

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BELMONT CHEVELEY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114139

Headteacher: Mr David E Bedworth

Lead inspector: Miss Kari Manning

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 255482

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	173
School address:	Scardale Way Belmont Durham
Postcode:	DH1 2TX
Telephone number:	0191 386 9494
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Whittaker
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 173 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6, this is a small school, which serves the local and wider community of a suburb in Durham City. Most children join the school in the reception class, coming from the nursery or playgroup that uses the school premises each morning. The proportion of pupils starting in subsequent years is lower than the national picture.

Fifty-two pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and 22 of these have statements. This figure is much higher than average because the school is funded by the local education authority to provide a unit with places for 20 pupils who have speech or communication difficulties. These pupils travel to the school from further afield in Durham and are taught in two special classes for part of the time and with other pupils for some lessons. A small number of pupils have been identified as being most able or talented.

The area in general is slightly more advantaged than most. This is not always reflected in children's attainment on entry to the reception class. Not all have benefited from pre-school experiences and, though their knowledge varies considerably, most children have skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are typical for their age. Almost all pupils come from British families and all speak English as their first language.

Last year the school gained a Healthy Schools award. Its facilities are used by a privately run and funded nursery and by members of the community who attend a diet club and first aid training.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Lead inspector	English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			English as an additional language
12536	S Bullerwell	Lay inspector	
29188	G Ulyatt	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
			Mathematics
			Music
			Physical education
11510	K Oglesby	Team inspector	Science
			Geography
			History
			Religious education
15551	P Mitchell	Team inspector	Special educational needs
			Information and communication technology

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6</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>9</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16</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>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school.** Teaching is good and often very good and pupils achieve well. Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum and good links with parents, the community and other schools. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are happy in school. Very good leadership from the headteacher and good management from senior staff and governors have ensured that standards have either been maintained or improved. The school achieves all of this at an average cost and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get off to a flying start in the reception class.
- Most pupils achieve well and those who have special educational needs achieve very well.
- Standards in mathematics are well above average but could be higher.
- By Year 6, standards in English, science and information and communication technology are above those expected for pupils' ages.
- Almost half of the teaching is very good or better.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and try hard with all activities.
- Though satisfactory the school's provision for pupils who are gifted or talented is at an early stage of development.

**The school has improved at a good rate since the previous inspection.** All of the key issues identified in the previous report in 1998 have been tackled successfully and the school has done well to raise standards in information and communication technology, music and art and design. The proportion of very good teaching has also increased since the previous inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	B	C	C
mathematics	D	D	B	A
science	D	D	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Overall, pupils achieve well.** Those who have special educational needs achieve very well while those who are gifted and talented progress at the same rate as all other pupils. When they start in the Foundation Stage children's skills and knowledge are generally typical for their age but this year, the reception class contains a high proportion of children who have special educational needs. Despite this, many are set to exceed the early skills and knowledge expected in personal and social development, communication language and literacy and mathematics. In other areas of learning they achieve the early learning goals. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics and science are average. Pupils are, however, beginning to forge ahead in reading, where standards are above average and in writing, where they are well above average. This is reflected in the fact that the school's results are rising at a faster rate than the national trend. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are not as high as those in mathematics and science. This is largely because most pupils in the language resource base have special educational needs preventing them from reaching the level expected for their age in national tests. This characteristic of the school has a significant negative impact on its performance in local league tables and in comparisons with all schools. It is also the main reason why the school's results fluctuate considerably from one year to the next and why the school's performance levels off and is rising at a similar rate to the national trend. Last year the

school did not meet its targets for raising standards in English and mathematics, largely because they were set at an unrealistically high level. Although standards in mathematics are high they are prevented from being even higher because pupils of all ages do not use their mathematical skills enough to solve problems. Standards in information and communication technology have risen considerably since the previous inspection and are now beyond those expected for pupils' age. Standards in art and design and music have also risen and now match those expected. Throughout the school, standards in religious education match those prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well and there were no exclusions in the last year. Attendance matches the national average and pupils arrive at school on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good.** There is **good teaching and learning** in all years and the school's procedures for assessment are detailed and informative. A wide range of after-school clubs and educational outings enriches the curriculum and there are good links with the community and other schools. The resources and accommodation have improved and are now good. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well and links with parents are good. This is a school with a warm, caring ethos where all pupils are valued and where pupils in the language base classes are included in all that it has to offer. Though satisfactory, the school's provision for pupils who are gifted and talented has been earmarked for further development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The headteacher leads the school very well and is ably supported by the good leadership and management of governors and senior teachers. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The most significant barrier to raising the school's performance in national tests is that pupils in the language base classes take part in national tests but few can reach the levels expected for their age.

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

Parents have positive views of the school and are happy with what it provides. Pupils enjoy school and talk animatedly about the lessons and activities that they most enjoy and the friends they have made.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Extend the provision for pupils who are gifted or talented,
- Provide more activities requiring pupils to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well during their time at Belmont Cheveley Park and overall, standards are above those expected for pupils' ages. Standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science and have risen in information and communication technology, art and design and music. Boys and girls perform equally well in national tests. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children get off to a fine start in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils achieve well in English, science and information and communication technology, so standards are above those expected in Year 6.
- Though pupils achieve high standards in mathematics they do not use their mathematics to solve problems.
- Standards in art and design and music have risen since the previous inspection and now match those expected for pupils' ages.
- Pupils in the language base classes achieve very well though very few reach the levels expected in national tests.
- Last year, the targets set for raising standards in English and mathematics were unrealistic and consequently not met.

#### **Commentary**

1 The school's results vary from one year to the next, depending on the number of pupils who have special educational needs in each year group. The school fares well when compared with those found nationally and those of similar schools, especially as all pupils in the language base are given equal opportunities to take national tests.

