

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **WOLSINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wolsingham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114068

Head teacher: Mr H Underwood

Reporting inspector: Mrs Julia Bell  
2456

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 May, 2001

Inspection number: 213049

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Upper Town Wolsingham County Durham
Postcode:	DL13 3ET
Telephone number:	01388 527457
Fax number:	01388 529072
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Terence Prior
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	Mrs J Bell	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			History	The school's results and achievements
			Physical education	Teaching
			English as an additional language	Leadership, management and efficiency
			Areas of learning for the foundation stage	
14083	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents
31157	Mrs C Bailey	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities
			Art and design	
			Music	
			Equal opportunities	
870	Mr J Haves	Team inspector	Geography	
			Information and communication technology	
			Religious education	
			Special educational needs	
27545	Mr A Scott	Team inspector	English	
			Design and technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse (Education) Limited  
14 Enterprise House  
Kingsway  
Team Valley  
Gateshead  
NE11 0SR

Tel: 0191 487 2333

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE.

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves the small town of Wolsingham in Weardale, County Durham. Most pupils come from the village or other small villages close by. The school admits children from across the full range of attainment and previous experience. However, the intake into main school is often above average, particularly in the development of language, literacy and communication skills. The school is similar in size to most primaries with 224 pupils on roll, 122 boys and 102 girls. The nursery has 54 children who attend on a part-time basis. It is resourced to admit children with special educational needs in the area. There are 76 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and nine have a statement of specific need. This is higher than the national average. The school has two pupils from an ethnic minority background although neither of these needs extra support. There are 14 pupils eligible for a free school meal, six per cent of the school population, which is below the national average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school provides a good level of care and support for pupils and promotes their self-esteem. As a result they have good attitudes to school and behave very well. The school is improving and standards are rising but could be higher in English. The school has also had a long period where staffing has been disrupted and the head teacher and deputy head teacher were appointed very recently. The many changes in staff since the last inspection have resulted in changes of teachers. The Year 2 class has had three different teachers in the past year and this has slowed progress and although standards are at the level expected for seven year olds they are much lower than in previous years. Teaching is mainly good and often very good or excellent in the foundation stage and Year 1. This means that children get a very good start to their learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The leadership and management of the school are sound and the governors' role is improving. Taking account the good ethos of the school, the effectiveness of teaching, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Teaching is mainly good throughout the school with very good or excellent teaching in the nursery, reception and Year 1 classes.
- Standards are improving steadily in mathematics and science.
- The provision for children in the foundation stage (nursery and reception classes) is very good and children make a very good start to their learning through the rich and varied range of activities.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are very well supported by specialist staff.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and these are promoted by the good relationships throughout the school. Their behaviour is very good.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English.
- Standards in ICT (information and communication technology), particularly in the juniors.
- The day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress and the use of the information gained to plan work that builds more precisely on what pupils' already know.
- The procedures for recording and monitoring pupils' attendance.
- The accommodation of the school to ensure all health and safety issues are resolved.

*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 May 1999 and has made sound progress in resolving the serious weaknesses identified at that time. In the year following the inspection there were many changes of staff and the school has employed many temporary teachers. This has badly affected progress in the Year 2 class. However, the teaching in Year 6 has improved. The standards have steadily improved in line with schools nationally, particularly in mathematics and science. Improvement in English has slowed and this is partly due to disruption in staffing. There has been substantial improvement in ICT, although gaps in their earlier learning mean that the end of Year 6 still below the levels expected standards. The school has also suffered disruption in senior management over the past year and the current head teacher took up post at the start of last term and the deputy head teacher has just joined the school. However, the management has improved; governors have developed their role and their work in committees supports the school well. The link of individual governors to different subjects is beginning to have a positive impact. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been clarified, but many are very new to their role and it will take time before they have a substantial impact on developing their subject. The head teacher has clearly identified what the school now needs to do to improve but these initiatives are too recent to have had an impact. However, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	C	B	C	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
mathematics	B	D	A	C	
science	C	E	A	B	

The school's performance was above average in the national tests in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The school's performance matches the upward trend found nationally in these subjects. When compared with schools with a similar number of free school meals, the school's results were relatively less good and matched these schools in English and mathematics and were above average in science. Standards in current work are not as high. At the end of Year 6 standards in English match the levels expected for pupils aged 11 and are above expected levels in mathematics and science. This can partly be explained by differences in the abilities of pupils in the current Year 6 class but also reflects the disruption to their learning caused by staff changes. Whilst standards in English are at the level expected by the end of Year 6, they could be higher, especially in speaking and listening, imaginative writing and library skills. They do not use literacy skills sufficiently to write imaginatively in English and other subjects and the limited range and quality of reading materials limits reading skills. Standards in mathematics are good and pupils use their numeracy skills to support work in science, design and technology and geography. Standards in ICT are improving well but are still below the levels expected at the end of Year 6. This is partly due to gaps in their skills due to earlier poor provision and also to the unsatisfactory accommodation in the ICT suite and the lack of compatibility of many of the school's computers. Standards in religious education meet the requirements identified for pupils aged 11. Pupils make sound progress in other subjects and standards in swimming are good due to the very effective tuition provided at the school's on site swimming pool.

The teaching of children in the foundation stage is very good and by the end of the reception year the children attain above the levels expected for their age. Standards in the national tests at the age of seven have been consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics over the past four years. Despite the good start children get in the foundation stage and Year 1, standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 are lower than in previous years due to disruptions in staffing that have affected work habits and standards. Although standards of current work match those expected for seven year olds, they could be higher. The head teacher and staff have begun to analyse the results of tests and other assessment information and use this information to set targets for individual pupils in English and mathematics. These whole school targets are realistic and the school is well placed to meet them but those for individual pupils are not specific enough and progress against them not checked regularly enough.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy coming to school and most are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They concentrate well in most lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Staff manage pupils well and behaviour is very good. Pupils behave well in the playground and when given the opportunity to work independently.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory. Relationships are good; pupils are supportive of each other and work well together. Those with special educational needs are integrated well and are well supported by their peers.
Attendance	Attendance is slightly below the national average. There is a high rate of recorded unauthorised absence. This is unlikely to reflect the true picture since procedures for recording and monitoring absence need to be improved.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	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 was mainly good in the 62 lessons seen. Teaching was good in 45 per cent of lessons seen and very good or excellent in a further 24 per cent. Teaching was satisfactory in 28 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in only 3 per cent of lessons where pupils were not well managed or time was not used well. The best teaching is in the foundation stage; this enables children in the nursery and reception classes to make a very good start to their learning. There were also examples of very good or excellent teaching in the Year 1 classes where the teachers build on the good progress made in the foundation stage. Teaching is more varied in Key Stage 2; teaching is good in Year 3, with a few good lessons in the other classes. The teaching in Year 6 has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and often good. The work of support staff is very good. Teachers have improved their planning and most have clear aims for their lessons and ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress have improved but teachers do not yet use their day-to-day checks of what pupils have learned

to plan work that builds closely on the previous learning. English is taught satisfactorily and mathematics is taught well. Numeracy skills are taught and used well in subjects such as science and geography. However, literacy skills such as imaginative writing and reading to research information are not taught and used well enough in English and other subjects. The teacher working at the school's on site pool teaches swimming very well.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils respond well to the good range of activities provided by their teachers. The range of out of school activities is limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good throughout the school. All these pupils have access to the whole curriculum and specific resources are matched well to their needs. Support staff ensure that their individual learning plans are implemented and updated on a regular basis, to ensure individual targets remain appropriate.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils do not require extra help and their needs are met in class lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. There is sound provision for their spiritual and cultural development. However, there is insufficient work in school to promote an understanding of Britain's multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring community and effectively supports its pupils. The staff work hard to promote their welfare.

The provision for children in the foundation stage is a strength of the school. Staff in the nursery and reception classes provide a stimulating curriculum and a wide range of activities that ensure that the children get a very good start to their education. They are well prepared for transition into Year 1. Educational visits are an integral part of the school curriculum and planned well to enhance learning. Links with the community enrich pupils' experience and enhance their learning. The school has good links with the local secondary school and this ensures Year 6 pupils are well prepared for transfer. Procedures for supporting and monitoring academic progress and personal development are good. The school has a useful assessment policy but there is insufficient use of day-to-day assessment information to plan work that builds closely on what pupils already know.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The head teacher and deputy head are very recently appointed and the many staff changes mean that most subject co-ordinators are new to their posts and have limited impact on developing their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The role of governors is satisfactory and is steadily improving through more effective work in committees and the links of individuals to subjects.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is at an early stage as many staff are new to the school. However, the head teacher and co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science analyse test results to provide information that enables staff to target specific areas where pupils can improve.
The strategic use of resources	All resources are used well to support pupils' learning. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The head teacher has a clear view of what is needed in the school and has begun to put in place a range of initiatives to develop the school. These are too new to have had an impact and now need to be monitored carefully and evaluated. The school's accommodation is adequate but is in a poor state of repair and the ICT suite is too small to make its use effective. There are sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced staff. Resources for learning are broadly satisfactory but there is only a limited range of reading materials for the oldest pupils and many computers both in classrooms and in the ICT suite are incompatible and unreliable, this slows pupils' progress. Money is carefully managed and the head teacher and governors make sure that they get the best value for the pupils. Relationships between the school and parents are good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of out of school activities could be better.</li> <li>• They would like more information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents could be improved.</li> <li>• The amount of homework given.</li> <li>• The school building is in a poor state of repair and has many areas of dampness.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents on most points. They are rightly pleased with the way the school encourages their children to work hard and that their children enjoy school. The staff are approachable and ready to help. The school is helping children to become mature and responsible but more could be done to encourage pupils to take initiative and to work independently. The inspection findings show that parents are right to suggest that the range of activities outside of lessons could be improved. However, the amount of homework is similar to most primary schools. The information to parents is now satisfactory. Parents are rightly concerned about the state of repair of the building.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 The school admits children from across the full range of attainment and previous experience. However, the intake is often above average, particularly in the development of language, literacy and communication skills. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The very effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes means that the children achieve well and make good progress in their skills and understanding across all the areas of learning that underpin the subjects of the curriculum. The very good teaching ensures that by the time they are ready to start in Year 1 most children attain above the standards expected for their age.

2 There are few differences in the attainment of boys and girls in their work but in the national tests girls do marginally less well than boys in mathematics. The school's test results over the last four years show that the standards match the national upward trend.

3 The pupils make good progress in their learning in the foundation stage, and in the early stages of Key Stage 1, where teaching is very good in the Year 1 classes. Progress has slowed in Year 2 due to disruptions in staffing resulting in three temporary teachers in the past year. Progress is broadly satisfactory in Key Stage 2; again there have been some staff changes in the last year. The uncertainties due to staffing problems are reflected in standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards of current work are at the level expected for seven and eleven year olds in English but should be higher given the good start pupils make. The recent disruptions in staffing is particularly evident in Year 2 where the good work in Year 1 has not been continued and standards in current work in mathematics and science match the levels expected for seven year olds but could be higher. Standards are above average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. However, standards were higher in last year's national tests for seven and eleven year olds, when results were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 were above average in English and well above the national levels in mathematics and science.

4 Pupils mostly enter school with good speaking and listening skills. The relaxed yet focused atmosphere in Year 1 enables pupils to develop a quiet self-confidence, and pupils speak freely and knowledgeably. However, the disruption to the teaching has left pupils in Year 2 less confident and less willing to talk in class although more able pupils can talk maturely and in some detail. The good skills developed in the foundation stage and Year 1 are not built upon and by Year 6 standards, although satisfactory, could be better. This is because many teachers, particularly in Key Stage 2 do not place sufficient importance on discussion. Teachers tend to do much of the talking, ask questions that only require a one-word answer and give too few opportunities for debate, role-play and drama to develop pupils' speaking skills. Less able pupils are sometimes withdrawn from parts of lessons to work on their own individual language programmes. The good support that they receive helps them to develop sound speaking skills.

5 Reading is taught well and pupils' achieve good standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils clearly enjoy reading, are well supported at home and make good progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress but this could be improved. Teachers do not provide enough stimulating reading material to guarantee a wide appreciation of different types of language or to broaden their vocabulary. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the school library to support work in other subjects. As a result, only more able pupils have secure library skills. Pupils have satisfactory skills in writing throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can form brief but coherent narratives, understand how to use capital letters and full stops, spell most common

words accurately and write neatly. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing is mostly correct but not very imaginative. This is due to teachers' over emphasis on grammar exercises and too few opportunities for imaginative, expressive writing in English and other subjects.

