	41	8	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)	39	223
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		129

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		25
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14	106

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	18	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	11	16
	Girls	14	13	16
	Total	27	24	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (73)	56(76)	74 (70)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	20
	Girls	13	11	15
	Total	25	21	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (67)	49 (73)	81 (67)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	12
	Girls	7	8	10
	Total	14	17	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44 (40)	53 (30)	69 (60)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	11	12
	Girls	6	8	9
	Total	10	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	31 (67)	59 (73)	66 (58)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	195
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	275

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	38

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	592,188
Total expenditure	578,455
Expenditure per pupil	2,217
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,067
Balance carried forward to next year	14,800

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

55%

Number of questionnaires sent out	262
Number of questionnaires returned	144

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	37	15	5	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	44	15	5	3
The teaching is good.	49	44	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	38	14	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	44	11	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	33	36	12	9	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	46	12	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	39	25	10	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 61 Hedworthfield nursery has 77 children on roll, all attending on a part time basis. The school admits children from a wide area of the community with approximately one third of them transferring to the reception class of the main school. Other children from the nursery are admitted to their local county or church schools when they reach the appropriate age for main school education. The school has the facility to provide a lunch for the children and several families choose to take advantage of this option. There are two sittings to cater for both sessions of the day and these provide valuable opportunities for social and personal development.
- 62 There are three adults in the nursery team consisting of one teacher and two very experienced and well qualified nursery nurses. Children are organised into groups on entry to the nursery and one member staff remains responsible for that group throughout the year. Children form close relationships with their group leader but are also comfortable with all the staff and the volunteer helpers. The main nursery area is large and organised into small sections to accommodate different areas of learning. It is used for individual and small group activities such as painting, construction toys and role-play and children take increasing responsibility for organising their own activities within this space. There is a separate room for focused and directed learning activities where the group leader takes more formal sessions. A 'listening room' is currently being refurbished and the nursery benefits greatly from the new resources that have been obtained with the support of the Education Action Zone.
- 63 The nursery and the reception classes are in separate buildings. The nursery is self-contained and the reception class is in the section of the school that houses pupils aged 4 to 7. The reception class has also been refurbished recently with both flooring and furniture being upgraded and this has ensured a pleasant environment for the children.
- 64 This academic year there has been a change in the curriculum requirements of children under five. This part of education is called the 'Foundation Stage of Learning' and both teachers have attended appropriate training and shared the information with each other. The foundation stage curriculum is followed in both nursery and reception classes and staff are aware of the need to prepare children for the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year. As a result of this change in curriculum, all staff are reviewing their practice and it is a period of considerable challenge as they become increasingly familiar with the stages of development and attainment required.
- 65 Staff find that there is a wide range of skills when children enter nursery with an appreciable number of children entering with poor communication skills. Many children find it difficult to listen or to be in a structured environment and staff take this into account in the early days. Many of the children need encouragement and opportunities to develop their independence and personal, social and emotional skills if they are to be secure in the school situation and staff plan to provide activities to cover the six learning areas of the foundation stage curriculum.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 66 When they first start at the nursery, a substantial number of children have poorly developed skills in this area of learning. The children make good progress although the majority are still

not on course to meet the learning goals identified by the time they finish the reception class. Staff feel it is important to act as role models for the children and use this as an important strategy for developing children's social and emotional skills. In this way they encourage a calm and polite manner and bring kind actions to the attention of the children such as when a child brought a jigsaw to the nursery and it was pointed out to everyone what a kind action that was. Opportunities for social development are found at lunch times when staff encourage children to use their cutlery and to eat and behave politely. Time here, however, is short for some children as parents are waiting to take them home. Stickers are given to children who finish their dinners and staff talk and encourage children while they eat. Opportunities are, however, missed to raise the standards of table manners in preparation for main school.

- 67 Children's confidence grows during their time in the nursery and the first part of each session encourages the development of independence and decision making skills. Time is taken for each child to choose an area in the room and to explain exactly what he or she will do there. Popular areas, such as the computer or the role-play area, are quickly chosen and children accept that they will have to make a second choice. They do this without complaint and are able to use the picture cards to choose another area to work in. This strategy encourages children to be able to make decisions and select how they will spend their time.
- 68 Children are encouraged to be polite at all times and will wait patiently if an entrance to an area is blocked or if they are waiting for a turn on a piece of equipment. They generally complete a task once started but frequently ask for reassurance or confirmation from an adult. On one occasion when pupils were being given a piece of fruit as part of a lesson, they were offered them individually, encouraged to say thank you and the staff member responded by telling them they were welcome. On another occasion, the approach was less specific and planning needs to identify the best approach for social development within an activity.
- 69 There were fewer opportunities to build-on this in the reception class where activities were more directed and less choice was available. Children are, however, able to take their turns when playing 'floor ludo' and are honest about 'going home' when somebody landed on them. Sometimes they did not behave in appropriate ways and would wriggle or roll on the carpet and the teacher would be required to bring them back to task.
- 70 Opportunities for developing a sense of joy, wonder or sorrow, or respond to cultural and religious experiences, are limited and need to be incorporated into planning whenever possible. Appropriate trips, visitors and drama would extend this area of the curriculum.

Communication, Language & Literacy

- 71 The majority of children enter the nursery with poor skills in communication. The majority make satisfactory progress in this area of learning but still fall short of attaining the learning goal by the time they finish in the reception class. Although there are opportunities to listen to staff or peers, there are limited opportunities for listening to stories or poems. This is a key area for developing language and communication skills.
- 72 Children at the end of nursery are able to recognise their names and sit in their places for the planning session. They had some opportunities to talk about their experiences in a structured situation and use was made of a soft toy to indicate when they could talk. This strategy enables each child to have a turn and ensured that others sat quietly while they spoke. A significant number of children expressed themselves in simple, basic terms with a minimal

amount of words. Opportunities to develop vocabulary are missed, particularly in new situations. Appropriate vocabulary is not identified in a structured way at the planning stage.

- 73 At the end of reception some children are beginning to use vocabulary to express their thoughts or explore meanings but the majority are not fluent. They find it difficult to pose questions, as illustrated when required to ask a partner the position of beads on a thread. They seldom entered into prolonged conversations with each other and answers to peers and adults are likely to be short and simple. Teachers sometimes responded quickly or answered themselves rather than leaving time for the child to formulate and express thoughts and then encourage extensions of simple statements.
- 74 Role-play situations in both nursery and reception are of an appropriate standard. In the nursery there is a well resourced house play area where children play freely but with limited conversation. Staff make a useful contribution to language in an alternative role play area when they participate and involve children. This was noticeable in the 'fruit shop' when staff became involved and asked questions about the cost of fruit and made complaints about the shop which the children loved. However, when the staff are not directly involved, the limited resources makes it difficult for children to play spontaneously. The role-play situation in the reception class, a police station, made a valuable contribution to the language development of the children who used a tape recorder and reporting sheets to tell the policeman in an 'interview' and in a written form what had been lost.
- 75 Children's listening skills are poor. In the nursery they sit quietly but are often not actively listening and cannot contribute to the discussion. Similarly, in reception, many children lose interest because they have not been listening. They then move about or roll backwards and are not fully prepared to embark on the task. They miss teaching points and do not participate in the conversations and discussions because they have lost the main points. Opportunities to develop listening skills need to be planned and developed at every stage. The anticipated 'listening room' in the nursery may help but opportunities to hear, discuss and learn stories and rhymes would develop appropriate skills. Although some children in nursery knew the words to, 'She'll be coming round the mountain,' many did not participate and it was due to the wholehearted participation of the staff that the experience was enjoyable.
- 76 In the nursery there are comfortable areas where children can read books but few choose this as an activity and cannot talk with knowledge about books they like or enjoy. In both nursery and reception children are able to borrow story-sacks and have the opportunity to read and discuss books at home.
- 77 In the nursery children are being introduced to the sounds of the alphabet in a commercial phonics scheme that has just been introduced. This has been identified as a useful introduction to the scheme and it is being used in a structured way in the reception class. Care needs to be taken in the way the scheme is introduced in the nursery so that pupils appreciate the purpose of sounds rather than experience a hurried introduction to a picture. At the end of reception some children are able to sound-out simple three letter words and one or two can identify the simple digraphs 'sh' and 'ch'. The majority of pupils, however, are not able to confidently build words. They are beginning independent writing with the support of the teacher but this is limited for a significant majority. Almost a third of the class receive help from a special educational needs support teacher. Children in reception classes have individual targets to improve their writing skills and are able to refer to these.

