

INSPECTION REPORT

MICKLEY FIRST SCHOOL

Mickley, Stocksfield, Northumberland.

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122219

Head teacher: Mr. G. Downey

Reporting inspector: Miss E. Allen
[Rgl's OIN - 16431]

Dates of inspection: 3rd to 5th July 2000

Inspection number: 191566

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mickley, Stocksfield, Northumberland.
Postcode:	NE43 7BG
Telephone number:	01661 842269
Fax number:	01661 842269
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. S. Rowlands
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Miss E. Allen	Registered inspector	English	The characteristics of the school
		Science	The school's results and achievements
		Information technology	How well are pupils and students taught?
		Art	How well is the school led and managed?
		Design and technology	
		Equal opportunities	
Mrs. J. Menes	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr. P. Smith	Team inspector	Mathematics	Attitudes, values and personal development
		Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
		History	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		Under fives	
		Special educational needs	

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Durham Local Education Authority

Inspection Office,
Education Department,
County Hall,
Durham.
DH1 5UJ

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mickley County First School is a small village school in the Tyne Valley in Northumberland. There are 52 pupils on roll, 33 boys and 19 girls, taught in 3 classes. Children who do not have a place in another nursery can be admitted to the reception class on a part-time basis in the term following their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 4 additional pupils in this category. The head teacher teaches pupils in Years 3 and 4, usually about 0.9 of the week, but some weeks he teaches them full-time. The school serves the local community, although increasingly pupils come from out of the school's local area. The attainment of pupils on entry is average overall. Although comparisons are unreliable in such a small school, the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. Additional support is provided for pupils with statements of special educational need by the LEA Learning Support Services. No pupils speak English as a second language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Mickley First School is an effective school with some good features. The head teacher, staff and governors work hard to achieve the aims and values of the school. Standards in basic skills are good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and very good for the youngest children. The school is well led and managed and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Promotes high standards in the core subjects.
- Improved standards in mathematics as a result of the National Numeracy Strategy and thinking skills project.
- Teaching and provision for children under five is very good and they make good progress as a result.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and as a result they make good progress.
- The school is well led and managed by the head teacher and governing body.
- It provides a good range of learning opportunities in the curriculum.
- It achieves high levels of attendance.
- The school has developed good links with partner schools, support agencies and schools abroad.

What could be improved

- The quality of short-term planning to ensure that the needs of the most able are met.
- More consistent application of the school's behaviour policy to help inattentive pupils stay on task in lessons.
- The management and use of resources, including displays in classrooms, computers, classroom space and use of class libraries to support teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. Standards have been maintained and show improvement in mathematics and information technology. Teaching is now satisfactory in all lessons at Key Stage 2. At the time of the previous inspection a fifth of lessons were judged as unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. Lesson planning still does not consistently support teachers well enough in their management of resources or in matching tasks to the needs of the different ability groups within classes. The school has developed good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and teaching and learning. This involves the head teacher, subject co-ordinators, governors and LEA adviser in regular visits to lessons. The school is now organised into three classes, which has removed the situation that existed previously of year groups split between two classes. The curriculum is well balanced between the different areas of learning for the under fives and the different subjects for Key Stages 1 and 2. The head teacher has improved the quality of communications with parents since taking up his post two years ago.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	B	C	C	D	well above A average above B average
Writing	C	C	A	B	average C below average D
Mathematics	D	D	D	E	well below average E

Children under five make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave reception.

The National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicate that pupils' results are well above average in writing, broadly in line with the average in reading but below average in mathematics when compared to all schools. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' results are below average in reading, above average in writing and well below in mathematics. However, the small number of pupils in the cohort makes comparisons between year groups unreliable. The school was able to provide provisional details of pupils' performance in 2000 Key Stage 1 tests and they indicate a substantial improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving above national expectations in mathematics and reading. This was confirmed by work seen during the inspection. Attainment on entry is broadly average and so pupils have made good progress in reading, good progress in writing and, taking into account the improvement evident in the 2000 SAT results, good progress in mathematics. The inspection judgements show that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils presently in the school are achieving above the national expectation in reading, writing and mathematics.

The pupils presently in Year 3 are achieving above average in aspects of mental arithmetic as a result of the National Numeracy Strategy and the thinking skills project. The inspection findings indicate that attainment at the end of Year 4 is average in reading and writing and mathematics and above in science. This reflects the slightly lower ability overall of the present Year 4 cohort.

Standards in both key stages are as expected for pupils of the same age in RE, geography, history, music, PE, DT, IT and art at Key Stage 2 and above average in art at Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. The youngest pupils are very enthusiastic. All pupils enjoy demonstrating what they can do in front of the class. The majority of pupils sustain concentration on the tasks they are given.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A minority of pupils show limited self-discipline and cause too many interruptions in lessons. Behaviour in the dining room and around the school is generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are happy to accept opportunities for responsibility offered to them. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.
Attendance	Very good, well above the national average.

Pupils' good attitudes to school and the very high attendance contribute effectively to the standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the school as a whole, teaching observed was good or very good in about equal proportions to the satisfactory teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching in the reception class, which includes those pupils who are under five, is very good. As a result, children under five and those at the beginning of Key Stage 1 make very good progress, especially in learning the basic skills in numeracy and literacy. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when a fifth of lessons in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is thorough, both within the separate literacy and numeracy sessions and across other subjects. This has resulted in improvement in pupils' skills in mental mathematics and reading in Key Stage 1.

Pupils with special educational needs have their needs accurately identified and they are very well supported. As a result they make good progress. A small number of older, higher-attaining pupils make slower progress than they should when they are not given tasks which challenge them. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, but they are not always consistent in the way in which they manage pupils' interruptions in lessons. This sometimes slows learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for pupils under five is very good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught appropriately. The school has given high priority to basic skills which has resulted in high standards. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils have access to the whole curriculum and generally make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Provision for cultural development is good. Introduction of thinking skills is having an impact on learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Good records are kept on pupils' progress and the school cares well for its pupils. Some procedures such as child protection are not formalised.

