

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BEDLINGTON WHITLEY MEMORIAL C of E (VA) FIRST  
SCHOOL**

Bedlington

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122281

Headteacher: Mrs J Bremner

Lead inspector: Mrs P C Cox,

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 November 2003

Inspection number: 255467

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:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	298
School address:	Gordon Terrace Bedlington Northumberland
Postcode:	NE22 5DE
Telephone number:	01670 822994
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Eldridge
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School is in a small ex-mining town in southeast Northumberland in an area of mixed owner-occupied and council housing. With 298 pupils on roll, the school is slightly larger than other primary schools. Almost all pupils are of white British ethnic heritage and all have English as their first language. Forty-two pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, a proportion below the national average. Of these, three pupils have statements of special educational need, a proportion similar to the national average. About 16 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a similar proportion to other schools. Few pupils join or leave the school at other times than in reception and at the end of Year 4 respectively. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school but overall it is below average. The school received an Achievement Award for improved Key Stage 1 test results in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19178	Mrs P C Cox	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology History Special educational needs
12682	Mr J Griffin	Lay inspector	
17877	Mrs C Ingham	Team inspector	Foundation Stage of Learning Mathematics Art and design
28037	Mrs P Smith	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography Music Physical education

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>32</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Bedlington Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School is a **good** school with many strengths, so that the pupils achieve well overall and they thrive socially and morally. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry to the nursery, the children's attainment overall is lower than usually seen. By the time they are nine, the pupils' attainment is similar to that in other schools in almost all subjects. The teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and is sound and often good in the rest of the school, so that the pupils maintain the good start they have made. Leadership and management are good and the school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes, in mathematics at Key Stage 2 and in reading throughout the school.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupils do not do well enough in science or information and communication technology at Key Stage 2.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very effective and, consequently, relationships in the school are very good.
- The teaching time for Key Stage 2 is lower than that recommended.
- The school has very close links with the parents of its pupils.

The school has made **good progress** since its previous inspection. Standards have been maintained, although the overall attainment on entry has declined. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed satisfactorily: the planning of the curriculum is detailed; the pupils with special educational needs now make sound progress; assessment is used appropriately and subject co-ordinators carry out their roles with enthusiasm and commitment. Although standards in information and communication technology are not yet high enough, the school has recently made rapid strides in raising them. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are better than they were.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	E	C	C	C
writing	D	B	C	C
mathematics	C	B	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Overall, **achievement is good**. The children do well in the nursery and reception classes and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all reach the goals that they are expected to attain by this age. The pupils maintain this level of attainment throughout the school in almost all subjects, building securely on the good start they have made. Consequently, their attainment by the end of Years 2 and 4 is similar to that seen in most schools. The trend of improvement in test results at the age of seven is higher than in other schools because standards in English and mathematics have risen significantly over the years. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in reading. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve well in mathematics and their attainment is higher than others of their age. However, standards in science and information and communication technology in these years are lower than expected for the age groups. Nevertheless, the pupils are making rapid strides in improving their attainment in information and communication technology.

The school promotes the pupils' personal development very well. The pupils have a positive attitude to school and their behaviour is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and all in the school show a high level of respect for others' feelings and beliefs. However, the rates of attendance are below average because many parents take their children on holiday during term time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Overall, the school provides a **sound quality of education** with many good features. The quality of teaching is sound. It is very good in the nursery and good in reception, where the teachers have a clear understanding of the way in which young children learn. The teaching is sound and often good for the pupils throughout the rest of the school. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and work effectively to make lessons interesting for the pupils so that they work hard. However, the pace of lessons sometimes drops and the pupils lose concentration. Pupils build the basic skills in almost all subjects satisfactorily, although some lessons are too long. Teaching is good in reading throughout the school and in mathematics at Key Stage 2, so that the pupils build on their knowledge and understanding well.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good for the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum is enriched by an interesting variety of visits and visitors. However, the teaching time at Key Stage 2 is lower than that recommended and, as a consequence, the time for teaching science has been limited.

The school cares very well for its pupils and provides them with good personal guidance. The school has a very strong partnership with the parents of its pupils and links with the community and other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides **good leadership and management**, setting a very positive and enthusiastic example to all. She has been instrumental in creating and developing the good ethos of the school and the focus on raising standards in English and mathematics. Senior staff provide strong support, and all in the school work as an enthusiastic team. The governing body carries out its role soundly and is a committed part of the school team.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting held for them, and those who responded to the questionnaire, were **very positive** about all aspects of the school. This was also true of most of the pupils, particularly the younger ones. Discussions with pupils in the school revealed that they are very proud of their school, their teachers and other pupils.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in science and information and communication technology in Years 3 and 4.
- Meet the recommended teaching times, particularly for Years 3 and 4, so that all subjects receive sufficient time.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** overall. The children do well in the nursery and reception classes and this advantage is maintained soundly through the rest of the school. The pupils do well in mathematics and reading, but do not reach the expected standards in science by the time they are nine.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make a good start in the nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils achieve well in reading throughout the school and in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- Attainment is lower than it should be in science and information and communication technology at Key Stage 2
- Pupils do well in singing throughout the school, and in swimming at Key Stage 2

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (16.4)	15.9 (16.0)
writing	14.7 (15.2)	14.8 (14.5)
mathematics	16.5 (17.3)	16.4 (16.7)

*There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in English have varied from year to year, depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. In some years, reading was well below average and writing below average. In 2002, the results were similar to the national average and the average of similar schools in reading, and above average in writing. The results in mathematics have been more stable, and moved from national average in 2000 and 2001 to above the national average and that of similar schools in 2002. The results in 2003 were similar to the national average and the average of similar schools in all three areas. The teachers' assessments in science in 2002 showed that standards were similar to the national average and the average of similar schools. The standards in 2003 were above the national average and that of similar schools because a greater proportion of the pupils reached the higher level. Overall, the trend of improvement in the test results has been above the national trend.
2. On average, the children enter the school with attainment that is below that usually seen. They make good progress in all the areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes, and their attainment is similar to others of their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they enter Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development their attainment is above others of their age.
3. The pupils build securely on the good foundations laid in these classes. The standards of the pupils presently in Year 2 are above average in reading, because they are taught well. Their attainment is similar to the national average in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are comparable with those in other schools in all other subjects and the pupils' achievement is sound. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, although the average attainment on entry has declined since then.