Mathematical Development

- 78 Mathematical opportunities in the nursery are fewer than for language. Children just about make satisfactory progress in this area but many still fall short of achieving the learning goal by the time they finish in the reception class. Children are able to count to 20 collectively and some are able to count further. The majority are able to recognise numbers to 5 but do not write them or record. There are missed opportunities for counting and the majority of children are unable to recognise 'more' or 'less' than. Some could recognise 'the same as' when comparing columns on a pictogram but answers to questions are led by more able children and few individual questions are proffered to act as assessments.
- 79 Counting games and number rhymes and songs are rather limited although these should play a valuable part in the structure of the day and contribute to children's learning. Similarly matching, sequencing and dealing with patterns do not have as high a profile as routine activities and this limits children's experiences. There is a range of jigsaws to develop spatial awareness and children gained experiences from a computer programme where they inserted regular shapes into the framework of a house. The children show considerable dexterity with the computer and are able to identify the appropriate shape and place it accurately in position. They could name basic square and circle shapes and enjoyed the activity. When children are given a shape and the teacher described the attributes some are able to identify their shape but a significant number required support from the teacher to do this.
- 80 In the reception class children are becoming increasingly familiar with ordering number and some are able to identify the position and recognise the symbol. Others, however use other strategies to complete the set task such as copying or remembering colours. Activities to encourage familiarity with the order number are well planned and offer different levels of understanding for different ability levels. There was a range of activities and children were not left with a task after their interest level had waned. Because of the level of language skills of some children, many found number tasks with a language content difficult to complete.
- 81 Assessments are recorded and kept in a book. They cover basic shapes, repeating patterns, more and less, counting in tens and sorting money. Assessments are not organised for the range of abilities within the class but the teacher writes an appropriate comment to put the result in context.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 82 Children have limited general knowledge when they start school. They do not sufficiently build on this position, with progress being unsatisfactory, so that the majority are not on course to meet the learning goal for this area of learning. In the nursery, children are able to watch and care for the bird and pets, which are kept there and children have walked around the local area to identify and discuss environmental issues such as whether certain parts of the neighbourhood have been well cared for. They were enthusiastic when they found a worm outside but discussion with an adult did not develop their understanding or sense of awe. During the inspection the children went on a trip to the bus depot and particularly enjoyed the bus-wash. Discussion after the bus trip encouraged each child to participate but did not extend to discussions of feelings as they anticipated the trip or went through the bus-wash. They were not able to ask questions about the trip but did record, in picture format, something that was important to them about the day. These experiences have been limited during the year and the children would benefit from a range of similar experiences at regular intervals

- 83 During the year the children in the nursery have done some cooking and noted the changes that take place when things are heated. This experience has been extended in the reception class where children made a shopping list, went to the shop for the ingredients and cooked with them, noting the changes when heat was applied. Children in the nursery also complete a weather chart but vocabulary used was limited and, when one child proffered information about the weather forecast, this was not used to extend children's understanding.
- 84 There is one computer in the nursery and one in the reception class. The children enjoy using them and the programs are appropriate to support learning, particularly with number work and phonics. The ratio of computers to children is below recommended levels so opportunities for children to use the programs are limited. In the reception class children also have the opportunity to use tape recorders and are able to follow a system of colour-coded stickers to operate them.
- 85 There is an area for small construction toys in the nursery and children are able to experience a range of technology for building and matching. They are able to choose tools and can hammer nails into a piece of wood. There are fewer similar opportunities available in the reception class.
- 86 This is an area of learning where children's progress is unsatisfactory. They do not benefit from a wide range of planned experiences that are specifically designed to encourage exploration, observation, problem solving and discussion. This is an area for development.

Physical Development

- 87 Children make satisfactory progress in this area but the majority are not on-course to achieve the learning goal for this area of learning. The resources for outdoor play are good. In the nursery there are sufficient cycle and pedal toys for the children to have frequent turns and opportunities. There is a small climbing frame and slide and a tunnel, wooden building bricks and a wide range of small equipment. The area outside the nursery has hard and grassed surfaces and there is also a reasonably sized covered area to allow for outdoor activities in poorer weather.
- 88 Much of the time children show independence in their play but there are missed opportunities to develop the language of movement alongside their actions. When an adult was involved in a throwing and catching activity with children, they benefited from the language and skills development that took place.
- 89 Outdoor play is timetabled for part of each session when the whole nursery go out together. This acts as a playtime but means that children are limited in their choices as 39 children share the equipment. A more flexible arrangement would mean increased adult input and influence in their physical development. The session does not include structured and planned movement work to encourage different styles of moving.
- 90 Similarly, in the reception class, resources are good and consist of equipment that requires co-operation between children as well as physical skills. These resources are, however, only timetabled for use once each week and a more flexible arrangement would benefit the children as well as making best use of the equipment.
- 91 Children in the nursery have many opportunities to develop finer physical skills such as using a hammer to hammer nails into a piece of wood and using jigsaws and construction toys. In the

reception class they were able to thread beads with confidence and dexterity. Children were confident in their use of large and small equipment and were able to adopt appropriate positions for the activities such as standing on a block to hammer, sitting on chairs to thread beads and kneeling with other small equipment. The small set of stairs in the nursery ensures that children are able to use steps. Co-ordinated sequences had been developed in the nursery as children danced to a tune in preparation for an excellent performance at a local theatre. They were able to move with rhythm and produce an exciting and impressive performance for the public.

- 92 Much of the time children show independence in their play but there are missed opportunities to develop the language of movement alongside their actions.

Creative Development

- 93 This is another area in which a substantial number of children have limited experience when they join the nursery. Many have not had the appropriate stimulation to encourage them to use their imaginations and the school has much to do in developing the skills of creativity and imagination.

- 94 Much is done to encourage these skills during their time in nursery and reception and satisfactory progress is made. However, the majority are still not on course to meet the learning goal for this area of learning. In many respects the situations provided for role play are so close to the experiences of the children that the opportunities for using imagination are limited. However, the resources of the home corner are good and children value the chance of playing there. Although the language used in the home corner is usually short phrases, the children stay in role and busy themselves with the various activities there. They play well together and understand the routines attached to this area. In the fruit shop, the involvement of staff helps the children in their role as customer or shop-keeper. However, when staff do not intervene, the lack of resources in the fruit shop closes down the opportunities for spontaneous play. When intervention occurs they check on the price of fruit, queue while the shopkeeper serves those before them and check that their purses and shopping bags are with them. The participation of the adult helped to create the correct environment as she chivvied along the shopkeeper to the delight of the customers who became less passive members of the queue and joined in the conversation as shoppers.

- 95 In the reception class, the creation of the police station was appreciated by the children who used it mainly for language development. They did, however, also use it to play the part of police officers, complete with handcuffs, radio, tape recorder and helmet, or members of the public come to report a loss. The children adopted different voices according to their role and became gruff police officers or doleful members of the public. The teacher had been involved in showing the children how to use the police station and they were able to listen to her interview on the tape recorder. They left the station to help in the search with purpose and determination. Their involvement indicated a good development in their imaginative play and their lack of inhibition was delightful.

- 96 In both nursery and the reception class, staff have organised areas or opportunities where children can draw, paint, make junk models or use different fabrics and materials for collage work. There are appropriate themes such as the one connected to the visit to the bus depot and there was a choice of contributing to the painting of a large bus for a shared display, or individual pictures relating to the experience of the child. Children can choose materials, tools and implements when making models but often stick them together at random rather than using

their imagination to create something specific. They do, however, gain considerable independence in using the resources and following the routines of moving work to an area to dry thereby leaving the working area free for the next person.

- 97 In music, children were taught the names of percussion instruments and some were given the opportunity to accompany the others while they sang, 'She'll be coming round the mountain'. The children were able to keep a good rhythm but did not have an opportunity to use the instruments imaginatively. The same lesson was conducted in the reception class and this raises queries over progression of skills, knowledge of songs and use of instruments. This area needs to be addressed if children are to be prepared for the National Curriculum in Year 1. Ten of the children represented the nursery at the local dance festival. They performed with confidence and aplomb and were undaunted by the lights, audience, surroundings or the enormous volume of the applause. The children and the support staff who trained them, are to be congratulated on the quality of the performance.

Teaching and Provision

- 98 Teaching in nursery and reception ranges from unsatisfactory to good but is predominantly satisfactory. Where teaching was unsatisfactory it was marked by a lack of intervention during play and, where it was good, children benefited from good planning and organisation. There is satisfactory teaching for all areas of learning in the foundation stage but aspects need to be addressed in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and the use of stories and rhymes. Teaching is good in personal and social education where the development of the children's abilities to share resources, wait their turns and play together kindly are impressive.
- 99 Planning is not settled and has been adjusted several times throughout the year in a bid to secure best practice. Staff are aware they have not yet become familiar with all aspects of the contents of the Foundation Stage of Learning curriculum and weekly plans have not always linked sufficiently closely with the stages of progression. They have visited other Early Years settings to share ideas and develop their present practice and plan to have a definitive planning system in place for the beginning of the next academic year.
- 100 Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory. Children are grouped before assessments take place and then not altered. There is a new Local Education Authority format for baseline assessment but some aspects are felt to be open to interpretation. Assessments from the nursery are not used by the reception class and target setting was not felt to be effective until the spring term when the teacher had got to know the children well. Assessments are not used to inform planning. Although children with special educational needs are identified, gifted and talented children are not provided for appropriately so as to cater for their needs. This is insufficient in both nursery and the reception class. Opportunities frequently are missed to develop conversations, introduce new vocabulary in a planned and structured manner or make children aware of emotions and feeling.
- 101 The quality of the teaching assistants is good in both nursery and the reception class. Teachers rely on the support of these members of staff and value their contributions. In the nursery, particularly, teaching assistants play a major role in the education of the children and bring positive ideas and contributions to their education.
- 102 Children enter the nursery with a wide range of abilities and those who go on to the reception class within the school enter and leave with attainments in literacy and numeracy below those

expected for their ages. Their experiences during the Foundation Stage of Learning do, however, ensure that progress is satisfactory in most areas.