Provision for children under five is consistently very good and in Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a broad and well-balanced experience for pupils. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory and for their educational support and guidance it is good. Aspects of provision have improved since the last inspection. For example, provision for pupils' cultural development is now good. The school now works well with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher provides clear educational direction for the school. The staff provides good leadership in their areas of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors carry out their strategic role well and are actively involved in the monitoring and development of the curriculum and standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school analyses results of National Curriculum tests and other assessments carefully. It monitors teaching and learning systematically and it uses the information to identify areas for improvement effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school plans the use of its resources well through a very good development plan; the governing body has a good oversight of the long-term issues in a small school. The school is proactive in raising resources from external sources. It gives satisfactory value for money.

The head teacher and governors work well together to lead and manage the school effectively. The school is adequately staffed and resources are generally adequate, although the provision of computers for use in the curriculum is insufficient and has an impact on teaching and learning in the subject.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• Their children like school. • Parents find staff and head teacher approachable. • Pupils are well behaved. • That the school expects their children to work hard. • That the school works closely with them.	• Amount of homework. • Communication with parents about pupils' progress. • A more interesting range of activities.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. The team found that arrangements for homework were satisfactory. The annual written reports on pupils' progress are supplemented with termly parents' meetings and staff are available before and after school for more informal contacts. This was judged to be adequate as a means to communicate progress. The team does not agree that a more interesting range of activities could be provided in a school of this size. Given the present level of staffing, a good range of activities is provided outside of lesson time.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, pupils make good progress in the school and achieve high standards. The attainment of the small numbers of pupils entering the reception class at four years of age varies from year to year. In the current entry it ranges from pupils with special educational needs to pupils who are very able. All pupils make good progress in the early years and by the time they are five many of them have exceeded the levels usually reached by this age in language, literacy and mental mathematics. In all other areas of learning they have made good progress as a result of some very good teaching.
2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, standards were average in reading, well above average in writing and below average in mathematics when compared to all schools. When compared to similar schools, standards were below average in reading, above average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Although all pupils reached Level 2 in all three tests, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 compared to similar schools was low. Taking the last four years together, the standards achieved in reading and writing national tests have been well above the national average and in mathematics have been close to it. Currently at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is judged by the standards achieved in lessons and in retained work and taking into account the provisional results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests. The improved attainment reflects the improved teaching and the extra focus brought about by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The "thinking skills" project has also improved pupils' achievements in mental mathematics.
3. Standards achieved by the oldest pupils in the school are in line with expectations for age in English and mathematics and above in science. This is judged by examining retained work and looking at standards in lessons. Pupils presently in Year 3 are achieving standards above expectations for age in reading, writing and mathematics. The comparatively lower-attainment in English and mathematics of the Year 4 pupils is consistent with their lower attainment in their national test results at the age of seven. This group of predominantly boys contains a higher percentage of lower-attaining pupils than other year groups. There is, however, some under-achievement as a result of comparatively poorer attitudes to their work. For example, some pupils are inattentive in lessons. In literacy work their writing is sometimes untidy and they choose to print rather than to use joined writing.
4. In all other subjects standards are at levels that would be expected for pupils at that age by the time they reach the end of Year 4. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above what might be expected in art and in line with expectations in all other subjects. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and they have improved in information and communications technology (ICT).
5. The school has set challenging targets for improvement and is well on course to achieve them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The attitudes towards school of the Key Stage 2 pupils have improved since the last inspection and they are now good in Year 3 and satisfactory in Year 4. In Key Stage 1 pupils' attitudes towards school are generally good. The great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire consider that their children like being at school and pupils spoken with during the inspection confirm this view. Their positive attitudes towards school are reflected in the high rate of attendance and no exclusions in recent years.
7. Pupils who are under five and those in reception class have very good attitudes to school. This small class functions very well. Pupils are confident and relate well to adults. They quickly develop independence and establish effective relationships. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are very good. This was particularly evident in reception class PE and music lessons where all pupils were well integrated and worked hard.
8. At the beginning of most sessions pupils enter the room happily and settle well. For example, at the start of the morning session, pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class read quietly whilst the teacher takes the register. Throughout the school, pupils are usually quick to start their work and there are always many keen volunteers to take an active part in answering questions or demonstrating what they know and can do in front of the class. This is particularly the case in numeracy, literacy, music and PE lessons.
9. Pupils are good at taking the responsibilities that are offered to them. Older pupils show commitment to the organisational tasks they are trusted to carry out, such as distributing hymn books at the start of assembly. The youngest pupils register their preference for a packed lunch or school meal by placing their name cards in the appropriate place. Pupils' personal development is monitored as part of the school assessment policy and targets agreed with them are shared regularly with their parents.
10. The great majority of pupils behave well in lessons, around school, when using local facilities and in the playground. They are cheerful and polite, always willing to engage in conversation with visitors to the school. Lunch times are social occasions when families and pupils of different ages sit together. Pupils, parents and others connected with the school have no concerns about the behaviour of pupils. However, the inattentive behaviour and lack of self-discipline of a small number of pupils during lessons takes the teachers' attention away from their tasks and disrupts the learning opportunities of others. Most children eventually respond in a satisfactory way when the impact of their actions on others is pointed out.
11. Relationships in school are good and this makes a positive contribution to the educational standards which pupils achieve. There is mutual respect shown by the pupils and the adults. This extends itself to the dinner "nannies" (lunch time supervisors) as well as the volunteer parents. Pupils are generally supportive and helpful to each other, such as at lunch times, break times or when asked to share their work at the end of lessons. The emphasis placed by the staff on providing a caring environment, where all pupils are valued, makes a positive contribution to the personal and social development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching for the under fives is very good and at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, it is overall satisfactory. Throughout the school it is never less than satisfactory and in around half of lessons it is good and occasionally very good. Much of the very good teaching is in the reception class. Teaching is better in Key Stage 2 than at the time of the last inspection.
13. Overall pupils make good progress in the school. Teachers encourage them to achieve high standards and to try their best. The teaching has many strengths but there are aspects which could be improved in order to improve pupils' learning.
14. Teachers generally have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and when they know their skills are more limited, they make good use of external resources to supplement what the school can offer. They are also willing to spend time learning new skills, for example, as they have done in improving their expertise in the use of ICT and the intensive training programme they have undergone to introduce the literacy strategy, the numeracy strategy and the "thinking skills" project. Their levels of competence in teaching basic skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT are good.
15. Teachers generally plan lessons carefully to ensure that the work meets the needs of the majority of pupils. However, where classes contain two year groups, the planning needs further refinement to ensure provision for the very wide range of ability. For example, in a literacy lesson in the Year 3/4 class the higher-attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given the same task to practise the skills of note-taking. While this provided good challenge for the Year 3 pupils, able Year 4 pupils found the task easy.
16. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs are well taught and teachers take care to ensure that planning targets work towards their individual education plans. The additional learning support that is provided for them is very effective at helping them to reach high standards.
17. Teaching makes use of a good range of methods that give pupils a variety of different learning experiences. For example, most lessons have a mixture of teachers' input, discussion sessions, group work and individual work. Visitors to the school are used effectively to provide an additional source of information and resources generally are well used. For example, interesting artefacts bring history alive and examples of good quality works of art help pupils to develop their aesthetic understanding. Good quality displays are used by some teachers to reinforce learning in numeracy and literacy, but in some classrooms display is under-used as a tool for learning. In those subjects in which resources are limited, for example, ICT, teachers sometimes use teaching methods that do not support learning effectively. In a lesson to extend pupils' knowledge about drafting text on screen, the teacher attempted to demonstrate detailed manoeuvres to a whole-class on the one computer available. Many were unable to see and became restless. Learning was therefore limited.
18. In some lessons the classroom space available is not used to the best advantage and groups sometimes work unnecessarily close to one another. In most lessons time is used efficiently and support staff and parent helpers are well briefed on the aims and expected outcomes of activities so that they can provide effective support to pupils' learning. This ensures that, when groups of pupils are not being directly supervised by the teacher, they continue to make good progress. This is especially true of pupils