6 The school is implementing well the National Numeracy Strategy Framework and pupils practise mental calculation in every lesson and have a rapid and increasingly accurate grasp of number facts. By the age of seven they recognise number patterns and sequences. By the end of Year 2 many pupils can place numbers accurately onto a number square and answer questions about the positioning of numbers up to 100. They know the difference between odd and even numbers, count forwards and backwards in fives and use whiteboards to show multiples of five in response to their teacher's questions. In Year 6 pupils identify pairs of two-digit numbers that total 90, multiply accurately a two-digit number by a one-digit number, demonstrate good understanding of shape and space and use co-ordinates to specify location. Pupils know the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and understand the concept of symmetry.

7 Pupils in Year 6 attain above the levels expected for their age in all aspects of science. This has improved since the last inspection but standards are lower at the end of Year 2; although pupils' progress in science is broadly satisfactory it could be higher. By the end of Year 2, pupils describe similarities and differences between materials. They are developing a secure understanding of the need for a fair test through investigations of different forces, know how electricity is used in the home and make sensible suggestions about its use in school. They can make and record simple circuits and know how these work. By the age of 11, pupils in Year 6 can competently apply the principles of 'fair testing' to investigations, can make predictions, accurately time observations and evaluate their findings. They have a good awareness of life cycles, food chains and life processes, and can relate healthy eating and exercise to a healthy body. Most pupils see the implications of scientific concepts to solving real-life problems. They use their computing skills well to produce coloured 'pie' charts and block graphs, or line graphs to record their findings.

8 Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) broadly meet national expectations for pupils at the age of seven but are below the national expectation at the age of 11. This is a significant improvement to previous inspection findings. The achievements in Key Stage 1 are partly due to the good start made in the foundation stage, where children are introduced to personal computers (PC's) and have regular access to them. This is carried through into Year 1 where pupils benefit from working with new PC's and software. However, pupils now in Year 2 did not have such good access to these resources, when younger and lack some experience in the area of control technology. By the age of seven, pupils have basic keyboard skills, successfully use painting programs, and use data to create block graphs. Standards of attainment are below average at the end of Year 6 because older pupils have not had sufficient opportunities in previous years to acquire a wide range of skills to match the demands of the curriculum. By the age of 11 most pupils word process competently, using a variety of layouts and can import images using 'clip-art'. Their experience of using spreadsheets is limited. They are developing a basic understanding of 'control', but have little experience of modelling programmes and have not used external sensing equipment in science. They use the Internet and CD-ROMs to support work across the curriculum; for example, in history and geography. The ICT suite is too small for whole or half-class teaching and the various computers within the suite are not compatible with one another. These factors restrict progress because too few pupils can learn skills at the same time.

9 Pupils consolidate their earlier work in most subjects as they move up through the school. Pupils make sound and sometimes good progress in their learning in art and design, geography, history, music and physical education and attain the standards expected for their age. There is evidence of good work in each of these subjects and standards are often above those expected in swimming due to the very good teaching at the school's on-site pool. Standards in design and technology have improved

since the last inspection and match the levels expected for pupils aged seven but are below expectations at the age of 11.

10 Standards of attainment in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This is because the school carefully plans the programme of study and ensures that all pupils have regular opportunities to learn about the different faiths prescribed in the syllabus and to explore the issues around them. By the age of seven pupils have a basic understanding of Christianity and an awareness of the beliefs of two other world faiths. By the age of 11, most pupils gain a sound understanding of Christian beliefs through studying parables and events of Christ's life. They know about the major events of his life and the work of the disciples. Most pupils are able to make valid comparisons with other faiths to identify similarities and differences and gain valuable insights into the beliefs and practices of three other world faiths.

11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. They are supported well in class and when withdrawn for group and individual activities with support staff. Those pupils who have been identified as needing additional support have good individual education plans with clear targets. These are regularly reviewed and this ensures that the pupils make good gains in their learning. Pupils with English as an additional language do not require extra support and make good progress over time.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12 The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to the school. The relationships within the school are good. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The majority of parents believe that the school maintains high standards of behaviour and that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.

13 Pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a low level of recorded lateness. The majority of pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. They are interested in their lessons and are fully involved in the classroom activities. Most pupils are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. Pupils quickly settle down diligently in class, maintain high levels of concentration, and stay on task.

14 Standards of behaviour are very good. Behaviour in the nursery is excellent. Almost all pupils behave very well and act in a mature and responsible manner. Behaviour in the classrooms is very good and there is no disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Pupils move around the school site in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is consistently very good. Although a few parents mentioned concerns about bullying, there was no evidence of any bullying or isolation of individual pupils noted during the inspection. There were no exclusions in the academic year prior to the inspection or in the current academic year to date.

15 Relationships in the school are good. Pupils relate well to their teachers, to other adults whom they come into contact with, and also to one another. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. Boys and girls of all ages mix and play well together at breaks and lunchtime. The vast majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and for the school environment. During assemblies pupils show appropriate respect for the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers. Pupils respect each other's feelings, values and beliefs.

16 Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They are learning a sound range of social skills that are helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. Pupils support local and national charities and are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. They take part in a wide range of visits, and are exposed to an appropriate variety of visitors from all parts of the community. Pupils respond well to the limited opportunities for taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms, and in some lessons, when not subject to direct teaching, they were observed working independently with a minimum of supervision. However, there was little evidence of pupils acting upon their own initiative. When given the opportunity to take on formal responsibilities around the school, for example returning registers to the school office, pupils act in a mature and sensible manner. The pupils have some opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school, for example, behaviour issues are discussed at circle time and class rules include pupil agreement.

17 Levels of attendance are slightly below the national average. There is a high rate of recorded unauthorised absence. However, this probably does not reflect the true level of unauthorised absence, as there has been a lack of rigour in maintaining class registers and following up the reasons for absence.

18 The high standards maintained in pupils' attitudes and behaviour have a positive impact on teaching and learning in the school.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

19 Teaching is mainly good and this has been maintained since the last inspection. The weaknesses identified in Year 6 have been resolved with changes of staff. The teaching was good in well over a third of lessons seen and in a further quarter of lessons it was very good or excellent. The best teaching is in the nursery and reception classes and so these children make a very good start to their learning. There were examples of very good or excellent teaching in the Year 1 classes where staff build on the good progress made in the reception classes. There have been many changes of staff since the last inspection and the resulting turnover of temporary teachers has caused disruption to pupils' learning, particularly in the current Year 2 and to some extent in Year 6. This situation has only recently stabilised. There was unsatisfactory teaching in only a few lessons where pupils were not well managed or time was not used well. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson taken by a temporary teacher, the pupils began to get restless after sitting 40 minutes on the floor with little purposeful involvement.

20 The very effective teaching in the foundation stage is based on the staff's very good understanding of the needs of young children. The very rich and exciting learning opportunities mean that children enjoy their work and behave well. Provision for children in the foundation stage is a strength of the school; teachers plan well for a stimulating range of activities that focus on first-hand experiences and enable the children to make good progress and to achieve well. By the time they transfer to Year 1 many children attain above the levels expected for their age, particularly in the language and literacy, mathematical and personal and social areas of learning. The good proportion of effective teaching in Year 1 ensured that well over half the teaching seen in Key Stage 1 was good or better.

21 Teaching is more varied in Key Stage 2, although there was good teaching in under half the lessons. Teaching is good in Year 3, with a few good lessons in the other classes. The teaching in Year 6 has improved since the last inspection with the temporary move of the school's very experienced Year 2 teacher into Year 6. Although teaching in this class is satisfactory and sometimes good, the teacher has had little recent experience of this age group. Work is sometimes teacher directed with too much provided for the pupils and too few opportunities for investigative work or opportunities for them to take responsibility for their learning. While this staffing arrangement has supported Year 6 pupils for

the term leading up to national test, parents are rightly concerned about the impact on the Year 2 class.

22 In the best lessons throughout the school, teachers question pupils well and this reinforces their understanding of what they are learning. In these lessons the questions are often matched to the different abilities in the class and enable all pupils to achieve and gain self-esteem. For example, in a good geography lesson with Year 1 pupils, the teacher posed questions beginning 'How do we know---?'. This enabled all pupils to offer responses confidently using their knowledge of the characteristics of the seaside, beach and sea. In most lessons teachers pace lessons well and this promotes pupils' interest and behaviour.

23 Lessons are well planned and resourced. In the best lessons, teachers provide a good range of challenging and interesting activities. In these lessons they have high expectations of their pupils, encourage them to think critically about their work and provide opportunities for discussion. In the foundation stage and in some lessons throughout both key stages, teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning and make choices of materials and plan their own work. For example, in an effective history lesson, Year 5 pupils were encouraged to carry out their own enquiries into aspects of life in Britain since 1948. The pupils were interested in the topic and had brought artefacts from home and used these, together with materials from the County Loan Service to investigate changes over time in aspects such as the role of women, transport, homes, music and fashion. The teacher set up the lesson effectively to provide good opportunities for individual research and the pupils' topic books showed good progress as a result. However, this level of independence is not a feature of all lessons and pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to plan and carry out their own research. For example in Year 6, the teacher produces high quality information packs to support topic work in history but these pupils have the ability to use books and computers to research their own material.

24 Teachers manage pupils well and there are good relationships between staff and pupils; teachers value pupils' responses and encourage them to have a go, even if they lack confidence. This works well with many pupils and they persevere and make an effort. All staff work hard to raise pupils' self esteem. Most teachers display their aims for the lessons so that pupils know what they will learn. In the most effective lessons the teachers talk about these aims with the pupils, and question pupils carefully to find out what they already know. This was evident in a well-planned geography lessons with Year 6 pupils where the teacher made very clear to pupils what they would learn in the lesson and how this related to previous work on the water table. This enabled them to make good progress in their understanding that water can pass through some rocks and not others and their recognition of stages of a river. The teacher reinforced effectively the correct geographical terms such 'permeable' and 'meander'. The well-timed interventions enabled all groups to make good use of their time.

25 Teachers' subject expertise is mainly sound in all subjects, although there are some areas such as English and music where it is not so strong. This can have a direct impact on learning. For example, there is no pianist on the staff so singing practice relies on a tape recording and some staff are not conversant with the published guidance bought by the school. Subject expertise in ICT has improved since the last inspection due in part to a well-planned training programme and the ways in which teachers are adapting the national guidance to ensure that statutory requirements are met. Teachers promote a wider range of learning opportunities, because they have the confidence to do so. They actively plan opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum and have sufficient knowledge and understanding of ICT to identify a range of opportunities for all pupils. Teaching is mainly satisfactory or better in all subjects and there are examples of good teaching in all areas of the curriculum.

26 The teaching of literacy is mainly satisfactory and good in Year 1. Reading is taught well and this results in good standards by the end of Year 2. However, teachers do not provide enough stimulating reading material to guarantee a wide appreciation of language and the swift development of

vocabulary in Key Stage 2. Pupils have too few opportunities to make the most of the school library to support work in other subjects. However, the school is currently relocating the library and auditing the stock of books. The teaching of writing is satisfactory and enables pupils to make a sound start to their writing. However, there is an over reliance by teachers on structure and grammar, which curtails the scope of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 to write expressively. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing is technically correct but not as imaginative as it could be, particularly for the more able. Although literacy is taught satisfactorily, it is not yet taught or used sufficiently in other subjects to support pupils' learning in areas such as history, geography and religious education.

27 Numeracy is mainly taught well and teachers' effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to improve standards in mathematics throughout the school. Teachers make clear links between subjects; for example, in a Year 6 art and design lesson, pupils developed a design through translating and rotating a shape and accurately used mathematical language such as horizontal, vertical, symmetrical and discussed fractions of a turn. Numeracy skills are also used in design and technology as pupils make careful measurements and in science older pupils make good use of measuring skills and they record information in graphical form, sometimes using a data-handling program on the computer.

28 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and often good. The work of support staff is very good. The learning support teacher and learning support assistants have good skills and manage pupils well. They ensure that pupils work together successfully and draw confidence in their abilities from this. Pupils who have 'statements of educational need' are also well taught. The quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers match work well to the needs of these pupils and this contributes well to the good progress they make. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language do not require extra support in lessons and their needs are fully met within the school's provision for all its pupils.

29 The procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. Teachers use assessment well to identify pupils with special educational needs. Teachers analyse tests results to identify where pupils need extra help. This sound practice helps them to group pupils and target extra support in areas such as reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Teachers increasingly use the results of the range of assessments to improve planning; their half-termly plans show differences in provision for the wide range of abilities in each year group but higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. This means that too few pupils attain the higher levels in national tests. The school's recently introduced system of target setting that is having a limited effect, since the targets are often too broad and, in some cases, teachers do not regularly monitor and update them. Marking varies; in a few classes it tells pupils what they have done well but teachers often praise work too highly and careless mistakes are rarely picked up to show pupils how they can improve.