Parents

- 103 Both the nursery and reception classes have induction meetings for parents and opportunities to visit the settings prior to the children's admission. These prepare both parents and children for their new experiences.
- 104 Parents have good access to staff informally at the end of each day and they are comfortable and confident talking to both teaching staff and the assistants. Regular information is sent home and the children in the nursery have a home-and-school profile which contains notes, photographs and work. Children are proud of these folders and bring in contributions from home to be talked about and included.
- 105 The reception teacher has organised and run family literacy and numeracy courses for parents of both reception and nursery children. These have been well attended and parents have benefited from the information. There is a designated room for parents' meetings, which is well resourced and furnished and provides a pleasant environment and welcoming atmosphere.
- 106 The reception class teacher makes a point of going into the playground each evening to talk to parents informally and follows the procedures of the main school with formal parents' evenings and written reports being issued in the summer term.

ENGLISH

- 107 Standards in English are well below what is typical for 7 and 11- year-olds and far more pupils are working below the expected level than above it. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the school's results were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Performance was low at the time of the last inspection, particularly at the age of 11, and results since then have shown a slight overall decline, whilst the trend nationally has been steadily rising. Boys' performance has fallen away badly and is now on average over a year behind the national norm at the age of 11. Pupils in the 7 to 11 age range, especially the older ones, are clearly suffering the lingering effects of an unsettled schooling. Many show only spasmodic interest in learning and have poor learning skills. Their ability to listen, read and write to support and record effective learning is well below that expected for their age and they do not achieve as well as they should. Higher attaining pupils seldom achieve their potential and advance to the higher than expected levels. The out-of-class support for the many pupils in this age range who have special educational needs is not effectively organised to ensure their satisfactory progress.
- 108 Nevertheless, there is clear evidence in that the very good work of the caretaker headteacher and the literacy co-ordinator is beginning to counter the legacy of poor attitudes and standards. Good systems and resources are in place to support work in English. As a result, teaching quality and staff morale are now good and there is a clear commitment on the part of all classroom staff to meet the needs of all pupils and raise standards. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have positive attitudes to learning and their work over time shows good progress in response to good teaching and support. As a result, the attainment of 7-year-olds in writing has improved significantly over previous years.
- 109 By the ages of 7 and 11, standards in speaking and listening are well below average and the school does not plan enough opportunities for pupils to build and practise these skills to a level at which they will support learning in all subjects. Pupils enter Year 1 with low confidence and skill in speech. Many do not participate in discussion or the shared reading of stories. When they do, their contributions are often limited to single words and the weak relevance of answers reflects poor comprehension of what was asked. Immature pronunciations inhibit early reading development. Pupils in Year 2 find discussion difficult. Boys, in particular, do not listen to each other so as to build on others' ideas. Instead, they call out any ideas that spring to mind. As a result, the pace and coherence of learning suffer as the teacher fights to keep discussion on track whilst valuing and using all contributions. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils show increasing fluency and confidence in using talk when working together in informal situations. They are less successful in more formal situations and teachers sometimes close down opportunities, for example, when groups share their work at the end of a literary lesson, in order to maintain pace and focus. Few pupils show ability to reason out their answers fluently and at length; a significant number lack the ability to use talk to negotiate solutions to shared problems. When pupils read aloud, they seldom vary their voices expressively to bring out their sense of character and situation. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to talk in a planned and extended ways about things that interest them. When, in a good Year 5/6 lesson, pupils had the chance to use role-play in groups to interpret a theme that was of urgent importance to them, they tackled it with energetic enthusiasm, as if it were a new thing. The resulting sketches were brief and made far more use of body language than of words; performances were unpractised and lacked verbal skill. Even so, strong progress was made in the lesson. This was one of the few English lessons observed in which the quality of learning was as good as the teaching. Usually the poor standard of pupils' learning skills meant that good teaching did not generate the results it deserved. This is a

major issue for the school and one which must be tackled if the overall quality of learning is to improve.

110 Attainment in reading is well below average at both 7 and 11 years of age. The school gives high priority to reading and works very hard to promote good attitudes to books, good reading habits and tastes, direct contact with local authors, a strong home-learning partnership with parents and active membership of libraries. These efforts have some effect and girls, in particular, are responding well to what the school promotes. However, far too few of the more able pupils achieve the higher levels, whilst many do not reach the expected level, though the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs largely accounts for this. Most teachers teach reading skills well. They provide daily experience of quality texts in the literacy hour, set regular reading homework, provide good resources and frequent opportunities to read quietly and hear and assess each pupils' reading weekly. Good records are kept and used to guide progress through the graded scheme. However, pupils are not always moved on at their best pace. For example, when sampling pupils' reading, inspectors sometimes found that pupils of different abilities could all read each other's books. By the age of 7, higher attaining pupils show a developed knowledge of and taste for books and authors. They read fluently and expressively and with a good awareness of the character and demand of the text. Average and lower attainers recognise non-fiction books by typical features - "Because it's got a photo on the cover", said one - and know the roles of author, illustrator and publisher. However, they have difficulty sounding-out and building words and lower attainers lose meaning and any recognition of their own errors. By the time they are 11, pupils can talk about the different qualities of authors such as Dahl, Garner and Rowlands. They can use the cover of a non-fiction book to predict the information carrying features within and to explain the procedure for locating specific information. Reading the opening of an unfamiliar story, pupils of different attainments offer a perceptive response, but only the higher attainers can answer questions about how an understanding of character and situation is developed. None can comment independently on the writer's choice of words in a way necessary to achieve the higher level, although teachers of Year 6 pupils were seen to teach these skills. The school has two spacious, attractive and well-stocked libraries but makes too little use of them in promoting independent reading skills.

111 In response to the school's improving provisions, the standard of pupils' writing is rising at Key Stage 1 and progress is good, though attainment is still below average. Pupils have good opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and they write brief but well-formed, directions, stories, recounts, directions letters and poems. They write imaginative new versions of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', or add vivid detail to a retelling of 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Higher attaining pupils handle language forms skilfully. For example, one pupil wrote this riddle for spectacles:

'I have arms but I cannot hug you.

I have windows but no curtains.

I have two glasses but don't pour water into me'.

The most able pupils begin to use a joined script, though few pupils write neatly or present their work well. Punctuation and sentence structures are correct but at the simplest level. The frequent spelling errors of the less able pupils show recognisable phonetic guesswork (ospetel); higher attainers show a better knowledge of the system (bootafully). Pupils currently at the end of Year 6 have made unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 and their standard of work is well below average overall, though the work of one class is significantly better in all respect than that of the other class. Even in the best examples, the range of text types is narrow and pupils have had few opportunities to write freely, independently and at length. Control of spelling and punctuation is well below expectations, but most pupils develop a fluent

and legible joined script. The most able pupils show good ability to vary word choice and sentence structure, for example, to bring out the typical narrative features of different types of story, such as moral, ghost, fantasy and adventure stories. Teaching is becoming more rigorous and challenging. Teachers at both key stages set clear and demanding individual targets and their very good marking of pupils' work reflects a determination to follow-up each target stringently.