with special educational needs but good examples were also observed in science and design and technology lessons.

19. Teachers are using the “thinking skills” project particularly well to encourage pupils to be creative in their work in history and mathematics. The impact of the project can also be seen in the teaching and learning of aspects of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
20. In many lessons teachers manage pupils well and establish good working routines. This is especially true in the reception class for children under five and in the early part of Key Stage 1. A minority of pupils in other classes are inattentive during lessons and teachers are not always consistent in the way in which they apply the school’s behaviour management policy. This sometimes results in unnecessary interruptions to learning that slows progress temporarily. Relationships are good, however, and teachers always manage to encourage pupils to return to task without resorting to confrontation.
21. Teachers make good use of ongoing assessment to check that pupils understand and have mastered new skills. Work in English, for example, is carefully marked and teachers write a number of suggestions and questions at the end of the work to help pupils improve their work. The use of homework to reinforce work in school is satisfactory.

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

22. The school provides a curriculum that is suitably broad and balanced, includes religious education and meets statutory requirements. It has worked hard and successfully to address criticisms of its curriculum from the last inspection.
23. The school provides a good range of opportunities to meet the interests, aptitudes and needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school makes good provision to teach the National Curriculum and places a suitable emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy Strategy has made a significant contribution to raising standards in literacy across the school, particularly in reading. In the same way the National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant and positive impact on standards the school is achieving in numeracy. Mental arithmetic skills are particularly well developed. All teachers are enthusiastically developing pupils’ mental strategies. Pupils are keen and confident to put forward their own suggestions when problem-solving. The school is taking advantage of the current guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in its planning of some subjects and is approaching the implementation of the revised National Curriculum in a thoughtful and well-considered way. The school makes suitable provision to deliver a programme of health education, including sex education and drugs education.
24. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Additional part-time support is provided both in class and by withdrawing pupils for additional work, mainly in literacy and numeracy. These pupils work to well written individual education plans that are monitored routinely by the head teacher, class teacher and specialist support staff. Parents are fully involved at the review stage and generally consider the support their children receive to be of a good quality.

