

INSPECTION REPORT

ESCOMB PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114103

Head teacher: Mr K Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell
2456

Dates of inspection: 8th - 9th July 2002

Inspection number: 196353

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Three Lane Ends Escomb Bishop Auckland County Durham
Postcode:	DL14 7SR
Telephone number:	01388 603273
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father M Dent
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	9
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Escomb is about the same size as other primary schools and serves the villages of Escomb and Witton Park. The school is popular and parents from other estates close to the nearby town of Bishop Auckland also choose it for their children. The school admits pupils aged four to 11. There are 217 pupils on roll, 113 boys and 104 girls. There is a broad socio-economic mix and the average number of free school meals reflects this. Pupils are mainly from white, English speaking families. There are none with English as an additional language. The school admits pupils with a broad range of abilities but many children enter the reception class with attainment that is typical of four year olds, particularly in speaking, listening, early literacy and social skills. The school has 55 pupils on the register of special educational needs; this is broadly average. There are 36 pupils who are at an early stage of need; 10 are involved with outside agencies and nine have statements of specific need. The number of statemented pupils is above the national average. The school is housed in a Victorian building and has three demountable classrooms. It has a mixed Year 1 and 2 class this year due to extra national funding. The school has been successful in its bid to the DfES to have a 'Classroom of the Future'. This will be erected by next spring.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an excellent school where the head teacher provides an outstanding lead and a very clear direction to ensure that all pupils, whatever their background and ability are able to succeed. The school provides a very effective environment in which pupils happily work and play together. The school is very well managed with the effective support of the deputy head teacher and staff. The governors have developed their role very well and work very successfully to help shape the direction of the school. Teaching is good and sometimes very good or excellent. This means that pupils achieve well and, by the time they transfer to secondary school, they attain very high standards. All staff provide a high level of care and support that promotes pupils' personal development and self-esteem. Relationships are excellent and key to the pupils' very positive attitudes to their work. They thoroughly enjoy school and behave very well. The school's effectiveness is reflected in its wide range of awards for areas such as Schools' Achievement, Basic Skills, Active Mark Gold and Healthy Schools. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher provides outstanding leadership and is well supported by the deputy head teacher, key staff and governors, whose work is very effective. Teamwork is very good.
- Relationships are excellent and encourage pupils to develop very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The excellent ethos of the school encourages pupils of all abilities to achieve the best they can.
- The good and very good teaching adds value to the pupils' learning and they attain very high standards.
- The school provides a very rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities, in and beyond the classroom, that ensure the pupils enjoy their learning.
- The school ensures the inclusion of all pupils in every aspect of its life and work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

What could be improved

- The progress of the children in the reception class through more effective planning and provision.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in 1997. The head teacher, staff and governors have responded well to the issues identified in the report. Teaching is now better and this has resulted in the very high standards achieved by pupils. Issues relating to overcrowding have been mainly resolved although space for children in the reception class is still limited. The space available in this classroom is not always used as well as it might be to match the planned curriculum. The school now has sufficient, well-deployed staff to supervise pupils at lunchtime. The resources for design and technology and music are much improved. Teachers have improved their planning, which is now linked to national guidance and the school's own clear aims for learning. The improved assessment procedures ensure that information from the teachers' day-to-day checks on what pupils have learned is used to good effect to plan future work. The school has built successfully on its work in information and communication technology (ICT) and is well placed to develop new initiatives in teaching and learning once the planned 'Classroom of the Future' is built.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	A	A	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	A	A*	A*	
science	C	A*	A*	A*	

The school is performing very well. This reflects the value added to pupils' learning and achievement due to the effective teaching. Pupils reach very high standards in national tests and in the 2001 tests for 11 year olds the school's results in English were well above the national average. Standards in mathematics and science were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The school's performance in all three subjects was very high and in the top five per cent of schools when compared with those with a similar proportion of free school meals. The school's improvement is more rapid than the upward trend found in most schools nationally. The school has set suitably challenging targets for this year and is on track to meet them. There are more pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6. Based on the attainment of this year group in tests when they were seven, the levels attained in the most recent tests are likely to be slightly lower than last year, but still high in relation to the national picture. In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, pupils' performance was above average in reading and writing and in the top five per cent of schools nationally in mathematics. Standards were well above those attained in similar schools in reading, above in writing and very high in mathematics.