4. At Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to achieve soundly, and their attainment in most subjects is similar to others of their age. They do well in reading and their attainment in mathematics is above that common for their age by the end of Year 4, because they receive good teaching. They achieve well in singing and swimming. However, their attainment is lower than it should be in science and information and communication technology. Science is not accorded sufficient time for the teachers to be able to cover the curriculum in sufficient depth. In information and communication technology, pupils are not yet achieving the standards of which they are capable, because they did not have enough experience in the past. However, they are now making up the deficit.
5. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls and they achieve equally. There has been no pattern of difference in the test results over the years. The pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to others in their classes because they receive an appropriate level of support. Those with statements of special educational need do well because their support is well focused. The more able pupils achieve as well as other pupils and reach the standards they are capable of in many subjects. However, because they are given the same work as the rest of the class in some subjects, they do not do as well as they could.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils show **very good attitudes towards school and good attitudes towards their work**. They behave well, form very good relationships and their personal development is very good. However, pupils' attendance has declined steadily and is now unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show very good attitudes towards school and good attitudes towards their work.
- Pupils form very good relationships and their behaviour is good.
- Pupils' personal qualities are very well developed; their moral and social development are particularly strong features.
- Pupils' attendance is below average.

### **Commentary**

6. The very good parental partnership and pupils' personal development at school make significant contributions to these positive attitudes and values, which have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and like attending. They are very positive about their teachers, who they hold in very high regard. Special occasions, such as when pupils dress up and the educational visits, coupled with the very positive relationships with other pupils, contribute significantly to their very positive attitudes towards school. In lessons, the pupils' attitudes towards their work are good overall. Pupils listen well and show good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Pupils respond particularly well when expectations are high, lesson tasks are demanding and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. Their enthusiasm for practical activities is particularly evident in design and technology, art and design and physical education lessons.
7. Very harmonious relationships among pupils are a very positive feature. Teachers value pupils' work and praise effort and good work most effectively. As a result, in lessons pupils are comfortable with expressing their views and asking questions of their teachers. This assists their learning. Behaviour in classrooms, during lunchtimes and at playtimes, is good. The good and reliable behaviour of nearly all pupils is an important element in the prevailing positive atmosphere for learning. A strikingly calm, social atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. There is no sign of any bullying or other anti-social behaviour. Parents' and pupils' survey responses fully support this positive picture, with nearly all parents positive about pupils' behaviour and the

effective way in which bullying incidents are resolved. Pupils are comfortable reporting incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and fully support the school's measures in such cases.

8. There were no permanent exclusions in the previous school year, while the level of fixed term exclusions, at just one, is below the national picture.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

*Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	298	1	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

9. Most children are on course to exceed the expected level related to their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year. Their self-esteem, confidence and independence are striking features. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. A discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils revealed that they have already got a strikingly clear and disapproving view of what represents unacceptable behaviour and why. They hold the rewards system in high regard and fully support school's sanctions, where needed. Most pupils show respect and care for others. For example, they hold doors open for adults in corridors and are kind to their peers who are feeling unwell or left out. They exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way. For example, most pupils routinely complete and return their homework. The ten Year 4 'buddies' help at lunchtimes and support the younger pupils in a variety of ways. In group-work, the Year 4 pupils listen calmly and with respect to different views expressed by others. The school's well established personal, social, citizenship and health education programme is central to pupils' social development and has led to significant improvement in pupils' attitudes and values since the previous inspection. The practice of getting pupils to create poetry for special events and to review their own work makes a positive contribution to their spiritual development. Songs, artwork and the French club are important features of pupils' good cultural development.
10. Attendance is now lower than it should be, having declined steadily in each of the past four years. The attendance rate is below the national average and unauthorised absence is higher than the average.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.9	School data:	0.5
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year (2002/03).*

11. The school's measures to combat absence are satisfactory. While illness is the primary reason for absence, holidays during term time is a growing feature, which accounts for most of the decline in attendance in recent years. In 2002/03, holidays during term time reduced overall attendance by over 2 per cent, contributing to both authorised absence and unauthorised absence, as some pupils are away for over ten days. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory. Most pupils routinely arrive on time, but a small minority does not.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides its pupils with a **sound quality of education** overall with some good features. The curriculum and teaching are good for the nursery and reception children. They are sound for those in Years 1 to 4.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching is **sound overall**, with many strengths. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good. In the rest of the school it is sound, enabling the pupils to build on their skills and knowledge consistently.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the nursery is very good and it is good in the reception classes.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school, as is mathematics in Years 3 and 4.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	7 (23%)	13 (42%)	10 (32%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.*

- Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes, where, during the inspection, most of the very good teaching was observed. Teaching in the nursery is very good and in the reception classes is mainly good and often very good. The classroom assistants are committed and hard working and make a significant contribution to the children's learning. The staff provide a very good range of imaginative activities which make learning exciting and interesting for the children.
- Teaching is at least sound and is often good at Key Stages 1 and 2, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The teachers plan their work in detail and sometimes use interesting techniques to interest and involve the pupils. The teaching of mathematics is good in the junior classes and the teaching of English is satisfactory throughout the school, although the teaching of reading is good. In these subjects the teachers take care in ensuring that the planning of work matches the pupils' attainment, although this is not often the case in other subjects. Consequently, there are occasions when the more able pupils do not receive the challenge they need in order to achieve their potential. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily throughout the curriculum, but there is an overuse of worksheets in some subjects that restricts the pupils' opportunities to develop their skills and ability to record independently. In other instances, much of the work in the pupils' books is identical, suggesting that little of it is the pupils' own independent work.
- A key characteristic of the teaching is the enthusiasm and energy that the teachers put into their lessons. They constantly encourage and support the pupils, who are very positive about their work and their teachers. The pupils' behaviour is managed very well and the relationships in classrooms are close, so that the lessons proceed smoothly and often at a brisk pace. As a result, the pupils usually concentrate on their work and are keen to do well. The purpose of the lessons is shared consistently with pupils and time is given at the end of sessions to discuss whether the objectives have been achieved. Consequently, the pupils are able to see what they are to learn and broadly how well they have done. The resources are well organised and prepared, so that the pupils' interest is maintained. The best teaching in the school demonstrates good subject knowledge and an imaginative range of methods to ensure that pupils work hard and increase their understanding of the topic. The pupils gain a sense of

urgency about their work and expectations are high. The teachers sometimes use games to capture the pupils' total attention and enthuse them, as was seen in a very successful mathematics lesson in Year 4.