30 Throughout the school, teachers give homework that has a positive impact upon pupils' reading, spelling and learning of number facts. In Key Stage 2, pupils' skills in finding information supports topic work in areas such as history.

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

31 The school curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the needs of the pupils. It meets statutory requirements. The school has successfully adopted the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. There are long-term plans for all subjects. Teachers' planning for each term is based on recent national guidance for all subjects that is adapted to meet the needs of the school. From these plans, daily plans for lessons provide a sound framework for teaching each lesson. Pupils

respond well to the good range of activities provided by their teachers.

32 The school has maintained the very good provision for children in the foundation stage identified in the last inspection. The provision for these children is a strength of the school. The staff in the nursery and reception classes work closely together to provide a stimulating curriculum and wide range of activities that ensure that the children get a very good start to their education. They create a lively atmosphere that encourages the children's learning and enables many of them to make very good progress. By the end of the reception year work prepares the children well for transition into Year 1.

33 Currently, the school offers limited opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. Football and netball clubs take place. The head teacher intends to add to the number and develop the range of activities to ensure satisfactory provision in the future.

34 Links with the community enrich pupils' experience and enhance their learning. The vicar from the local church visits the school to lead services and pupils attend Harvest Festival and Christmas services held in the church. During the inspection the vicar led a 'marriage service' in the school for Year 3 pupils, which was thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, parents and staff. Pupils take part in activities organised by Sunderland Football Club and in a safety programme that provides simulated experiences such as the evacuation of a building that is on fire, a road traffic accident and opportunities to raise their awareness of the dangers of taking illegal drugs. In Year 3 pupils communicate with others from a school in Hertfordshire, and from much further afield, in Nairobi. Pupils and teachers prepare and present concerts that are well-attended and popular with parents.

35 Educational visits are an integral part of the school curriculum and planned well to enhance learning. These include visits to the theatre and to a lead-mining museum. The school has good links with the local secondary school. Year 6 pupils spend a full week there in preparation for transfer and some attend literacy and technology summer schools. This ensures that they are well prepared for moving up to their secondary school.

36 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and other activities. The school successfully implements its policy to 'promote equal opportunities in all aspects of school life with no discrimination between gender, race or religion'. There is no evidence of significant difference in the attainment of specific groups of pupils, for example, boys and girls.

37 Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. This is because all these pupils have access to the whole curriculum. There are specific resources for their use. Support staff ensure that the individual education plans are adhered to and updated on a regular basis, to ensure individual targets remain appropriate.

38 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and reflects the school's stated aims. All classes have a yearly plan that covers areas such as bullying and keeping safe. Health and sex education are generally integrated into other subjects but Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to attend a useful presentation from the school nurse once a year.

39 The school's provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.

40 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development through assemblies, the teaching of religious education and within some other lessons. The overall quality of assemblies varies; the most successful provide good insights into beliefs and values. The most effective assemblies are those where pupils are encouraged to participate actively. For example, in Key Stage 1, Christ's parable of houses built on sand and on rock is used effectively to consider questions of trust and

reliability. This promotes active responses from the pupils through discussion, song and prayer. Good use is made of prayer in many assemblies to acknowledge belief in a supreme deity. However, some assemblies are over reliant on commercial materials and these provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to take part. Through the religious education curriculum, pupils have many opportunities to study differing beliefs and this increases their knowledge and understanding of different faiths. In some lessons a sense of awe is created; for example, in the Nursery when tasting Israeli food and discussing its' importance to belief. In Key Stage 1, pupils are provided with very good opportunities to reveal and discuss their family 'treasures'. In Key Stage 2, pupils experience the excitement and meaning of a wedding.

41 The provision for moral development is good. The school actively promotes an understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Clear moral messages are conveyed through assemblies and at other times during the day. There are clear school expectations on behaviour and relationships and these are reinforced effectively through class discussion. All staff use a consistent approach in their dealings with pupils. For example, the mid-day assistants know what is expected from pupils throughout the day and apply these principles at lunchtime. There is close liaison between class teachers and support staff, so that consistent strategies are used when managing behaviour. The staff is a good role model in showing pupils the importance of considerate attitudes to the development of positive relationships.

42 The provision for social development is good. In many lessons pupils are encouraged to listen to one another, respond sensibly and work collaboratively. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils help one another locate information on rivers and express themselves in a mature manner when discussing this topic. In ICT, pupils work effectively in pairs on the computers, supporting one another's learning. Where pupils are withdrawn for learning support, they form cohesive learning units, working together with their learning support assistant. This helps develop their confidence and social skills. The school is developing a wider range of responsibilities for pupils; they currently are given a number of roles to support their class teachers. In assemblies pupils have responsibility for helping with visual and sound aids. Pupils are encouraged to support different charities by organising fundraising events, for example, a plant sale. The school aims to re-establish a school council and develop links with the Parish council.

43 The school's provision for cultural and multi-cultural development is satisfactory. Good use is made of visiting speakers to encourage an appreciation of art and music. Individual music lessons are available for piano and guitar. In history, a speaker recently provided useful insights into the history of Wolsingham. Pupils visit the theatre and local museums. There is normally a school residential visit for older pupils. Whilst there are some well established links with the local church, there are few links with other faith groups. Through the curriculum, in religious education and geography opportunities are provided for pupils to be more aware of other cultures; for example through studying Sikhism and the Caribbean island of St Lucia. However, there is insufficient work in school to promote an understanding of Britain's multi-cultural society.

44 The school has a range of policies to support spiritual, moral social and cultural areas of provision, however they need to be reviewed and updated. The quality of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is broadly similar to the time of the last inspection and remains a significant aspect of school life.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

45 The school effectively supports its pupils and the staff work hard to promote their welfare. The head teacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides good leadership in this aspect. All staff are very approachable and totally supportive. The non-teaching staff are caring, dedicated,

committed and provide very good support for both teachers and pupils. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them consistently and conscientiously. Good provision is made for medical and first aid requirements, and arrangements for dealing with routine matters such as minor injuries are also good. Conscientious staff, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils very well at breaks and lunchtimes and their standard of care is high.

46 The school makes appropriate use of relevant external support agencies and very good use of its learning support staff. Non-teaching staff and parent helpers are deployed very effectively and used very well to support pupils and teachers. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to achieve well and make good progress. Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is a good awareness throughout the school. There are good procedures for health and safety that are well known by all staff, who consistently demonstrate safe practice in lessons. Particular attention is made to safety during swimming lessons where the level of adult supervision is very good. The governing body and the head teacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously and all the required safety inspections and checks, including risk assessments, are regularly carried out, continually updated, and properly recorded. The health and safety aspects deemed unsatisfactory at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Although new risks associated with the accommodation have been identified.

47 The school has effective procedures in place for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. This has a positive effect on the high standards of behaviour that are maintained throughout the school. However, the current arrangements for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. Class registers show a high incidence of unauthorised absence that has not been followed up, and the reasons for absence have not been formally recorded in the registers. Attendance needs to be monitored and recorded much more rigorously.

48 Class teachers and the support staff know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. Procedures for supporting and monitoring academic progress and personal development are good. The school has developed a positive assessment policy. Individual records are maintained on every child and are passed up the school from teacher to teacher. However, the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is unsatisfactory, for example, teachers are not consistently evaluating individual pupil's or groups' performance to set work that builds on previous learning. The monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is good which has a positive impact on the progress they are making. Great care is taken by support staff to maintain accurate records of progress. These are reviewed at regular intervals, so that individual pupil targets can be adjusted. There is good liaison between class teachers and support staff.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

49 Relationships between the school and parents are good. The school enjoys the active support of many parents. The majority of parents consistently expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. There are a good number of committed parents and governors who regularly help in the classrooms where they are effectively deployed in a support role. The majority of parents are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home. For example, a large number of parents attended a 'wedding' in the school hall, which was part of a religious education lesson. A parents and friends association is under development and a high level of interest was shown at the initial meeting. A considerable amount of money has been raised for the school by parents and many have given of their time to help improve the school environment, for example, assisting with the development of the nursery outdoor area.

50 Not all parents agreed that the school works closely with them. However, the recently

appointed head teacher has taken appropriate steps to initiate more regular consultation with parents. Records show that any parents' queries or complaints are responded to promptly and in an appropriate manner. The head teacher and his staff are very approachable and many parents take the opportunity to talk informally to class teachers at the start and end of the school day. A significant number of parents disagreed that their children get the right amount of homework to do at home. The inspection team judged the use of homework to be satisfactory. A high number of parents disagreed that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence supported these parents' views and the provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory for a school of this size. However, some parents rightly expressed concerns about the safety aspect of taxis crossing the playground when pupils are walking across at the start and end of the school day. The inspection findings also support their concerns about the poor state of repair of the building; there are damp and peeling walls and many window frames are rotting.

51 Communication between the school and home is satisfactory. The school now sends out regular, informative newsletters and frequent letters about specific events and activities but evidence suggests that this is a relatively recent development. The school publishes a comprehensive and informative prospectus but the current edition omits the statutory required information about parents' right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship and the rates of authorised absence. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish a useful annual report but the latest report fails to include the statutory required information about the professional development undertaken by the teaching staff. A high number of parents disagreed that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. Inspection evidence did not support these parents' views as parents are given a personalised and informative progress report and offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. Reports clearly indicate, progress, what pupils can and cannot do, what they understand and point out areas for improvement. However, the school does not currently make curriculum and topic information readily available to parents. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress. They are given the full opportunity to attend review meetings. When appropriate they receive written information and they have good access to all staff.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

52 The school suffered severe disruption with the resignation of the head teacher and many staff changes after the last inspection. This affected staff morale and the resulting high turnover of temporary teachers has caused disruption to pupils' learning, particularly in the current Year 2 and to some extent in Year 6. The teaching in Year 6 has improved since the last inspection with the decision to move the school's very experienced Year 2 teacher into Year 6 for a term. This arrangement has supported Year 6 pupils for the term leading up to national test but some parents are concerned about the effect this has had on the Year 2 class. Although the school's options were limited, the decision created further disruption for the Year 2 class where the changes of teachers in the past year have disrupted their learning and standards, while satisfactory, are not as high as in previous years and could be better.

53 Since taking up his post in January, the head teacher is working with staff and governors to put in place new initiatives to develop the school and to ensure that aspects that have lapsed are reviewed and brought up to date. He has a sound grasp of what needs to be done and is providing satisfactory leadership. The governors and head teacher see stability in staffing as a priority in their aims for school improvement. However, some initiatives put in place have been hurried; they need to be evaluated and their success checked. Initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the school have not yet been in place long enough to have had an impact. Progress in responding to the priorities the head teacher has identified has been slowed because he is obliged to take the lead in many initiatives since

the deputy head teacher was only appointed this term and many subject leaders have changed responsibilities or are newly appointed. Most are eager to develop their management role but are still finding out what is needed.

54 The school has dealt with the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection. However, standards in English could be further improved and although provision and standards in ICT have substantially improved, standards need to be improved by the age of 11. There has been substantial improvement in the quality of teaching in Year 6, with changes in staffing. Teachers' planning of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and the adoption of national guidance for each subject ensures a useful framework for teaching and learning. Assessment procedures have improved and the head teacher and staff carry out analysis of all assessments, including the results of national tests. This is beginning to provide information that enables the staff to set realistic targets for groups of pupils in English, and mathematics. The targets for individual pupils are often too broad to have an impact on pupils' learning and are not checked and updated frequently enough. The teachers do not yet use their day-to-day assessment of what pupils have learned to match the next pieces of work more closely to individual needs. The health and safety issues identified in the last inspection have been resolved but others now need urgent action.

55 The role of the governors has improved substantially; they are very supportive and work well to support the school through their committees and through the link of individual governors to the subjects of the curriculum. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities but governors are not yet involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. For example, they have not made sure that decisions about staff deployment and responsibilities are as effective as they might be.

56 The school is beginning to establish sound systems to check on the effectiveness of its work. Many teaching staff have been recently appointed and have taken on new curriculum responsibilities (some as recent as three weeks) but are enthusiastic. However, all subject leaders have begun to find out what is working well and where improvements can be made. For example, many school policies were established in 1995 and are out of date. The school has adopted national guidance for all subjects and co-ordinators are working to update the school's policy statements. The school has not yet established clear opportunities for co-ordinators to consult with staff or to visit other classes to check on the development of their subjects. For example, the deputy head teacher took over the co-ordination of English three weeks ago and has already put in place a detailed draft action plan and it is to be presented to staff for discussion but it is unclear how she has involved staff in identifying what already works well and where things need to improve before writing the plan. However, co-ordinators scrutinise the teachers' planning for each term.