- 112 The many pupils with special educational needs do not progress as well as they should. When these pupils are taught in class, their teachers plan and prepare appropriate work for them and use any available support well. However, at Key Stage 2, adequate support is seldom available for the range and extent of pupils' needs. Pupils who work within the programme of Additional Literacy Support benefit from effective teaching and a strongly progressive learning scheme. When groups are withdrawn for literacy work in the special needs room, pupils experience kindness and good humour, but they do not learn. The teaching does not make effective use of planned opportunities to extend and assess their understanding and use of language, either spoken or written.
- 113 Pupils have useful opportunities to use the spoken and the written word to support their learning in other subjects. Examples of pupils' growing ability to use the special vocabularies of different subjects were seen in science, history and religious education. However, this work is fragmented and carries no evidence of a focus on literacy, for example, to develop planning and drafting skills related to the way in which each subject typically organises information. The volume and finish of much work are less than should be expected and pupils have too few opportunities to develop and utilise their language and learning skills independently, for example researching an interest or writing at length. A challenge facing the school is to orchestrate the literacy strategy across the curriculum, so that pupils have a better range and quality of opportunity to learn language and to use language to learn in all subjects.
- 114 The quality of teaching is good overall. Of the ten class lessons observed, three were satisfactory, five good and two very good. In addition, outstanding literacy teaching was observed in the Language Development Unit. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection when most lessons were satisfactory, few were good and 'significant elements' were unsatisfactory. This improvement results from much effort by all staff to improve their expertise; from the quality of monitoring and support given by the English co-ordinator, the head teacher and the local literacy consultant; from consistency of work within the literacy strategy; from improved resources and from improved staff stability, morale and teamwork. A striking feature was that the quality of teaching was better than the quality of learning in most of the lessons observed. This is because, in the past, pupils have not developed good learning skills and attitudes and it illustrates why standards respond more slowly than provisions to the school's strong drive for improvement. The legacy of these difficulties is most marked at Key Stage 2.
- 115 The teaching of pupils up to the age of 7 is good overall. The main strengths of work at this stage are:
- the very good teamwork between both teachers and the support assistant, so that both behaviour and learning are very effectively managed and promoted;
 - the very good communication skills of both teachers, who ensure that everything is lucid, well paced, interactive and interesting, so that pupils listen attentively, understand and have active roles;
 - the rigorous use of assessment to ensure that each group achieves well during the lesson because each task builds new learning on earlier learning at the right level;

- the friendly and sensitive, but firmly purposeful, relationships in each class. Teachers value each pupil and each effort and strike a balance between pace and patience; challenge and support.
- good planning provides the basis for these qualities by ensuring that lessons have strong structure, clear objectives, varied methods and attractive resources.

116 The teaching of 7 to 11- year-old pupils varies between satisfactory and very good and is good overall in the lessons seen but the inability of teachers to help pupils use their literacy skills in other subjects is a concern. Teachers manage their difficult classes well. Classes are difficult because many pupils retain the negative attitudes acquired during a more unsettled period of schooling. Difficulties are made worse by the arrangements for grouping pupils in mixed age classes. The method used robs classes in Years 3, 4 and 5 of the older, higher attaining pupils who might set a standard of aspiration and attainment. This leaves teachers with classes which consist essentially of middle and lower attainers. The difficulty is compounded when, as in Year 3, over half the pupils have special educational needs, many of which include challenging behaviours. Teachers value and respect their pupils and work with great commitment to enthuse them and raise their self-esteem. They all set very good examples and ensure that their values and relationships contribute well to pupils' social and moral development. They consistently reinforce good responses and point-out the impact of a misdemeanour on others. As at Key Stage 1, these teachers plan carefully to bring interesting resources, clear aims and structures and interactive approaches into their lessons. Some inspirational qualities surprised reluctant learners in Years 5 and 6 into an enthusiastic response to poetry. Some common weaknesses are:

- a failure to set clear targets for the quantity of work pupils will complete and the quality of its presentation. Lacking this, many pupils simply spread-out the task and present it without care;
- failure to refocus the lesson aims at the end and use them to review learning rigorously, so that pupils begin to think in terms of success criteria and to evaluate their own learning;
- questioning methods that do not teach pupils how to discuss language. As a result, teachers begin to answer their own questions and to talk too much.

117 The very experienced and committed co-ordinator provides very good subject leadership. Having led the development of the literacy strategy across the school in difficult circumstances, she has worked tirelessly on an imaginative range of initiatives to underpin the strategy and boost its effect. Most of these initiatives aim to strengthen literacy links with parents, authors, local businesses and outside agencies and several have been strongly supported by the education action zone and the local literacy consultant. Such initiatives include:

- the organisation of a successful writers week in which people from many occupations worked with children in school to show how writing was a key skill in their different workplaces;
- the constant use of visiting authors and story tellers to raise the profile of literature and narrative;
- strengthening links with the Jarrow library and the children' librarian to promote good habits of library use by all pupils;
- the establishment of home-school and home learning agreements, and the building of Family Literacy courses and 'morning conferences' for parents, to encourage and equip them to play a full and effective role in children's learning;
- the development of 'story-sacks' projects and giving a 'writer's kit bag' to every pupil to encourage voluntary practice in telling and writing stories.

- 118 These ties with parents and the community correspond to a good range of in-house initiatives led by the co-ordinator. These include:
- the introduction of ‘response partners’ and ‘reading partners’ in which older pupils take responsibility for supporting the speaking and reading development of younger pupils;
 - the comprehensive upgrading of the school’s book stock and its use. This work has had a particular focus on books for boys and books to support the less able readers;
 - the development of individual writing targets throughout the school and of writing areas and writing boards for pupils’ use in all classrooms.
- 119 These interrelated initiatives shrewdly address necessary aims and priorities and reflect the right vision for English in order to improve attitudes and standards. In relation to the same vision, the co-ordinator also monitors the teaching of literacy and samples pupils’ work. The outcomes are used to identify training needs and curricular issues. Information gathered from the good procedures for assessing standards in English is very well used. Its uses include: monitoring the progress of different groups; evaluating provisions; setting individual targets; identifying success criteria for higher attaining pupils; planning the use of staff and resources to support learning in English and reviewing the arrangement of pupils into groups. All these well co-ordinated and well-directed efforts reflect the admirable strength and quality of the determination to improve the school. The effort has clearly contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching and other key provisions. It is now beginning to be rewarded with the first clear signs of rising standards.

MATHEMATICS

- 120 Standards in mathematics in the school are low. The results of national tests have remained low because too many pupils at ages 7 and 11 are not attaining levels for their age and too few pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment. The trend in recent years is that standards are relatively static and at a low level at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents no change since the last inspection.
- 121 Standards at age 11 have been consistently below the national averages for the past four years. The results were slightly better in 1998 but this improvement has not been maintained. In 2000 just over half the pupils attained the levels expected for 11-year-olds compared with 71 per cent nationally. The proportion of high achievers also fell well below the national average. Pupils with special needs did less well than expected. Too many pupils failed to reach the level below that expected for their age. Their results were well behind national standards with almost three times as many pupils being in this group. These results show that standards have fallen throughout the 7 to 11 age range. They are well below the expected results for this year group. The results in 2000 show that this school is also below those of similar schools. The attainment of boys is significantly lower than girls but the school’s previous attempts to address this have had no effect. The school exceeded its predicted target for this year group by 9 per cent.
- 122 Standards at age 7 are well below the national average for pupils of this age. Pupils enter school in Year 1 with standards below most pupils of the same age. Standards have been well below the national averages for the past four years with the exception of 1998 when they were in line. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in national tests for 7-year-olds also fell well behind national expectations. Over a quarter of the pupils failed to reach the expected level for their age compared with 9 per cent nationally. At this age there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. However early indications are that the

national test results for 7-year-olds in 2001 have improved greatly. The national test results of 11-year-olds have also improved but not by the same margins as those of 7-year-olds.

- 123 The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory at both key stages. There was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in both key stages. There was also some teaching that was better than satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly using the National Numeracy Strategy as guidance. In all classes the plans show the three-part lesson. However, in some classes the introductions to the lessons are overlong. This leaves too little time for pupils to work independently. On some occasions there was insufficient time for the plenary and this was omitted. This prevented pupils being able to see successful examples of work and an effective summary to the lesson. In the main, teachers use methods which are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2. However, the management of behaviour is unsatisfactory. Pupils have poor attitudes to learning in mathematics especially in Years 3 to 6. In too many lessons the pupils are noisy and display a range of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour. Too much teaching time is lost in attempting to deal with this disruptive behaviour. The use of support staff is good. In the oral and mental starters they sit close to difficult pupils and attempt to keep them on task. Sometimes they sit pupils on their laps to reduce disruption. In the main part of the lesson they work with groups of less able pupils explaining and encouraging. They work closely with teachers and understand the purpose of lessons well.
- 124 The quality of work in the pupils' books is poor. This is not true in one Year 5 class where the work in the books is well organised and presented. In this class handwriting and number formation is good. Teachers do not, in the main, insist on sufficiently high levels of layout and presentation. Work is regularly marked but there are inconsistencies in marking. In most cases pupils understand their next learning objective and marking indicates when this has been met. In too many instances pupils are not told what are the good features of their work or what they have to do to improve. In many classes, assessment opportunities whilst the lesson is in progress, are lost because the teachers spend too much time dealing with noisy and disruptive pupils.
- 125 Overall the quality of learning is unsatisfactory. The main contributory factors to this are poor listening skills and inappropriate behaviour in lessons. Overall progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but the pupils with special educational needs in these classes do not make satisfactory progress nor do the more able pupils. The teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of the more able pupils and do not plan work which challenges or inspires them. The progress made by pupils in the Language Development Unit is good as a result of the high quality teaching. The very detailed assessments made of pupils' skills are a significant factor in helping these teachers plan work which is well matched to their abilities. They use a range of good quality resources. They manage and use space well. In the main school, progress for pupils aged 7-11 is unsatisfactory. Teachers fail to deal with the frequent instances of disruptive behaviour which interrupt teaching and prevent pupils learning at a satisfactory pace. Despite this disappointing picture, evidence seems to suggest that the progress pupils are making in mathematics is beginning to improve.
- 126 There is an inconsistent use of information and communication technology to support teaching. The school has recently adopted a commercially produced assessment package. Pupils leave the mathematics lesson to do their assessment activities at the computer. This reduces the time spent in learning mathematics in that lesson. It is too early to say what impact the use of this package is having on teaching and learning. No evidence of computer programs directly supporting the content of lessons was seen. In one Year 2 class the teacher made very good

use of an interactive white board in the introduction to the lesson. She had prepared a series of interesting and colourful worksheets which engaged and sustained pupils' interest. The use of this white board enabled the teacher to clearly model the mathematical processes involved.

