

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **Greenhead C of E First School**

Carlisle, Cumbria

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122284

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Jean Morley

Dates of inspection: 31 January – 2 February 2000

Inspection number: 187914

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenhead Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA6 7HB
Telephone number:	016977 47347
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Caroline Clayton
Date of previous inspection:	13 – 15 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jean Morley	Registered Inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Art	How well are pupils taught?
		Design & technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Special educational needs	What should the school do to improve further?
Trevor Smith	Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Joan Henderson	Team Inspector	Mathematics	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
		Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	Children under five.
		History	
		Music	
		Physical education	

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

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the village of Greenhead, Northumberland, three miles west of the town of Haltwhistle. There are 46 pupils aged from four to nine on roll. Half come from the school's own catchment area and most others travel from Haltwhistle. Greenhead Church of England First School is much smaller than most other schools. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The pupils are from a variety of backgrounds, including farming. There are six pupils with special educational needs and, at 13% of the school population, this is below the national average. 14% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is well below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is within the average range.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Greenhead Church of England First School is a good school. It achieves standards that, both when compared with all schools and with similar schools, are very high in reading, well above average in mathematics, above average in science and satisfactory in writing. It is very good at teaching pupils to think for themselves. The development of pupils' personal skills is very good and all relationships are excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall. None is unsatisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well and her good management strategies have a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. The governing body does not always have a clear *strategic* view of its own for the school but listens to the views of the headteacher and supports the school soundly. The school provides good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The headteacher leads by example and leads very well.
- The school attains very high standards in reading and mathematics.
- Encouragement to pupils to *think* and to *reason* is a real strength of the school's provision.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work.
- Relationships between everyone in school are excellent.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.

#### What could be improved

- Standards in writing are affected by insufficient opportunities to write at length.
- The way the science curriculum is planned prevents some pupils from attaining higher standards.
- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough.
- There are omissions in the information which is sent to parents.

*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 1996, at which time pupils were judged to achieve the standards expected nationally in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1, but to fall short of those standards in information technology. Standards in all other subjects were judged sound. The standards in Key Stage 2 were found to be "less secure".

Since that time, standards have improved significantly in reading and in mathematics in both key stages. There has also been improvement in pupils' attainment in science although this has been more modest. Progress has been good on all the key issues identified in the last report, particularly in the organisation of the Key Stage 2 classroom. This is now good and has a positive impact on the progress that pupils make and on the standards they attain.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	C	A	A*	A*
Writing	B	B	C	C
Mathematics	D	B	A	A

**Key**

Very high                      A\*

Well above average        A

Above average              B

Average                        C

Below average                D

Well below average        E

This information shows that, at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, the school attained standards in reading that were very high, both when compared with all schools and with similar schools. These results place Greenhead in the top 5% of all schools. Standards in writing match average standards nationally. Attainment in mathematics is high: in the national tests *all* pupils attained the expected level. Inspection findings confirm all these standards. Attainment in science, as judged by the teachers' assessments, matches that achieved nationally. By the time pupils leave the school at age nine, they are attaining higher standards in all these subjects than they used to. Mathematical agility, reading skills and confident speaking skills are particular strengths in pupils' attainment. Although standards are high enough, the school is rightly pursuing excellence. However, some of the targets set by the school are unnecessarily modest. For example, there is a 76% mathematics target for Year 4 pupils to achieve Level 3 in 2001, while all of this cohort achieved Level 2 in their Key Stage 1 test. The English target is set at a level that expects those pupils who secured Level 2B or above at the end of Key Stage 1, to secure Level 3 and, as a result, is more realistic.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very happy at school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop very well on a personal level and relationships in school are excellent.
Attendance	There are satisfactory rates of attendance and no unauthorised absence.

Relationships are a real strength of the school. Teachers and pupils have a delightful rapport and this makes a very positive contribution to classroom learning. Pupils get on well together and show genuine pleasure when someone else does well. They are quick to say 'well done'.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the teaching observed, 20% was satisfactory, 47% was good and 33% very good. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good overall and often very good. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching between the two classrooms and there are no significant weaknesses in teaching. There are some significant strengths, the most impressive of which is the impact on pupils' learning of very skilful questioning by class teachers. This – very successfully - helps pupils to *think* and to *reason*. Lessons are always made enjoyable and challenge all pupils effectively, including those with special educational needs. Pupils make good progress. Literacy and numeracy are always taught at least well, and often very well. The basic skills of reading are thoroughly taught and mental mathematics sessions are a real strength of the school's provision.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has a sound curriculum although three areas need some attention.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Teachers know these pupils well and respond well to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good overall. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good. Provision for spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All aspects of the way in which the school cares for its pupils are good.

The partnership between school and parents is good and pupils benefit from this close relationship. However, there are some omissions in the information that parents receive from the school. The curriculum is satisfactory although some minor amendments are necessary in science and in opportunities for writing. Pupils benefit from the care they receive.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school well and fosters a harmonious environment in which good relationships flourish and pupils learn well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body supports the school soundly. Some of its members, particularly those linked to literacy and numeracy, are beginning to take a more active role, while some retain a more token involvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is aware of the good standards it achieves but, in continually pursuing excellence, recognises its weaker areas and establishes appropriate strategies for improving them.
The strategic use of resources	The school spends prudently. Resources are adequate rather than generous but support all the work of the school well enough.

The school is well led by the headteacher. The staff are sufficient in number and offer good levels of expertise. There are adequate resources in all subjects with the exception of information technology. However, the school is awaiting delivery of the necessary computer. Accommodation is adequate and the school makes sound use of the space and facilities it has. Spending, overseen largely by the headteacher, is both prudent and wise.

## 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>• Children make good progress in school.</li><li>• Children enjoy school.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• Staff are very approachable.</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li><li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities available outside lessons.</li><li>• The information about the progress their children make.</li></ul>