15. All pupils are included in all that the school has to offer. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning because it is planned to support the work in the classroom.
16. On the rare occasion where the teaching is unsatisfactory and the pupils' progress is limited, it is because the teaching is not focused sufficiently on teaching the necessary skills, so that the pupils do not move on rapidly enough. In some lessons, while the teaching is otherwise satisfactory, there is a significant amount of over-direction by the teacher that does not give pupils opportunities to develop or apply their skills of investigation or independent learning. Although the use of grouping by attainment in English and mathematics works soundly, time is often lost moving from one room to another. Some lessons are too long so that the pupils' attention is not sustained, and on a few occasions they spend too long sitting on the floor. In other lessons, the pace sometimes drops and the pupils lose concentration. On most occasions, the teachers at Key Stage 2 cope well with their large classes, but there are times when the teacher's own time is not organised well enough, so that groups and individuals do not always get the attention they need.
17. Support staff work well with the groups and individuals they assist. In some lessons, their time and expertise are effectively used during whole-class teaching sessions to support the teaching. However, this is not common and the support staff are often under-occupied for long periods at the beginning of lessons. Teachers plan lessons soundly to provide appropriate tasks for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need. This ensures that work is broadly matched to the needs of these pupils. The pupils' individual education plans are specific in many instances, and often include targets for English and mathematics. However, this is not the case for all targets. Although the teachers' planning rarely refers specifically to these pupils' individual education plans, teachers and learning assistants provide sound support for individuals and groups because they plan carefully with these pupils in mind.
18. The school has a good range of assessment procedures on which to base teaching, and these are used soundly. Test data is analysed carefully to identify those with special educational needs or those who need further support with their work, and to group the pupils for work in English and mathematics. The teachers evaluate many of their lessons in English and mathematics in order to ensure that further lessons build on what has been learned. They assess work in all subjects each half term to provide information on the pupils' attainment, and the pupils are asked to evaluate their own work and identify areas where they need to improve. However, while marking is sound in mathematics, it is not sufficiently effective in other subjects and, therefore, does not make enough contribution to assessment. In only a few classes does marking contain comments that will help pupils to see how well they have achieved the aims of the lesson or how they may improve their work. Some marking is over-lavish with praise for work that is not of good quality.
19. In the Foundation Stage of Learning, assessment procedures are good and are used effectively to guide future learning and set targets for achievement. Assessments are thorough, an integral part of activities and are included in all the areas of learning. The staff keep ongoing notes of the children's progress and have a very good knowledge of each child. The staff have successfully introduced the Foundation Stage Profiles, and these provide a detailed record of the rates of children's progress.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **sound**, with some exciting learning opportunities both in and out of lessons. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is good for the children in the nursery and reception classes.
- The working week for the junior pupils is less than the recommended minimum.
- There is a very good programme for health education.

### **Commentary**

20. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is rich and varied. The staff ensure that the children experience the full range of learning outlined in the national guidance for children of this age. A strength of the curriculum is the commitment given to planning play and practical activities as the main strategy for learning. The staff have also very successfully made genuine links across the areas of learning in curriculum plans through themes such as 'Shape and Pattern' and 'The Jolly Postman'.
21. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is suitably broad, but the allocation of time to subjects is not as balanced as it might be. This is mainly due to the fact that the junior pupils' working week is below the recommended minimum by at least an hour. As a result, the science curriculum is unsatisfactory and pupils do not reach average standards. The school has worked hard to address the criticisms made in the previous inspection. The improved structure of the curriculum allows pupils to learn systematically, building on to what they have previously learned. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and, because they are well supported in the classroom, they achieve as well as others.
22. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. Teachers are guided very well by the scheme of work and inter-weave the teaching of sex education, drugs and alcohol abuse and keeping healthy, through curriculum areas such as science, technology and physical education. In addition, there are set times every week when pupils can discuss personal and wider issues. The school has recently been awarded the Healthy Schools Award and this acknowledges their work in promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
23. Activities after school are similar to those in other first schools. Football is played throughout most of the year. The pupils participate in football and swimming competitions and dance activities. All activities are open to both boys and girls. The curriculum is further enriched by visits out of school and visitors to school. The school participates well in activities of a more artistic nature, such as drama or dance. One such exciting activity was the African dance workshop. Authors, artists, and football coaches are invited to school, as well as members of the local community, to share their expertise with pupils. These opportunities all add to the vibrancy of the curriculum.
24. The school is currently developing new initiatives to support the pupils' learning. The Thinking Skills project is well underway and helping pupils to become more independent and to make decisions based on sound reasoning. This supports the personal development of pupils well. The exciting project to further develop the school grounds to support learning across many curriculum areas is at the formal planning stage. Pupils, staff and governors have all been consulted and many of the plans are the outcome of pupils' work in design and technology and geography.
25. Accommodation is satisfactory. The hall is spacious for the teaching of physical education, with large grounds to facilitate outdoor lessons. Space is at a premium in the junior classes. However, good use is made of the communal space outside classrooms for practical lessons. The nursery has a secure area for outside play. Resources are at a satisfactory level for the delivery of the curriculum. English books have been replaced since the previous inspection and are now of good quality and quantity. Book stocks are further enhanced by the library service.

The flair and ingenuity of the nursery staff are shown in the outstanding organisation of the nursery. The displays are excellent, varied and very colourful. Resources are plentiful and of a very high quality. These, together, create a vibrant and purposeful exciting environment where the children are motivated to learn.

## Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for its pupils. It gives them **good support, advice and guidance**. There are appropriate measures to involve pupils in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- Support, advice and guidance for pupils are good.
- The school involves pupils appropriately in its work.

### Commentary

26. The headteacher, class teachers and other staff know the pupils very well and recognise their needs. They act quickly if a pupil is unhappy or under pressure, and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle in. As a result, nearly all pupils confirm that they have a good and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school. The policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are well considered and properly carried out. Links with parents and outside agencies, including health and social services, are very good. The needs of pupils with a range of learning difficulties are considered carefully and addressed very effectively. The more able pupils are often given the support they need to reach the higher levels in English and mathematics, particularly through the use of grouping by attainment.
27. The support of all pupils' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent, thorough and effectively shared with pupils and parents. This important work is underpinned by the good assessment of pupils' achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored and very well supported through the personal, social and health education programme. Where there are concerns, the headteacher, class teachers and other staff work well with pupils and their parents to identify how these concerns can be overcome. Pupils confirm they get a good idea of how they are progressing academically and in their personal development, from the merits system that operates in classes. Pupils' targets, which are discussed at parents' evenings, also help older pupils especially.
28. The school involves pupils appropriately in its work. Although there is no school council or equivalent, the very positive relationships between adults and pupils form a very good basis for hearing the views of pupils. Pupils have recently been involved in re-designing the school grounds, for example, to include extra play equipment. Assemblies have been held on the theme of 'What makes a good school?' Pupils' suggestions and ideas formed an integral part of this activity. Work, as part of Healthy Schools status, also contributes positively to taking pupils' views into account.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a **very good** partnership with parents, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Links with other schools are good. Links with the local community make a good contribution to pupils' development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good partnership with parents.
- The school has good links with other schools.
- There are good links with the community.