25. The curriculum for the pupils under five is very good. Pupils in reception class have access to a wide range of stimulating activities. The curriculum takes account of the six areas of learning and an appropriate emphasis is placed upon personal and social development, language, literacy and mathematics. The additional full-time support for pupils with special educational needs adds significantly to the quality of the provision in reception class and to the progress that these pupils make.
26. Teachers make very good use of links with neighbouring schools, for example to moderate the standards pupils achieve in literacy. In addition, work between these schools and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne has led to a very effective project on the development of "thinking skills". This project, in which the head teacher takes a leading role, is having a significant impact on both teaching and learning, particularly in aspects of numeracy and literacy.
27. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is mainly nurtured in school assemblies where pupils display respectful attitudes during moments of prayer. In addition, singing in assemblies, music and art make a positive contribution to pupils' spirituality.
28. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and these principles are reinforced in classrooms and around the school. There are many examples of the school's system of rewards and sanctions being used to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils understand the few simple rules and think them fair. For example, in assembly the head teacher set pupils a target for the week, and where these are revisited by class teachers, pupils reflect upon their own progress. Lunch time activities provide reasonable opportunities for pupils to learn how to play together and staff reinforce the principles of care and consideration for others. Pupils who attend the wildlife club are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for the world around them.
29. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development and this is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils have visited a suitable range of places of educational interest and have experienced first hand communicating with children from other countries, such as Italy and Finland, by letter and e-mail. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have studied their own cultural heritage in history, looking at life in Viking times and seeing it brought to life with interesting artefacts and activities in lessons. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make use of the local community, such as visits to the local church, and develop an appreciation of how society has changed, from visitors to school who describe their own experiences. Through art, music and literature, teachers expose their classes to the cultural diversity of the world in which they live.
30. The provision for extra-curricular activities is wide for a school of this size. Teachers and volunteers work hard to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities, including music, a wildlife club and soccer. These activities contribute to pupils' personal and social development by providing opportunities for pupils of different ages and classes to work together.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. This is a very small school where staff know all pupils very well as individuals and show care and concern for their welfare. The school has made appropriate provision for pupils' health and safety and the head teacher and a governor keep the governing body informed on safety issues and action taken. The school has a good policy for child protection, but measures to inform staff on child protection issues have not been implemented.
32. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, but the school has not yet fully developed a clear and consistent approach to encourage pupils to behave well and to help them develop self-discipline. Parents are satisfied that the school takes appropriate action in response to occasional incidents of bullying.
33. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good, particularly in English and mathematics where they are supported by the "thinking skills project". This project is also a means of introducing pupils to self-assessment. The school successfully monitors and promotes pupils' academic achievement through the use of targets for individual pupils in literacy, numeracy and where appropriate attitudes to work and personal development. Staff review targets every term and pupils and parents are involved in the process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The school has made very good progress in improving communication with parents since the last inspection. Parents now feel much happier about approaching staff with concerns and are confident that they will be listened to. Staff are available for brief exchanges of information at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents are generally pleased with the education their children receive and value the improvement in communication that the school has achieved.
35. The school is keen to involve parents in their children's education and regularly provides them with useful information on the curriculum and homework, together with guidance on how they can help their children. In reception, children are set tasks such as selecting a tiny object to fit in a very small box that gives an opportunity for parent and child to think and discuss together. However, some parents are not satisfied with the work their children are expected to do at home and a few parents also feel that they would like more information on pupils' progress.
36. It is the judgement of the inspection that provision for communicating with parents on pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, with annual written reports supplemented by termly meetings with staff.
37. The school values the active support it receives from many parents, such as helping in the classroom, escorting pupils to swimming lessons and working on the recent grounds' improvement project. The PTA is very active in arranging social and fund-raising events and makes a very good contribution to school resources for a school of this size.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The head teacher provides good leadership, giving the school clear educational direction and a strong sense of purpose. He has a very high teaching commitment but nevertheless manages to keep on top of his management responsibilities and ensures that school developments are carried forward. He has a clear commitment to high standards. In his two years in the school he has addressed most of the outstanding issues from the previous inspection, notably improving communication with parents. He has worked closely with governors to identify the strengths and areas that are weaker in the school and together they have produced a good quality development plan designed to address the areas for development and to raise standards. The initiatives have been steadily introduced to be manageable in a small school and they are beginning to have an impact on teaching, learning and standards. His good relationships with teaching and non-teaching staff have resulted in very good team work, which effectively supports all pupils in the school in both their academic and personal development.
39. All staff are involved in leading developments in a number of subjects and this they do efficiently and effectively. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been particularly well co-ordinated.
40. The governing body fully meets its responsibilities. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are well informed about all aspects of its work. Each governor has a particular interest in one or more subjects or aspects and has regular meetings with the members of staff responsible. Governors are fully involved with the head teacher in producing the school development plan and monitoring progress towards the targets set. Targets are challenging and the school is on course to meet them.
41. The school has developed good systems for monitoring its performance and the governing body is actively involved in this. Teaching is systematically observed by the head teacher, co-ordinators and governors and results of assessments of pupils are carefully analysed. The information gained is used to decide where to target support and resources. The head teacher has been fully trained in performance management and the school has a detailed policy that it is implementing to replace the appraisal system that it has formally operated.
42. Resources are used efficiently and the principles of best value are applied. The governing body gives careful consideration to the most effective way to ensure that administrative tasks are carried out, while maintaining the teaching force at a reasonable level. This year funding has been allocated to increasing administrative support and providing flexible, good quality supply cover so that the head teacher can be released at essential times. Both head teacher and governors are proactive in securing extra funding from a variety of sources to take forward some of the developments they feel are essential, for example the impressive improvements to the grounds and the grants for the "thinking skills project". These have improved the learning environment and are having an impact on standards in the school.
43. Learning resources are adequate in most subjects but there are insufficient computers to deliver the new curriculum from September and library facilities are poor. Classrooms are spacious but the room is not always used effectively in lessons.
44. When account is taken of the standards achieved by pupils and the improvement

since the last inspection, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to improve the quality of provision and raise standards the governors, head teacher and staff should:

- Improve the climate for learning by:
 - Improving the quality of lesson planning to ensure that the needs of the most able are met. (Paragraphs 15, 62, 70, 71)
 - Ensuring a more consistent application of the school's behaviour policy to help inattentive pupils stay on task in lessons. (Paragraphs 3, 10, 20, 62, 70, 101)
 - Improving the management and use of resources in lessons, including displays in classrooms, classroom space, library areas and computers, to better support teaching and learning. (Paragraphs 17, 18, 64, 71, 96)

[OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES]

- Formalise the school's child protection procedures. (Paragraph 31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	28	48	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	54
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	6	4	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	18

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	41

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	128,557.00
Total expenditure	126,248.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,140.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,455.00
Balance carried forward to next year	6,764.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	40
Number of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	37	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	43	3	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	63	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	44	29	0	0
The teaching is good.	51	37	9	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	17	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	66	34	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	34	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	53	15	0	3