- 127 Links with other subjects are underdeveloped. A few examples were seen when in a literacy lesson pupils conducted a survey of pets and discussed their findings. Some examples of graphs and charts were seen in geography, history and science. Links with industry were good. The local Education Business Partnership led a particularly successful activity. A member of a local building firm conducted tower-building activity with Year 6 pupils. This was good example of using and applying mathematics and of links with design and technology. Two other members of staff were also present in the lesson. The clear planning, high adult-pupil ratio and the use of available space (the school hall) enabled learning to proceed at a good pace. There were sufficient resources for all pupils to be actively involved. In this lesson the pupils' attitude and behaviour were good.
- 128 There is a satisfactory supply of mathematics resources in classrooms including number squares and lines, tables, calculators, rules, two-dimensional shapes. The staffroom contained a central supply of less frequently used resources including weights and balances, calculators, two and three-dimensional shapes, fraction games and apparatus and a variety of containers for measuring capacity. These were stored in clearly labelled boxes for easy identification.
- 129 The mathematics coordinator was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection.

SCIENCE

- 130 In the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2000, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level or above was well below the national average. It was well below in comparison with other schools in a similar social context. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher levels was below the national average and broadly similar to schools in the same social setting. The results over the past three years indicate that the school's performance has been below the national average and there has been a significant difference between the performance of boys whose achievement is lower than that of girls.
- 131 In 2000, results of teachers' assessments for 7-year-olds reaching the expected level or above, were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils who reached the higher levels was above the national average. Attainment was above in comparison with results for similar schools.
- 132 At the time of previous inspection, standards were judged to be below national average by the age of 7 and well below by the age of 11. Evidence gathered during this inspection indicates that standards are still below at the ages of 7 and 11. There are some contributory reasons for this continuing low attainment and performance in science. Pupils' prior attainment is very low when they enter the school, particularly in their English and mathematical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world, which has an impact on their performance in science tests. In addition, the unstable staffing and leadership of the school recently, has had an impact on the pupils' behaviour and attitude in lessons, particularly the older pupils, which as had a adverse effect on the school's results. Since the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, the school has not successfully introduced their implementation in the science curriculum to help support and develop learning and to assist pupils to undertake the actual

tests. Also the use of information and communication technology is currently underdeveloped across the school to help support and develop pupils' learning in the subject.

- 133 The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding in the National Curriculum programme related to the study on living things, materials, and physical forces. However, there is an over-directive style of teaching by staff which stifles and prevents pupils' developing their skills of scientific enquiry and investigation, particularly of the more able pupils in classes and does not offer them the opportunity of working independently in groups and record their findings themselves. This has the effect of pupils having a knowledge-based and factual understanding, rather than one based on actually working on practical investigations to develop scientific of observation, classifying and predicating skills.
- 134 By the age of 7, pupils have covered a range of work in all aspects of the subject and are developing their scientific language when discussing their work. Pupils in a Year 1 class, know and understand what is meant by a 'push' and 'pull' when working with plasticine to make different shapes. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson, know and understand that vehicles will travel down a funnel at varying speeds depending on the surface. They are developing an awareness of a 'fair test' when they investigate on different materials such as the carpet, lino and wooden surfaces. As pupils move through the school they build-on and develop their knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the subject. Pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class, know and understand, through observation, that 'dyed water' travels up the stem of celery stem and that a plant needs roots to live because they transport water and nutrients through the plant. In a Year 5 and 6 class, pupils know that the heart is a muscle and needs exercising and can use graphs to compose and answer questions about the pulse rates of different pupils in their class. Pupils in a Year 5 and 6 class know where their heart is and understand that its rate increases with exercise. It helps develop their understanding of fair testing and understanding that a change in the variable, such as checking their pulses before the two-minute time limit, will affect their results.
- 135 Pupils' overall attitudes to work are broadly sound. When motivated and interested, they listen well to adults and each other. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, when the pupils were working on how exercise affects the heart beat and circulation. However, in a few lessons there is inappropriate behaviour and inattention, which is due to a lack of appropriately differentiated work to meet pupils' specific needs. Overall the behaviour and attitude is at the expected standard and level, particularly when the work is matched to their needs.
- 136 The overall quality of teaching is of a satisfactory quality, with one lesson being of good quality. Teachers' subject knowledge is soundly developed but there is some lack of confidence and lost opportunities in developing pupils' understanding through investigative work. Although the teachers' guide and control the pupils, the over-use of a directive style of teaching and tight control of pupils' learning often limits the rates of learning in lessons. There is also no account of the needs of pupils of different ability in teachers' planning to meet the needs of all ability levels in classes, particularly the more able pupils who require more challenging work and activities. In the better lessons observed, teachers use open-ended questioning effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. In addition these lessons have a definite structure, a brisk pace, with an appropriate emphasis on practical investigations and high expectations of what pupils learn to build-on what they already know. In one good lesson observed in a Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher matched the lesson to meet the needs of all pupils in the class and intervened and raised questions to make pupils approach the activity like young scientists. The marking of pupils' work is of a variable quality. In the

better examples seen, teachers indicate where pupils understand concepts and where they need help and support in their learning. The use of resources and support staff helps pupils learning in lessons. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson, when the pupils learnt about 'pushes' and 'pulls'.

- 137 The quality of leadership in science is soundly developed and appropriate. The co-ordinator has just recently returned from maternity leave and monitors half-termly planning. She has analysed last year's performances in tests, and identified weaknesses that the school needs to address to improve test results from an audit she carried-out before going on maternity leave. There are currently whole-school assessment procedures in place, but there is no tracking of individual or groups of pupils to help with future planning to raise standards. There is a policy and scheme of work which rotates on a two-year rolling programme and the school is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

- 138 It was possible to observe only three lessons in art and design. Pupils' work is generously displayed around the school and judgements are based on this evidence, on the lessons seen and on discussion with pupils and staff and a scrutiny of planning.
- 139 Standards are as expected at 7 and 11 years of age. Given their low starting point, this represents good achievement by all pupils, including those who have special educational needs. The work and achievements of pupils in the Language Development Unit are particularly impressive. Across the school, effective teaching enables pupils to make good gains in a range of media and techniques and to develop the confidence and skill to attempt different creative challenges. Standards have been at least maintained since the last inspection, despite the school's unsettled history during that period.
- 140 Pupils' observational skills develop well in a range of media. In Year 2, pupils have made good use of their sketch-books to develop pencil techniques, such as shading and hatching. Using charcoal, they have sketched oil-lamps, rubbing and smudging to create an impression of depth. Pupils in Year 4 have drawn good, life-size portrait heads with accurately observed shapes and features, whilst those in Year 5 have drawn still-life studies of pots and a bowl of fruit. Pupils develop good selection and control of colour, medium and form to produce striking landscape studies. In Year 2, pupils have painted seascapes in pale colour washes, whilst pupils in the Language Development Unit have used colour and form more brightly and boldly in large studies of the nearby coast. Pupils in Year 6 have used coloured chalks on dark paper to create strongly effective impressions of the London Blitz. The bright searchlight beams radiating across threatening skies show a good understanding of composition and tonal contrast. The work of great artists features continuously and pupils respond well to the challenge of emulating techniques to capture similar impressions. For example, Year 2 have mixed and used colour boldly to paint flower studies in the manner of Van Gogh, whilst in Year 5, pupils chose either pencil or pastel to show their technical understanding of essential differences between Rembrandt and Monet in their use of defining outline.
- 141 Two notable features which contribute significantly to pupils' learning through art are, the strong use of art to support work in other subjects and the involvement of pupils in major projects which extend beyond the school. For example, pupils in the Language Development Unit have benefited greatly from the opportunity to work with professional artists. To their great delight and pride, they have risen to the challenge and the ideas contained in their excellent colour designs have been incorporated into a stained-glass window. Examples of

mutually beneficial links with other subjects are in evidence everywhere. For instance, pupils in Year 1 worked as illustrators and as authors to make picture-story books called 'We're Going on a Dragon Hunt' based on a well-known Michael Rosen story. Pictures and words match very well. Art links not only with literacy, but also with history, geography, music, science and design and technology. For example, whilst pushing and pulling clay in response to their visit to the coast, pupils in Year 1 recalled their work on forces in science. The Year 2 seascapes were inspired by the music of Vivaldi. In Year 4, pupils have produced very sculptural African masks and also, in relation to a visit to Bedes World and their study of the religious history of their region, they have completed skilful copies of an illuminated manuscript.