## Commentary

29. Links with parents, other schools and the community have improved since the previous inspection. The partnership with parents works very well, as the school and nearly all parents work on the basis that both have key roles in a shared enterprise. The school provides a good quality of materials to help support pupils' learning. The termly parents' evenings, good annual reports and curriculum booklets, for each year group, are key features of the partnership. There are clear homework arrangements, supported by the reading record. The staff have an approachable, helpful attitude. There is quick and decisive action to address any concerns. Led by the headteacher, the school is very responsive to the views of parents.
30. The parents make strong contributions to the successful partnership. There is nearly full parental attendance at termly parents' evenings and a high parental attendance at achievement and class assemblies, where pupils take the assembly, on different themes, for the whole school. The Parents' and Friends' Association arranges a series of successful fundraising events, which also contribute to pupils' personal development and the strong sense of community that prevails, as staff, parents and pupils are involved in many of the events. Parents help with projects, such as the current school grounds development.
31. The success of the partnership is reflected in the very positive response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Only a small minority of parents had any concerns on any of the survey questions. Nevertheless, a minority of parents does not deliver on their responsibility to ensure pupils attend school regularly.
32. The local church is a key community link. The vicar takes assemblies regularly, while other church members are governors and school helpers. The church is used for services and exhibitions of pupils' work. Pupils' learning benefits from a good range of visitors and visits. Public services, such as the police, health and fire services, enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. Pupils take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity. Pupils sing regularly at church and at a senior citizens' home. The after-school club, housed on the site, provides important support for working parents.
33. The school enjoys good links with the middle school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 4. For example, there are well-established curriculum links to ensure continuity. First schools in the area meet regularly to work on common issues, such as the introduction of Thinking Skills and the Foundation Stage Profile. The school takes part in football matches with other first schools, providing older pupils with additional understanding of the local community whilst developing their sense of fair play and competition.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **good leadership and management** for the school and has ensured that there is a constant and successful focus on raising standards in English and mathematics.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides positive, enthusiastic and energetic leadership, which inspires staff and pupils.
- Test data is used well to identify areas where improvement is needed and to take action to raise standards in English and mathematics.
- All staff are committed to ensuring that the pupils have equality of opportunity in all areas.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and special educational needs are good.
- The management of the school does not ensure that there is sufficient time for science in Years 3 and 4, although the management of the curriculum is satisfactory overall.

### Commentary

34. The school is led and managed well and this quality has been maintained since the previous inspection. The headteacher's positive and energetic leadership has been effective in providing a clear educational direction for the school. The whole school is clear about the direction it will take in the future and the senior staff make a sound contribution to the school's sense of purpose. The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together and have created a corporate approach to decision-making that operates efficiently. There is a caring atmosphere, based on consideration for the whole individual, in which pupils feel valued and develop their confidence and self-respect well. The headteacher has built a team of committed teachers who are keen to raise standards. Relationships throughout the school are very good and this ensures that the school runs smoothly, and that everyone, including the pupils, is eager for improvement.
35. The systems for monitoring and improving the teachers' performance are used suitably to ensure that teachers have appropriate objectives and are given opportunities to build on their professional skills. The analysis of test results is used well to support the identification of areas for improvement and to demonstrate teachers' success in raising attainment. There has been a very clear and successful focus on raising standards in English and mathematics. There are realistic predictions for the pupils' attainment in these subjects, firmly based on a good knowledge of the pupils and their progress. However, the shortage of taught time at Key Stage 2 has not been addressed. The school has not identified or remedied the shortcomings in science.
36. Development planning is undertaken soundly, staff and governors have a close involvement and the appropriate priorities for school improvement are identified accurately. The senior management has monitored the quality of teaching and identified points for development based on a satisfactory evaluation of the provision. Consequently, there is a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and appropriate support has been put in place where it is needed. Planning is always forward-looking, so that there are suitable contingency plans for the future if it appears that the school's funding will be drastically reduced.
37. The joint leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The staff are efficient and have a good understanding of the needs of the youngest children of the school. They ensure that there is good curriculum provision, and keep clear records of the children's development. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership and management of this important area of the school's work. This ensures that those pupils with special educational needs receive the support they need. The paperwork is thorough and managed capably.



38. Subject co-ordinators lead and manage their areas soundly and some have developed their roles well. They take their responsibilities seriously, ensuring that there are appropriate schemes of work for all subjects. Teachers work closely together and share their planning, so that co-ordinators are able to monitor what is planned for their subjects. Consequently, most teaching builds consistently on what pupils already know and understand. Results of national tests are analysed each year so that weaknesses can be identified and adjustments made to the curriculum. The co-ordinators have had opportunities to monitor and work with their colleagues in order to analyse strengths and weaknesses in detail and draw up plans to improve resources and planning. They are developing their roles in taking responsibility for raising pupils' attainment and there is a suitable programme to monitor teaching and standards in subjects. They write action plans to bring about the required improvements. However, some of the co-ordinators are relatively new to their roles and have yet to become fully conversant with the standards and planning.
39. The governing body is conscientious in carrying out its legal responsibilities and provides the school with sound governance. Governors work with a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and areas where improvement is needed and are involved appropriately in shaping its future direction. Committees work effectively and many governors are frequent visitors to the school, observing lessons and holding discussions with key staff. They challenge and support the school well

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	518,033
Total expenditure	511,943
Expenditure per pupil	1,954

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33,793
Balance carried forward to the next	39,883

40. Financial resources continue to be used effectively. The school applies the principles of best value soundly. The governing body compares pupils' performance with that of similar schools, and also looks at the patterns of progress. Well advised by the headteacher, it uses the budget wisely, with a strong focus on supporting priorities identified for improvements to teaching and learning. The recent audit judged the systems to be managed efficiently and identified no major issues for action. There has been recent high expenditure on setting up the new computer suite and this important new resource is already beginning to help raise pupils' attainment in information and communication technology. The balance brought forward has been used appropriately.
41. The sound strategic allocation of the budget in the school development plan is backed up by careful procedures for routine management of finances. With good support from administrative staff, the headteacher checks expenditure very carefully to ensure it is in line with what has been planned. Funds given to the school for specific purposes are used appropriately. The funding allocated to the school is lower than that given to most other primary schools. When account is taken of all aspects of the school's work, including: pupils' achievements; the quality of teaching; good attitudes to work that are generated among pupils; the strong leadership and management of the school, and the low income that the school receives compared with the national picture, the school gives good value for money.

# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS**

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

**Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The procedures, practices and teaching are good overall. Provision in the nursery is very good.**

The children attend the nursery part-time following their third birthday and transfer to reception classes when they are four years old for full-time attendance. Although there is a wide range, the children's attainment is below average overall when they start nursery, particularly in their speech and language skills. The children achieve well and, by the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach the expected standards in all the areas of learning and exceed the standards expected in their personal, social and emotional development. Children with special educational needs receive good support and they make good progress. High standards of provision for the Foundation Stage have been maintained since the previous inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most children are likely to exceed the levels expected by the end of the reception year.
- Teaching is very good.
- Caring and supportive relationships promote children's confidence, self-esteem and good behaviour successfully.
- The children have much enthusiasm for learning and have positive attitudes.