Children enter the reception class with the skills and understanding expected for four year olds. They make sound progress but more able children could achieve higher standards if staff developed a wider

range of challenging activities. By the time they transfer to Year 1, many pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. Pupils make very good progress throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils' standards in current work in English, mathematics and science are well above the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The work of more able pupils is of an excellent standard. Pupils achieve well in ICT and standards are well above those expected by the time they transfer to secondary school. Work in other subjects is of a high quality and pupils take pride in their finished work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and make very good progress in relation to their ability.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the staffs' high expectations in respect of their work and behaviour. They develop very good attitudes that support their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The staff manage pupils very well and so behaviour is very good, both in lessons and as they move around the school. Pupils are so interested in the good range of activities offered that they want to behave and don't want to waste a minute.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and ensure that pupils' personal development is very good.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above the national average.

Pupils look after each other and work and play very well together. All pupils willingly take on responsibilities in class and older pupils respond in a mature way to being responsible for a wider range of areas, such as caring for younger pupils at break times. There were two fixed term exclusions in the last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Very 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.

Teaching is good overall, and is often very good or excellent in Years 3 to 6. The high proportion of effective teaching is one of the main reasons why the school is so successfully raising standards. Teachers' planning is thorough and based on their knowledge of what each pupil can achieve. In most classes work is well matched to the needs of all pupils and builds well on what they already know. Although teaching is satisfactory in the reception class more could be done to use more effectively the limited space available in this classroom in order to plan and develop a wider range of activities to challenge more able children. While learning is satisfactory it could be better. In most classes teachers' questioning is very good and well matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils. Staff intervene well to challenge pupils' thinking and so they learn well. Most teachers use time and resources very well. Teaching in English and mathematics is very good and the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very effective. Teachers ensure that pupils develop and practise to good effect

their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects such as history, geography, science and design and technology. Teachers make good use of ICT to support their work in classrooms. They stimulate pupils' interest and support the learning of basic skills with well-chosen programs. Classroom assistants work very well with teachers to support pupils' learning. Their work is particularly effective with pupils with special educational needs and with targeted groups to raise their achievement in English and mathematics. Teachers value pupils' achievements and display work very well; this effectively reinforces pupils' learning and promotes their self-esteem.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides an interesting range of experiences and activities to stimulate pupils' eagerness to learn. The good range of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils receive very good support from class teachers and support staff and so they make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. From starting school pupils learn to care for each other and this is built on throughout the school. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to share their thoughts and feelings and to listen to each other. Pupils learn to appreciate the world about them, to work together and show care for others and for their environment.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The excellent ethos of the school ensures a very supportive learning environment in which every pupil is valued and encouraged to achieve success. Staff provide very good care and support for all pupils.

Staff establish very effective links with the local community and this helps pupils get a good understanding of life in the local area. There are very good links with the local church. These opportunities for community involvement support the pupils' good understanding of citizenship. The school offers a very good range of out of school clubs. The partnership between the school and parents is very good and parents work well to support their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The head teacher gives an excellent lead in establishing the very high quality environment for learning. Teamwork is very good. The school is managed very well with effective support from the deputy head teacher and other staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a good understanding of how the school is performing. Their useful development plan enables them to provide a good input to school improvement. They work very well with the school and share the staffs' commitment to the pupils and their families.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's priorities for improvement are based on its good awareness of what it does well and where improvement is

	needed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Governors are proactive in ensuring good value in all goods and services in order to provide the best quality for the pupils.