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

46. Pupils under five are taught in the reception class. They enter full-time schooling in the September of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. During the inspection there were six pupils under five years old, four of whom attended the “early starters class” for some afternoon sessions only. With so few pupils starting school at any one time, attainment is very varied and it is not possible to report an attainment level that is typical for the school. This year, for example, attainment ranges from pupils with special educational needs to pupils who are talented and very able.
47. The school has built upon the good practice described in the previous report and pupils receive a very good preparation for their statutory education in a secure and very supportive learning environment. Staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils. They create opportunities and take time to involve parents in settling their children into school. All connected with the school consider that such arrangements form the basis of an effective partnership between home and school.
48. The curriculum for pupils under the age of five takes account of the six areas of learning and the goals that they are expected to achieve by the age of five. Lessons and activities throughout the day give appropriate emphasis to literacy, numeracy and personal and social development, whilst integrated activities in the afternoon provide enrichment through exciting opportunities to learn through play and develop pupils’ creative and imaginative talents.
49. Pupils benefit from the family atmosphere of a very small class and quickly grow in confidence. They learn routines from older pupils and are expected to be personally independent. There are very good opportunities for them to make choices, to learn to co-operate with others and to take turns with resources, so that they understand the behaviour expected of them in the classroom and around the school.
50. Attainment in language and literacy in the current admission group is above what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils listen with pleasure to stories and join in enthusiastically with familiar words or phrases. When reading “Suddenly” by Colin McNaughton, pupils talked about the pictures with great enthusiasm and copied the expression and intonation of the teacher in reading familiar words in the text. Through skilful questioning, pupils are taught to read pictures for information whilst high-attaining pupils are given opportunities to read or anticipate words by using rhyme and their knowledge of initial letters. One pupil was able to read complex sentences and was keen to draw the teacher’s attention to it and then read small, italicised text. They enjoy talking about books they have had read to them and retell their favourite stories enthusiastically both orally and in writing. Pupils are encouraged to write for a range of purposes and in their “surprise” stories most made very good attempts to mimic the style of the book that they had read with the teacher.

51. Mathematical development is promoted through a good range of practical activities and pupils have learned to count, match, sequence and order. In mental mathematics, pupils achieve beyond national expectations. The teacher uses number lines and other resources effectively to encourage pupils to count in twos, know odd and even numbers and calculate to 20. Pupils experience sequencing events in stories, PE and music and use their counting skills to calculate the number of pupils present and absent during registration periods. In the classroom café, pupils counted objects and became familiar with money, eagerly counting out change for purchases given to adults. They know the names of regular two-dimensional shapes such as square, triangle and rectangle and some basic properties of these shapes.
52. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the world. They constructed simple maps of "Pip's island" in the sand and as in most curriculum areas, used language precisely and accurately to describe the story that underlay their plans. They enjoy investigating different materials in the natural and man-made environment. An interesting display of reflective materials stimulated their imagination and curiosity so that they made models and acted out stories of magic and wizardry, often drawing upon experiences beyond school. The teacher makes very good use of the local environment so that pupils are familiar with the past and the present. For example, over a series of lessons pupils have learned about the life cycle of frogs and presented their information in models, drawings, paintings and writing.
53. Pupils have many opportunities for creative development. They build models and practice their fine motor skills in a range of imaginative situations. They handle tools and equipment with an increasing confidence, such as when they made their "funny pets", some of which were based upon the story of a "wishing well" read to them in an earlier lesson. They sing together, can repeat melodies and maintain simple rhythms with reasonable accuracy. Music lessons are very well taught; pupils have fun and make very good progress.
54. Pupils develop good physical skills and where they may have specific learning difficulties they are very effectively supported to enable them to participate fully in all physical activities. Through dance and physical education lessons and during play times, good opportunities are provided for daily physical activity.
55. Teaching is very good. The teacher and support staff have established very good working relationships which promote a clear understanding of the needs and development of pupils. Procedures for assessment are good. Teachers' planning is generally good and provides sufficient detail of activities that ensure that most pupils can achieve the desirable outcomes by the age of five. Very good class routines encourage pupils to take responsibility and make choices. Staff maintain a very good working ethos in classrooms and pupils are very well behaved. Links with the pre-school play group ensures a smooth transition for pupils into school, with continuity of experience throughout reception class.

ENGLISH

56. Standards in English are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly in line with national expectations for nine year olds for the pupils presently in Year 4. Pupils presently in Year 3 are on course to achieve above expectations for age. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were similar overall.
57. The small number of pupils in each year group means that attainment, as indicated by the national test results, varies from year to year, making comparisons difficult. However, in 1999 pupils achieved well above average in writing and broadly in line with average in reading when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, standards were above average in writing and below average in reading, due mainly to few pupils attaining the higher levels. Provisional national test results for pupils presently at the end of Key Stage 1 show a much higher number of pupils achieving higher levels in both reading and writing. This is consistent with inspection findings that indicate that pupils now in Year 2 are achieving above average in English overall, showing good levels of progress in both reading and writing.
58. Pupils make a very good early start to developing their speaking and listening skills in the reception class and, by the time they are seven, most pupils speak clearly and confidently in discussion sessions, when answering questions and when making presentations to their class. For example, in a history lesson they competently discussed what life might have been like at the turn of the last century. One pupil gave a detailed and clear account of a recent holiday during a news session. By the end of Year 4, most pupils can express themselves clearly and can have a mature discussion about their work. In history they are able to discuss the life style of the Vikings and can describe how they imagine Viking jords would feel as they worked through their daily activities. Pupils in both key stages respond well to opportunities presented to them in literacy sessions, to answer questions and to describe their observations. The majority of pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to one another. However, a small number of pupils find listening without interrupting difficult in the introductory sessions to the literacy hour.
59. Overall, reading standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1, although there are a small number of lower-attaining pupils who have not reached national expectations. Pupils are very familiar with the structure of books and they know how to find information using the index and contents pages. Higher-attaining pupils read fluently and very accurately when reading their chosen books. Within the literacy session many can infer meaning from the written information. For example, some pupils in a Year 1½ class recognised that the text was set in Australia as a result of the references to Australian animals. Lower-attaining pupils are not so accurate or fluent but most are able to use their knowledge of phonics to make reasonably accurate attempts at new words. By the end of Year 4, higher-attaining pupils read at a standard above average for nine year olds and most of the rest are in line with standards expected at this age.