### **Commentary**

42. The children in the nursery respond very well to the high quality provision and quickly learn to treat equipment carefully, to take turns and are very comfortable in the environment. Reception children are adept at selecting activities and working harmoniously with other children in groups and pairs and maintaining concentration for a sustained time. The children grow in confidence because they feel secure and they are continually encouraged to have a positive attitude to other children and adults. There are trusting relationships between the staff and children that help the children to recognise that they are valued as important members of the class. In vibrant and happy classrooms, the children enjoy their learning because the staff are skilful in planning activities to engage the children's interest. In the nursery and reception classes, learning is fun and an enjoyable experience where the children develop a high level of enthusiasm for learning.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children make good, and often very good, progress in this area of learning.
- High priority is given to the teaching of speaking and listening skills.
- Assessment is used successfully to plan children's future learning.
- The development of language and literacy skills is integral in all activities.
- The development of children's writing skills through purposeful tasks is well planned.

### **Commentary**

43. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of the reception year and many are likely to be working into the first level of the National Curriculum. Their achievement is good. This is as a result of good teaching and the effective use of assessment data to plan the children's learning systematically. Considerable emphasis is given in the nursery to promoting speaking and listening skills through well-planned and focused adult-led activities and play activities in all areas of learning. The staff are skilled in using questions to engage the children in purposeful conversations. The children develop in confidence to speak in large groups. Teachers successfully intervene at appropriate times to encourage language development, for example, in imaginative play. This aspect is a great strength of the provision. In the reception classes, focused work is planned well and linked to a theme to consolidate learning. Work is well matched to the children's abilities. Most children want to write because they have a reason to do so, for example, to write a caption to illustrate a picture for display in the classroom. The more able children are beginning to write sentences.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most children make good, and often very good, progress and achieve well.
- Activities are planned well and support learning successfully.
- The outdoor environment is used well as a resource for learning.

### **Commentary**

44. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the expected levels and the more able children are likely to be working into Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The children's achievement is good. This is as a result of very good teaching through practical activities, which have meaningful links, for example, through the current topic, 'Shape and Pattern'. The nursery children develop an understanding of shape and pattern as they make biscuits and decorate them with checked and striped patterns. Reception class children explore the outdoor areas to find and record different patterns on buildings. These children develop a good understanding of number through regular opportunities to use number and, by the end of the year, many children add and subtract numbers to 10 competently.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is well structured to provide a good range of experiences for the children in all the elements.
- A good range of well-prepared resources is used effectively support learning.
- Good links are made with communication, language and literacy.

### **Commentary**

45. The children achieve well because they experience rich and varied provision through a continuous programme of practical experiences. Almost all children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of their time in reception. Teachers plan activities to capture children's natural curiosity and interest. They have high expectations of children's abilities to explore and investigate to use different tools and materials. In a water play activity in a reception class, the children's abilities to explore cause and effect were developed well as they

used pipes in milky pink water and said they were making 'bubbly' milkshakes. Nursery children contrast 'night' and 'day' as they use the night and day role-play areas and observe as they looked through the night and day windows. Good use is made of information books and interactive displays to extend the children's learning and promote discussion through, for example, work about autumn in the nursery.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children achieve well in their physical development.
- All children have access to a secure outdoor area with good facilities.
- Teaching has high expectations and is imaginative.
- The children's manipulative skills are developed well.

### **Commentary**

46. The children learn quickly and achieve well in the skills of co-ordination, control and movement because of the good, structured teaching and access to an interesting range of resources in a well-organised outdoor area. Most children are likely to reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers plan a specific focus for outdoor activities and this ensures that skills are developed effectively. Nursery children show their increasing abilities to roll hoops with control. The children are supervised well by the staff as they use the equipment. They really enjoy the sessions and are very active. The children's skills develop well from their start in the nursery because of the daily planned activities. They quickly learn to handle tools competently and staff are alert to what is happening in order to intervene appropriately to demonstrate how to improve skills.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Artistic skills are developed well.
- There are regular opportunities for children to make their own choices.
- There is a clear focus on skills development.

### **Commentary**

47. Art skills are developed well and almost all children are working towards the expected level by the time they leave the reception class. The children have access to a wide range of materials, which they can select for themselves. The staff pay good attention to developing the children's observational skills, for example, as they paint pictures of themselves with impressive results in the reception class. In the nursery, the children enjoy creative activities because they are encouraged to use their own ideas, select the materials they think are best and delight in having their work displayed in the nursery. Children build successfully on their own experiences in role-play activities. In the nursery this play is enhanced by the availability of good dressing-up clothes, but the resources for role-play are not of such high quality in the reception classes.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2.**

### **ENGLISH**

The provision is **sound** with many good features, particularly in reading.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils read well and make good progress.
- The teachers plan work that is well matched to meet the needs of pupils.
- The pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Support staff are not used as effectively as they might be.
- The library areas are not sufficiently accessible.

### **Commentary**

48. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are broadly average and, by the end of Year 4, standards are similar to those expected of that age group. Many pupils enter the school with below average skills in English and they achieve well.
49. Standards in reading have improved since the previous inspection, even though the overall attainment on entry has declined, and now pupils read well. Teachers present pupils with quite challenging texts in lessons and help them to understand their meaning. They encourage pupils to discuss characters and events, and model expressive reading. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. They read fluently, expressively, and use a variety of methods to help them decode unfamiliar words. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to read at home and in this they are well supported by most parents. The learning targets set for the older pupils successfully motivate them and a special event, such as the 'Reading Challenge', refreshes pupils' interest in books. Even though pupils read well, they do not find it easy to discuss their favourite books and authors in any depth. Both infant and junior pupils have the necessary skills to find information for themselves from books. The libraries are not as accessible as they could be and class libraries are not prominent enough. This criticism was made in the previous inspection report. The quality of books for children has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
50. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when some teachers lacked confidence. The training for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been thorough and the knowledgeable co-ordinator gives good support. Teachers' planning has developed well since the previous inspection and pupils now have the experience of writing for a purpose across a wide range of writing opportunities. They write creatively and descriptively, write instructional texts and poetry and develop their story-writing skills. Spelling is taught systematically and handwriting is well practised. The pupils in Year 2 join their writing.
51. Teachers know their pupils well and mostly plan lessons that match their levels of ability. Older pupils are taught in ability classes and this means that the more able pupils have more demanding texts and activities. This is beginning to have an impact on standards with considerably more pupils reaching higher levels in reading and writing than in the past. Lessons involve the pupils, who work with concentration and do their best. However, the level of challenge is sometimes too low for the more able pupils and their pace of learning sometimes drops
52. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by skilled assistants. In the group sessions, the good questioning skills of the staff ensure that these pupils understand the text they are reading. These sessions are fun, yet brisk and focused. Opportunities are sometimes missed to make better use of these skilled assistants during the first part of the lesson, when the pupils with special educational needs would benefit from additional support during the whole-class session. Good support is given to pupils who are below average in the junior classes, and this helps them to learn well. When there is no support in the large junior

classes, as happened during the inspection, teachers have great difficulty in helping pupils to overcome any problems or to check on their learning.

53. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop satisfactory listening skills. As a result, they follow instructions appropriately and share their views and opinions in discussions. They respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions. There are, sometimes, insufficient opportunities given for the pupils to ask questions themselves. Their vocabulary is sound, although not broad, an area that the teachers work hard to enrich.
54. Some lessons are too long, especially for the younger pupils. These pupils sit too long on the carpet and lose concentration, as a result they do not learn as well as they might. This also happens when the pace of the lesson drops. The school is currently developing a Thinking Skills project to help pupils become more independent and to make decisions. This is beginning to have an impact on the way pupils work during the group sessions, when even the younger pupils work at a task unsupported by an adult. Pupils are learning ways to help them to ask questions and to challenge views with which they disagree.
55. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. She is active, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She and her colleagues work hard to raise standards and to find ways of bringing the curriculum alive for pupils. The subject is monitored frequently by the co-ordinator and the headteacher, who check on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Opportunities have been missed, however, to check that marking helps pupils to improve and know what they have to learn next. The governor responsible for literacy plays an active role. She monitors the work of the school, supports the team, but is not afraid to challenge them.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Literacy features satisfactorily across most areas of the curriculum and this supports the improved range of writing opportunities which pupils currently enjoy. Pupils know that the style of writing changes according to the purpose. Pupils write labels appropriately and clearly in geography, science and design and technology. They record investigations in science, and information in history. Pupils in Year 1 devise pertinent questions in history, and write poignant letters as if from the trenches of World War 1. Pupils share their thoughts and emotions quite movingly through prayers and poems. However, some opportunities are missed to develop the pupils' writing skills when they have too many worksheets to complete or they copy the teachers' writing from the board.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision In mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards in the junior years are above average and the pupils do well.
- The pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- The quality of teaching in the junior years is good.
- The pupils use mathematical skills and knowledge well to solve problems.
- There is an over-reliance on worksheets, particularly in the infant classes.

## Commentary

57. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' attainment is similar to the national average and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 4 are above those in other schools and achievement is good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils made satisfactory progress. The time given to developing pupils' skills in mental calculation at the start of lessons is used effectively and often involves challenging pupils to think for themselves, for example, when working out the function of a number machine. The teachers at Key Stage 2 use speed challenges effectively to improve pupils' skills in mental calculation. Pupils experience a wide range of mathematics to ensure their skills are developed in each area. They develop confidence in calculation using the four rules of number. The pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. They use estimation skills and standard measures with accuracy.
58. Pupils throughout the school enjoy mathematics and are keen to succeed. They are quiet and listen attentively to teachers and they particularly enjoy practical activities. The pupils are confident and appreciate the support they receive from teachers. They display high levels of self-esteem. The pupils know and use appropriate mathematical language because teachers build this into their lesson plans and encourage pupils to use the correct terminology. For example, in Year 2, the pupils use the terms 'signs' and 'symbols' when they are introduced to multiplication. Junior pupils readily use terms such as 'multiples', 'digits' and 'factors'. The pupils' problem-solving skills have improved since the previous inspection and there was evidence in lessons of pupils' increasing confidence in tackling such tasks. For example, the pupils in Year 1 used their knowledge of addition competently to work out that when two groups of pupils changed places the same total remained.
59. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and it is good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, the pupils are set into two groups, and at Key Stage 2 into three groups. This is particularly effective at Key Stage 2 in providing appropriately for the ability range. The teachers give their pupils clear instructions at the start of lessons and the pupils know what is expected of them. Good control and very good relationships ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace. The teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and offer new challenges. The more able pupils are challenged through planned extension activities. In the best lessons, teachers develop pupils' understanding by encouraging them to explain their work, involving them in the lesson, building on their skills well and ensuring that they do their best. However, there is too much reliance on pupils recording their work on worksheets, particularly in infant classes, which is often time-consuming and hinders their abilities to use their own methods for recording and their independence.
60. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject, with a clear focus on improvement. Her management is good, using monitoring and evaluation to identify areas where improvement is needed and taking appropriate action.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The pupils further develop their knowledge and skills in mathematics soundly through work in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils use their knowledge in measuring and record findings from investigations on graphs. In art and design, they create symmetrical patterns and look for symmetry in paintings. In physical education, they use comparative measures and link their knowledge of shape with body movements. Attention is given in teachers' planning to promote the pupils' use of mathematical skills through application in other areas.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**. Although the pupils at Key Stage 1 achieve soundly, those in Key Stage 2 do not.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 4 are lower than they should be.
- Not enough time is given to teaching science at Key Stage 2.

### Commentary

62. The teachers' assessments in science in 2002 showed that attainment was similar to the national average. The results of these assessments improved in 2003, particularly at the higher level. The pupils at present in Year 2, are working at levels that are similar to the national average, but those in Year 4 are underachieving because there is not sufficient time allocated to teach the subject in enough depth. Standards at Key Stage 2 have deteriorated since the time of the previous inspection.
63. The pupils at the end of Year 2 have a sound understanding of natural and man-made materials and know that changes in some materials are reversible while others are not. Their knowledge of the necessities for life and of forces is at the level expected and they have a basic understanding of how to keep a scientific test fair. The more able pupils explain their ideas articulately. The teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory overall, and the pupils are given many opportunities to undertake practical work, which they do with enthusiasm. However, there are some occasions when the pupils are given inappropriate activities, such as drawing a photocopied illustration of the structure of the ear. Too many worksheets are used throughout the school, and, therefore, the pupils do not have enough opportunity to set out their own work or make decisions about the methods to use. Although teachers mark the pupils' books regularly, their marking is not often related to the purpose of the lesson, nor does it show the pupils what they could do to improve.
64. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and the teachers do what they can with the time available. However, too little science is taught and there are considerable times through the year when there is no science teaching. Consequently, teachers focus too much on ensuring that the pupils acquire knowledge, at the expense of developing the scientific skills. As a result, even the Year 4 pupils have little experience of planning and carrying out their own investigations or of choosing their own ways of setting out their methods and findings. Although they have a basic understanding of how to make a test fair, their awareness of other aspects, such as how to answer simple scientific questions, is not developed well enough. Their scientific knowledge is little better than that of the Year 2 pupils. Therefore, although they are asked to make predictions, the pupils have insufficient experience on which to base their forecasts.
65. The co-ordinator has taken over the subject quite recently and is developing her role satisfactorily. She has made a sound start in developing an action plan, but has not yet identified the weaknesses in provision because she has not been able to monitor standards or teaching. There are suitable assessment procedures, but they are not supported by adequate marking which gives pupils enough guidance on how well they are doing and how they can improve.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**, although standards are not high enough at Key Stage 2.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at Key Stage 2 are below those expected.
- The pupils throughout the school are developing their skills and knowledge soundly.
- The use of the new computer suite is making a good contribution to the progress that the pupils are able to make.