The excellent leadership of the head teacher, coupled with the very good support and effectiveness of other staff and governors, is leading to very high standards and an extremely successful school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school. Behaviour is good.• Teaching is good and their children make good progress.• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best.• The school is well managed.• Children are encouraged to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about how well their child is getting on.• The amount of homework.• The range of activities beyond the school day.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views but do not support their criticisms. The information to parents is good and the school works well to develop its partnership with them. There is a very good range of activities beyond the school day, including a wide range of visits and a residential visit for the oldest pupils. The amount and frequency of homework is satisfactory and is similar to that found in most other primary schools. It supports pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The head teacher provides outstanding leadership and is well supported by the deputy head teacher, key staff and governors, whose work is very effective. Teamwork is very good.

1 The head teacher provides outstanding leadership through the example he sets and the way he works successfully with staff, governors, and parents to provide the best opportunities for all pupils. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, the staff and governors work as a very effective team. This very high quality teamwork ensures that the aims and values of the school are shared in order to provide an excellent ethos for learning. The head teacher inspires confidence in the staff by recognising their strengths and supporting them well. He implements effective performance management procedures that ensure that staff have access to good quality professional development and training. This has resulted, for example, in teachers gaining a greater level of confidence in planning to more clearly identify what pupils will learn and in becoming more effective in their assessment of how well pupils are achieving.

2 The head teacher has a very good understanding of best primary school practice. This enables him to work well with staff to ensure that the curriculum and organisation provide the best possible experiences for all the pupils in the school. The head teacher sets the tone for the excellent ethos in the school that promotes the pupils' learning and supports their achievement. His clear belief in enabling all children to believe in themselves and to achieve the very best they can is shared effectively with all staff, governors and parents. This is successful in enabling all pupils, whatever their background and ability, to achieve very well over their time in school. By the time they leave school at 11, many pupils attain very high standards in most subjects. The school is very well managed and this is well supported by the deputy head teacher, staff and governors. The deputy head teacher works very effectively with the head teacher to identify what is working well in the school and give a lead in implementing strategies to resolve any areas for improvement. The role of subject co-ordinators is developing well and they give a good lead in developing their specialist areas. All manage a budget and ensure their subjects are well resourced. They share expertise and support colleagues very well.

3 Governors are very supportive of the school; they work closely with the head teacher and staff to identify, implement and monitor developments. They have a very good overview of the work of the school, are knowledgeable about the curriculum and take an effective role in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The governors have worked together to produce their own development plan and this provides a very useful framework for their work over the next three years. Individual governors are linked to subjects and to whole-school aspects such as special educational needs; they meet regularly with the co-ordinators for these areas to discuss developments. The information they gain is then shared with the whole governing body so there is a clear awareness of the school's performance. All governors attend regular training events and are actively involved in visiting the school and observing work in classrooms. The chair of governors works very closely with the school and gives very good direction to developing the partnership between school, governors and parents.

4 Escomb is an excellent school where pupils receive a very effective education and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. Its success reflects the leadership of the head teacher, key staff and governors and their aim to promote the highest possible achievement for all pupils. The excellent relationships and teamwork in the school result in a clear commitment to all pupils and their families. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are rightly proud of their school; standards are very high and this promotes its very good reputation within the local and wider community.

5 The last inspection found Escomb Primary School to be a very good school but, given that very good starting point, it has still moved forward under the outstanding leadership and direction of the head teacher. He has worked very well with staff and governors to further improve teaching and standards. The school's effectiveness is reflected in its wide range of awards for areas such as Schools' Achievement, Basic Skills, Active Mark Gold and Healthy Schools. The successful bid to be allocated a 'Classroom of the Future' is a further recognition of the very effective work of the school. The head teacher, staff and governors have a shared commitment to continuing to move forward through such initiatives.

Relationships are excellent and encourage pupils to develop very good attitudes and behaviour.