The inspection team fully endorses all the positive views of parents. There are no traditional school clubs which run on a weekly basis. However, this is more than compensated for by individual events such as "Kwik Cricket" coaching, sports tournaments, the opportunity to watch some professional sport and significant annual coaching for a charity run. Parents do not receive complete information about the progress that their children make because pupils' reports do not contain a section on information and communication technology and do not set targets to help pupils improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly average. By the time they start Year 1, they attain and often exceed the expected goals.
2. Pupils make excellent progress in reading so that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are very high. In 1999, 92% of pupils achieved the expected level, Level 2. Of these, two-thirds achieved the higher level, Level 3. This latter proportion is more than double the national average. In addition, improvement since the last report has been significant: at that time, just 57% of pupils attained the expected level while the national average was 80%.
3. In writing too, there has been a marked improvement since the last inspection. At that time, 57% of pupils achieved Level 2, with a national average of 80%. In 1999, 92% of pupils achieved this level. The significant feature here, however, is that pupils do not achieve the *higher* level in writing. The reason for this is that, in the areas of the curriculum where there should be opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing; science, history and geography, for example, those opportunities are much too infrequent.
4. In mathematics, the school has sustained the very high standards reported at the time of the last inspection. Both then and in 1999, all pupils secured Level 2. In 1999, however, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was almost double the national average.
5. Teacher assessment for science in 1999 matched the national average of 87% for pupils achieving Level 2 but, as with writing, no pupils attained Level 3. Science is taught thoroughly in this school and the level of challenge presented to pupils is very good. The consistent failure of a proportion of pupils to achieve Level 3 is to do with the way in which the science curriculum is organised: science topics are taught once in the key stage and sometimes pupils are too young to grasp the Level 3 elements of them.
6. Standards at Greenhead compare very favourably with similar schools in all areas except Level 3 writing and science.
7. Inspection findings clearly indicate that the high standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 are built on in Key Stage 2 and, at the age when pupils transfer to middle school, a very high proportion are achieving the expected Level 3 in English, mathematics and science. A high proportion of pupils achieves *above* Level 3 in reading and mathematics although the proportion achieving this level in writing and science is more modest. All told, this is a very significant improvement over the findings of the last report when, against a judgement that in Key Stage 1, pupils, "generally achieve the national expectation in English, mathematics and science"... Key Stage 2 attainment was found to be "less secure".
8. Targets set by the school are only modestly challenging. Some reflect a well-judged challenge for each pupil in the year group, translated into a percentage. Others are unnecessarily low. In mathematics, for example, there is a 76% target for the current Year 3 pupils to achieve Level 3 (the expected level) in mathematics at the end of Year 4, even though they *all* achieved Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The most able pupils make very good progress in reading and in mathematics, although the current organisation of the curriculum prevents them also doing so in science and in writing.
10. In information and communication technology, the unsatisfactory standards reported at the time of the last inspection have not been fully remedied, although there has been some improvement and this improvement is now gathering pace. Standards in art, design and technology and music

are all high. Insufficient evidence precludes judgements being made on geography, history or physical education.

11. Some available data indicate that girls out-perform boys at Greenhead School. There is no inspection evidence to support this.

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

12. Pupils are keen and eager to come to school. Most, brought by car or bus, arrive before the official starting time and come happily into the building. As they arrive, they go to their classes, where they find activities to occupy them until the official starting time. Pupils can be found playing board games together, practising spellings on the computer, building with constructional toys or discussing, with their friends, things they have brought from home.
13. Pupils are genuinely interested in school and involved in the wide range of activities available to them. They bring tokens for a variety of different savings schemes in order to acquire additional resources. A discussion with a Year 4 pupil highlighted the good number of different visits and activities in which the pupils are involved on a regular basis. He particularly talked about a re-enactment of a Roman / Celtic skirmish, which had been part of the history study and proved memorable for him. Many more pupils talked about their involvement in the regional run to raise funds for research into children's cancer.
14. During lesson observations, pupils' behaviour was good. They were highly motivated, confident and able to explain, concisely, their reasons or methods. They were polite and patient when listening to each others' explanations.
15. Around the school, pupils are courteous to visitors and show respect both for others' property and the displays of artefacts and photographs. In the dining hall, older pupils are very helpful, ensuring that the younger children have all they need. They are well organised and efficient when helping to tidy up after lunch.
16. Relationships between all pupils and adults in school are excellent. In a session before school, where a group of pupils was playing a board game, they explained the rules thoroughly to each other and then joked to their teacher that now they all knew the rules, no one could cheat.
17. The atmosphere in school is very good. All the children and adults, whether staff, parents or helpers, work together well. All are treated as equals and everyone is valued. This is well demonstrated in a calendar produced by the school, where each month has been illustrated by a child and the birthday of everyone in school written into the correct date. Birthdays are celebrated in assembly and pupils enjoy this.
18. Class rules, devised by the pupils themselves, demonstrate that they understand how bad behaviour, lack of consideration for others, or lack of appreciation of others' feelings, can make for unhappiness. The school emphasises good behaviour and there is a reward and sanctions scheme. The Friday assembly is a celebration and reward assembly. Pupils are able to nominate each other for awards. The school has an anti-bullying policy. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour observed during the inspection.
19. The syllabus for religious education includes work on other religions. The assemblies in school, charitable work, links with people from a variety of different cultures and with the disabled, all help pupils to appreciate that people are very different. They have a blind friend who writes to them regularly now that he lives too far away to visit very often. The displays in the hall help pupils appreciate the differences of other cultures, particularly those of Japan and different areas of Africa.
20. During the inspection, pupils were extremely helpful, showing us where we could find a variety of items. Many pupils use their initiative to bring in books and other resources from home to help with work they are busy with in school. They take responsibility seriously and use it with considerable maturity, for example, when making an award to another pupil for the quality of their work or for their kindness.

21. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Absence levels are slightly lower than the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. A system for checking the reasons for absence is in place and working well.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The last report judged teaching to be good in two-thirds of lessons in Key Stage 1 and sound in the remainder. In Key Stage 2, teaching was "generally sound or better", but there were instances, specifically in mathematics and science, where "the organisation of the classroom prevented effective teaching and learning."
23. Judgements in *this* inspection indicate an improvement in the quality of teaching. Moreover, there is now no significant difference in teaching quality between the two key stages and all teaching is satisfactory or better. 20% was judged sound, 47% good and 33% very good. There are no significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching but there are some important strengths. The outstanding strength is the quality of teachers' questioning. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, the management of pupils and the quality of assessment are also strong features.
24. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Where they have particular expertise it is used well. For example, the part-time teacher teaches music and art to all pupils. Design and technology is taught by the full-time teacher and the significant skill of the head teacher in mathematics teaching has now been very effectively absorbed into the practice of her Key Stage 2 colleague.
25. Both teachers have considerable skill in teaching the basics of literacy and numeracy. Pupils' reading is a testament to the success of the teaching: they have a full repertoire of strategies to use, including phonic skills, 'reading on' when they come across a word they do not know, breaking phonetically regular words into smaller parts and using clues from the context and from illustrations. Teaching of mental agility with numbers is first rate. Pupils revel in the challenges presented to them and have very high levels of competence.
26. Teachers' planning is thorough and always incorporates clear learning objectives. These are regularly shared with pupils so that they, too, know what it is their teacher wants them to learn.
27. The relationships between teachers and pupils at Greenhead are excellent: teachers clearly like the children a great deal and the feeling is mutual. This has a knock-on and very beneficial effect in the classroom where pupils listen with interest, participate with enthusiasm and are sometimes wide-eyed with delight. Teachers challenge pupils very well within individual lessons although the *arrangement* of the curriculum sometimes prevents this manifesting itself in very high achievement, particularly in science and writing.
28. Teachers use methods likely to help all pupils to learn. They manage this skilfully and take full account of the range of age and ability in each classroom. There is one outstanding strength and that is the quality of teachers' questions. In all lessons, both teachers use questioning very skilfully indeed to probe pupils' thinking and to encourage them to reason. It is this skill of these teachers, more than any other, that both contributes to pupils' excellent comprehension skills and makes them resourceful.
29. Pupils' behaviour is good and causes little or no problem. However, staff are noticeably vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are attentive. They are quick to engage subtle yet effective tactics if they are not.
30. In almost all lessons, the school makes very effective use of the nursery nurse. She is involved in the planning for Key Stage 1 and, under the guidance of the headteacher, works very effectively with reception year children. The school is awaiting imminent delivery of an additional computer and this will substantially enhance information and communication technology (ICT) opportunities for pupils. Currently, however, the school makes good use of what it has got. Work in ICT is carefully and sensibly linked into several subject areas, particularly into English and mathematics where wisely purchased software not only challenges pupils but also allows them to

monitor their own performance.