### Commentary

66. Standards are lower than they should be at Key Stage 2 because the pupils have not had sufficient experience of the subject in the past. Although attainment is higher at Key Stage 1 than it was at the time of the previous inspection, it has not improved sufficiently at Key Stage 2, where achievement is unsatisfactory. New machines and new accommodation are now in place, but have not yet had time to improve standards further, although pupils of all abilities are building on skills and making reasonable progress. Increased staff confidence, combined with the new machines and aids, ensures that pupils receive clear, helpful instruction. Learning support assistants have also received training and they are providing good support in many classes, not only to the pupils, but also to the teachers.
67. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have acquired a range of competency skills, which enables them to exchange and share information. They have had opportunities to do this in many different ways, for instance through text, Clipart, 'painting' and using graphs. They have, however, had limited opportunities to find things out. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of how computers can help them modify their work, by altering mistakes in typing, for instance. They have a satisfactory knowledge of how to log on in the new suites and how to save, retrieve and print their work. However, the standards in Year 1 are higher than is usually seen because the pupils in this year group have had a more thorough grounding than has been possible with other years.
68. The teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is the occasional lesson where the teaching is less effective because it does not focus sufficiently on the skills that the pupils should be developing. There is sound progression in the acquisition of skills as pupils move through the school. By Year 4, pupils are using information competently to make a presentation to a chosen audience. Many have become reasonably rapid in the use of the keyboard and mouse, although some still find it difficult to find the letters quickly. They produce graphs from given data and use the computers to compose their written work, changing font, size and colour. The pupils use CD-ROMs for research into some subjects. However, they do not yet have sufficient experience of using the technology for processing their own data, using control programs to give commands or using the Internet for research. The pupils share the resources amicably and co-operatively, so that the lessons move on briskly and all are able to develop their skills.
69. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. A sound curriculum for information and communication technology is in place and contains all the required elements in the scheme of work. The school, and the co-ordinator in particular, have worked hard to develop the facilities and resources. The new hardware has not yet had time to have a full impact on teaching and learning and to have been used and developed adequately in other areas of the curriculum.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Information and communication technology is not yet used effectively across the whole curriculum. The technology is used adequately in some subjects, such as English, mathematics and geography, where there are appropriate resources. However, in other subjects, such as music and design and technology, there is still work to be done because the school is in the process of building up the software.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weakness

- The teachers encourage pupils to find things out for themselves.
- The topics are interesting to pupils.

#### Commentary

71. By the end of Years 2 and 4, the pupils are reaching standards similar to those expected of the age groups and they achieve soundly. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed and adapted to incorporate national guidelines and this has addressed the criticisms made at that time. However, because of escalating costs, the school is not able to offer pupils the experience of a residential visit, which was a positive feature of the subject noted in the previous inspection report.
72. Teachers encourage pupils to learn for themselves. They use maps, aerial photographs, books and CD ROMs appropriately to find out about places and people in this country and far away. The local environment is used frequently to support learning. The younger pupils draw simple maps to illustrate their journey from home to school and note significant landmarks. The older pupils evaluate the locality noting how things could be improved. In the same way, they have studied the school grounds, and suggested ideas to be included in the new grounds project. The project is now at the formal planning stage and pupils gain a sense of ownership because they have made a contribution. As a result, pupils gain first hand experience of how land-use changes over time to meet the needs of the population.
73. Teachers provide an interesting curriculum, which motivates pupils. Barnaby Bear appeals to the younger children and they gain sound knowledge and understanding of features of the seaside through his travels. They are challenged well when they look for specific world destinations to help Santa to deliver parcels. The African study is brought alive for the older pupils when they enjoy an African music and dance workshop. Teachers link the subject to other curriculum areas to support learning and understanding. The work the school is developing on Thinking Skills is beginning to have an impact on decision-making. The older pupils study four different kinds of settlements and make an informed decision on which settlement is best. Not all judgements are the same, but they are based on well thought-out geographical reasons.
74. The older pupils present their work particularly well. Maps are labelled neatly and appropriately, and illustrations are drawn carefully. Pupils evaluate their work at the end of each topic. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has been instrumental in initiating the grounds project and her enthusiasm has captured the interest of pupils, staff and parents. The governor responsible for geography shows an active interest in the subject and he gives appropriate support.

## History

Because only one lesson was seen in history, it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. However, it is evident the pupils' **achievement is satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enlivened by interesting visitors and practical activities.
- Too many worksheets are used so that the pupils do not present enough of their own work.

### Commentary

75. Standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection, when pupils were achieving soundly. The pupils in Year 2 have covered an appropriate range of topics, studying changes over time and famous people of the past. Their work about the Gunpowder Plot showed a sound understanding of the sequence of events. The Year 1 topic about Grace Darling, a local heroine, was enlivened by a dramatic presentation that raised their enthusiasm. The Year 2 class in 2002-03 undertook research, using the Internet, about Samuel Pepys. The pupils in Year 4 are very interested in their work about the Celts and Romans, particularly the visit of the 'Roman lady' who fascinated them with accounts of such things as Roman food and clothing. They show a sound knowledge of Hadrian's Wall and the archaeological remains unearthed when the new floor was being laid in the church.
76. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are covering the same topic in all year groups, which has made the curriculum easier to plan. However, the school has not looked beyond this to develop pupils' skills sufficiently, so that similar work is being covered in each year group. Usually, all pupils in the class cover the same work, and the less able often have work left unfinished. The teaching in the one lesson observed during the inspection, in the infants, was good, but, overall, there is an overuse of worksheets, many of which are coloured in painstakingly. Marking is unsatisfactory because it does not help the pupils to see how well they have done or what they need to do to improve.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, and the co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the scheme of work and the resources to support it. There are suitable assessment procedures, including the use of self-assessment by the pupils.

## Religious Education

Religious education was inspected under Section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and Design

No overall judgement can be made about provision because no teaching in art and design was observed during the inspection. However, it is evident that standards are similar to those in other schools and the pupils' **achievement is sound**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' individual work shows imagination.
- There is a very good scheme of work.
- Too much adult input is evident in large-scale work.

## Commentary

78. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are similar to those in other schools and the pupils' achievement continues to be satisfactory. Displays and photographs show that pupils are offered an appropriate range of opportunities to explore different aspects of art and design. A strength of the pupils' individual art on display is the individuality of pupils' work which shows their own ideas. Art and design is used soundly as a means of recording for other subjects, such as the collage pictures of Celtic clothing. Pupils' pictures, using an information and communication technology program, also reflect their own ideas. These include work to illustrate the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' in geography. Some large-scale work on display does not reflect the same level of individuality because there is a high level of direction by the teacher.
79. Leadership and management in art and design are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has recently completed a revised scheme of work for the subject. This is a good document, which gives detailed guidance on how skills will be developed in specific areas, for example, drawing, painting and sculpture. The links with other subjects are made explicit and give a high focus to the subject. This is a sound basis for future development in the subject and is an improvement since the previous inspection.

## Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' planning ensures that design and making skills develop systematically.
- The teachers make meaningful links to other curriculum areas to support pupils' learning.
- The pupils enjoy the subject and their work is valued.

## Commentary

80. Standards are similar to those in other schools at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and the pupils achieve soundly. Standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection, but improvements have been made to the curriculum. The school has adapted national guidelines and produced plans that develop skills systematically. For instance, the pupils in Year 2 learn to use a needle and thread and join a button on to a fabric Christmas tree, while those in Year 4 show a higher level of skill by using a running stitch to join the sides of their finger puppets. Similarly, their cutting and joining skills develop appropriately over time. Teachers give pupils time to practise their newly acquired skills before they apply them to the making of their products.
81. Design and technology is often linked to other curriculum areas in a meaningful way. Pupils design and make land buggies, using wheels and axles, to support their work on forces in science. They use precise measurements in their designs and this supports their numeracy skills. A book, enjoyed and shared in literacy, stimulated the designs for a lighthouse that incorporated a winding mechanism.

82. Teachers' value pupils' work and display their designs and products appropriately. They keep photographs to record the quality of past work and the pupils' pride in their work is obvious. Products are made and decorated carefully. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically. Year 4 pupils are particularly proud because their designs have been included in the new grounds project. Pupils evaluate their work competently and know how they can improve their designs and products.
83. The co-ordinator is new to the subject. She is enthusiastic and active, and is currently developing her role satisfactorily. She has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how it develops within the school. Although accommodation is at a premium in the junior classes, appropriate use is made of the group spaces outside the classroom if necessary.

## **Music**

The provision is **satisfactory**, with some good features.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils sing well.
- They enjoy music and respond well to the musical opportunities presented to them.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to listen to and appraise music.

### **Commentary**

84. Standards are similar to those in other schools by the end of Years 2 and 4 and the pupils achieve soundly. However, they achieve well in singing, where their attainment is higher than is usual for their age. Singing has a high profile in this school and, as a result, pupils sing well. All pupils participate well in assembly, they sing sweetly, tunefully and with good control. Songs are introduced and refined until they reach performance standard. The two-part singing has clearly-defined harmonies and creates a beautiful sound. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to listen to, appreciate, and appraise their own singing.
85. Pupils enjoy music, they discuss it enthusiastically, but mostly they talk about singing. They are proud to take part in special events and talk about their favourite songs. In lessons, when using instruments, most pupils respond very well, they listen intently to new tunes and concentrate well to make sure they play their instruments at the right time to the correct rhythm. Pupils in Year 2 sustain their concentration and, as a result, they sing two-part songs, with support, fairly accurately. Pupils in Year 4 respond well to music through dance. Their movements reflect the mood of the music effectively during their performances in assembly.
86. Teachers plan lessons carefully. A new scheme of work guides planning well and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and the lessons flow smoothly and briskly. As a result, pupils learn well because the lessons are interesting and exciting and they are keen to participate.
87. Well-chosen music sets the atmosphere for assemblies, but pupils are not made aware of the title or the composer of the music. They listen to music to learn new songs but they are rarely asked to appraise the music. Pupils create layers of sound in lessons using tuned percussion instruments and their voices, but opportunities are missed for them to enjoy the outcomes of their own music-making by recording it, then listening to it and appraising it and making suggestions for improvement. A very small minority of boys do not participate as well as they might. Some pupils get over-excited and the teacher acts swiftly to calm them down. However, when the teacher fails to act instantly, learning time is lost because their concentration slips.

88. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator. The headteacher and all the staff make a positive contribution to the subject because they share a love of singing and are keen to introduce pupils to a wide range of musical activities. To this end, teachers exploit opportunities for visiting musicians and dancers to come to the school to share their expertise. This brings a new dimension to pupils' learning.

## Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils swim well.
- The pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to discuss their work.

### Commentary

89. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils reach standards that are typical of the age group and they achieve soundly. Pupils swim well and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, the majority swim 25 metres, achieving well. In gymnastics, the older pupils control movements competently when they transfer weight from one body part to another, although their skills are not as well-developed as was seen at the time of the previous inspection. They use different parts of their body to balance their weight and develop a sequence of movements to change from one balance to another. In games, the younger pupils develop throwing and catching skills with increasing success as they meet more difficult challenges. The group dance presentation seen in the special assembly was of a good standard. The older pupils responded well to the music and they closely mirrored their partners' movements effectively.
90. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Lessons are well planned to ensure that the pupils understand the significance of warming up their body before exercise and allowing it to cool down afterwards. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and this allows full access to the activity. The teachers circulate well to support pupils and help them to improve. When teachers ask pupils to demonstrate their work to help others to improve it is effective, but opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to discuss their work and to evaluate the work of others.
91. Most pupils respond well in lessons. They know what is expected of them, although a small minority of younger pupils are fussy. This happens when the pace of the lesson drops, and they lose concentration. Boys and girls happily partner each other in Year 2. The older pupils choose to work in single gender groupings and the teacher does not challenge this.
92. The co-ordinator is active and leads the subject well. After-school activities take place throughout the year and contribute to the standards achieved. Dance and keep-fit activities are also organised as part of the Healthy School initiative. Pupils enjoy additional football coaching from the staff of Newcastle and Sunderland football clubs. All activities are open to both boys and girls. Pupils respond well to these activities and competitions are organised with other schools.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers plan lessons very well to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- The teachers encourage pupils to become responsible members of the school community.
- The warm, friendly school atmosphere supports pupils as they grow and blossom.

### **Commentary**

93. Teachers are guided very effectively in their planning by a very good scheme of work, which begins in the nursery and continues in a step-by-step way until the end of Year 4. Teachers skilfully weave sex education, healthy eating and an awareness of drugs and alcohol abuse through the science curriculum. Pupils know and understand the reasons why they need exercise through the many physical activities planned for them. Sportsmanship and fair play are also key features of the physical education curriculum. Issues of a more personal and social nature are discussed in a special weekly lesson. Pupils learn ways to help them deal with social and moral dilemmas.
94. Teachers encourage pupils to think of others and help each other. This is encouraged in the classroom and through the “buddy” system at playtimes. Pupils are encouraged to recognise that sometimes they have to ask for help, and the very good relationships, which are firmly established in this school, allow pupils to feel secure and comfortable to seek the support they need. From the moment they enter the nursery, pupils develop a strong sense of belonging in this warm and friendly school community. They grow in confidence and self-esteem because they know that they are important and valued as individuals by the caring staff, whom they trust. This very strong provision permeates through the daily life of the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*