6 The relationships between staff are excellent and they provide good examples on which pupils can base their own very effective relationships with others. As a result, pupils relate very well to the staff and other adults. Their personal and social development is very good and this has improved since the last inspection. Throughout the school, staff work hard to enable pupils to gain confidence and promote their self-esteem. The high quality of support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is a key feature in their successful learning. The staff working with the oldest pupils show awareness of the growing maturity of their pupils and reflect this through opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility around the school. This is very evident in the way older pupils take responsibility for helping younger children. They act as 'buddies' to help any pupils who are unhappy or need help. Parents of pupils who join the school during the year are delighted at the way others in the school make particular efforts to help their children settle. The older pupils are elected to the School Council. They take their responsibilities very seriously and put forward and debate useful suggestions for improving the school.

7 The children in the reception class are well settled into the routines of the school and move very confidently in the class base and outdoor areas. Staff in this class work well together to reinforce the children's personal and social development within all activities. Children are confident and quickly learn to take a part in activities. For example, the teacher shared the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' and the children enthusiastically joined in with 'trip-trap, trip-trap over the bridge'. Children later acted out the story, modelling their teacher's telling of the story by adopting a range of voices to match the characters. Children learn to take turns and share and, when working on computers, the more confident children help others to use the mouse to click on icons, open their programs and identify the option needed.

8 All staff provide a very good range of activities and experiences and this ensures that pupils continue to develop very good attitudes to their learning. Parents are pleased that their children are eager to come to school and respond with such enjoyment to their tasks. Most pupils concentrate well on their work and maintain their interest. Those with special educational needs, who sometimes lack concentration, are encouraged well by staff and so they work hard and do their best. Pupils work very well together and support each other. In a Year 6 geography lesson they collaborated very well in groups to plan, develop and present a fact-file of information about the Lake District. They researched information using the Internet and worked in a mature way to decide what each member of the group would work on in order to produce a fold-up information leaflet for pupils of their own age. In a Year 3 history lesson, the teacher gave pupils a good range of opportunities to replicate an archaeological 'dig'. Pupils became totally engrossed in 'sand-skimming' with trowels and using a grid to locate finds; they were elated at successfully discovering bones and coins. 'We're real archaeologists' said one.

9 Pupils are managed very well and their behaviour is very good, both in class and in the outdoor areas. There are, quite naturally, a few petty squabbles but pupils are so interested in the range of opportunities that they forget any differences. The pupils are aware of the few school rules and respond very well to the system of rewards given to promote good work, attitudes and behaviour. They enjoy each other's success and applaud spontaneously as individuals show their good work. All staff reinforce good working habits; they encourage pupils to work together and plan activities that will promote learning to share and take turns. Pupils respond well to the way staff value their efforts and are eager to do the best they can. Staff work very hard to raise the self-esteem of all pupils and build their confidence to try new experiences. Parents are pleased that their children quickly become mature and act responsibly because teachers have clear expectations of work and behaviour and trust pupils to work independently. When pupils are taken out on school visits they are very aware that they are 'ambassadors' for their school and the school receives many reports from members of the community about how well pupils conduct themselves.

The excellent ethos of the school encourages pupils of all abilities to achieve the best they can.

10 The head teacher sets the tone for the excellent ethos in the school and this ensures a very supportive environment where pupils work in harmony. There is a very strong bond between the teachers and pupils at the school. All pupils know that they are valued and that their contributions and ideas are considered and respected. The school has a wonderful caring atmosphere that welcomes you as soon as you go through the door. The central aims of the school are linked to developing pupils' self-esteem and giving them plenty of opportunities to share their talents and to celebrate their achievements. This is evident in the spontaneous applause for pupils gaining awards in celebration assemblies. Staff value pupils' work and this shows in the high quality displays around the school. They encourage pupils to take pride in their work and many present their work carefully; written work in books and folders is often of a high quality. The ethos of the school ensures that pupils gain an appreciation of the arts. The good programme in music and art and design enables pupils to learn about the work of local artists and musicians, and about those from other times, cultures and traditions.