31. Assessment is a strength of teaching. Within this strength is one outstanding feature: the very high quality questioning used takes visible account of pupils' understanding. It is automatically adjusted to provide greater challenge, to take a step back or to probe more deeply, as appropriate. Teachers are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils in their class. One weakness related to assessment is the quality of teachers' marking, most particularly in English. It is thorough in identifying errors in pupils' work but comments are too frequently 'congratulatory' and too infrequently designed to help pupils to move on. Homework is used well to extend work in the classroom.
32. Pupils understand what they are taught because explanations are clear and because they are encouraged to think, to explore ideas and to give reasoned responses on a lesson by lesson basis. They are attentive and try hard to participate. They do not always present their work as tidily as they should but this is because their teachers do not insist on it. When asked to work independently, they work at a good pace and invariably produce what their teachers expect them to. They are resourceful and will seek answers to their own problems rather than disturb their teacher. For example, they will use a dictionary, a word card, or ask a friend for help. Almost all concentrate for long periods of time given their age and maturity. In fact some lessons, particularly music, make excessive demands on them in this respect. Pupils certainly understand what they are doing but are not so aware about how they have done. This is due in part to the quality of teachers' marking.

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

33. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was judged to be broad and balanced and this is still the case. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum although there are three features that militate against *some* pupils *always* making the best possible progress. The first is the organisation of science topics which is such that each one comes round only once in two years: this restricts the potential for some pupils in Years 2 and 4 to achieve the higher levels. The second is the limited opportunity for pupils to write at length and the third is the slightly limited opportunity for specific information technology skills to be taught. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and planned for very effectively. The home-school reading programme works well and parents support their children with help for spellings and other homework.
34. A very good programme of visits and other activities, both in and outside of school hours, enhance the curriculum. These include field trips, football coaching, outdoor activities, visits to museums, environmental trails, Kwik Cricket, cluster sports days, toddler trundles, church services and musical performances. Overseas visitors and charity links enrich the pupils' experiences.
35. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the curriculum. The school complies with the requirements of the Special Needs Code of Practice with all pupils on the special needs register having individual education plans. The targets set are realistically challenging and teachers provide appropriate work. The school makes good use of the learning support service for the pupils at Stage 3 of the register. It also provides effectively for pupils of both genders and all ages.
36. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils' spiritual development. There are strong links with the local church and the vicar frequently leads school assemblies. There is a 'specialness' about relationships at Greenhead School and this produces some very special times in classrooms. Key Stage 1 pupils are invariably wide-eyed when their teacher reads them a story and in Key Stage 2, they are thrilled when they discover what a concave mirror does to their reflection. At the end of the school day, many are eager to show their kaleidoscopes to their visitors in school and to explain how they made them and why they work as they do.
37. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All the adults in the school set good examples, with excellent relationships existing between all staff, parent helpers and children. Very good use is made of praise. Pupils' ideas and explanations are valued and success is

celebrated. Throughout the school there is a clear emphasis on self-discipline and class rules, drawn up by the pupils, are followed. The pupils are handled sensitively and with respect. The school has an anti-bullying policy and a reward and sanction system in place.

38. These same excellent relationships enhance the children's social development. Friday's assembly is used as an opportunity to celebrate success. The school has a system of rewards which is pupil led. One pupil may, at any time, nominate another for a sticker award. For example, during a paired reading session, one child nominated another for a reward for reading particularly well. The thing that impressed him most was the ease with which she managed to read the word 'magnificent'. The child explained the reason for his nomination to the teacher and the other children. In Key Stage 1, a child had asked for, and been given, a very difficult problem to solve in mathematics. On giving the correct answer, she was praised with a little chant which she accepted gracefully, thanking the other children. Most pupils arrive early at school. This is used as a 'choosing time' so that they can play games, use the computer, indulge in constructive play etc. before the start of the day. The children work well together, co-operating, taking turns, helping each other, discussing things and showing initiative in the tasks they choose to do. During lunchtime the older pupils act as servers and helpers on each table. They also help to clear the tables after lunch. Year 4 pupils meet and build relationships with similar aged pupils from other local first schools before, together, they transfer to middle school. This is a well-timed and sensitive opportunity for pupils who have attended such a very small school. All pupils are treated as individuals. This is carried through, even to the calendar in use in the school, which is illustrated with pupils' pictures and has been specially printed to include the birth dates of every child in school. Pupils, teachers and parents are involved in raising substantial sums of money each year for a variety of charities. The major charity event of the year is the Cancer Run for which the pupils train for a number of weeks. They also support Guide Dogs for the Blind and, through a non-uniform day, UNICEF.
39. The school's provision for cultural development is very good. Visitors from a variety of cultures are invited into school. Recently these have come from Japan and Africa. Photographic displays in the school hall record these events. Some pupils had the opportunity to make origami birds and the visitor from the Zulu region of South Africa provided the school with artefacts including hand-woven baskets, mats, ankle bells, Zulu shields, spears and household items. The pictures depicting life in her African village inform pupils of the cultural differences between Greenhead and Africa and enhance the geography curriculum. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to listen to and to learn music from other cultures. They have, for example, been learning a native American canoe song. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their own culture, and this is extended very well, particularly through history.
40. The school devotes a substantial amount of time to a programme of health education in order to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, to enable them to take responsibility for their own actions, to respect the rights of others and to keep themselves safe. This programme includes the statutory requirements for sex and drugs education.
41. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The school makes good use of community resources. Pupils visit the local Roman sites and the church and they use the play area in Greenhead Village. Little goes on in the village in which the school is not included and the school invites people from the village to their functions too. The school is acutely aware of the need to also extend pupils' awareness *beyond* their small village and have become actively involved in a rich variety of community projects, for example, working in the wild flower meadow at Haltwhistle, the development of Walltown Quarry and a Roman Wall Day with other cluster schools. School events are well supported by the whole community and the Harvest Festival and Christmas and Easter Plays are highlights of the year.
42. The school is a member of the West Tyne cluster of small schools and is regularly involved in joint projects with them. Through curriculum liaison and social events, it has close links with the middle school to which the pupils transfer when they leave Greenhead. All of the children from the feeder schools within the cluster have the opportunity to go on a residential field trip in the summer term prior to their transfer in order to help them make new friends that they can meet up with again in September. The school has particularly close links with a neighbouring school with whom it plans joint music sessions that take place weekly at alternating venues.