57 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Funding devolved for this purpose is used well. The nursery is staffed to provide a facility for children with special needs and they achieve well. This is built upon throughout both key stages because pupils receive well-structured support both in class and when withdrawn into small groups. Pupils who have 'statements of educational need' also receive good support. They have access to the whole curriculum and there are specific resources for their use. The new head teacher currently retains the role of co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO). He acts as the manager of the procedures in school and delegates tasks to appropriate staff. Despite recent staff changes the overall quality of provision remains good. The newly appointed school governor for special educational needs has a clear view of her role, is committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides good support to the school.

58 The head teacher has reviewed the school development plan to ensure it provides a sound framework for improvement. It includes details of the named person responsible for managing the development, financial implications and regular times for reviews of progress. Financial planning is sound and spending is linked to the educational priorities identified in the school development plan. The

governors and head teacher are keen to get the best value for the pupils in all resources and services and gather information before financial decisions are taken. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Resources in ICT are sufficient to teach the curriculum but the incompatibility of various computers restricts progress since the teaching of specific skills is limited. However, all resources available to the school are used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning. Given the good attainment of many pupils on intake, the good ethos of the school and the sound progress made since the last inspection the school provides satisfactory value for money.

59 The school has an adequate number of teaching and support staff. The school has a good blend of experienced and more recently qualified staff. They work well together and offer each other mutual support. Teachers' expertise is generally sound, although there are some areas where it is not so strong. This is apparent in aspects of English, and in music. This can have a direct impact on learning. The school ensures that teachers receive satisfactory training to upgrade their skills, but does not always link this in to the priorities identified in the development plan. However, training for ICT has been effective and is beginning to raise standards.

60 The school has satisfactory procedures to introduce new teachers to the school. Newly qualified teachers, for example, are assigned a mentor, a senior colleague who guides and supports their work. This is valued, as is the input from other teachers. New teachers also benefit from good support and training from the local education authority and from time out of the classroom to improve their skills. However, there is no systematic approach to this. In the current year, it has not been organised so that newly qualified teachers can learn by watching the good practice of colleagues in the classroom. Furthermore, there is not much useful documentation to acquaint new staff with the school's procedures, such as a staff handbook. The decision to ask the two newly qualified teachers to lead a subject was not well made and has given them a heavy workload, although the head teacher supports the co-ordinator for physical education and the ICT co-ordinator is working alongside the deputy head. However, the deputy head has just joined the school and also manages literacy; she has had little time to get to know what is needed and to support the inexperienced co-ordinator. The management of the school has not taken sufficient account of national guidance that makes clear that teachers in their first year should not be asked lead a subject or be given difficult classes. Although a new teacher in this situation was supported during the week of the inspection, there was no planned programme for how this support was to be monitored or discussion to check the impact on the morale of the teacher.

61 The adequacy of the accommodation throughout the school is mainly satisfactory. The teaching space in the nursery and reception class is limited, but good management and the use of all available space, allows all curriculum areas to be taught. The other classrooms are of a good size and place no major restrictions on teaching. The school lacks a central library where pupils can carry out independent learning and research. This aspect has not improved since the last inspection. The computer suite is too small, hot and stuffy and is not ideally situated to be fully effective. There is a shortage of suitable rooms for the withdrawal of individuals and groups of pupils, for example, pupils with special educational needs are often taught in the corridors. The swimming pool remains a valuable asset to the school and has a positive impact on the high standards achieved in swimming. There is sufficient space for the storage of learning resources.

62 The school is in a poor state of repair. Nearly all classrooms suffer from damage to the walls caused by water ingress and dampness. Many parents have expressed concerns about the health implications of their children working in a damp environment. Many window frames are rotting and there are potential safety hazards presented by the possibility of windowpanes falling out if repairs are not carried out before the situation deteriorates further. The disabled access to the school is poor and there is no disabled toilet provision. However, despite the adverse conditions, the school is well maintained and kept very clean by the premises superintendent and his cleaning staff. The learning

environment is enhanced by attractive display of the pupils' work.

63 The outside play area is large and well marked out to support pupils' play activities. There is a large grassed sports area. The nursery outdoor area is safe and secure, and, although still under development, provides the children with a stimulating and exciting play area. This has a positive impact on their social and physical development.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64 In order to continue to improve standards the head teacher, staff and governors should:

(1) In English:

- provide more planned opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills through role-play, drama, discussion and debate;
  - improve the teaching of letter sounds to enable all pupils to tackle unfamiliar words;
  - improve opportunities for pupils to use the library more regularly to support study skills and to find information;
  - improve the range and quality of reading materials, particularly for the older pupils;
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively in all subjects.
- (Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 26, 84, 87, 88, 113, 124)

(2) Continue to improve standards in ICT and:

- produce a long term plan for the development of ICT throughout the school;
  - ensure more opportunities for using sensing equipment in science and the use of modelling programs to support learning in other subjects;
  - review approaches to teaching and learning that maximise the use of accommodation and resources to ensure more whole class teaching of skills.
- (Paragraphs 8, 58, 128, 130, 131, 134)

(3) Improve assessment procedures to ensure that work that is more precisely planned to meet the needs of different groups within classes:

- involving curriculum co-ordinators with senior staff in analysing assessment information, including test results to set more precise targets for individuals and groups and monitoring their progress toward achieving them;
  - ensuring that teachers use the information from assessment to plan work that builds on what pupils already know;
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment to set more specific targets for individual pupils and check more regularly their progress against them;
  - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work provides information on what they do well and guidance on how to improve their work.
- (Paragraphs 29, 48, 54, 89, 91, 106)

(4) Improve the procedures for recording and monitoring attendance.  
(Paragraphs 17, 47)

(5) Work with the local education authority to find ways to resolve the health and safety issues identified during the inspection.  
(Paragraphs 46, 61, 62, 134)

In addition to the key issues above, the following more minor weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Review procedures for the induction and support of new staff.  
(Paragraphs 60, 144)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	18	45	28	3		

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)	27	224
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	69

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	18	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	32	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97% (89%)	97% (82%)	100% (89%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above 8	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	32	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97% (89%)	100% (89%)	100% (93%)
	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	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	28	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88% (68%)	78% (68%)	94% (61%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	14	14
	Girls	12	10	11
	Total	22	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69% (55%)	75% (26%)	78% (26%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	243
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	28.0

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	139

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.0

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.3
--------------------------------	-----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	445827
Total expenditure	440609
Expenditure per pupil	1591
Balance brought forward from previous year	4531
Balance carried forward to next year	9,749

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	245
Number of questionnaires returned	153

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	40	6	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	5	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	49	13	5	4
The teaching is good.	47	41	5	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	40	24	6	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	8	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	46	4	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	29	47	13	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	34	45	5	1	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	51	2	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	30	29	12	8

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents expressed concerns about the safety aspect of taxis crossing the playground when pupils are walking across at the start and end of the school day. Inspection evidence supported these parents' concerns. The inspection findings also support their concerns about the poor state of repair of the building; there are damp and peeling walls and many window frames are rotting.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

65 The school has maintained the very good provision for children in the foundation stage identified in the last inspection. The provision for these children is a strength of the school. The staff in the nursery and reception classes work closely together to provide a stimulating curriculum and wide range of activities that ensure that the children get a very good start to their education. Staff create a lively atmosphere that encourages the children's learning and enables many of them to make very good progress. By the end of the reception year the children are well prepared for transition into Year 1.

66 Children enter school with a broad range of attainment and previous experience with few who attain above the levels expected for their age in language, literacy, number and social skills. However, the nursery has a special facility for children with special educational needs. The children spend at least a year in the nursery and there is one reception class and a mixed reception and Year 1 class. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good and often very good or excellent. As a result, children of all abilities achieve very well in their skills and understanding across all the areas of learning. By the time they reach the end of the foundation stage and transfer to Year 1 many children attain above expectations for their age across all the areas of learning. All staff have a good awareness of the learning needs of young children and work together as a team. This is a key factor in the very good provision throughout the foundation stage. Staff know the children well and make careful assessments of their progress. The information gained from these assessments is used effectively to match work to what the children already know and to provide extra support for those who need it. Children with special educational needs are well supported in both their group and individual activities. Those who are immature or have physical difficulties are encouraged to take a full part in all activities at a level where they are confident. They are well supported by staff and make substantial gains in their personal and social skills.

67 Resources are deployed and managed well to provide opportunities for children to take responsibility for getting out and returning their own equipment. However, some resources, particularly those for outdoor play are old and in need of replacement or refurbishment. Staff make a lot of their own equipment. The teachers establish good links with parents through the programme of home visits. The induction of children into the nursery and reception classes works well and includes visits before they start nursery or move into the reception class. The useful written guidance helps parents to prepare their children for school. Parents indicate that they value the guidance and induction visit and feel that their children are well prepared for starting school. The provision for children under five is managed well and the co-ordinator works well with her colleagues and provides a clear direction for the organisation and development of the children's learning.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

68 The personal and social development of the children is very good and from starting in the nursery they are encouraged to be independent. The children are secure, confident and well settled into school routines; they move confidently about their classrooms and the wider areas of the hall and playground. The staff provide good opportunities for the children to make choices from the good range of activities on offer. By the time they transfer to the reception classes the children are very responsible and competent learners. They get out and return equipment and show initiative. For example, when playing outside the children select from the wheeled toys and devise their own imaginative routes, taking on the role of 'crossing patrol' to let other children across the 'road'.

69 The staff have very good relationships with the children and this promotes very good attitudes

to learning. The children enjoy their activities and respond well to adults; many are keen to ask and answer questions. They work well together in pairs and small groups and sustain concentration within activities. The children's behaviour is very good and this reflects the staff's high expectations and effective management of their classes. The children's spiritual and moral development is developed through stories and is reinforced within the activities linked to the areas of learning. The children in the reception class understand the importance of co-operation, kindness and caring for others. During a religious education lesson, work was linked well to their current topic on the sea and the teacher made good use of the story 'The Fish King's Power of Truth'. Her good questioning ensured that the children understood the meaning of the story. They collaborated well to act out the story and made mature and sensible responses about their feelings when acting in character.

### **Communications, language and literacy**

70 Children in the nursery and reception classes receive a good start in language and literacy work. The teaching of early language skills is good throughout the foundation stage. In the nursery, staff rightly set a high priority on the development of early speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. They plan well together to provide opportunities for children to practise their speaking and listening skills within all activities. The children respond well to the careful and purposeful questioning and to the opportunities for discussion provided by the staff. This enables them to improve their listening skills, learn to take turns when speaking, follow directions carefully and widen their vocabulary. These opportunities are consolidated and built upon effectively when the children move into the reception class.

71 In both the nursery and reception classes the children quickly develop a confident approach to speaking and listening activities with adults and when sharing ideas before small groups of other children. They work well in small and larger group situations, co-operating and learning to take turns in their speaking. They learn to listen to each other in structured games and activities. Role-play promotes the development of language and social skills and children use experiences from outside of school to act out different situations. For example, nursery children worked in the 'post office' and their good recall of what they saw on a visit to the local postal sorting office was evident as they wrote cards and letters to post in letterboxes to be set up in the 'road' in their outdoor play area. They accepted mail, ensured it was correctly stamped and addressed and took 'telephone messages'. Children's speaking and listening skills are often at the level expected for their age when they enter the nursery, but they make good progress. Children feel they are valued because adults listen to them patiently as they try to find the words to share information. The staff listen well and the children copy. The nursery class listened carefully as one boy described in detail a machine 'that lets my Dad scoop up all the mud'. Children listen carefully to stories and know many action songs and rhymes by heart. They listened to a story about 'Postman Pat' and looked carefully at the pictures to help them understand the events of the story. One child volunteered 'I can see the rain clouds on the hills'. By the end of the reception year, many children have good speaking and listening skills. The children speak confidently and are eager to share their ideas. For example children talked about islands they had drawn. Descriptions included, 'This is a river with some stones in it,' and, 'Here is some sand where people sink'. The children have a good range of vocabulary and use it confidently in response to effective questioning from staff.

72 Children share and enjoy a wide range of stories and rhymes with adults and visitors in the nursery. Most children take books home each week to share with their families. They know how to hold books, turn the pages and that pictures and print in books go from left to right. They know that print conveys meaning. Children learn to recognise their names from their name cards and can find these readily. They are beginning to recognise some letters, for instance, in books and in their names. Most children in the reception classes recognise a small number of commonly used words and can interpret labels and captions around the classrooms. They accurately retell stories in their own words; for example, children in the mixed reception and Year 1 class retold the story of the 'Rainbow Fish' by

acting out the events. A few read simple sentences from early reading books. The children know many letter sounds and some common blends and are beginning to use these to sound out and read words. They make good progress in the whole class sessions at the start of literacy lessons when they share a book with teachers. These sessions are used well to enable children to develop their knowledge and use of letter sound to help them read, write and spell. The children make substantial gains in early reading and many demonstrate skills above expectations for their age; they are well prepared for their next classes.