11 The building is cared for very well by the caretaker and used well by staff in subjects such as history. For example, pupils in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class learned a great deal about Victorian schools based on a study of their own school building and records of past pupils and teachers. The outdoor areas are developed well with an attractive wildlife garden. This provides a good resource, not only for teaching and learning in areas such as science, but also in developing pupils' awareness and care of the environment.

12 The needs of the pupils are at the very heart of everything the school does. The positive examples set by all the adults working in the school influence the excellent environment for learning. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and the importance of friendship. A particularly good example of this is the 'buddy' system, where the younger children know that they have someone to turn to and look up to in the school. This works very well and gives everyone a real sense of security and belonging. There is a clear feeling of 'family' that permeates the life and work of the school. As a result, pupils show a mature awareness of the need to be tolerant and to respect the views and feelings of others. They are always ready to help others and parents value this. Pupils care for each other and are particularly supportive of those with special educational needs.

13 The school encourages pupils to work and play together and to mature as members of their school community. Pupils support charities by fund raising, and are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. All members of staff place a very high priority on pastoral care, are very approachable and totally supportive. The classroom assistants are dedicated and caring; they are

committed to providing very good support for all pupils. All staff have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them consistently and conscientiously; this promotes the pupils' development within the caring ethos established.

The good and very good teaching adds value to the pupils' learning and they attain very high standards.

14 Teaching is mainly good, and is sometimes very good and is occasionally excellent in Years 3 to 6. The substantial amount of high quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress throughout their time in school. They achieve well, whatever their background and ability, and standards are very high.

15 Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to set tasks that keep pupils interested and help them to learn effectively. This was shown in a very good science lesson with Year 4 pupils where the teacher combined his very good skills in ICT to enrich the work on electricity. He used an interactive whiteboard very well to check pupils' recall of previous experiments they had carried out on electrical circuits and the conductivity of certain materials. He built well on the pupils' previous learning to enable them to look at how insulation is used in the home. There was a very good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to do their own research and discuss their work. In a good religious education lesson, Year 2 pupils gained a good understanding of the Buddhist culture and celebrations through learning to make their own clay models of Buddha. The teacher's good subject expertise enabled them to look at similarities in the Buddhist teachings with their own lives. Her very imaginative approach to the topic meant that pupils were very well motivated. The teacher made very good links to pupils' spiritual and cultural development as she encouraged them to talk to their Buddha as they made it, 'Your good thoughts will be always inside your Buddha'. Pupils responded very well and used the teacher's well-chosen resources to share positive thoughts such as 'look after others' and 'hurt no living thing'. Pupils quickly learned the importance of positive rather than negative thoughts.

16 Literacy and numeracy are taught very well and this is reflected in the very high standards achieved in English and mathematics. In a very good English lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher had planned work that was very well matched to the different abilities within the class. She had very high expectations in terms of pupils' work and behaviour and ensured that pupils were very clear about what they would learn and how well they were doing. The very well taught group reading session set the scene for the work on poetry to be done during the week. Poems were well chosen to give very different viewpoints on the theme 'Springtime'. As a result, pupils responded very well and worked efficiently to use texts to pick out the themes of the poem and the author's aims. On a Ted Hughes poem one pupil volunteered 'I think he is amazed at all the things that happen at the start of spring'. Another discovered that the poet used 'strong words' and this gave a very good picture. The teacher used this skilfully to make a useful teaching point on the use of powerful verbs to enrich writing. The time at the end of lessons is used well in most classes and in this session the brisk and challenging teaching ensured that pupils were highly motivated and responded very well as they shared what they had learned.

17 Most teachers plan very effectively and build on previous lessons to match activities to what the pupils have learned. Many teachers make good links with work in other subjects. These, together with effective questioning, clear demonstrations and illustrations ensure pupils fully understand concepts and extend their thinking. In a well-taught mathematics lesson, the teacher's good questioning was well matched to the different needs of the pupils in the Year 5 class. The brisk mental arithmetic session had pupils well involved and their recall of number facts was very accurate as they joined in their 'Bingo' game. The effective deployment of the classroom assistant ensured that less able pupils were supported well and achieved success.