60. Writing standards are good in Key Stage 1 and pupils have successfully built on the skills they acquired in the reception year. The present Year 4 pupils are weaker at spelling than other year groups and their script is poor, some of them preferring to print than to use a cursive style. Even so, higher-attaining pupils in this class are competent writers who have mastered some of the more advanced skills, such as those of efficient note-taking. In contrast, the majority of pupils in Year 2 are using well formed joined writing to construct interesting and imaginative stories, poems and accounts. Their punctuation is usually accurate, although spelling is still weaker than other aspects of English.
61. The school is making effective use of the National Literacy Strategy in its teaching. It has helped teachers to focus on specific aspects of reading and writing and as a result is raising standards. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their reading and writing skills in subjects other than English. For example, in science they record their observations accurately and in history they are given opportunities for writing at greater length.
62. The teaching of literacy to the youngest children in Key Stage 1 is good and sometimes very good. All sessions for these children are carefully planned and skilfully delivered, so that the wide range of need within the group is catered for. In other classes, particularly those containing two year groups, planning sometimes fails to identify activities which are challenging enough for the most able and as a result, some of them are sometimes working at a level below their capabilities, particularly in the introductory session of the literacy hour. The needs of pupils with special educational needs, on the other hand, are very well met across the school and the additional learning support that is provided for them is very effective at helping them to reach good standards in English. In many lessons pupils are well managed, but in some, teachers fail to prevent the interruptions to learning that occur as a result of some inattentive pupils.
63. Pupils are making good progress in literacy as a result of some focused teaching and very good use of assessment that helps teachers to set pupils targets for improving their work. Good examples were seen in the marking of stories in Year 1/2. The teacher had made clear suggestions to help pupils meet targets which had been set for them, such as using correct punctuation, spelling or being more imaginative.
64. Resources for teaching literacy are good and are used well by teachers to provide work that motivates pupils. Resources for pupils to use independently and for research purposes are limited. The class libraries, for example, do not support the needs of the curriculum well enough in the quality and range of the books they provide or in the way in which pupils have access to them in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

65. Standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 are above the national average and in Key Stage 2 are in line with expectations. By the end of Year 4 the attainment of nine year old children is broadly in line with national expectations. Though there are no national comparisons available, the school does use other measures to check on the progress made by children and these, together with classroom observations, show that standards are improving. Inspection evidence shows that very good work in the early years is followed by good achievement in Key Stage 1. Attainment in Year 3 is broadly average with some good attainment in number and understanding the number system. In Year 4 pupils' attainment is sometimes below expectations, though pupils have made satisfactory progress on their prior attainment in Key Stage 1 national tests in 1998. Such overall standards reflect a similar position to that reported in the previous inspection, but mask the improvement in pupils' ability to calculate mentally.
66. The 1999 national tests for seven year olds show that the school's results are below the national average and well below those of similar schools due mainly to no pupils attaining the higher levels. Provisional results from this year's national tests show a significant improvement. Not only have all pupils attained the national standard, but over one quarter have reached the higher levels. This has been due mainly to improved teaching of basic number skills, made since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, so that pupils can work more quickly and accurately to solve number problems and the introduction of "thinking skills". All teachers feel confidently about teaching the subject and are able to develop pupils' mental and oral skills well, using a range of techniques.
67. By the age of seven most pupils are using the four rules of number with a fair degree of accuracy. They recognise regular fractions and apply their knowledge to practical situations. The standard of work on shape and measurement, including time and capacity, is as expected for their age.
68. By the time they leave school pupils have developed good skills with which to process number. At the beginning of the year, teachers identified mental calculation as a weakness in mathematics. Time given to improve upon this position has resulted in aspects such as decimals, ratio, space, measurement and data analysis being neglected. It is the teachers' intention to redress this imbalance in the second year of the curriculum plan for this mixed-age class.
69. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good or very good during the oral/mental part of lessons. In both the mixed-age classes the children demonstrate effective mental agility when answering questions. They can handle two or three numbers comfortably and develop a good range of mathematical vocabulary. They respond quickly to any problem involving addition and subtraction, and most of the children enjoy competitive situations when they can demonstrate their speed to respond to questions. The teachers are quick to seize upon the enthusiasm of the children and use a good range of questions to challenge them. In one lesson, the Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were very quick and accurate in calculating halves and doubles of two and three digit numbers. In a Year 1 and Year 2 class, there was a very enthusiastic response to estimating and measuring time with a sand timer.

70. The majority of pupils listen attentively and take pride in their achievements. However, there is a significant minority who find it difficult to settle to their tasks. This is seen during the initial mental and oral sessions when they call out answers or do not give the necessary attention to the teacher. At its worst this results in time being lost while the teacher deals with their lack of self-discipline. During the main part of lessons teaching is more often satisfactory and pupils usually work with sustained concentration. Sometimes, however, the tasks are not always well matched to pupils' attainment and, in particular, the high-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is in part due to the lack of detail in teachers' planning, so that whereas teachers target pupils with questions of varying difficulty in the oral part of the lesson, too often activities are provided without such differentiation and opportunities to support and challenge pupils are missed. All lessons end with an appropriate opportunity for pupils to share what they have learned with the rest of the class. Teachers use this effectively to ensure that the purpose of the lesson is reinforced in pupils' minds and so that they can see the links between one lesson and another.
71. The school has been quick to respond to the requirements outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy that has now been fully implemented throughout the school. This has helped to raise the level of staff confidence in teaching the subject. However, the quality of teachers' short-term planning does not provide sufficient detail to ensure that in mixed-age classes pupils of different attainment make the progress expected of them. On occasion, as in a lesson on "time" in Key Stage 1, the use of classroom space and resources does not always contribute efficiently to pupils' learning.
72. The school has in place effective systems for keeping track of the progress that children make. There is good analysis of these records and teachers use this information effectively in helping to improve standards. The head teacher is the present co-ordinator and is able to check on the quality of the teaching and on the school's performance regularly. Effective use is made of test results to check on areas requiring improvement and the methods pupils use to solve problems. This good leadership has ensured that standards are improving and that staff are confident in teaching the subject.

SCIENCE

73. The standards pupils achieve in science are above expectations for their age. Attainment, as indicated by the 1999 teacher assessments, showed as average overall, although pupils achieved above average in experimental and investigative work and in their understanding of life processes and living things. The provisional results for teacher assessments for the pupils presently reaching the end of Year 2, show an improvement in the numbers of pupils achieving Level 3 in all aspects of science. For these pupils attainment is above average for their age. The work seen during lessons and on examination of their books confirms that many pupils are working at higher levels. For example, in work on electricity pupils could build batteries, wires, bulbs and buzzers into a circuit. They could also explain how switches control the circuit and why some circuit diagrams would not power a light bulb. By the time they leave the school at nine, pupils have made good progress in their learning and have good levels of knowledge and understanding in all aspects of National Curriculum science. For example, they carry out tests on the insulating properties of a variety of materials. They understand the meaning of a fair test and can make predictions about which material will be the most effective. They record their results accurately using tables and graphs.

74. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Children in the reception class work enthusiastically on their simple investigations and they develop good knowledge and understanding of science through a well planned and very well taught programme of activities. In Key Stage 1 they build on their skills effectively and continue to show an interest in the subject. The small number of lessons seen during the inspection were good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and organise science lessons so that pupils are able to work at different levels according to their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are making good progress in science.
75. The previous inspection noted that teachers' medium and short-term planning was not tight enough and that some overlap and repetition was evident. This has been fully addressed in medium-term plans that make use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work for science. The school adapts this to provide a two-year programme of work carefully matched to the range of pupils in each class. This is supported by a good range of suitable resources that are well used by teachers to provide a motivating curriculum.

ART

76. Standards in art are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and about average for nine year olds in the present Year 4 class. Pupils make good progress, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of art. This is the result of some good teaching in the reception class and the Year 1/2 class. In both classes teachers encourage an appreciation of art by displaying examples of works of art in the classroom and frequent references to the aesthetic elements across other subjects. For example, work on reflection and shadows in science was enhanced by using pupils' understanding to create a reflective three-dimensional piece of sculpture.
77. In another lesson pupils learned new IT skills by applying what they had learned about Mondrian's use of colour and shape to an activity on the computer. Pupils understand that some colours are more dominant than others and can use this knowledge to experiment to produce different effects. No art lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 but the evidence of work on display indicates that they continue to develop their painting and drawing skills and are reaching satisfactory standards.
78. Pupils enjoy their work in art and respond well to the good teaching of the subject in Key Stage 1.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. It was only possible to observe one lesson of design and technology in Key Stages 1 and 2 during the period of the inspection and so no judgements are possible on teaching, learning or attitudes during lessons. Examination of pupils' past work and a discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils about their models shows that attainment is broadly in line with levels expected for pupils of seven and nine. Younger children learn how to handle simple tools safely and begin to build structures using construction kits. They apply these skills efficiently to the projects given to them in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 pupils had built models of animals and insects using reclaimed materials and incorporated an electric circuit that powered either a light or a buzzer. Designs were imaginative and carefully drawn to show the materials they would use and how they would be joined together. They could describe in detail how they had adapted their original ideas when their models were being constructed. For example, one boy described how he had experimented with ways of concealing his battery and buzzer in the body of his insect to improve its appearance.
80. In Key Stage 2 pupils designed a dinosaur costume that would be made as a class project. They drew their ideas carefully and begin to decide what materials they might use in constructing a costume.
81. Teachers are beginning to investigate how ICT can be used to support work in design and technology.

HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

82. Due to timetable arrangements and the school's planning cycle, no geography lessons were seen and it was only possible to see two history lessons. Judgements are based on lesson evidence, a scrutiny of past work, teacher plans and discussions with teachers and pupils. Pupils' attainment in both history and geography is in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Standards since the previous inspection have been maintained.

83. Pupils' achievement in both key stages is satisfactory. In geography, pupils in Key Stage 1 develop simple mapping skills, learn about parts of the region, such as the Northumberland coast, and are beginning to appreciate their place in Europe through their connections with schools in Italy and Finland.
84. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue with European studies and consider in some detail environmental issues such as pollution. They study the local region and improve their mapping skills by looking at communication, location and natural habitats.
85. In history, pupils in Key Stage 1 are knowledgeable about a number of local and national historical figures that include Grace Darling. They have an increasing understanding of the differences between the present time and the past. For instance, pupils had arranged photographs on a time line and were able to discuss what life might have been like at the turn of the last century.
86. In Key Stage 2 pupils build upon their earlier experiences. Their written work displays an understanding of the life of the Vikings, Tudor England and more recent events in history, such as the sinking of the Titanic. They research topics using books, photographs, artefacts and information technology, though this is in its early stages of development.
87. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in history and geography. There are many examples of pupils writing at length or making use of time lines and other forms of data, such as the "emotion graphs" produced by the Year 3 and 4 class. Speaking and listening skills play an important part in developing the pupils' knowledge of both subjects. Pupils contribute well to lively whole-class discussions in which they are able to express their own views and listen to those of others.
88. The small amount of evidence available suggests that teaching in both subjects is satisfactory. Teachers organise a range of visits and walks to provide pupil with first-hand experiences. Visits have included Washington Wildfowl Park, the local church and Bede Monastery. In addition, visitors to the school contribute significantly to pupils' understanding of how people's lives have changed. In one lesson a grandparent related her childhood experiences of a trip to the coast and pupils responded enthusiastically to the lovely images she described. These experiences are making a good contribution to the quality of learning in these subjects and to the personal and cultural development of all pupils. Teachers are making good use of resources and a small selection of artefacts. For example, a lesson on the life of a Jarð was brought to life with a good display of Viking artefacts.
89. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in both subjects. Work produced indicates that they take an interest in their work and make satisfactory progress in their learning.
90. Co-ordinators have an effective overview of both subjects and help teachers to plan their work. There are plans to review both schemes of work in line with the requirements of the new curriculum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