73 Children in the nursery are beginning to act as ‘writers’ and make attempts at their own writing, ranging from ‘play’ writing to emergent writing where letter shapes are recognisable. They enjoy ‘writing’ letters to friends. In the reception class, children initially write over the teachers’ script to add captions to their pictures or tell stories. Most form recognisable letters and dictate words and sentences for their teachers to write and then copy them carefully to produce their own accounts. For example, children in the reception class made good attempts at describing their trip to the Sea-life Centre. They show sound control of pens and pencils for their age. They are eager to write and many of the children attain well and make good progress in letter formation and early writing. Standards in writing are likely to be above expectations for their age for over half the children by the time they transfer to Year 1.

### **Mathematical development**

74 Children in the nursery and reception classes learn mathematical skills through playing a wide range of games that enables them to sort, count and create sets of objects by colour, shape and size. In the nursery the staff encourage children’s counting skills and reinforce their understanding of the match of numbers to objects in a wide range of activities. After learning about Jewish traditions the children were encouraged to count the candles in the ‘Hanukkah’ and then to name the different coloured candles and count how many there were of each colour. Many count accurately and match numbers successfully up to nine. They began to gain an understanding of terms such as ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ as they handled ‘parcels’. They worked well with a parent helper to predict which parcels would be the heaviest and used simple scales to test their ideas. Many were surprised when they discovered that small parcels were often heavier than large ones! The teachers’ careful assessment of what children can do is used well in the reception classes to enable them to learn to count and write numbers. In an effective oral session, the teacher matched her questions well to the different ages and abilities in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. This reinforced counting skills to at least 20 and enabled children to accurately match numbers to objects on a picture of the seaside. They quickly identified that the octopus had eight tentacles and there were 23 fish in the sea. Most children recognise two-dimensional shapes such as square, oblong, triangle and circle. All were able to begin to understand symmetry as they folded different shapes in half to create identical shaped parts. By the end of the lesson almost all the children were beginning to see the difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical patterns and demonstrated this by creating sets from a mix of coloured strips presented to them.

75 The children learn number songs and rhymes that are chosen well to reinforce their mathematical language and counting skills. They know many of these by heart and join in the actions with great enthusiasm. Children are developing their understanding of volume through practical activities that enable them to use sand, water, beans, pulses and counters to fill different shapes and sizes of container and to compare how much each will hold. They are beginning to use vocabulary such as ‘full’ or ‘empty’ and understand the terms ‘more than’ and ‘less than’. In free choice activities, many children make patterns with beads, cubes and shapes and are beginning to repeat them. The well-chosen mathematical games reinforce the children’s recognition of shapes and many of the children recognise the main primary colours of red, green, blue and yellow. The higher attaining children know a range of simple two and three-dimensional shapes and can name them. Children’s mathematical skills and understanding are developing well and they have a secure understanding of ordering numbers and

how written numbers represent objects. Many children make good progress in their number skills in the nursery and reception classes and attain above the standards expected for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1.

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

76 The nursery and reception staff plan well together to provide the children with a range of experiences that will enable them to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the world about them. Many children learn quickly through the many first-hand experiences provided by staff. These activities are a sound foundation for the children's future work in science, design and technology, history and geography. They practise skills using computers, listening centres and tape recorders to support their learning. In their topic on 'people who help us' the children in the nursery have a good understanding of the postal service through the well-planned visit to a local postal sorting office. The children show in their role-play in their 'post-office' that they know that letters and parcels have to be properly addressed, weighed and stamped before collection. They use well their experiences from out of school to take roles as customers, postmen and counter staff to act out scenes in the post office and 'street' in the outdoor play area. The staff plan well to reinforce the children's understanding through other areas of learning and in literacy the children listen to tales of 'Postman Pat' and in mathematics handle parcels to decide which is heavier. The children learn about other countries and show great interest when their teacher links holiday postcards to destinations on a map. They show real interest in other people and their traditions and eagerly worked with an Israeli student to make bread used in a Jewish family festival. They wondered at the embroidered cloth used to cover the loaf and were exciting by the embossed Hebrew writing in the silver goblet shown to them. They understood differences between their writing and that of a Hebrew text.

77 In the reception classes the children are working on a topic 'The Sea' and have visited the Tynemouth Sea-life Centre and know about different kinds of fish, can describe features of the seashore and have written about their findings, made colourful collages and painted pictures to show what they know. Teachers provide a good range of practical experiences to underpin early scientific concepts; children have investigated why some things float and others sink and know that magnets attract most metals. They can describe differences in houses past and present and have created their own models and three-dimensional pictures in work in design and technology.

78 Children have opportunities to use computers and show sound control as they use the mouse to manipulate cursors and move pictures on the screen. Staff ensure that programs reinforce basic skills in literacy and numeracy. For instance, reception children worked independently to open a program and used the mouse to control cursors and drag matching shapes to create a repeat pattern. Many children use computers confidently and build on their experiences from out of school. The children work well together and the more experienced are quick to show others how to use a program. The children enjoy working with computers and are delighted when they succeed in a game. The children in the reception class have used simple data handling packages to create pictograms showing the different eye colours in their class and have produced computer generated pictures of houses. Unfortunately the computer network is unreliable and children's efforts are often frustrated as computers 'crash'.

### **Creative development**

79 Staff ensure that creative activities are available on a daily basis and children have free access to paint, paper and collage materials at all times. They enjoy painting pictures, and use a range of colours and brush sizes. Standards of attainment in creative development are at least meeting the expectations for children of nursery and reception age and some achieve well. They are enthusiastic and keen to take part in all activities. In art activities, they explore colour and texture using a range of

materials to create pictures, collages, prints and patterns. For example, reception children have worked with a parent helper to weave a sea picture. Others have painted in the style of Mantises and created colourful pictures. The staff carefully mount the children's work and displays in the class bases are of good quality. They represent a wide range of areas of learning and promote the children's self-esteem.

80 Children have frequent opportunities to create three-dimensional models in clay and 'junk' modelling materials. They explore and use malleable materials such as play dough to experiment with texture. Many children competently use a variety of techniques such as cutting, folding and sticking paper, fabrics, foil and feathers. For example, reception children have worked imaginatively to create collages of the seaside and to show underwater scenes. Children regularly experience musical activities; they memorise counting and action songs and learn to sing in tune. The staff demonstrate well the actions and movements and this encourages the children to join in. The children sing tunefully and quickly learn new words, actions and tunes. In the nursery, when making their choices for a session, the children will choose music making and have access to a range of percussion instruments, which they 'play' enthusiastically. Children have frequent opportunities for imaginative play in their activities and use small toys to create a range of environments such as roads, farms and houses.

### **Physical development**

81 In the nursery, the children develop confidence and control of the way they move through opportunities for outdoor play. They use a range of wheeled toys and manoeuvre them carefully along routes they have planned. Children skilfully avoid obstacles and play a variety of imaginative games. During their physical education lessons in the school hall, the teachers effectively reinforce the children's confidence in using space. In a very well taught lesson in the hall the teacher's excellent knowledge of the learning needs of young children ensured that the children built on skills learned in earlier lessons and moved safely and used space well. The adults took a full part and this motivated well the less confident children. All children could run, skip or jog, changed direction and moved forward or backwards to show the movements of 'Postman Pat's' van. They 'reversed' with good control and used imagination to wave to passers-by as they 'drove' along. The specialist support assistant worked well with children who have special educational needs and encouraged them to take a full part in the activities and to achieve success.

82 Staff reinforce safety points and remind the children about the effects of exercise on their bodies. In the reception class, for example, children know the need to warm up muscles at the start of exercise. The children showed good co-ordination and persevered with difficult tasks as they 'bunny-hopped' in and out of hoops. They watched other children demonstrate good movements and practised and refined their work to take their weight on their hands as they hopped. The children are developing sound hand and eye co-ordination and can bowl a ball to their partner and trap the ball when it is returned. Children make substantial gains in their independence and help to get out and return equipment sensibly. Many children are developing sound co-ordination and learn to handle tools and equipment safely. For example, they use their manipulative skills in practical situations to make models using construction kits, shape wood with tools, paint with different sized brushes and cut and paste to create collages.

### **ENGLISH**

83 By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards that are at the levels expected for pupils of their age. However, they are not as successful in English as they were in last year's national tests when standards were well above average. This is largely due to the many changes the school has undergone during the past year and, in particular, to the several changes of teacher for pupils in Year 2. Pupils have inevitably been unsettled and this has had a direct impact on standards. Standards have clearly dropped since the last inspection, but not too significantly. The quality of pupils' speaking and

listening has remained average and their reading is still above average. Their writing skills are no more than what is expected for seven year olds and this is a weaker picture. Underlying trends, though, suggest that this year may be exceptional, as the standards in the classes below Year 2 are good due to effective teaching in the foundation stage and Year 1.

84 By the age of eleven, pupils' standards are similar to national expectations. Their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing are all broadly average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection in writing, little change in speaking and listening, but a weaker picture in reading. The school has certainly been trying to improve the quality of writing and this emphasis is beginning to have a positive effect. Teachers do not, however, provide enough opportunities in classes for pupils to fully develop their speaking skills, in particular. The modest range of reading books does not promote a strong enough interest in reading. Pupils in Year 6 have also had a change of teacher during the year, and this has not been entirely beneficial to their learning. Although standards are at the level expected by the end of Year 6 they are not as high as the results in the national tests last year.

85 Pupils mostly enter school with good speaking and listening skills. Teachers quickly develop very good relationships with the pupils, which ensure a strong mutual respect in the classroom. Because of this, pupils quickly learn to listen and concentrate well. The relaxed yet focused atmosphere in Year 1 enables pupils to develop a quiet self-confidence, and pupils speak freely and knowledgeably. However, the disruption to the teaching has left pupils in Year 2 less confident and less willing to talk in class. Some more able pupils can talk maturely and in some detail. For example, one pupil chatted happily about the art of flying a model aeroplane off a hill. Most pupils are less forthcoming, preferring to wait to be asked questions, rather than volunteer information. They tend to speak in simple sentences and rarely describe things in detail. Less able pupils are often keen to listen and talk, but often have a short concentration span and may forget the question or tail off during a sentence.

86 There is not much improvement in older pupils, relative to their age. Standards are satisfactory but no more. For the most part, in the junior school, teachers simply do not value enough the importance of discussion. They tend to talk too much, ask undemanding questions or only ask more able pupils to keep the pace of the lesson going. When preparing to write a letter of complaint about school meals, in a class exercise, Year 5 pupils were not given the chance to debate which food was not especially appetising. When pupils in Year 6 were working out some derivations of words from classical languages, there was too much focus on worksheets and the whiteboard, and not enough exploration of possible answers. Less able pupils are sometimes withdrawn from these activities to work on their own individual language needs. The good support that they receive helps them to develop a reasonable competence in speaking.

87 Reading is taught well and the structured approach results in good standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils clearly enjoy reading and, although there is not a wide variety of texts, they make good progress. Teachers make sure that reading books go home every day, even though they do not hear pupils read often enough themselves. Most pupils read simple books quite fluently and have a good vocabulary. They tend to be thwarted by unfamiliar words, though. Not all pupils use letter sounds to help them to tackle unfamiliar words; only more able readers know how to split up the syllables of new words to help pronunciation. These pupils also put more expression into their reading, whereas most pupils are only just beginning to do so. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, have less confidence, but their reading skills are not much lower than other pupils. They read expressively, although often quite slowly, even using fingers on occasions as a guide to aid their concentration. They are able to read a range of texts, fiction and reference books with some confidence, if not total accuracy. By the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress but this could be improved. Teachers do not provide enough stimulating reading material to guarantee a wide appreciation of language and the swift development of vocabulary. For example, most pupils in Year 6

still have to read books from the standard reading scheme. Although they do read other books, their knowledge of good quality writers and writing is disappointing. Furthermore, teachers do not usually allow pupils to make the most of the school library to support work in other subjects. As a result, only more able pupils possess the proper library skills expected of pupils of their age.

88 Pupils have satisfactory skills in writing throughout the school. They quickly learn how to express their thoughts in sentences and, by the end of Year 2 most pupils can link these together to form brief but coherent narratives. Pupils with special educational needs can also write in sentences but their ideas are not well developed and writing is brief. Many pupils can extend sentences using simple conjunctions like 'and' and 'but', and they understand how to use capital letters and full stops even though they often forget. Apart from occasional lapses, the spelling of most common words is accurate. Handwriting is quite neat and sometimes joined up. Less able pupils, however, still have difficulty being consistent in their handwriting. More able pupils can bring their writing alive with thoughtful vocabulary, such as 'spooky castles' and 'grumpy dragons'. Their spelling and handwriting are also good. As they grow older, pupils learn how to draft out their writing in rough, so that their work becomes more organised and structured. Unfortunately, there is an over-reliance by teachers on structure and grammar, which curtails the scope of pupils to be expressive. By the end of Year 6, this emphasis on form and the limited influences from literature mean that pupils' writing is mostly correct but not very imaginative. Although more able pupils can be reasonably descriptive, 'the air was dank and misty', they are not adventurous enough in the choice of language. Less able pupils struggle to be really coherent and often fail to complete work. Teachers do not enable pupils to learn and practise their writing sufficiently in other subjects.