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

43. Pupils' general welfare remains a high priority and continues to be well promoted within the school. The school cares well for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Child protection arrangements reflect local authority guidelines, with the headteacher having designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies if cases of abuse are suspected. A suitable health and safety policy is in place and day-to-day working practices are sound. Standards of cleaning are high and the building is generally in good repair. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day and lunchtime routines are now managed well. As a result, the school functions as a calm and orderly community. There are appropriate arrangements for dealing with accidents, illness and the administration of medicines and emergency equipment is serviced regularly, with fire drill being held at least once every term.
44. Procedures for promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour remain effective, and are followed consistently by all members of staff. Sanctions are appropriate and simple, yet sensible rules ensure pupils' thoughtful and orderly conduct around school. Clear guidelines are in place to deal with bullying. Any reported incidents are taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
45. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are mainly informal but effective and permeate all areas of school life. Teachers know the pupils very well, have excellent relationships with them and respond positively to their needs. Strong emphasis is placed on developing high levels of mutual respect and the need to recognise good qualities in others. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage good work and behaviour and significant achievements are celebrated. The health education programme and residential visits for the older pupils also continue to make significant contributions to pupils' personal values.
46. Registers are completed efficiently at the start of sessions in accordance with current guidelines. They are monitored regularly and any absence that is not explained promptly by parents is followed up quickly and efficiently. Rates of attendance are reported appropriately to parents. There are no specific arrangements in place to promote attendance but almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their children like coming to school, and inspection evidence supports this.
47. The school has efficient assessment procedures underpinned by the teachers' very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils. The assessment strategies applied in lessons on a day-to-day basis are very good indeed. Whole school assessment is used well to identify areas of weakness, such as the need for more pupils to achieve the higher levels in writing and in science. While the school tries hard to put in place initiatives designed to lessen these weaknesses, it does not always take a broad enough view. It tends, for example, to look for answers at the classroom level when sometimes an adjustment to the curriculum would prove more effective. That is not to distract, however, from systems, which, overall, provide good quality assessment.

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

48. Good links have been maintained with parents since the last inspection. Parents feel welcome in school and almost all of them who responded to the questionnaire consider that the school works closely with them. They are actively encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home and are very satisfied with the amount of homework provided. Reading diaries are used effectively and maintain useful communications between teachers and pupils' homes. Almost all parents have signed up to the home school agreement. Several parents regularly give up their time to help in class, where they provide valuable help with activities such as reading, literacy and information technology. Some generously provide transport for music lessons or for transporting pupils on school visits. Recently parents, along with friends and grandparents, have worked with staff and pupils to produce a collage depicting school life in commemoration of the millennium. The Parent Teacher Association remains very active. Its fund-raising and social activities are well supported and, from time to time, the members also help out with minor repairs and improvements to the building.
49. Written communications with parents have deteriorated since the last inspection so that they are

now unsatisfactory. The governors' annual report lacks many necessary items and the prospectus does not state that parents have a right to withdraw their children from religious education and acts of collective worship. Parents have rightly expressed some dissatisfaction with the information they receive about their children's progress: pupils' end-of-year reports do not meet statutory requirements. This is because they do not include information technology and there are no targets to help pupils improve. There are good features, however. Through newsletters and various other forms of correspondence, parents are well informed about life generally in school. Each half term they also receive details about what is taught in class. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are notified, at an early stage, of any concerns and invited to review meetings to discuss their children's progress.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher leads by example and leads very well. The 'team' at Greenhead is a very small one but the headteacher has been very successful in galvanising her staff into a group with a firm and shared commitment to raising standards. Although there is no deputy headteacher, the support, dedication and active involvement of the second teacher make a very positive contribution to the overall management of the school.
51. Since the last inspection in 1996, the standards that pupils attain have been raised substantially from being in line with national averages overall, to current levels, almost all of which are above, or well above, those achieved nationally. These improvements have been secured because good use has been made of data to identify weaknesses and strategies likely to bring about improvement have been rigorously pursued.
52. Following the last inspection, an appropriate plan was prepared and the subsequent action has been good overall. The governing body has shown interest in the progress made on the key issues and has requested – and received – regular written and verbal updates. However, the actual progress made is largely to the credit of the headteacher and the other full-time member of staff who have responded positively to each key issue:
  - *Improve the quality of the learning environment in the junior classroom;*  
This classroom now comprises pupils from one key stage only, and therefore no longer presents the difficulties identified in the last report.
  - *Establish systems to monitor the quality of education provided;*  
The quality of teaching is monitored and it is now of a good – and often a very good – standard. Although still embryonic, classroom observation has been undertaken by the literacy and numeracy governors. The headteacher has provided the governors with helpful guidelines to assist them in this process. The governor with responsibility for target setting has started to help the headteacher with the analysis of data.
  - *Further develop the use of subject expertise;*  
Subject expertise through direct teaching is used to good effect in art, design and technology and music. The headteacher and the Key Stage 2 teacher have worked effectively together in order for the latter to gain further expertise in teaching mathematics. The impact on pupils' learning has been very good.
  - *Streamline the assessment and recording system;*  
The school now has adequate, yet manageable, systems for assessing pupils' work and attainment.
  - *Review the management of accommodation and the storage of resources;*  
The school has made appropriate adjustments and, within the constraints of available space, manages both accommodation and storage satisfactorily.
  - *Ensure that midday supervision is adequate;*  
The school took immediate action on this issue and has, subsequently, sustained adequate supervision.
  - *Review the workload of the headteacher and support staff;*  
Administrative support has been increased to an adequate, yet cost effective, level. The headteacher takes occasional time away from her class on a needs basis but there is still room for improving the efficient use of this time. This is achievable through selecting a venue which avoids constant interruption.



- *Promote the school as a quality environment through the presentation of pupils' work;*

The text within the report makes clear that this key issue referred to pupils' work on display. The quality of this is now sound.

- *Continue to work in partnership with parents;*

The school has a very good working relationship with parents; a view to which parents readily subscribe. There are, however, some omissions in the information they receive from school.