91. It was only possible to see two IT lessons and some observations of pupils working independently on art activities and using mathematics and literacy programs, during the inspection. No use of control technology was observed, although planning indicates that this is covered in the curriculum. Examination of previous work, discussions with pupils and examination of documents indicate that pupils attain in line with standards expected at the ages of seven and nine. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection when they were judged to be below average in Key Stage 2 and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory.
92. The school put in place an extensive training program for teachers following the previous inspection and improving ICT has been a priority in this year's school development plan. This has resulted in increased confidence in teaching the use of ICT and the provision of a broader range of activities across the curriculum.
93. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are familiar with a range of programs to help them test their skills in aspects of number work and literacy. They use the tools available to them efficiently. They use word-processing packages competently and they use ICT effectively to support their designing in both art and design and technology. They are able to correct their own mistakes and those of the teacher. For example, in a lesson in which the teacher was demonstrating how pupils could use "Dazzle" to create abstract designs, pupils could identify why the colour flooded into the border area of the design and suggested ways of overcoming the problem.
94. By the age of nine pupils have made progress in using ICT for drafting and redrafting text. They understand how to centre, highlight using bold type, underline and change font type and size. They use the skills they have learned in literacy lessons to improve and correct text on the screen. They use data-handling programs to create graphs and charts and they are familiar with electronic mailing facilities. For example, some of them have sent letters by e-mail to partner schools in the Comenius project in countries such as Finland.
95. Pupils are confident in their use of ICT and are able to use computers independently to support their learning. They enjoy using programs that test their grasp of mental mathematics or their ability to spell progressively more difficult words.
96. Teaching of ICT is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers use a combination of demonstration and individual support to help pupils to master a new program or a new facility. Teaching is least effective when a whole-class is shown detailed procedures that they cannot all see and the teacher's concentration is focused on the computer screen rather than the class. It is more effective when groups of pupils are shown a procedure and then can practice it individually. A good example was observed in a Key Stage 1 art lesson when the teacher showed pupils the essential skills and then they were able to work individually using the work of Mondrian to inspire their designs on the computer.
97. The school is in the process of developing its provision for ICT and has increased the range of programs to support work across the curriculum. There is still inadequate provision of computers to meet the increasing demands of the curriculum and to allow adequate access for pupils.

MUSIC

98. Due to timetable arrangements, only two music lessons were observed. Evidence is supported from observation in assembly and discussions with pupils and teachers.
99. In both key stages, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 sing well and respond to changes in rhythm. In a lesson where the teacher played music from a "Drum Dance", pupils responded spontaneously by keeping a beat and mimicking the music they heard.
100. Pupils who are about to leave the school sing well and use percussion instruments to maintain an instrumental accompaniment. They show a knowledge and appreciation of a wide variety of music. In the lesson observed, the teacher provided opportunities for pupils to take on the role of the conductor, which they embraced enthusiastically. In whole-school assemblies, pupils sing clearly and with enthusiasm and reach the standards expected for their ages.
101. Teaching overall is satisfactory but has many good features. For example, teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are very well prepared. Effective questioning, use of resources and demonstrations enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in their ability to distinguish between different musical styles, to perform in front of their classmates and appreciate the different moods that music can create. Where teaching is satisfactory, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the lesson and minor interruptions are not managed effectively.
102. The music curriculum is well planned so that pupils have a good range of experiences to learn to appreciate and perform music. In assemblies and lessons teachers play music from a range of modern and classical composers. There is a music club where they learn to play the keyboard and a choir that has successfully taken part in the Wansbeck Music Festival. These activities enhance the musical opportunities available to pupils in an effective way and make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. There are good resources for the subject that enables pupils to participate in making music. Staff work hard to maintain the good provision identified in the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Only two Key Stage 1 dance lessons were observed. Pupils' attainment is as expected for their age, though there were a number of pupils in reception class performing at a standard expected of older pupils. Evidence from teachers' planning and the school's scheme of work indicates that there is satisfactory provision for the teaching of gymnastics, swimming and outdoor activities. The majority of pupils achieve the minimum standard required for swimming by the age of nine.
104. Pupils in Key Stage 1 link simple actions with increasing control when performing to music. Their balance and agility are as expected for their age. Some older pupils are beginning to look for ways to improve their performance by evaluating what they like and dislike; can and cannot do well. The majority of pupils have the confidence to perform in front of the class and pupils with special educational needs are well supported and encouraged to participate.

105. Teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teachers ensure that lessons have an appropriate balance between vigorous and skill-based exercise. Teachers stop lessons to praise individual performance and either demonstrate or choose pupils to provide examples that reinforce the lesson's objective. They ensure high levels of safety that are necessary in the small school hall. Where teaching is very good in reception class, the teacher uses her skills expertly to vary the pace of the lesson, the range of activities to challenge pupils, and to make pupils aware of the effects of exercise on their body.
106. Pupils' attitudes to this subject are good. They dress appropriately, are well behaved and respond well to the instructions of teachers. They clearly enjoy this subject and are very enthusiastic and energetic during lessons. All pupils co-operate well with each other when working in pairs. They show high levels of concentration during difficult exercises, such as mirroring each other's actions, and make satisfactory progress.
107. The co-ordinator has made good use of the "TOPS" and "High Five" schemes to provide both training and resources. The limitations of the hall and outside play areas, identified in the last inspection, remain and continue to be overcome by the good organisational skills of the teachers. The use of a commercial scheme is ensuring consistency in the delivery of the subject. An after-school soccer club is run by a parent, and opportunities for pupils to practice soccer and skipping at playtimes contribute to the overall development of pupils' physical skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Only one lesson was observed during this inspection but timetables indicate that all classes give appropriate time for the subject. Additional evidence is drawn from observations in assemblies, previous work and discussions with staff and pupils. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been addressed and teachers plan appropriately to meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject and ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to study world faiths.
109. In Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure knowledge of the traditional Christian stories and those from other religions such as Buddhism. Many recognise and understand the values that these stories present and how Christian values effect their lives. In a lesson where the teacher told the class a Buddhist story called the "King's Elephant", some of the high-attaining pupils in Year 2 were able to make comparison with stories from the Christian bible.
110. Pupils in Key Stage 2 study the life and times of Jesus, the development of Christianity into Britain and examples from other world religions. Their knowledge and understanding is as expected for their age. For example, some pupils were able to explain the dilemmas faced by Saul after his conversion to Christianity and in assembly answer questions about stories from the Old Testament, often explaining the moral that underlies them.

111. Teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory but the whole-class activity did not sufficiently take into account pupils' attainment and opportunities were missed to challenge high-attaining pupils to demonstrate their mature understanding of the spirituality contained in the story.
112. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visiting clergy and visits to local places of worship. For example, visits to St. George's Church and a Buddhist temple make a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of our multi-cultural society.