89 The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching at both key stages. Not all teachers are careful enough about grammar and spoken English and this can lead to uncertain explanations, especially for older pupils. They do not always pick up enough on pupils' errors so that pupils can improve. For example, one teacher failed to correct a pupil, when he started a sentence, 'Me and James went ...'. This is also true of their marking of pupils' written work. Teachers often praise work but they do not point out errors enough or give advice about how to improve. A few teachers use their day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to match work to their different abilities, sometimes very well. Too often, though, the work is just graded versions of the same task, and not clearly linked to pupils' specific needs. This is less true of pupils with special educational needs where support staff work well with teachers to improve particular weaknesses in English, either by working in classrooms or by withdrawing pupils for individual or group work.

90 Teachers are often successful in creating a positive learning atmosphere in classrooms. For the most part, they develop good relationships with the pupils. Teachers expect high levels of behaviour and commitment, and also value pupils' contributions. This ensures very good behaviour and a healthy level of concentration. Teachers are then able to teach without constantly having to check whether all pupils are gainfully employed. In Year 1, for example, the atmosphere of mutual respect is so high that pupils work hard unsupervised and are keen to present work neatly. Teachers do not build enough on these special relationships, particularly higher in the school, to encourage pupils to really expand their use of English.

91 The co-ordination of the subject is in a state of flux. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed and she has not had enough time or opportunity to fully evaluate the subject throughout the school. She has already produced a detailed action plan to develop the subject, but this has been produced too quickly. Although the plan is intended to be presented to staff for discussion, they have not been involved sufficiently before it was finalised in order to identify what already works well and what is needed in terms of priorities for improvement. For example, teachers do not make good enough use of the results of pupils' assessment to guide their lesson planning but this important issue does not feature in the action plan for literacy. One issue, which rightly concerns the school, is the library,

which has been recently moved out of a classroom into a corridor. This in itself does not allow easy class use since the area is more normally used for group teaching of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the range of books is limited. The school has done well to eliminate many unsuitable books but has yet to buy many more stimulating titles both fiction and non-fiction. It plans to reinstate the library and further improve book provision.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Positive attitudes to learning have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved. Pupils in Year 6 achieve above the standards expected for their ages in numeracy and all aspects of mathematics. Test results in summer 2000 show that their attainment was well above the national levels and in line with those of similar schools. Test results for pupils in Year 2 for the same year show that they achieved well above standards expected nationally and above those of similar schools. In the national tests in Key Stage 2 boys' attainment is higher than girls' but pupils' work demonstrates that there is no significant difference. Pupils' current work shows that they are working at levels above what is expected for pupils aged 11 and are at the level expected for seven year olds at the end of Year 2. The differences in standards in tests and current work in Year 6 reflects differences in the abilities of the pupils year on year and the different numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Differences in standards in the current Year 2 are partly due to differences in the ability of this group compared to the pupils in Year 2 last year. However, the main reason for lower standards in current work is linked to the lack of continuity of pupils' learning due to the frequent changes of teacher.

93 The quality of teaching is mainly good in both key stages. Teachers' planning is detailed and supports teaching and learning. Teachers make clear exactly what pupils need to learn so that they understand the purpose of activities. They use mathematical vocabulary well throughout lessons and so pupils understand and confidently use the terms. Teachers explain processes clearly to pupils and provide good support for them, including those with special educational needs. Teachers' skilful questioning enables pupils to explain methods of computation and helps them to explore their own reasoning. Teaching is well paced, lively and interactive. For example, in a Year 6 lesson taught by the co-ordinator for mathematics, pupils played number bingo by rounding numbers and dominoes to match equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. Teachers plan a good range of activities that help pupils learn. Resources are well prepared, readily available and used effectively to support teaching and learning. Classroom assistants help teachers to provide good support for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils respond well because their teachers have high expectations of them. However, teachers' assessments of what individual pupils can do is not used effectively to plan the next pieces of work and targets set for individual pupils rarely focus on mathematical learning.

94 The school is implementing well the National Numeracy Strategy Framework and all daily mathematics lessons follow these guidelines. Pupils practise mental calculation in every lesson and have a rapid and increasingly accurate grasp of number facts. By the age of seven pupils recognise number patterns and sequences. For example, in Year 2 they are able to put numbers onto a number square and answer questions about the positioning of numbers up to 100. They know the difference between odd and even numbers. Most pupils can count forwards and backwards in fives and use whiteboards to show multiples of five in response to their teacher's questions. In Year 6 pupils used target boards to identify pairs of two-digit numbers that total 90. They recorded answers on whiteboards to share with their teacher when multiplying a two-digit number by a one-digit number. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate good understanding of shape and space. They use co-ordinates to specify location and know the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They understand the concept of symmetry and complete patterns of symmetrical shapes around an axis with accuracy.

95 Mathematics makes a small contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, in Year 1, the teacher demonstrated how to make symmetrical patterns using paint and folding paper. Pupils wondered at the beauty and complexity of the patterns created from such a simple process. One pupil developed the idea by painting his name and was surprised by the outcome that he then shared with the rest of the class. Pupils behave well in almost all lessons. They develop their social skills through purposeful paired talk that supports their learning. They listen attentively to one another and to their teachers. Numeracy skills are sometimes used well in other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 art and design lesson, pupils developed a design through translating and rotating a shape. They accurately used mathematical language such as horizontal, vertical, symmetrical and discussed fractions of a turn.

96 The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has a clear idea of the standards achieved throughout the school and has identified priorities for development based on an audit of current practice. These are set out in a numeracy action plan. The co-ordinator and the head teacher monitor teaching and planning. Lesson observations are recorded and the findings shared with teachers to help them develop their work with pupils and so improve learning. The co-ordinator has also taught demonstration lessons for other teachers in order to show ways of dealing with particular concepts. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and enhances teachers' confidence. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' progress throughout the school. She analyses test papers to identify strengths and weaknesses in the answers made by pupils and uses this knowledge to ensure that planned activities ensure that pupils are well prepared.

## **SCIENCE**

97 Inspection findings show that standards in science are above the levels expected by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 at the age of 11. However, this is below last year's national tests for eleven year olds when standards were well above those attained nationally and above those of similar schools. At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in current work matches the levels expected for their age with a few pupils who achieve more highly. This is below the very high teacher assessments of last year and reflects the fact that the pupils' learning has been disrupted in this class. There have been many staff changes in Year 2 and Year 6; this has slowed progress, particularly in Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection but are lower at the end of Year 2.

98 Progress is good for many pupils who have special educational needs. The teacher and classroom support staff ensure that these pupils are supported well and are able to work at their own level, often using simpler methods to record their findings. For some higher attaining pupils, work is not always sufficiently challenging to enable them to make the best possible gains in learning.

99 Teaching is good in the Year 1 classes and ensures that pupils learn effectively through a good range of practical activities. Pupils in Year 1 have investigated to find the best conditions in which to grow plants. They know that plants require light, heat, water, air and food if they are to be healthy. The teacher effectively develops links between subjects and pupils have used their ICT skills to produce annotated diagrams of the life cycle of a bean. This work is built upon in Year 2; by the age of seven pupils plant and grow seeds in different conditions such as in a greenhouse, in a shed and in the classroom and make accurate predictions about the impact of the materials used in these environments on the rate of growth of the seeds. By the end of Year 2, pupils describe similarities and differences between materials. They know that materials are worn and used for different purposes. They are developing a secure understanding of the need for a fair test through investigations of different forces. For example, they ensured that toy cars of the same size and weight were used to test the friction caused by different surfaces. Pupils have a good recall of how electricity is used in the home and make sensible suggestions about its use in school. They can make and record simple circuits and know how these work. In a topic on 'Ourselves' they show a sound understanding of which foods are best for health.

100 The teacher is new in Year 2 and in a soundly taught lesson pupils learned about the impact of exercise on their bodies. They checked their pulse, temperature and lung capacity at rest, after exercise and when they had recovered from exertion. More able and many average pupils recorded their work carefully but less able pupils showed a wide range of letter and number formation, although some worked carefully and set out work well. About a third of the class made accurate measures as they tested temperature and pulse but many recorded measures that varied widely from the normal. By the end of the lesson the pupils showed an understanding of how the body responds to exercise and gained an awareness of investigative techniques but they were not ready to make accurate measurements. The pupils are not well settled due to the disruptions in teaching in this class. Although teaching was satisfactory and the teacher gave clear directions, organisation did not enable all pupils to make the best possible progress, strategies to control silly behaviour were not fully effective. For example, instead of checking lung capacity by blowing up the balloons before and after exercise they continued to play blowing up the balloons many times with little regard to the experiment. This hinders the development of scientific knowledge and understanding, and slows progress for some pupils.

101 Progress is good in Year 3, where pupils are well taught. Pupils have learned about keeping their teeth healthy and know that some foods are good for teeth and others such as sugar are not. In work linked to design and technology they have created colourful plates of 'food' in their restaurant and used word processing skills to type out their menus to show they understand what makes a healthy meal. In a well planned and taught lesson, these pupils showed a good recall of a visit to a local garden and could accurately name parts of plants and could identify their function. For example, they understood the term 'capillary action' and described how a plant took minerals through its roots.

102 By the age of 11, pupils in Year 6 can competently apply the principles of 'fair testing' to investigations as when they tested which materials would make good thermal conductors. Their written work shows that can make predictions, accurately time observations and evaluate their findings. Most pupils were able to see the implications of their information for solving real-life problems of insulation. In work leading up to the national tests, many pupils showed a good understanding of dissolving and evaporation. They explained why filtering was effective in such a process, and used the terms 'solution' and 'evaporation' appropriately when describing work done previously. Following their investigations, pupils use their computing skills well to produce coloured 'pie' charts and block graphs, or line graphs to record their findings. Analysis of pupils' work, and discussion with pupils, indicates that they have a good understanding of sound and vibration. They have a good awareness of life cycles and food chains and less able pupils were able to make a useful identification key for mammals. Pupils also have a good understanding of life processes, and can relate healthy eating and exercise to a healthy body. In another Year 6 class investigation they showed a good understanding of the functions of organs, bones and muscles of the body.

103 Pupils enjoy their science lessons and most behave in a responsible way when listening to explanations by the teacher and when working with apparatus in small groups. In many lessons there is earnest activity as pupils carry out their investigations and talk enthusiastically about them. They respond well to each other and in most lessons use classroom equipment and materials carefully. They work well in pairs and small groups to conduct investigations. This works well for pupils with special educational needs, who work well in mixed ability groups and are well supported by their classmates. Behaviour is good in most lessons because teachers manage their classes well.

104 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and is often good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents a continuing improvement in teaching since the last inspection. In many lessons, teachers make clear what pupils are expected to learn and how to proceed. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and use it well to plan interesting activities in each topic. Most teachers place appropriate emphasis on developing the skills of scientific enquiry. Teachers use homework well to

extend and enhance pupils' learning.

105 Pupils' attitudes to science are mostly good. Most pupils show high levels of involvement in practical work, especially when they are challenged. Pupils mostly listen well, and try hard to complete the required tasks. A small number of pupils lack confidence when carrying out practical work, and require, help, support and reassurance.

106 The subject co-ordinator took over the subject last September and has worked hard to gain a good overview of the subject. She has clear ideas of strengths and weaknesses and has produced a well-written development plan to manage what is needed to further improve standards. The co-ordinator manages resources well; these are organised in boxes according to topic and this helps other staff manage their teaching more effectively. Instead of a portfolio of pupils' work, the co-ordinator displays samples of work from each age group in the school and this effectively shows the progress made by pupils over time. However, the co-ordinators has had little opportunity to check on teaching and learning to assess strengths and weaknesses, although she does scrutinise teachers' planning and provide support. The school makes good use of the school grounds and visits such as, to the Botanical Gardens and Tynemouth Sea Life Centre to enhance pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107 There was no opportunity to observe teaching in art and design in Key Stage 1 during the inspection and judgements are based on an analysis of teachers' planning, scrutiny of work displayed around the school and on lessons seen in classes in Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and standards in art and design are in line with those expected of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. In the two lessons seen teaching was satisfactory. However, in these lessons there was a lack of detail in teachers' planning and insufficient intervention when pupils were working to reinforce skills and share results. However, teachers have secure subject knowledge and pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make sound progress. Pupils' skills are assessed annually and pupils in Key Stage 1 select examples of work to include in their individual portfolios. However, insufficient attention is given to checking on pupils' achievements in lessons and providing guidance on how to improve their work.