53. The governing body provides sound support for the school. Through discussions with - and reports from - the headteacher, it keeps abreast of the strengths, weaknesses and improvements in the school. There is evidence emerging that some governors – the chair, numeracy and target setting governors in particular – are taking a more active and shaping role in school. All members of the governing body support the work of the school in general and some, in addition, are able to offer specific support linked to their particular skills.
54. The targets set by the school relate to the percentage of pupils likely to attain Level 3 by the end of Year 4. Broadly, they include all pupils who secured a Level 2B or above in the national test at the end of Key Stage 1. As such they are modestly challenging and the school is on target to achieve and possibly exceed them.
55. Teaching is monitored and evaluated sensitively, yet rigorously and within a framework which allows ideas to be mulled over, strengths recognised and weaknesses to be tackled through agreed strategies. It is an effective system. There is no formal appraisal system in place, but classroom observation, frequent opportunities to discuss small changes aimed at improving the quality of teaching, together with an annual professional development interview, combine to provide a good substitute for the Key Stage 2 teacher. However, there is no system of appraisal on offer to the headteacher. The opportunity for reflection, both on current performance and on the future development of the school, although undertaken by the headteacher on her own behalf, is limited by the absence of such a system.
56. The school regularly provides initial teacher training. Although no students were in school at the time of the inspection, discussion of the structured support which the school offers, suggests that the quality of it is very good.
57. Budgeting to date has been the responsibility of the headteacher. Some governors have limited roles in financial planning but most are not adequately informed in order to participate fully, to have an effective overview of the process or to monitor the effects of spending decisions. However, the headteacher spends prudently and wisely and all curricular areas are adequately funded. Administrative routines are sound.
58. Accommodation is satisfactory and used well. Classrooms are adequate in size for the number of pupils in them and appropriately furnished. Old furniture has now been replaced and new carpets are properly secured to the floor. The quality of display has also improved. It is now sound and helps to create a warm and interesting environment in which pupils can work. Displays place value on pupils' work and are also used to inform. Internally, the building is very clean and generally in good repair. Outside, the grounds are attractively landscaped and well-maintained. The school building provides sound accommodation and is in a satisfactory decorative condition.
59. There are sufficient books for general use and for specific work linked to topics because the school makes effective use of the loan facilities available. Very good use is made of the hall, most frequently by children aged under five. However, this arrangement means that much 'removal' work is then required to change it into an area safe and appropriate for physical education lessons. It is only the willingness of all adults to help to clear the area that allows this dual-purpose usage to work effectively. Resources are adequate to cover all subjects of the curriculum with the exception of information and communication technology. Here, the school is awaiting imminent delivery of the new computer which will mean that this area too, will be adequately resourced.
60. Financial planning is sound. The annual budget is carefully developed by the headteacher with support from the finance sub-committee and in response to priorities identified in the school development plan. It is monitored regularly to ensure that spending remains within agreed limits

and due attention is paid to seeking value for money when purchases are made. Suitable arrangements are also in place for judging the cost-effectiveness of major expenditure on the quality of education provided. In recent years a broadly balanced budget has been maintained, with an appropriate reserve for contingencies.

61. Financial control and administration are also sound and do not impede the work of teachers. Appropriate spending limits are in place and day-to-day transactions are managed well by the headteacher with good support from the school secretary. The school does not, however, have its own computerised accounting system, although one is due to be installed in the near future. Accounts are currently prepared by the Local Authority, which provides regular and informative updates about expenditure. The most recent auditor's report confirms that sound financial systems are in place and all recommendations made in it have been fully acted upon.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62. The headteacher, staff and governors should work together to:

- Raise attainment in writing by:
  - providing planned and frequent opportunities – in a range of subjects and for a range of purposes – for pupils to write at greater length;  
(see paragraphs 3, 27, 33, 75)
  - introducing, as an integral element of marking, targets to help pupils improve the quality of their work;  
(see paragraphs 31, 80)
  - improving the presentation of pupils' work in general and their handwriting in particular.  
(see paragraphs 32, 75, 105, 109)
- Raise attainment in science by:
  - re-organising the topics covered in science so that pupils 'visit' them on more than one occasion in the key stage.  
(see paragraphs 27, 33, 93)
- Raise attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
  - ensuring adequate curriculum time for teaching ICT skills.  
(see paragraphs 33, 112)
- Ensure that the following school documentation meets all statutory requirements:
  - the annual report to parents; (see paragraph 49)
  - the governors' report to parents; (see paragraph 49)
  - the school prospectus. (see paragraph 49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	33%	47%	20%	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	46
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>YR – Y4</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	6

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

**Attendance****Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	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	7	6	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	92 (74)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	12	13	11
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	92 (71)	100 (88)	87 (75)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*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	0
White	46
Any other minority ethnic group	0

**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, 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)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.45
Average class size	22.5

**Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	91,024
Total expenditure	90,351
Expenditure per pupil	2,008
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,554
Balance carried forward to next year	3,227

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CARERS

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

46

Number of questionnaires returned

35

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	66	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	29	0	0	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	31	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	46	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	50	47	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	37	9	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	26	6	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	31	3	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	57	34	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	31	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	32	24	0	9

## **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**

63. Provision for the children in reception year is good. Their main class base is with the Key Stage 1 pupils but the school makes good provision for them to receive teaching as a separate group. This is possible because an additional teacher works in the school for one day a week and because the nursery nurse, working under the guidance of the class teacher, also provides good, daily support. On entry to the reception class, evidence from baseline testing shows that children are of broadly average attainment. They make good progress towards the expected goals so that, by the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children have met them and most have exceeded them. There are two children on the register of special educational needs, both of whom are making good progress.

#### *Language and Literacy*

64. Attainment in language and literacy is good. The quality of teaching is rarely less than good and often very good. Children speak confidently to adults and to each other. Their sentence construction and diction are good: even a child with speech difficulties is confident when speaking to the whole class and when answering questions. Children listen carefully to each other, enjoy listening to stories and show interest and enjoyment in books. For example, they listened intently to the story, 'Owl Babies', recognised repeated phrases, answered questions and were very keen to join in the phrases spoken by certain characters. They recalled the sequence of the story and described their favourite parts. They recognised words beginning with 'o', using word lists, located other words starting with that letter and moved on to practise their writing of 'o'. All are encouraged to form their letters correctly. Scrutiny of their workbooks shows that the children can overwrite and copy letters and numbers. They all recognise their own names.

#### *Mathematics*

65. Attainment in mathematics is good and children have a good understanding of mathematical language. They recognise numerals, match a number of objects to the correct digit, describe which number comes before or after another one, which number comes between two numbers and which is more or less than another. They have good skills for checking their own accuracy. For example, one child, who did have some difficulty in naming '4', checked its name by starting at zero and counting along. The children were introduced to the concept of faster and slower through a practical activity where two children ran, hopped, skipped or jumped from one position to another. The quality of teaching is very good and expectations of children are high. For example, vocabulary of speed was introduced using the words quick, slow, faster, slower, more time, less time, longer time, shorter time, both the same. Following on from this, the children were then asked to name something that moved faster or more slowly than something selected by the teacher. Carefully targeted questioning is another strong feature of teaching and where misconceptions arise, these are carefully corrected through the ongoing assessment within a session or a unit of work. The children are very enthusiastic about mathematics and make very good progress.

#### *Knowledge and Understanding of the World*

66. Knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children have worked on a number of areas including 'Myself', 'Animals', 'Plants and Flowers', 'Day and Night'. At the time of the inspection, they were working on a winter theme and, in a session with the nursery nurse, talked about winter weather and how this affected animals and birds. They each made bird cakes to hang in the school grounds and then recorded, pictorially, what they had done, underwriting captions written for them. The children demonstrated their knowledge of the needs of other creatures well. The discussion was lively and well led. All children were keen to be involved and to talk, for example, about feeding birds in their own gardens and why birds can't get worms in the winter.