- 142 The quality of teaching and learning in the three lessons seen was consistently good. Each lesson was well planned and resourced and was conducted in a stimulating way to set-up demanding practical tasks which captured and maintained pupils' interest and best efforts. Strong features were the quality of the opportunities for pupils to work creatively with different media, including a program in information and communication technology, and the use of great art to enable pupils to develop and apply theoretical understandings, for example about tonal contrast. A shortcoming in each lesson was the failure to make and use opportunities at the end of the lesson for pupils to talk appreciatively and critically about each other's work in relation to the lesson's learning intention.
- 143 The quality of teaching and of pupils' work shows that the present, rather informal arrangements, for managing the subject are largely effective. The steady development of skills across the elements of the subject is broadly assured by the adoption of the nationally recommended whole-school scheme and by good medium-term planning based on this. However, there are no systematic arrangements either for keeping track of how pupils are getting on, or for checking the quality of teaching and improving teachers' knowledge of the subject and how best to teach it. As a result there are inconsistencies. For example, in the 5 to 7 years age range, information and communication technology is very well used to support work in art, but this is not built-on in the 7 to 11 age range.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 144 There were a limited number lessons seen during the week of the inspection involving pupils in Years 5 and 6. Judgements about overall attainment are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils, teachers and the subject co-ordinator and examining completed work and photographic evidence. By the ages of 7 and 11 their achievement is similar to those seen in schools nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making sound progress over time. When taking account of the previous inspection, standards seen for pupils aged 7 have been maintained and there has been an improvement for pupils aged 11.
- 145 By the age of 7, pupils learn to plan their work using simple pictures and list the materials they are going to use in the construction of a model. For example, in a Year 1 class pupils have designed and made 'Sock Puppets', listing what they will need to make them, as well as producing sketches of what they will look like when completed. Pupils work with different materials and tools and can join and fix moving parts to another. This was seen in a display of previously completed work outside a Year 2 classroom. Pupils had designed and made wooden wheels and axles to be attached to a vehicle. This was linked to their current work in science on 'Forces'.

- 146 As pupils become older, their designs become more detailed and complex and they learn to think about the purpose behind the construction of a model. For example, pupils in a Years 3 and 4 class have designed and made a 'Moving Monster', which includes using a pneumatic system and a syringe system to make a part move on the model, such as an eye popping out or to raise a wing on a particular model. Pupils also have experience of using a variety of tools and equipment and know the importance of evaluating how successful they have been when they have constructed a model. This was seen in previously completed work by Years 5 and 6 pupils when they had designed and made slippers. They also had the opportunity of working with a representative from the Construction Industry Training Board,(CITB) who presented them with the challenge of making a tower from a construction kit and a bridge using wood, paper, tape and bolts. They know and understand the importance of careful planning before actual construction takes place and to carefully evaluate how successful they had been on completion of their model to see if they could make improvements.
- 147 It is clear from the scrutiny of work previously undertaken and by speaking to pupils that they are taught how to handle different materials and tools and how to evaluate and modify their ideas and models. In the lessons observed, which included pupils from Years 5 and 6 working with the representative from the CITB and their teachers, there was use of skilful questioning, intervention and guidance as all adults moved between different groups of pupils. Teachers pay attention to developing pupils' social and personal skills in lessons by expecting them to work together and co-operate when designing and making a model or construction. This was evident in the lessons observed and from examining the work undertaken previously by pupils across the school.
- 148 The management and leadership are sound and appropriate. There is a policy and scheme of work which reflect current initiatives in the subject. The resources for the subject are adequate and are stored centrally for easy access by staff. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and classroom displays on a termly basis to ensure progression and continuity in the subject. However, there are currently no whole-school systems of assessment in place to assist with future planning for pupils' future needs.

GEOGRAPHY

- 149 The attainment of 7 and 11-year-olds fall below that expected for their age. The achievement of most pupils is broadly satisfactory although more able pupils are sometimes not appropriately challenged. Pupils acquire new geographical skills appropriately but their ability to record their work is hindering the progress they make. The ineffective use of literacy skills in the subject is the main problem.
- 150 The previous inspection indicated that there were serious concerns about the way pupils made progress in geography and consequently the standards that were being attained. There has been some improvement made, but not enough. The improvements mainly surround the teachers' confidence in teaching the subject and the good use of resources and equipment to help deepen pupils' understanding. Weaknesses remain in the way pupils present their work.
- 151 Although only one lesson was observed for pupils in the 5 to 7 age range, the scrutiny of work suggests that very little recorded work in geography is happening and that pupils tend to complete the same work irrespective of ability. In the Year 1 lesson that was observed the pupils were able to think of some ideas as to why the seaside attracts visitors. However, the over-long introduction resulted in some pupils losing interest and in their learning not being

extended. The teacher did stimulate the initial interest and pupils did think of suitable questions that they could ask. However, too many pupils did not listen attentively and this restricted the quality of the discussion. Year 2 pupils have used co-ordinates to place various local points on a simple map. They have also developed plans of houses and show that they can interpret symbols from the maps they have looked at. They have started to compare the place they live with a make-believe island. However, the limited literacy skills applied to this work is holding back the standards that are being attained. There is appropriate use of numeracy skills for this age group.

- 152 Older pupils in the 7 to 11-year-group are also being held back by their inability to apply their literacy skills appropriately to geographical work. In the two lessons seen for older pupils there was good use made of resources to stimulate interest amongst the pupils. However, the outcome was quite different. In the good lesson a model of a lock was used to help deepen pupils understanding about how a boat moves across hilly areas. Another group in the same class are finding out more about the Aswan Dam on the Nile and were using the Internet to gain access to more information. In this lesson the pupils were keen and showed good levels of curiosity. Their vocabulary was limited, however, and this restricted their ability to ask pertinent questions. In another lesson with the same age group, there was ineffective use of a video to try and get the pupils to focus on making plans and maps associated with a river. In this lesson the pupils were inattentive and their attitudes were poor. They wasted a great deal of time fiddling and getting involved in minor disruptions. The teacher who was a temporary member of staff did his best to regain control but pupils had lost interest at an early stage and there was little chance of regaining their attention. The pupils are not familiar with words like estuary and this restricts their ability to ask pertinent questions.
- 153 In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory. However, the pupils' learning was unsatisfactory although this did vary considerable in the lessons seen. Teachers have more confidence in teaching the subject now compared to the position reported at the time of the previous inspection but the pupils' attitudes have not improved enough.
- 154 There is now a policy for the subject and the co-ordinator has adopted the national guidelines so that the school does have a scheme of work. The school uses Cumbria as a location that offers them contrast to their own and is beginning to develop resources to help make this study area as meaningful for the pupils as possible. The younger pupils, in particular, benefit from using 'Barnaby Bear' as a mascot who visits different places of interest with them. They talk about his visits and widen their general knowledge of people and places as a result.
- 155 The management of the subject is unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator has had very little time to check on the quality of teaching and learning that is happening. However, the co-ordinator has worked hard to help staff with planning, develop the scheme of work and to ensure that information and communication technology is used more effectively to support the subject. The school is in need of new atlases, especially ones that show the new country boundaries for Europe.

HISTORY

- 156 It was only possible to observe one lesson in history but there was enough evidence from work completed to make judgements about standards. Standards are below that expected for pupils aged 7 and 11. As with geography, the main reason is that pupils' limited literacy skills are

holding back the progress they are making. They have developed good understanding of the changes that have occurred over time but they are not able to record their work appropriately.