18 The substantial amount of effective teaching adds value to the pupils' learning and experiences as they move through the school. They make very progress and attain very high standards. They transfer to secondary school with a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills that they can apply to new work. The teachers plan lessons very carefully and ensure a good balance between direct teaching, work in groups and individual work. Teachers are very enthusiastic; they enjoy teaching and this motivates pupils very well.

The school provides a very rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities, in and beyond the classroom, that ensure the pupils enjoy their learning.

19 The curriculum is well planned; this ensures that all pupils have equal access to a rich and stimulating range of activities and experiences. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are implemented very well and staff make good links with other subjects to enable pupils to develop and practise these skills. For example, in a well-taught mathematics lesson with Year 1, the teacher enabled pupils to solve problems related to the travels of a toy bear, 'Barnaby', who receives postcards from all over the world to reinforce learning about different countries in geography. The topic was made relevant to the pupils as they organised information well to solve real-life problems about the costs of food and drink for tea and things to find in a toyshop.

20 All subjects of the National Curriculum are represented well and in sufficient depth. The curriculum provided for pupils goes well beyond the statutory requirements and provides pupils with a very rich and exciting programme of learning. The school ensures that the arts are well represented. Subjects such as art and design, music and dance enhance pupils' cultural development and add much to their self-esteem. The artwork on display is of high quality and is presented very well to enhance the learning environment and to value the work done by pupils. The school is always seeking to further improve pupils' experiences and plans a focus on the arts with local secondary schools. Year 6 pupils have produced high quality work showing the influence of David Hockney and Van Gogh. Their work on 'A Sense of Place' shows that pupils achieve high standards in art and design by the age of 11.

21 Pupils learn effectively because they are fully involved in a good range of practical activities and first-hand experiences. The school provides a good range of out of school visits linked to the curriculum topics. Pupils visit historical sites and museums and carry out investigations in the environment. The activities concentrate on enabling pupils to experience the world beyond school, and a variety of artists, musicians, theatre groups, engineers and service personnel visit the school to share their experience and expertise. There are good links with the local church. The school is pro-active in using the environment to foster pupils' understanding and care of the world about them. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. The school is good at developing pupils' experience beyond their own area and country. The school has a 'partner' school in Dublin and pupils from the school have visited Escomb and joined in activities in and beyond the school. The school is planning links with China, and staff and pupils are excited about the use of new technology when they get their 'Classroom of the Future' to be able to maintain and develop such contacts.

22 Staff give willingly of their time to provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' personal and social development and enrich the curriculum. These include a wide range of sporting activities, music making, drama, environmental work and art and design. These are available to all pupils.

The school ensures the inclusion of all pupils in every aspect of its life and work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

23 The school gives high priority to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their ability or background, are fully involved in every aspect of its work. The analysis of test results taken by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the assessments of how well pupils are doing in other year groups is good. The head teacher and staff make very effective use of this analysis to identify areas for improvement, build on pupils' success and to continue to raise standards. They identify the needs of groups and individual pupils to intervene and provide well-focused support to enable them to improve their work. The school is effective in identifying any pupils who have a particular gift or talent. When individual pupils show above average ability in a particular area then the school ensures that they can work with others of similar ability, sometimes in another class for that particular subject. This is effective and allows pupils to work at their own pace and to make the best progress possible.

24 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. All funding is used well to ensure that they have the best possible support. The deputy head teacher is the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She has very good expertise and manages provision very effectively. She works well with all staff to ensure that these pupils are encouraged to gain in confidence and self-esteem and to achieve as well as they can. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to ensure that the provision takes account of the latest code of practice and that all staff are aware of procedures to be followed. Pupils' individual education plans are well matched to their needs and provide clear targets for them to work toward and good guidance on how these can be achieved. These plans are often linked to providing support for the pupils' reading, writing and number skills or to improving their personal and social skills. The staff and co-ordinator regularly review individual targets to meet the changing needs of the pupils. Targets are shared with parents so that they can support their children at home. Parents indicate that they value highly this useful communication with the school. The school has above average numbers of pupils with a statement of specific need and these pupils are very well supported and enabled to access the curriculum and achieve as well as they can.