108 By the age of seven, pupils in Key Stage 1 mix two primary colours to make a new shade and control paint well to show detail. They demonstrate satisfactory awareness of colour and texture. Year 2 pupils produced good work in response to a Monet painting. They used chalk skilfully and linked this with good use of an art package on the computer to respond positively and show imaginative and careful interpretation of the impressionist style. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils study famous artists including Matisse and Derain, whose techniques they adopt in their own work. Examples of well-produced art projects supported by parents include a large wire and paper sculpture and weaving using different textiles. By the age of 11, Key Stage 2 pupils learn how to create different effects through the skilful use of line, pattern and tone. Some pupils consider their choices of paint and materials carefully to gain the desired effect.

109 Pupils enjoy work in art and design; they behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. They co-operate with their classmates in shared activities. In Year 6 pupils have opportunities to create visual images based on their own still life compositions. They learn to study and appreciate the beauty of different shapes and forms to include natural and man-made artefacts. Throughout the school, work in art and design fosters pupils' cultural development through opportunities to respond to the work of a range of artists from different times and places.

110 The co-ordinator is new to the post and is well supported by the previous post holder. Teachers assess the standards pupils achieve by their scrutiny of displays in classrooms and around the school. However, the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to visit other lessons to check on the quality of teaching and learning and how the subject is developed in different parts of the school and does not

monitor teachers' lesson plans. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory although the role of the co-ordinator requires further development in order to have an impact on practice throughout the school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111 Although the school has begun to improve the subject since the last inspection, it has not yet succeeded in fully doing so. The school has given structure to the subject through a new nationally accepted scheme of work. This means that pupils can move from year to year, progressively adding to their skills and knowledge. This is happening more in Key Stage 1, where pupils are reaching satisfactory standards by the age of seven. It is not the case further up the school. Although sometimes pupils benefit from good teaching, not all pupils receive enough time and opportunity to develop their skills. This is especially so in Year 6, where pupils' attainment is still unsatisfactory.

112 Pupils have a good start to the subject. In Year 1, the very good working atmosphere in the classrooms produces effective learning. Teachers have high expectations and explain things clearly to pupils so that they can quickly and easily undertake their tasks. The strong relationships in the classrooms mean that pupils can be trusted to work sensibly individually or in pairs. There is a buzz of activity as the pupils concentrate hard to create, for example, moving pictures with levers and sliding mechanisms. Two pupils designed and produced moving jaws for a shark so that it could consume a bather more easily! Pupils learn well because they are encouraged to work such things out through trial and error. It is a similar picture in Year 2, but pupils do not benefit from such a range of work. They know how to design simple items like a glove puppet, and they are starting to describe their ideas on paper. They can also label their diagrams, such as the features of a car, although much of this is copied from the board. Only more able pupils can refer clearly to their findings. One pupil described a grated apple as being sweeter than a solid one. These pupils are also stronger at evaluating their work, even though their ideas are still quite simplistic, 'Next time, I will paint my windows yellow'. All pupils present their work quite well but teachers' marking is too brief and does not give enough guidance for pupils to improve. The number of different teachers in the class this year has not helped this situation since there has been little consistency in approaches and expectations.

113 There is some good work in Key Stage 2, but the quality of many pupils' work is disappointing. Teachers do not devote enough time to the subject. They do not use it as a means of developing other subjects like English. Therefore, pupils do not write about their ideas and plans enough. Pupils in Year 3, for example, can label the filling of their ideal sandwich, even though their writing is restricted by the structure of accompanying worksheets. This is not always the case. When pupils in Year 4 made some two-dimensional shooting stars, there was no evidence of written designs, labelling or evaluations. It often happens that teachers do not encourage pupils to assess their work and suggest improvements efficiently. As a result, pupils will not learn readily from their mistakes and successes. Teaching is better in Year 5. Pupils are encouraged to be more rigorous in their approach to work, and write procedures down. They benefit from the opportunity to select raw materials to make their own musical instruments, for example. However, sometimes, the focus of their work is allowed to be too broad. Consequently, pupils struggle to achieve. Some pupils, for example, wanted to make musical instruments that were multi-faceted. This was unnecessarily complicated, especially as they had not even made a simple one in the first place.

114 A key problem in Year 6 is the small amount of time pupils have for the subject. Often, pupils are withdrawn in groups of four from an art lesson to receive fifteen minutes teaching from a classroom assistant. This not only deprives them of essential time to immerse themselves in a topic, but also means that their brief meeting with the subject may not take place again for another two or three weeks. Furthermore, the quality of teaching is not good enough. There is far too little discussion to help pupils consider the most effective methods and far too little explanation. This was clearly seen in session preparing to make slippers. There was no attempt to weigh up the strengths and weaknesses of

the different materials with which to make the slippers and no guidance about how to present the methodology. There is not a sufficiently good enough working atmosphere in Year 6 for the pupils to be allowed to work together as a class. Expectations, therefore, are limited. Indeed, their design of a slipper had to be for a teddy bear's foot, because a larger one, for their own feet, would have involved too much stitching.

115 The school has not shown enough urgency in developing this subject; there is not enough evaluation of what is happening for it to improve quickly enough. The newly appointed, but temporary, co-ordinator is enthusiastic and efficient but has not yet had the time to develop the subject. She has made a useful initial survey of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject but does not yet have a clear view. For example, the school realises that teaching methods may need some improvement, but it does not yet know what these are.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116 At the age of seven, pupils' attainment in geography meets the national expectation. By the age of 11, the pupils in Year 6 only commenced their geography this term. This is because of staffing changes during the school year. In the lesson observed their attainment broadly matched expectations. The more substantial work seen in Year 5 shows these pupils' attainment meeting age-related expectations. Overall pupils achieve the expected standards and make satisfactory progress. Care is taken to ensure those pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate guidance and support.

117 By the age of seven, pupils have sufficient skills to locate features on a map, using a two-figure grid reference. They draw maps to show they have an awareness of scale and direction. A visit to the local park leads to accurate recording of the key features, such as paths and boundary fences. Pupils are aware of the main features of their town. They record these accurately on a map and write comments on them. They make good use of ICT to produce graphs following a traffic survey. Within the key stage, pupils show an awareness of features from contrasting locations, making comparisons between their town and a coastal resort. The clear development in pupils' knowledge and understanding over time is due to careful teaching of basic geographical skills, the use of appropriate resources and the pupils' positive attitudes towards their work.

118 By the age of eleven, pupils have a sound understanding of the water cycle and know its' role in sustaining rivers. Pupils are secure in their knowledge of many aspects of the rivers' life. They are aware of how rivers are formed and know that different types of rock influence this. For example, they know that water will penetrate limestone more easily than granite. They understand how a river progresses from its' source to the estuary and they can identify most features along its' route. Within the key stage, they are carefully taught and introduced to an appropriate range of topics. For example, in Year 3 they gain some good insights into contrasting societies, through studying a Kenyan village. In Year 4 they complete a study of their locality and accurately record land use. In Year 5 they complete a substantial study of St Lucia, in the Caribbean. This work gives them good insights into local, regional and world geography. The work on St Lucia is well supported by an established resource pack and taught competently. It provides pupils with contrasting insights into life on St Lucia and they become more aware of the environmental, social and economic issues relating to tourism.

119 The quality of teaching is good. Class-teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of this subject. They make good use of resources, for example, Year 1 pupils use a range of photographs. In some lessons, good use is made of research based learning, including using CD-ROMs and the Internet. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and contribute in discussion. For example in Year 1 a pupil knows the coastline is 'where the land meets the sea'. In Year 2, pupils are encouraged to use correct terminology, such as 'co-ordinates'. In Year 6, pupils work independently and make good use of graded task sheets to investigate their topic. Overall, most

pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning and behave well. A number of older pupils offer mature and thoughtful comments when questioned.

120 The curriculum follows the recent national guidance and this provides a varied range of learning experiences. This successfully addresses the concerns raised in the previous inspection regarding progression between year groups. At present the role of co-ordination is undertaken by the head-teacher, who is a specialist in this curriculum area. Resources are adequate and include a good range of atlases. The curriculum issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed and the needs of higher attaining pupils are now more successfully met, through the more careful setting of tasks and increased opportunities to work independently.

## **HISTORY**

121 Progress is mostly satisfactory as pupils move through the school and work builds steadily on previous learning. Pupils develop historical skills, knowledge and understanding in a logical order and standards are broadly at the levels expected by the ages of seven and eleven. This is helped by the fact that many pupils have good general knowledge and are interested in the topics they study. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

122 Pupils in Year 1 have studied houses and have a sound understanding of the differences between houses now and in the past and can describe how they have changed. For example, the contents and layout of kitchens and bathrooms are very different. The teachers make good links between subjects and pupils have made models of houses in their design and technology work. Year 2 pupils have used their art and design skills and made portraits of the famous people they have studied. They know about their lives and why they are famous. By Year 5, pupils learn know terms such as 'decade' and 'century' and place important events since 1948. They explore changes over time and in a well-taught lesson worked well together on topics related to transport, jobs, buildings, toys, houses, music and fashion. The pupils showed a good understanding of how to carry out historical enquiry and used well the artefacts brought from home or loaned by the County Loan Service to identify aspects of change, for example, the changing roles of women, changes in architecture and fashion.

123 By the age of 11 pupils can use their skills to find out about the past using books, photographs, pictures, CD-ROMs and the Internet. For example Year 6 pupils discover how the Ancient Greeks lived and have studied the emergence of the City States. They can describe how people worshipped their Gods and know the names for public buildings such as the acropolis. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the way of life of ordinary people and have produced advertisements for a Greek home. Pupils have made an in-depth study of Sparta, and know the value of archaeological evidence such as statues, wall paintings and paintings on pottery can be used as evidence of how the Spartan boys were trained to fight and what weapons they used. Pupils' cartoon strips of life in Sparta show a sound understanding of a good range of aspects. In a well-resourced lesson, Year 6 pupils used an information pack put together by the teacher and carefully studied books and pictures to find information on the range of sporting events. They compared what they knew with their knowledge of the modern Olympic Games and are well aware of the many differences. For example, no women took part in the Greek Olympics. The teacher effectively matched the tasks to the abilities of the pupils by enabling less confident readers to use simpler text and to record differently. About a third of the pupils illustrated their work well and used source materials well to produce well drawn pictures of the athletes, copied from pictures of statues or paintings. The teacher's high expectations of work and behaviour meant that pupils responded well and persevered with their tasks.

124 Pupils learn about events, people and changes, using a range of information sources. Learning about history through enquiry is the strongest area of the subject at present. Pupils reinforce and communicate their understanding of history in different ways, such as, through writing, pictures,

maps and discussion. There are some links between history and other subjects, such as, English, art and design, design and technology and geography. For example, Year 6 pupils study maps to learn about Ancient Greece. These links give added meaning to pupils' work in history and add to the quality of their learning. Links with ICT are developing as the school's provision improves, but too often the computer network is unreliable and pupils cannot complete an enquiry. Older pupils do not use the school library well for independent research and by Year 6 they are capable of taking more responsibility for their enquiries. For example, the teacher in Year 6 provides too much material for the pupils and this limits opportunities for them to find out things for themselves.

125 Evidence from teachers' planning and discussions with staff indicate that teaching is at least sound. Only two lessons were seen and in these the teaching was good. This was because significant emphasis was given to the study of source material to bring the subject to life for pupils, good questions helped to extend historical understanding, relationships were secure and work was appropriately challenging. Pupils are interested in history and are eager to find information.

126 The co-ordinator had only taken over leadership of the subject three weeks before the inspection. She has not yet had time to affect development but is clear about her priorities. For example, the school has adopted recent national guidance for history but the policy is dated 1995; it is unsatisfactory and has no relevance for current units of work. The co-ordinator has begun to put together useful topic boxes of source materials and artefacts to support teaching and learning. The local area is used well to develop historical understanding.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

127 The standard of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers are more competent with their basic skills and have a greater understanding of using information and communication technology (ICT) across the school curriculum. They are more confident when exploring ICT with pupils. This has a direct impact upon learning. Teachers now organise their work more effectively and provide good opportunities for all pupils to have regular access to ICT. Pupils respond very positively to this and work sensibly in pairs on the classroom based equipment. Critical to this is the early introduction to basic skills, giving all pupils opportunities to practice and improve these. Pupils make good progress over time in Key Stage 1; as a result standards of attainment in ICT broadly meet national expectations at the end of Year 2.