- 157 Pupils in Year 2 are able to use stories to help them make sense of historical facts. This is seen in the work related to Charles the Second and the Great Fire of London. Good use of such stories by teachers is helping to capture pupils' interest and helping to deepen their understanding about events that happened many years ago.
- 158 There are effective links with information and communication technology for this age group as they use CD ROMs to search for information. However, pupils' written work does not match their historical knowledge and their spelling is particularly poor. Lower ability pupils spend too much time colouring-in and this is handicapping their knowledge and understanding of history.
- 159 Older pupils in the 7 to 11-year-age range find themselves copying up too much work from worksheets. They end up colouring-in too many of these worksheets with many being coloured-in badly. There are, however, attempts made to bring some of the history to life as was noted in the Anglo-Saxon work completed about 'Sutton Hoo'. However, this work also sees pupils using comprehension exercises rather than searching for evidence to find out about happened.
- 160 Year 6 pupils have looked at photographs taken during the Second World War. This work reveals that they can make pertinent observations about that period in time. They respond to the emotional aspects, based on how they would feel in that situation. There is only a limited amount of work covered. There are, however, serious concerns about the pupils' ability to write concisely because of the limitations of their written English. Spelling is particularly poor with words like raid being written as 'raide' and just as 'gust'.
- 161 It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching except to note that the work tends to be a little narrow and lacks descriptive features. There is unsatisfactory management of the subject with little checking of the quality of teaching and learning evident. There is an inadequate amount of resources available to support work in this area.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 162 Standards are not high enough in information and communication technology. Overall, there are pockets of good work happening but this is not consistent through the school. This indicates that there is a huge variation in teacher confidence when dealing with the subject. There has, however, been some improvement in the recent past. The previous report indicates that work in the 5 to 7 age range was much better than in the 7 to 11 age range. This remains to be the case although there are examples of good and indifferent practice throughout the school.
- 163 Although there was no direct teaching of the subject timetabled, there was evidence of information and communication technology being used to support other work in some subjects. This was most prominent in mathematics, art and design, geography and history. Personnel from the education action zone have helped the staff to develop a structured system to help pupils improve their skills in information technology.
- 164 Year 2 pupils grow in confidence as they use a CD ROM to find out information about the Great Fire of London. They can retrieve their own work and show appropriate keyboard skills for their age. However, their skills in other areas of information and communication technology

are limited. Older pupils are further behind making unsatisfactory progress. This widens the gap that occurs between the expected standards for their age and the actual standards attained as they get older.

- 165 Although little direct teaching was seen, it is clear that a lack of teacher knowledge and confidence is holding back the pupils' learning and inhibiting the progress they are able to make. In the few lessons when the computer was used the teachers showed that they had enough knowledge to cope with the demands made by the pupils. However, the evidence from the scrutiny of completed work showed that limited amount of information and communication technology work is happening. There is good use of the interactive white board by the Year 2 teacher who is very confident in using information and communication technology to support pupils' work.
- 166 The development of an ICT suite is at an advanced stage of consideration. The school has benefited from a great deal of support from the Education Action Zone in preparing their development programme for the subject. There is a need to increase the amount of computers available to the school and to improve the subject knowledge of teachers. Teachers are due to participate in a full training programme in the very near future.

MUSIC

- 167 No overall judgements can be made about standards in music. During the inspection only one music lesson was seen for pupils aged 7 to 11 and none for pupils aged 5 to 7. At the time of the last inspection standards in music were in line with national expectations for younger pupils and below expectations for older pupils..
- 168 In the one lesson observed the standards were in line with that expected for their age and the quality of teaching was good. The good subject knowledge of the teacher enabled her to plan work which was well matched to pupils' ability and was challenging. Pupils knew the terms pitch, note, scale, treble clef and stave and were able to name the notes on the stave. Pupils were encouraged to use the correct terms throughout the lesson. The lesson moved at a brisk pace and pupils made good progress in their learning. The second part of the lesson involved composing in the pentatonic scale of C, working in groups. The pupils were able to work cooperatively due to clear instructions and a good supply of tuned instruments (chime bars and glockenspiels). The pupils' attitude to learning was good, as was their behaviour throughout the lesson.
- 169 Discussions with other pupils revealed shortcomings in their knowledge of musical terms. Too few pupils are familiar with a range of musical terms, particularly by the age of 11. Whilst pupils listen to music, their ability to appraise music is limited by their poor knowledge and understanding of musical terms. Their knowledge of the names of musical instruments is limited. However, pupils enjoy music lessons in general and singing in particular.
- 170 The quality of singing in assemblies and hymn practice is good. Pupils can sing in tune, in time and at an appropriate volume. They can also sing one hymn as a round. They listen carefully and respond well to the teachers' instructions. When the teacher explained the next hymn 'was a quieter hymn', the response was noticeable. The teacher's good subject knowledge made an important contribution to the hymn practice. At one point she explained how important body posture was in allowing the lungs to fill with air and improve the quality of singing. Pupils co-operated well when asked to compose.

- 171 The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Little money had been spent on music in recent years when music was not seen as a high priority. There is a school policy which sets out aims and objectives and gives some guidance on assessment. Accompanying this is a good scheme of work. This is based on national guidance and specifies in detail the musical progression for each term and year group. This is not as yet being used effectively throughout the whole school. The co-ordinator is given insufficient time to develop and monitor the subject. However, the coordinator is aware of many of the shortcomings in the subject and has clear plans of how it should develop.
- 172 There is a sufficient supply of tuned and untuned instruments throughout the school. There is an insufficient supply of music CD's to extend pupils listening to music from other cultures, countries and other time periods. There is a shortage of books and CD ROMs about music, musicians and composers. Links between music and other subjects are poor. The use of information and communication technology to support music teaching is poor. Although the school's computers contained a music composition program, there was no evidence of this being used to support music teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 173 During the week of the inspection the physical education lessons observed included games and gymnastics activities. Discussion with pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that the school provides a balanced programme of physical education which fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, participate in gymnastics activities, respond to music through dance and undertake outdoor adventurous games. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 classes undertake swimming lessons at a local pool through the academic year and most can swim 25 metres by the time they leave school.
- 174 Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils develop their skills and perform with increasing competence. They all have a clear understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 3 and 4 lessons when pupils warmed-up to a vigorous routine to musical accompaniment. Pupils' attainment by the age of 7 and 11 is at the standards expected in schools nationally and maintains the standards identified in the previous report.
- 175 Pupils in a Year 1 class can throw and catch a ball and this was developed into working with a partner to develop hand and eye co-ordination. Pupils were able to talk and discuss with the teacher what they were doing and how it could be improved when working in a small games situation. In a Year 3 and 4 class pupils used skipping, bench step-ups, star jumps and shuttle runs to improve and refine their performance and endurance levels in a gymnastics lesson. Gymnastics skills are developed in the school and pupils know how to organise a sequence of movements over apparatus. For instance, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, they could use benches and mats to develop a series of jumps from either a standing or running position using their arms to gain distance. Pupils in a Year 5 and 6 class work with a local authority specialist teacher to complete an orienting course around the school grounds and know and understand the importance of using their numeracy skills when finding the different 'A' and 'B' sites set in the activity.

- 176 Pupils' demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and respond favourably to the challenges presented to them by teaching staff. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils' were keen to improve their technique and endurance during a gymnastics lesson. They co-operated well in pairs or as part of small groups. As a result, their lessons are effective and they make satisfactory progress over time in all areas of physical education.
- 177 The overall quality of teaching and learning was judged to be of a satisfactory quality, with some features of good quality teaching observed in lessons. All lessons begin in an orderly fashion and contain appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities. All lessons include an appropriate structure and are clearly planned to offer progression and a safe working situation. Teachers set suitable challenges, provide clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop their skills. For example, in a Year 1 games lesson, the teacher explained how to throw a ball to a partner and the need to be at the right distance to be successful in catching the ball. Time and resources are used effectively to support learning in the subject and lessons usually proceed with a lively pace. Class management in lessons is well managed by staff and, on the odd occasion when pupils are not fully concentrating in a lesson, the class teacher soon brought them back to full attention and order. They encourage all pupils to participate in every aspect of the subject. Questioning is used effectively and pupils are encouraged to improve their performance, for example in gymnastics. All staff act as good role models, dressing appropriately and showing enthusiasm for the subject, which is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.
- 178 The school provides a range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which include a dance club, cricket, soccer, netball and tag rugby. The school takes part in competitive sport with other local schools, which helps develop a sense of competitiveness and fair play. The curriculum provision for the subject is satisfactory and makes a positive contribution to the pupils' social and moral development. The key skills of speaking and listening are encouraged in physical education lessons and make a positive contribution to the development of literacy across the school.
- 179 Currently there is no co-coordinator responsible for managing and leading the subject. The previous headteacher undertook this role. There is a policy and scheme of work which reflects current initiatives in the subject. The resources are good and the school has addressed the issue of having suitable mats and benches for gymnastic work which was highlighted in the previous inspection. There are currently no formal systems of assessment for the subject, although teachers give clear feedback and encouragement to pupils during lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 180 Pupils start Year 1 with attainment in religious education being below what could be expected for their age. The knowledge of religion is limited for a significant number of pupils and their low attainment in communication, literacy and language restrict comprehension and discussion. Recent changes to the curriculum and more structure to the way in which religious education is taught lead pupils to make satisfactory progress in this subject. At the age of 7 the attainment of more able pupils is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. However, the attainment of other pupils of this age is below what is expected. At the age of 11 pupils' attainment is below what is expected at this age as described in the Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