### *Creative Development*

67. Children attain well. They enjoy imaginative play in the sand area, cut and stick accurately. They enjoy colouring and painting and their pictures are lively and appropriate for their age. They hold their pencils and crayons correctly and are aware of the rules regarding their safety. Children are provided with good musical experiences. For example, in a joint lesson held with the reception class children from a neighbouring school, they sang songs using actions and marched in time to tunes. As a result of the good quality of teaching they received, they were able to progress to try, simultaneously, to sing, march and keep a steady beat with an instrument. A few succeeded. The children are very enthusiastic about music and show commendable self-control in not playing percussion instruments until the appropriate moment. Music lessons are challenging and enjoyable.

### *Physical Development*

68. No actual physical education lesson was seen during the inspection but during mathematics, children were able to run, jump and hop and two children were able to skip. They use pencils and crayons correctly; they cut out and are able to use glue reasonably accurately. They have access to the large physical apparatus, which the rest of the school uses, and also have access to a range of small apparatus.

### *Personal and Social Development*

69. The children's personal and social development is good. Children are very happy to come to school, they are willing to take turns, to share with each other and wait patiently for their turn. They are confident around the school; they take good care of their equipment and help to tidy up. Their behaviour is good. They concentrate well and this was particularly evident during a music lesson, which lasted in excess of 50 minutes. The children persevere until activities are completed. The school values the children and all relationships are excellent. They learn about the values and beliefs of others and are fully involved in the life of the school, making their contribution to charitable events at the Mini-Run.
70. The quality of teaching for children under age five is good. Children are praised and encouraged and all staff are used very effectively. Planning is good. Lesson plans have clear objectives for all the children. A good range of learning resources is provided: all equipment is in good condition. A real strength of the curriculum for children aged under five is the well planned and effective questioning, which is similarly used to assess the children's understanding and, at a very early stage, clear up misconceptions.

## **ENGLISH**

71. The 1999 national test results show that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level, Level 2, in reading was very high both when compared to all schools and to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 in writing was also very high. However, while the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 3, was very high in reading, no pupil secured this level in writing. Overall, this equates to pupils attaining very high standards in reading and average standards in writing. Similarly high standards are achieved at the end of Year 4.
72. Data points to a difference in the attainment of boys and girls, with girls out-performing boys in both reading and writing. However, cohorts are small in this school and inspection evidence clearly points to broadly similar attainment, effort and participation between the two genders.
73. Standards of speaking and listening are good overall. Pupils have a sound vocabulary and quickly learn and use technical vocabulary linked both to work in English and in other subjects. Year 2 pupils, for example, talk confidently about blurb, illustrator and acknowledgements. They speak with confidence to an audience, whether it be their classmates or in a school production. There is one outstanding feature and that is the pupils' capacity for *thinking* and *reasoning*, clearly displayed in the answers they give to their teachers. They listen attentively and are capable of following simple instructions without a fuss. Combined with their own resourcefulness for solving problems, this is particularly useful in literacy lessons because it allows their teacher to work with a group of pupils, undisturbed.



74. Standards in reading are very high. While pupils are not always really fluent when they read, they do have a range of strategies at their fingertips to help them: breaking a word down into sections, 'reading on' if there is a word they do not know and using picture clues, for example. The outstanding strength in reading is pupils' capacity to *understand* what they read. This is a direct result of the exceptional questioning skills of both full-time members of staff who continually ask pupils to predict, express a view and give reasons for it. A paired reading scheme which operates daily in Key Stage 2 makes a valuable contribution to high reading standards as does the support which almost all pupils get at home. In this classroom, pupils have the opportunity to reward their reading partner if they feel he / she has read really well. However, they have to be prepared to explain their reasons fully to the class. One boy chose to reward his reading partner and explained, 'She read some really hard words today.' When asked what they were, he replied, 'All of it was hard, but she knew the word *magnificently*.'
75. Writing is the weakest element in English by a significant margin, although this weakness is only a relative one as almost all pupils *do* achieve the national standard. It is the fact that no pupils achieve the higher levels that lets the school down. There are a number of factors that contribute. Firstly and most significantly, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. While to do so is often problematic within the structure of the literacy hour, the school does not make effective use of a wealth of other opportunities across the curriculum. There is negligible evidence, for example, of pupils enjoying *full* report writing in science, empathetic writing in history or writing to a pen-pal in a school in another locality, linked to work in geography. Secondly, even within the literacy hour – and particularly in Key Stage 1 – there is an excessive use of worksheets. Too frequently, these depend on single word answers slotted into printed text and take away from the fuller writing opportunities which pupils need if their writing skills are to develop well. Thirdly, teachers accept standards of presentation that are not the pupils' best. This is more prevalent in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Finally, while all work is marked thoroughly for accuracy, there are two features of teachers' marking that fail to pursue high standards from pupils. Written praise is too liberally given and includes many instances when the work is not tidy enough. Additionally, on too few occasions is there a comment designed to help pupils improve their next piece of work. The strengths in writing are the accuracy of spelling and the ability of most pupils to use punctuation with accuracy commensurate with and often exceeding their age.
76. All pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in the 'mechanics' of reading. They make very good progress in understanding what they read. The progress they make in writing is sound.
77. They clearly enjoy all of their lessons in school and English is no exception. They are rarely inattentive and on the odd occasions when they are, a quiet word from their teacher is all that is needed. They particularly enjoy listening to a story or joining in with reading it. When asked to work by themselves, they do so sensibly, realising that their teacher is helping someone else. They support each other well if they meet a problem.
78. The few pupils who are on the register of special educational need have clearly identified learning targets on their individual education plans. Against these targets, they make good progress in reading and sound progress in writing.
79. The literacy hour has been fully implemented in the school and is functioning well. Although there is a named co-ordinator, in practice, the role is shared between the two full-time teachers. They oversee the subject well and have rightly identified writing as a weakness. However, they have not yet introduced strategies designed to address the nub of the problem: limited opportunity to produce longer pieces of writing.
80. The quality of teaching is good overall, sometimes very good and with some particularly strong features. There are no significant weaknesses beyond the room for some improvement in marking which too frequently congratulates pupils and, too infrequently, tells them how they can improve further. Planning is thorough and detailed. The relationships in both classrooms are delightful and this helps pupils to relax, grow in confidence and achieve well. The quality of questioning is particularly good and pupils are encouraged to give full and reasoned answers – their teachers and their classmates wait patiently if this takes them a little time. Finally, there

are good strategies for developing reading skills and it is the fact that pupils are taught how to select the most suitable from several, that helps them to make the good progress that they do in this element of English.