128 The achievements in Key Stage 1 are partly due to the good start made in the nursery, where children are introduced to personal computers (PC's) and have regular access to them. This is carried through the Foundation Stage into Year 1. The current Year 1 pupils benefit from working with new PC's and software from an early age. The pupils now in Year 2 did not have such good access to these resources, when younger. Despite this, they have attained the national standard for seven years old pupils in most areas of the ICT curriculum. They lack some experience in the area of control technology, because of equipment failures at critical points in the teaching programme. There are opportunities later this term to remedy this, by making use of the new floor robots in school.

129 By the age of seven, pupils have basic keyboard skills, knowing the function of different keys, such as 'shift' and 'spacebar'. They use these to good effect when writing sentences and short stories. Most pupils control the 'mouse' correctly and this enables them to 'click & drag' when using such programs as 'Colour Magic'. Pupils make good use of pastel colours to select a realistic effect and recreate Monet's garden. Pupils follow up their work by using the Internet successfully to research the painter's life. In other work, pupils successfully select shapes to create a symmetrical effect. They make good use of 'RM Starting Graph' to use data from a traffic survey and create a graph. With their class teacher, pupils have use of a digital camera and help down load images onto the PC. They use these effectively by combining text with graphics. Pupils have experience of musical composition and

using simulation games. In Year 1 pupils use control technology successfully to rotate shapes on screen. They gain experience of map-making on the PC.

130 Pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 2. However, the older pupils have not had sufficient opportunities in previous years to acquire a wide range of skills to match the demands of the curriculum. The result of this is that standards amongst the oldest pupils are below expectations for their age. Although standards are below the expected levels at the end of Year 6, this is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

131 By the age of eleven most pupils word process competently, using a variety of layouts, for example, to represent differing viewpoints on the 'foot and mouth' crisis. This is augmented through importing images using 'clip-art'. They have limited experience of using spreadsheets and are still learning the basics of this. They know how to use the floor robot to develop a basic understanding of 'control', but have little experience of developing this 'on-screen'. Pupils have little experience of modelling programs and have not used external sensing equipment. However, pupils are now broadening their experiences; for example, using logi-blocks to devise a sequence for controlling traffic lights. Their experience in using PC's for research is improving rapidly. They use the Internet and CD-ROMs to support work across the curriculum; for example, in history and English. Within the key stage, younger pupils are now developing skills at an earlier age. For example, in Year 4, pupils work with spreadsheets, experiment with musical composition and make good use of the Internet. They gather a range of data; for example, on temperature and represent this graphically. In Year 5, pupils are developing skills in control technology and data processing and they make good use of art packages. These recent improvements in provision have been achieved because the staff have received further training and the level of resources has improved.

132 The impact of this is improvements in the range of experiences pupils receive. They make satisfactory progress over time and achieve improvements in their use of ICT. This is a significant improvement in comparison with the previous inspection.

133 The standard of teaching in Key Stage 2 is now satisfactory. Teachers promote a wider range of learning opportunities, because they have the confidence to do so. They actively plan opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum. They have sufficient knowledge and understanding of ICT to identify a range of opportunities for all pupils. Good use is made of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs and the learning support assistants play a vital role here. There is a significant input from a voluntary helper, who provides very good support to a number of staff and pupils. The improving opportunities provided help promote an independent and mature approach from many pupils. They can be trusted to work sensibly together and develop independent learning skills. They are keen to learn and often support one another effectively.

134 The curriculum now meets statutory requirements. There are sufficient resources to cover the programmes of study, which are based on the nationally produced guidelines. The new co-ordinator is beginning to identify priorities and support colleagues effectively. She receives good support from the deputy head teacher, a voluntary helper and the designated school governor. ICT is taught in classrooms at Key Stage 1. This provides pupils' with regular access to PC's, but limits opportunities for whole class teaching of ICT skills. At Key Stage 2 there is a mix of classroom teaching and group teaching within a small ICT suite. This accommodation is unsatisfactory. The ICT suite is too small for whole or half-class teaching. It lacks common access, being approached through two classrooms, is hot and lacks blinds. The various computers within the suite are not compatible with one another. These factors restrict progress on occasion, as the teaching of specific skills frequently requires duplication of teaching time. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, a routine task is only completed by a third of the class because pupils have to wait their turn to use equipment and receive support.

135 The school has achieved considerable improvements since the previous inspection and

standards are rising. All pupils enjoy a wider range of experiences than two years ago. However, the school lacks an appropriate strategic plan of how to move ICT forward in the long term. In order to build upon the progress achieved, the school should carefully review its options for raising standards further and maintaining curricular provision. Such reflection is likely to include approaches to teaching and learning within an environment that maximises the use of accommodation and resources.

## **MUSIC**

136 The school has made sound progress since the last inspection and standards of work seen in music are satisfactory at the ages of seven and eleven. The music curriculum is supported by published guidance that has only recently been adopted by the school. The peripatetic teacher visits the school for the equivalent of one day per week to teach stringed instruments to those pupils with special aptitudes and abilities. They also have the opportunity to attend district orchestra rehearsals that are held in the school once a week.

137 Almost all teaching seen was satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers plan effectively and resources are used appropriately to support learning. Most teachers take care to use musical language and explore its meaning with their pupils. Planned activities present a suitable level of challenge. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher read from the lesson plan from the published guidance and did not maintain eye contact with pupils. As a result they did not listen well and disrupted the lesson. This slowed the pace and hindered learning. However, there is good behaviour in most lessons and pupils respond enthusiastically to activities. They enjoy singing and do so tunefully. Pupils in Year 2 joined in an action song 'Jolly Roger' with obvious pleasure.

138 Pupils understand and use musical terms correctly. For example, pupils in Year 2 recognised changes in tempo when listening to Grieg's 'In the Hall of the Mountain King'. In Year 1 pupils respond to different musical moods and can maintain a steady beat in a simple accompaniment. They recognise that they can play instruments in different ways to make changes to sounds. Year 5 pupils sang in harmony when led by their teacher and a classroom assistant.

139 The subject co-ordinator is very new to the role. However, she has a clear idea about standards throughout the school and confidence in the new subject guidance, which is popular with most staff. She identifies well the priorities for purchase of resources. The current policy is out of date and the co-ordinator is planning its review so that the subject is more effectively supported. There is no formal checking on the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

140 During the inspection it was only possible to observe lessons in games, gymnastics and swimming. Discussions with staff and pupils, plus the examination of documents and teachers' records demonstrate that the physical education curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the areas of physical education are taught according to the season. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils attain standards that match the levels expected for their age in most aspects of physical education. However, pupils achieve well in swimming and standards are above those expected for their age. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. The school provides extra-curricular football and netball clubs that are well attended. Some pupils are members of local sports clubs and they apply the skills developed in these clubs to their work in lessons. This enables these pupils to demonstrate good throwing and catching skills. Pupils learn to swim at the school's own pool where the very effective tuition enables them to achieve well. Older pupils refine and broaden their skills in a larger pool at the local secondary school. By the time pupils transfer to secondary education most can swim a recognised stroke for 25 metres and many swim well beyond these National Curriculum requirements.

141 Most pupils in Year 1 showed good control as they practised gymnastic movements. They balanced well as they travelled across benches and boxes. They used a variety of jumps and achieved poised landings as they held different body positions. The excellent teaching ensured that pupils were aware of what they had to do to land well and to be aware of their posture. She provided good opportunities for pupils to watch each other's movements and to then improve their own performance. These Year 1 pupils listened carefully to instructions and responded imaginatively to opportunities to plan together. In Year 4, pupils show sound co-ordination as they practised racquet control in preparation for tennis. The teacher used tennis terms well and motivated the pupils through her references to the skills of professional players. This enabled pupils to seek to refine their footwork and rallying skills. By the end of the lesson, pupils held the racquet correctly and rallied the ball against a wall with sound hand/eye co-ordination. However, there was too little challenge in the activities and although pupils consolidated the skills learned in previous lessons, they could have developed more new skills. By Year 6, most pupils can throw and catch accurately and can apply these skills in formal games of rounders. A few show good throwing techniques and they field the ball well. During one session Year 6 pupils refined their ball skills as they threw and caught a ball with each hand and then threw a ball over distance to a partner. The teacher intervened to enable the pupils to improve their co-ordination in order to catch the ball. Pupils refine their aiming skills and could direct the ball to land between cones and then on to their partner. Many demonstrated good hand/eye co-ordination but the pace of the lesson was slow and, although the teaching was sound, pupils lost interest since they had no opportunity to use their skills in a formal game.

142 Pupils understand the need to warm up muscles and move quickly into routines. Most staff plan brisk warm-up sessions. The pupils are mainly well managed; they enjoy physical education and behave well. Only in Year 6, were a few pupils disruptive because they were not sufficiently challenged by the activities.

143 The teachers have sound subject expertise and use time and resources satisfactorily in most lessons. Most lessons are planned carefully and take account of the recent national guidance adopted by the school. In Key Stage 1, staff ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Safety points are well made and pupils learn to sensibly set out and return apparatus and equipment. They are encouraged to plan and work together in group activities and to learn from the examples of others. The pupils show a clear understanding of what is expected and most respond well. In Key Stage 2, the pupils have too few opportunities to plan together and precautions such as removing watches and earrings are not reinforced in all lessons.

144 The co-ordinator is in her first year of teaching and was asked to take on this role in January. She has some sound ideas on how the subject can be developed but has had little opportunity to develop them. However, she has produced a useful development plan for the local sport action zone that will start next school year. Her priorities have rightly been to develop her teaching skills with a difficult class and gaining experience in planning and organising pupils' learning. The school has sound links with Sunderland Football Club and members have visited the school to coach pupils. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to observe work in other classes or to check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and how the subject is developed in school. Resources are satisfactory although benches and mats are old and will need to be replaced in the near future.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145 Standards of attainment meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils achieve satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This is because the school carefully plans the programme of study. This ensures that all pupils have regular opportunities to learn about the different faiths prescribed in the syllabus and to explore the issues

around them. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve at a satisfactory rate because they are well supported in class.

146 By the age of seven pupils have a basic understanding of Christianity and an awareness of the beliefs of two other world faiths. In Year 2, they hear stories from differing religious faiths and learn about the importance of symbolism. They study the birth of Christ and significance of this event, going on to hear stories about his life and teaching. Through other work, they learn how beliefs influence individuals and lead them to help others; for example, the work of Mother Teresa. When studying Buddhism, they gain useful insights into the family shrine and explore its' significance in the home. This helps them to identify their own special possessions, such as a christening shawl and the first edition of the Thunderbirds comic. A number of pupils talk about these confidently. There are good examples of written work on Christianity, but less evidence of pupils writing about other faiths. Within the Key Stage, pupils have good opportunities to explore and discuss feelings. One pupil showing the class her doll and explaining it was special because "my grandmother knitted it for me".

147 By the age of eleven, most pupils gain a sound understanding of Christian beliefs through studying parables and events of Christ's life. They know about the major events of his life and the work of the disciples. Most pupils are able to make valid comparisons with other faiths to identify similarities and differences. For example, they compare the holy books, forms of worship and creation stories. They gain valuable insights into the beliefs and practices of three other world faiths. This enables them to recognise the importance of pilgrimage and why cities such as Jerusalem are holy to three faiths. As they move through the key stage pupils increase their knowledge of religious belief and practices. For example, in Year 4, they learn about the five 'Ks' of Sikhism and this leads to some useful discussion on the significance of dress. One pupil noting that 'white represents purity'. Good use is made of visiting speakers to enrich the curriculum. During the inspection the local vicar conducted a mock wedding ceremony. This provides good opportunities for pupils to witness the ceremony and to hear and reflect upon the significance of marriage in society.

148 The standard of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, with examples of very good teaching observed in Year 1 during the inspection. This ensures that pupils gain an appropriate understanding of the principal beliefs of the differing faiths studied and helps support their views in discussion. Some particularly good teaching takes place in Key Stage 1, where visual aids are used particularly well. For example, the re-creation of a Buddhist shrine provides valuable insights into the nature of belief and creates a sense of awe for many pupils. In Key Stage 2, pupils are encouraged to discover the motives behind events, for example, the execution of St Alban. They use a range of resources and work independently. The quality of teaching has a positive impact upon learning. It helps develop pupils' knowledge of different faiths and provides insights into religious experience. It promotes enquiry methods well and encourages independence in learning. Most pupils are interested and involved; they listen carefully to one another with older pupils respecting one another's opinions.

149 The school promotes the teaching of the locally agreed syllabus effectively. The different topics are planned in an appropriate order, pupils have opportunities to learn about differing faiths and then reflect upon them. There are effective links with the local church but few with other faith centres. The co-ordinator has few opportunities to monitor the curriculum and this is particularly so for Key Stage 2. Assessment procedures are developing well. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. Standards are similar to the last inspection, being slightly lower at the end of Key Stage 1 this year, because the Year 2 class has had four different teachers and less work has been completed.