25 The school has a detailed whole-school policy for special educational needs and this ensures that pupils with learning problems are identified early in their school career. If action is needed this is quickly provided and this early intervention provides good support so that many pupils often reach the levels expected for their age and no longer need extra help. This is clearly shown in the school's high standards in National Curriculum tests where performance is not depressed by the inclusion of special educational needs pupils.

26 All staff show great commitment to all pupils. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they are encouraged to take a full part in all activities, whatever their level of ability. For example, staff encourage less confident pupils to 'have a go' in physical activities or when working on computers. Some pupils have physical problems but still join in confidently and are supported well by staff. Other pupils support them well and all pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into their classes and work well in group activities or when working individually with adults. Their learning is carefully monitored and, where a pupil requires direct teaching or support, this is managed well by the staff. For example, when pupils have a statement of specific need the school ensures that the provision is of high quality and good liaison between the support assistants and class teachers means that work done on a one-to-one basis complements that done in the classroom.

27 All pupils, whatever their ability, enjoy their learning and they achieve success through tasks that are well matched to what they already know and can do. The well-trained support staff are deployed well throughout the school to work with different ability groups. They work well with teachers and plan work that pupils enjoy and enable them to make good progress. They provide effective support in lessons and when they withdraw pupils from class to work in small groups or individually.

28 The school has developed good links with outside specialist agencies such as speech therapists, educational psychologists and physiotherapists. The good provision ensures that resources are well managed and the pupils make very good progress and achieve as well as they can for their ability.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The progress of the children in the reception class through more effective planning and provision.

29 Although teaching is satisfactory and curriculum planning provides a suitable programme of work in each of the recommended areas of learning, there is not enough detail to show what children of different abilities will learn. Planning identifies useful activities for the groups of children working with adults, but those for children to choose and work on independently often lack challenge. For example, children coloured in templates of characters from the story 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', but the activity was not developed and a long time was spent with little gain in learning. The learning targets are not always specific enough for these tasks and they sometimes lack challenge, particularly for more able children. This means that, while progress is satisfactory, it could be better. In some adult led tasks the activities are not effective in taking account of what the children can already do. For example, many have begun to write independently but the task presented of cutting out a sentence to match a picture lost any opportunity for writing skills to be practised. At this time of the school year, when children show good skills and will soon transfer to Year 1, more could be done to challenge them, extend their learning and ensure that they achieve as well as they can.

30 The space in the reception class is limited and staff have tried to ensure that all areas of learning are represented. However, the space could be used more effectively if its use was linked to the activities planned for the term. For example, the role-play area is inconspicuous and could provide more of a stimulus for developing children's imaginative language.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31 Building on the good practice available in the school, the head teacher, key staff and governors should:

- (1) Further improve children's learning and achievement in the foundation stage by:
 - ensuring that planned activities have sufficient challenge for all groups of children and build more closely on what they can already achieve;
 - making more effective use of the limited space by linking areas more closely to a wider range of planned activities.

(Paragraphs 29 and 30)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	11	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	38	52	10	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points..

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	217
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	55

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97% (97%)	100% (97%)	100% (97%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	28	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93% (97%)	100% (97%)	100% (97%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	31	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97% (96%)	100% (92%)	100% (100%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	15
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	29	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91% (81%)	91% (85%)	100% (100%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	186
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	27.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	192

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	485,055
Total expenditure	469,712
Expenditure per pupil	2,165
Balance brought forward from previous year	40,076

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	217
Number of questionnaires returned	89

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	0	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	0	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	30	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	43	4	3	2
The teaching is good.	70	26	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	35	10	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	22	1	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	13	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	59	33	3	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	73	23	0	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	26	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	31	5	2	12