- 181 At the time of the last inspection the teaching and learning of religious education was unsatisfactory. Subsequently the responsibility was given to a new co-ordinator who has worked diligently to introduce the Locally Agreed Syllabus and has produced a relevant scheme of work from which teachers can implement appropriate lessons. Although the status of religious education, as being equivalent to a core subject, has not been recognised by all members of staff, the thorough approach of the co-ordinator has brought about a change in the teaching of the subject. The subject is now taught regularly and plans are followed in most year groups.
- 182 Work in books in some year groups is often incomplete and standards of presentation are low. There are, on occasions, gaps of several weeks without work being recorded and opportunities are missed to use religious education as a vehicle for extended writing. Standards of work are better in Year 6 where pupils have followed the scheme of work and written-up their own thoughts following class discussions. A range of strategies are used to record different types of work or discussions. Resources are adequate, although spending has not been high. Basic requisites, such as class Bibles, are in place as are some artefacts for religions other than Christianity, but a more wide range of stimulating resources would benefit learning.
- 183 At the age of 7 some pupils are able to recall familiar Bible stories. However, all but the more able child could remember only the story of the Lost Sheep from the previous day's lesson. Pupils could remember that Jesus died on a cross but thought that this festival is called Christmas. Only the persistence of one child convinced them otherwise. Pupils did remember the time Jewish visitors came to the school and were able to recall that Jews do not believe in Jesus and that a Jewish church is a synagogue.
- 184 At the age of 11 pupils' attainment is below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They have covered the religion of Islam and the Jewish religion during their time in school and are able to identify the Holy Books of these religions and Christianity. They understand the rituals surrounding the handling of the Qur'an and showed thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. Pupils have considered philosophical questions such as 'What is God?' and are able to put forward suggestions that God is there for people to support them always and might also be one's conscience. They are also aware that not all people believe in a God and can consider the differences between atheists and believers. However, their inability to apply literacy skills appropriately is holding back the progress they make.
- 185 Planning is broad and there is evidence that it is now followed by teachers. At present lessons are not evaluated and, whilst assessment sheets have been compiled by the co-ordinator, their use is limited and this process is ready for review and evaluation. There is a comprehensive and effective action plan that has been implemented to move forward the development of the subject. The co-ordinator has worked hard since being given this responsibility but has not been supported by senior management. Her non-contact time to establish the implementation of such an important subject was minimal and no opportunities for professional training were made available. The progress of the subject is the result of her personal commitment and professionalism. The co-ordinator manages the Language Development Unit and has no teaching role within the school. She does, however, have a heavy load of responsibilities within her own Language Development Unit role and the appropriateness of her role as religious education co-ordinator needs to be reviewed.

PART E: THE WORK OF THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Characteristics

- 186 The unit is a specialist educational establishment for speech and language impaired pupils attached to the main school. The unit is situated in the same building as older pupil from the main school. The Unit draws pupils from all over the Local Education Authority and most of the pupils are brought to school by taxi. There are 24 pupils attending the unit and, at the time of the inspection, the staff are running an outreach service, which has meant that the head of the unit is seconded from her full time class teaching role to administer and manage the outreach service. The pupils in the unit are aged 5 to 11 and exhibit a range of language related difficulties. Parents, staff and pupils know the unit as the Language Development Unit.
- 187 The unit was established in 1982 and has gradually increased in numbers since that time. Pupils normally stay with the unit until such time as they are competent and confident enough to return to mainstream schools. The unit aims to offer the best education and therapy to enable pupils to return to mainstream education and to help pupils overcome difficulties. Its aims specify that it is hoping to provide individually tailored programmes for its pupils.
- 188 At the time of the inspection the teaching staff included a temporary teacher who was covering the class normally taught by the unit's leader. There were two other full-time teachers and three full-time nursery nurses (one for each class). There were two part-time speech and language therapists and a part time occupational therapist. The outreach teacher (head of unit) also had the help of a full time nursery nurse.

Attainment and Progress

- 189 The vast majority of younger pupils who start in the unit have academic skills that are well below that expected for their age. They make very good progress as they continue in the unit. The improvement in pupils' communication, language and literacy is outstanding. There is also particularly impressive progress made in their mathematics. One of the key features of the progress is the way teachers use the detailed profile of each individual pupil to help tailor the learning to their needs. By the time they are 7 to 9 pupils have grown in confidence and are prepared to offer a range of adjectives to describe a character. For example, pupils come up with 'massive', 'enormous', 'horrible' and 'angry' to describe the troll from the Billy Goat Gruff story. In another lesson pupils of the same age group are able to make hypotheses about what is likely to happen to balloons that are put into a fridge or an oven. Again, the attention given to specific vocabulary is helping the progress made by the pupils. For example, the teacher insists that they use the word 'contracts' rather than 'gets smaller'.
- 190 Older pupils make good progress because of the attention given to the way the teacher speaks. The precise use of language is helping pupils understand what is being said and helping them to speak more clearly. In a mathematics lesson the teacher uses a 'swinging ball' to help pupils keep pace with the chanting during their mental and oral work. This helps pupils with their pronunciation. The pupils are provided with individual opportunities to practise their times tables. These strategies are helping pupils make very good progress. At the time of the previous inspection it was noted that pupils were making very good progress. That position has been maintained and built upon so that pupils are now achieving even better.

Attitudes to Learning

191 The pupils are very enthusiastic learners. They are keen to do well and are proud of their achievements. There was a real sense of awe and wonder when one pupil explained to the others how much work they had done. This is evidence of the joy and satisfaction they take in each other's achievements as well as their own. Behaviour is very good the pupils listen attentively and make a determined effort to contribute to the lessons. They are polite, well-mannered and a credit to the school. When pupils from the unit join mainstream classes it is very noticeable how eager they are to put their hands up when a question is posed to the whole group. They are very comfortable and confident in the larger setting and show very positive attitudes. Staff are very successful in raising the self-esteem of pupils and this is helping them to focus on their work with a great deal of confidence. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour have improved from the good position reported at the time of the previous inspection.

Teaching and Learning

192 The outstanding and very good quality of teaching is making a powerful impact on the pupils' learning. This is a position that has improved since the previous inspection. This is despite teaching being noted as a strength at that time. Within the three classes the most impressive feature is the knowledge of the individual members of staff working with the pupils. Each member of staff working with the pupils uses very clear and concise language. This is benefiting the pupils' learning. The staff insist on the pupils looking at the movement of their mouth as they say new words and this is helping their own pronunciation.

193 In literacy sessions the teachers work extremely hard to provide appropriate stimulation for the pupils. The use of the puppets in the Three Billy Goat Gruff story is one example. The modelling of good communication by the teacher of the oldest pupils helps to engage the pupils. In a literacy lesson, the same teacher gives clear indication that she is on the pupils' wavelength and uses a 'millionaire' game to help pupils deal with issues of congratulating and complaining. The game requires the pupils to listen attentively and to respond to an audience.

194 In a mathematics lesson the same teacher and the nursery nurse work very effectively with the pupils to help them develop their understanding of fractions. The practical example of using a pizza helps to deepen this understanding. The pupils respond positively and they are introduced to new mathematical words in a carefully structured manner. A science lesson for younger pupils reveals that the teacher is able to think of some very interesting ways of getting the learning across to the pupils. The use of balloons, one put into a fridge and one put into an oven, successfully helps pupils to understand about the way air expands and contracts.

195 The assessment procedures used by the staff are very comprehensive and are another major strength. One of the teachers has devised a very interesting and expert way of checking on early reading skills. This process, alongside others, is helping staff to be able to focus in on the learning needs of all pupils. In one lesson the teacher of the oldest pupils uses a target board to help pupils assess for themselves how well they have done. The pupils are very perceptive and talk with some authority about what they have and have not achieved as they put their name on the target board. They are encouraged to place their name, from the outside of the board if their achievement has been minimal, to the very centre if they feel they have achieved everything they set to.

196 During introductions the teachers are careful to sit pupils in such a way as to gain their full attention. They know how long to keep the group together and do not over-run the time they have allocated to each part of the lesson. During plenary sessions opportunities are maximised for pupils to talk about what they have been doing. The way this part of lessons are conducted is particularly helpful to pupils' language development. The good use of the plenary is in contrast to its poor use in many lessons in the main school.

Leadership and Management

197 The unit's leader provides strong leadership. She has the qualities of getting the staff to work together and to put every effort into improving the skill levels of the pupils. Her own expertise is well respected and there is a strong sense of people working to a common goal. She has successfully kept the staff's attention on improving standards by focussing on the achievement of pupils.

198 Very good links are established with a range of outside agencies. There is a great emphasis put on establishing close liaison with parents. This is a point that the parents were very keen to make clear to the inspectors at the pre-inspection meeting. The quality of the relationships at all levels is helping there to be added focus on the needs of the pupils.

199 There is a very comprehensive plan for future developments. The points in the plan have been very well prioritised and all staff are clear about the role they have to play in meeting these. Resources are very well used and there is an adequate amount of them. The unit has limited control over the finances allocated to it. This is a point that is likely to be reviewed under the new management.

200 One of the disappointing features has been the degree of curricular liaison that has existed between the staff in the main stream and the staff of the unit in the recent past. The level of expertise that the staff in the unit have would benefit the staff of the mainstream especially in relation to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. The limited amount of liaison is not due to a lack of effort on behalf of the unit's staff and it is something else that is likely to improve under the new leadership of the main school.