## MATHEMATICS

81. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in mathematics is very high when compared with national standards: in 1999, 100% of pupils achieved Level 2 and, of these, 38% achieved Level 3. These very high standards are maintained through Years 3 and 4 so that, by the time pupils transfer to middle school, all attain Level 3 and many attain Level 4. At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics were judged to be sound overall although with evidence of some higher attainment in Key Stage 1 and some under-achievement in Key Stage 2. Current attainment levels, therefore, signify a substantial improvement.
82. In Key Stage 1 the good early years' foundation is built upon. Pupils count on and back in tens from any number, for example, ten more than 15, ten more than 32 etc. Their planned programme of work covers shape, position, size, quantity and pattern making, which is delivered in a practical framework. High quality oral and mental work both engages all pupils and challenges them to solve simple problems and gain a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. Year 2 pupils can double numbers beyond 100, count on and back in tens – and at times with numbers selected by themselves and which go beyond 1000.
83. In Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to work at beyond national expectations. The extremely well planned oral and mental work, which is a key feature of the mathematics in the school, is very well demonstrated in the pupils' ability to try different approaches and find differing ways of carrying out calculations and solving sometimes quite complex problems. They work through problems methodically and are able to describe, concisely and accurately, both orally and in writing, their strategies. They are encouraged to describe two or three different methods of achieving the correct answer, for example, when doubling 238, one pupil suggested  $(200 \times 2) + (30 \times 2) + (8 \times 2) = 476$ . Another explained, 'double 240 would be 480, but 238 is 2 less than 240 so double 2 is 4 and 480 take away 4 is 476'. They reason well, and use this and their very good mental agility, to solve a range of mathematical problems linked to work in all attainment targets.
84. The quality of learning is good overall and often very good. All pupils are treated as young mathematicians and rise to the challenge. They are confident and enthusiastic and all, including those with special educational needs, make at least good - and invariably very good - progress throughout the school.
85. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good. It was judged very good in three of the four lessons observed and sound in the remaining lesson. The one weakness in the latter was a slowing of pace as the lesson progressed and a period of time during which pupils were not fully occupied with purposeful work. However, there are significant strengths in the teaching of mathematics and these were evident in all lessons observed. Firstly, very good practical, mental and oral mathematical work prepares the pupils well for confident problem solving and contributes greatly to the very high standards they achieve. Secondly, questions are searching and challenging and used expertly, not only to help teachers with their assessment of pupils' attainment and to clear up any misconceptions but also to help them plan what they should teach next. Thirdly, the emphasis on mathematical language is very good. Finally, pupils learn well because their teachers are vigilant in ensuring that they are always attentive to what they are being taught.
86. The mathematics curriculum is well planned, delivered through the numeracy hour and contains all the elements required by the National Curriculum. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and homework is used effectively, particularly in Key Stage 2. The mathematics co-ordinator has shared her considerable expertise with the Key Stage 2 teacher and together they have successfully eliminated the weaknesses identified in the previous report. Mathematics – teaching and attainment - is now a strength of the school.

## SCIENCE

87. At the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessment indicates that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level, Level 2, matches the national average. It also indicates that no pupils achieve the higher level, Level 3 and that this falls considerably short of a national figure of 20%. The current level of attainment is very close to that reported at the time of the school's previous inspection. By the time pupils leave the school at age nine, almost all achieve Level 3. This represents an *improvement* since the previous inspection.
88. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the various stages of human life and construct their own two or three generation family tree. They name key features in the life of a butterfly and recognise that different climates and habitats suit different animals. They suggest their own ideas for everyday activities involving pushing and pulling. They take measurements, such as the distance travelled by a toy vehicle when it starts its journey at the top of a ramp, and some suggest reasons why not all vehicles travel further an equal distance. Some, however, find this difficult and their responses suggest some confusion between distance and speed.
89. By the end of Year 4, pupils know that different teeth have different functions and that teeth decay if not looked after. They suggest sensible ways of preventing tooth decay. Some explain the difference between a parallel and a series circuit. They know the meaning of *conductor* and *insulator* and name materials in each category. They make sensible guesses about which materials are magnetic and which are not.
90. In Key Stages 1 and 2, both the quality and the quantity of scientific investigation to underpin the understanding of concepts and the building of a bank of scientific knowledge are good. Year 1 pupils, for example, know why, when trying to find out which vehicle will travel furthest, it is fairer to let them roll from the top of a ramp than to push them. Year 2 pupils use metre sticks and tape measures to measure the distance travelled and, from a list of results, identify which travelled furthest and which the least far. Year 3 pupils describe the essential features of a reflective surface as smooth, shiny and flat. Year 4 pupils look at their reflection in some flat kitchen foil and then offer some well thought out responses as to why they cannot see themselves nearly so well when it is crumpled.
91. Within individual lessons, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes very good progress. They are clearly fascinated and listen with interest as their teacher presents them with new challenges.
92. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in one and very good in the second. In the good lesson, there were many good features but the last section was too challenging for Year 1 pupils. In both lessons the activities were well thought out and were designed to challenge. As with almost all teaching in this school, the quality of questioning was excellent. In the Key Stage 2 lesson in particular, pupils were led gently to very perceptive responses about how light travels when bouncing off a crumpled, reflective surface and the effect that has on its mirror-like properties. Given these features, it is surprising that pupils do not achieve standards that are higher than average both at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. However, the answer lies not in the quality of teaching, but in the way in which the science curriculum is organised.
93. The school follows the content of the national science scheme, but adapts it to take account of the fact that there are two year groups in each class. In effect, this means that for Years 1 and 2, there is a two-year rolling programme of science. There is then another two-year rolling programme for Years 3 and 4. The result of this is that, in broad terms, some science units are covered in Years 1 and 3 while others are covered in Years 2 and 4. Clearly, Year 1 pupils do not have the capacity to work at Level 3 and in these science units, therefore, no pupils achieve the higher level by the end of the Key Stage. Much the same is true in Key Stage 2. This is unfortunate because the arrangement does not do justice to the very high quality science teaching which takes place in the school.
94. Resources in science are good and are used well to support investigative work. The two full-

time teachers are joint co-ordinators and work well together. Investigative science features strongly in the work they plan. They recognise the fact that a number of pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels in science fail to do so but have not yet put in place any systems likely to bring about lasting change.

## **ART**

95. Standards in art reported at the time of the last inspection were sound. Scrutiny of work indicates that they are now good even though those displayed in the one art lesson observed were only satisfactory.
96. Pupils in Key Stage 1 produce finger patterns by using paint on plastic. From the stimulus of the story, "The Magic Snowman", they produce drawings in chalk. They experiment skilfully with shades of yellow and blue to produce sand and seascapes. Pupils in Key Stage 2 weave and then re-create their work in paint with very careful attention to colour, design and detail. They experiment with tone through rubbings and through the use of a soft pencil to re-create a fur effect. They work with clay to produce leaf-shaped dishes and with wood to make printing blocks.
97. Only one art lesson was observed. This is insufficient on which to judge the quality of teaching. However, in this satisfactory lesson, pupils had the opportunity to experiment with drawing pencils. One-to-one demonstration by the teacher helped pupils to make sound progress. The deployment of the nursery nurse was, very unusually, unsatisfactory. This was because the teacher gave insufficiently precise instruction to allow her to provide effective support to pupils.
98. Resources for art are adequate. The scheme of work is comprehensive. Recent staff changes mean that, currently, there is no co-ordinator for art.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Standards of work in design and technology are good and this represents an improvement over the sound standards reported at the time of the last inspection.
100. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make a mini-theatre complete with spider, sunshine, clouds and rain, each of which is operated on a cotton-reel pulley system. As they recite, "Incy-Wincy Spider", they operate the relevant cotton wheel. Pupils in Key Stage 2 produce Victorian pop-up toys based on the principle of an off-centre hole in a wooden disk. They use cardboard tubes to make a desk tidy, combine design and technology both with science to produce an owl with flashing eyes and with art to produce a clay hedgehog with twig prickles.
101. Only one lesson was observed and this is insufficient evidence on which to judge the quality of teaching. However, resources were meticulously prepared and there was a very clear focus on the development of both skill and understanding. The one weak feature in the lesson was over prescription but, judging by work on display, that was more a feature of one lesson than of general practice in the school.
102. Resources are adequate. Teachers' expertise is well used and a scheme of work provides good opportunities for pupils to learn new skills and to try out their ideas.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection. Work on display and in pupils' books and files was examined and discussions were held with pupils. Teachers' planning files were also examined but these do not constitute sufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards. .
104. The school makes good use of the local area, including their own wild life garden and Greenhead Village. The residential visit undertaken by the older pupils broadens their experience and makes a valuable contribution to the development of their social skills. Their experience is further enhanced both through the number of visitors from other countries and through links with different organisations that the school supports. Displays highlighted links with Japan and the Zulu people of South Africa. Communications with a blind visitor, who they sponsored on a cycle trip across Cuba, further enhanced their knowledge of different parts of the world through photographs and a diary of his journey.
105. The school has sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum when they use the cluster loan arrangements. Improved presentation and storage of pupils' work in geography would help to enhance its value. The full range of the programme of study is planned for and covered through a two-year cycle.

## **HISTORY**

106. No history lessons were seen during the inspection. Work on display and in pupils' books was scrutinised and teachers' planning files were examined. Discussions were held with pupils but it was not possible to make a secure judgement on the standards that pupils attain.
107. The history programme of study is successfully planned over a two-year cycle; with Key Stage 1 covering work on 'How We Used To Live' and Key Stage 2, the Victorians and Invaders and Settlers with an emphasis on the Romans. Much of the history curriculum is wisely supported through first hand experience with visits to the Roman Army Museum, pupil involvement in a Roman Day, where they participated dressed as Celts or Romans, and visits to The Roman Wall. A visit to the Kilhope Wheel lead mine helped the pupils in their understanding of life and work in the past. Timelines around the school help to emphasise chronology. A display in the Key Stage 1 class of artefacts from 100 years ago brought to life the way that pupils' forebears lived. Pupils handle the artefacts with care and are proud of the contributions that they are able to bring from home.
108. The history curriculum contributes well to the cultural development of the pupils. They have a good understanding of the history of the area, which is made particularly relevant for them through first hand experience.
109. Resources for history are adequate when used in conjunction with the visits the children undertake. Improved presentation and storage of the pupils' work would help to enhance its value.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. The last inspection report judged the school not to be delivering the full programme of study for information and communication technology (ICT). Although there has been some improvement, its inclusion in the School Improvement Plan correctly signifies that there is still some way to go to full implementation. Standards, both at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4 are below those expected nationally.
111. Children have used an art program to make Christmas cards. Most have experienced work on the computer to help them gain mouse control. They have selected pictures from an art package which have then, with help, been imported into their work to enhance word processing activities. In Key Stage 2, keyboard skills are limited and frequently slow. However, pupils do work competently and quickly with a good range of software which supports their work in several areas of the curriculum, particularly mathematics and English. This is particularly

useful because it allows pupils to assess their own work and to make decisions about what they should do next. Discussions with teachers, parent helpers and pupils demonstrated that pupils with experience of word processing were able, with help, to create graphs and tables to classify and present information, had experience of working with the floor turtle and could use appropriate computer programs to explore imaginary and real situations.

112. No teacher-led sessions in ICT were observed during the inspection and there are too few sessions where skills are specifically taught. However, a new computer program to help with word processing was competently demonstrated by a parent helper and the pupils were keen and enthusiastic.
113. Planning for ICT is satisfactory but the implementation of the programme of study is severely limited by the lack of appropriate computer hardware. The school currently, who have access to them prior to official school starting time. A number of pupils are brought to school early in order to use this facility. The computers are used effectively within literacy and numeracy sessions to enhance the curriculum.
114. Through funding from the National Grid for Learning, the school is awaiting imminent delivery of a new computer followed by a link to the Internet. Meanwhile, both full-time staff have undertaken training and now have adequate skill to help pupils achieve the expected standards. Software has been carefully chosen and is well suited to the needs of the pupils. Hence, the school will, very soon, be well placed to help pupils make swift progress towards higher standards in ICT.

## **MUSIC**

115. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve standards in music that exceed those expected of pupils of a similar age.
116. By the time they start Year 1, pupils sing simple songs. They move and play percussion instruments while keeping in time to a tune. No music was seen in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing unaccompanied rounds in a variety of complex arrangements. They keep to their parts well. They make good progress in their lessons, learning a new song from the Red Indian culture and progressing to singing this in an elaborate round. The term 'ostinato' was introduced to the pupils and then used in a round. Evidence in pupils' music books shows knowledge of musical notation and the value of different musical notes. Taped music is used in assemblies and the children listen carefully. They are encouraged to recognise the pieces and name the composers. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have timetabled opportunities to learn to play the recorder.
117. The pupils' response to music is good. They are all enthusiastic and genuinely interested. They relate well to each other and to their teachers and work hard to improve their skills. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was good; subject knowledge and expertise was the particular strength. Good musical vocabulary was introduced to the children. However, music lessons are rather long.
118. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and is valued by the parents and the community. An annual highlight is the school's musical performance. Video evidence of this event illustrated its good quality.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. No physical education lessons were seen during the inspection as they all take place in the second part of the week. However, teachers' planning shows that regular physical education does take place with a range of gymnastics, games, and dance over the year. In addition, the whole school goes swimming in the summer months with all children making progress with their swimming skills and all of Year 4 children able to swim at least 10 metres by the time they leave the school.
120. The school is part of the West Tyne cluster of small schools and this provides further

opportunities for the pupils to take part in inter-school sports competitions. Older pupils also experience a cluster residential field trip that enables them to take part in adventurous activities.

121. During the last inspection, the condition and storage of the small equipment was a weakness. This has been rectified: the equipment is in good condition and stored conveniently and accessibly. The large physical education equipment is in good condition. The school has a good level playing field with goal posts and a level, well-surfaced playground with netball / basketball hoops.