2 When they start in the reception class, children's attainment varies significantly but most have the knowledge and skills expected for their age. A rich, varied curriculum combined with substantial very good teaching enable children to make gains and acquire skills quickly. Consequently, by the end of the reception year most children exceed the early goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics and achieve as well as expected in other areas of learning. Staff use the skills gained in the Foundation Stage to provide a firm basis for learning as children get older. For example, the emphasis given to children's personal development ensures that they are self-disciplined and behave well in later years. Similarly, the attention teachers give to language development is evident in the adventurous and imaginative vocabulary used in the stories written by pupils in Years 1 to 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (14.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.5 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*



**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.3 (26.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (28.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3 Good teaching of reading and writing results in many pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieving standards that are above average. Last year, a third of the pupils in Year 2 achieved a higher level and this brought the school's overall standards up. The only gap in knowledge in Years 3 to 6 is that many pupils still spell words as they sound, due to a previous lack of emphasis on correct spelling. While standards are satisfactory this prevents them from being higher.

4 Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in science. They get off to a fine start in Years 1 and 2, when they learn to predict and test out theories, then record the results of their experiments. In Years 3 to 6 they extend their knowledge about scientific facts and theories and begin to relate it to the everyday world. In information and communication technology, increased resources and improvements to the quality of teaching have helped raise standards by the end of Year 6 so these are now above those expected for pupils' age. This is because pupils have a sound understanding of how to use computers and other information and communication technology but above all know how to put them to good use for learning in other subjects.

5 Standards in mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 6. This is because teachers ensure a firm mathematical foundation in number patterns and relationship in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build on this mathematical knowledge, which helps them in their work on shape, space and handling data. However, pupils do not often enough put their knowledge to use to solve mathematical problems. This prevents standards from being even higher.

6 Changes to the curriculum and in the methods of teaching art and design and music have paid dividends. A greater emphasis on teaching pupils techniques and skills in art and design has helped raise standards so that they now match those expected for pupils' ages. In music, teachers now make more use of tuition and teaching by specialists to motivate pupils and provide them with a wider range of experiences in singing and playing instruments. Consequently standards have also risen in this subject and now match those expected by the end of Year 6.

7 The school is successful in integrating and providing equal opportunities for pupils who have special educational needs, particularly those in the language base classes. They benefit from a mix of specialist teaching in small groups and involvement in lessons with pupils in other classes. The high quality of teaching and support that they get enables them to achieve well during their time in school. Due to their special educational needs many reach levels lower than those expected in national tests, particularly in English. It is a measure of the school's success that a small number sometimes do so.

8 Last year, the targets for raising standards in English and mathematics were set at an unrealistically high level and the school did not manage to meet either. The school's tracking system provides staff with the information they need for accurate predictions and is sufficient to help them set manageable, realistic targets. The headteacher and governors are aware of this issue and intend to discuss it in the near future.

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

9 Pupils' personal development is very good. They have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well in lessons and around the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good and they gain in maturity and independence. Attendance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are very good and pupils work alongside others in a supportive way.
- Behaviour is very good during lessons as well as at play, maximising the opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Pupils show a great interest in school life and are involved in all it has to offer.
- The school council has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes.
- Opportunities to take initiative have improved tremendously, resulting in pupils who are mature and confident.

### **Commentary**

10 The relationships forged between adults and pupils are based on mutual liking and respect. As a result, pupils try hard to please their teachers and generally give their best efforts in lessons. In the reception class, children are expected to share equipment and be patient and loving towards one another. This ethos permeates school life in successive years. Pupils say that they make friends easily and very few have experienced bullying or any form of harassment. Pupils from the language base classes are fully included in many lessons. Everyone benefits from this arrangement. Pupils from the base feel included as part of the larger school and other pupils learn tolerance and patience. The whole-school commitment of caring for one another is very good and is a true model of inclusiveness. Through the high quality of its leadership, including the effective implementation of the race equality policy the school devotedly caters for everyone's needs. Pupils follow the caring role models seen among staff and value the contribution each pupil has to make.

11 Individual performance is directly related to the pupils' very positive attitudes and relationships with adults. Pupils aim to achieve as high a standard as possible in relationship to their own ability. They are eager to learn, and concentrate diligently during whole class teaching and group work. Even the youngest children in the reception class and Year 1 show very good levels of concentration and great interest in all they do. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils are very clear about the school rules and follow them to the letter. Teachers rightly have high expectations and consequently pupils sustain concentration and persevere with tasks even when they are quite challenging.

12 From conversations with pupils, it was clear that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to be intuitive in the way they act out plays for younger pupils. They sensibly choose stories with a good moral such as 'The Selfish Giant' and perform it for the school during assembly. They are interested in all that is on offer and the high take-up of after-school activities bears this out.

13 The school council is especially effective in creating mature ideas. Pupils are proud of their involvement in improving the quality and range of food offered at lunch-time by discussing their ideas with the catering company. It is through their ideas that the school now has bike racks so pupils can cycle to school and store their bikes safely. The council asked pupils about improvements they would like to see to the area outdoors, so now there is a butterfly garden for all to enjoy.

14 Pupils benefit from having both individual and collective responsibilities, which engender high self-esteem. The school organises a rota whereby older pupils play alongside younger friends at play-time. The school council was responsible for choosing a good range of play equipment, which is used and enjoyed by everyone. Pupils help prepare snack-time for children in the reception class and offer general help to many teachers in their spare time. The school nurtures pupils' spiritual awareness very well. Religious education lessons give them regular worthwhile

opportunities to think deeply. For example, one pupil in Year 6 described a holy place of pilgrimage by saying 'I would feel that God himself had entered the building'.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.6%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
172
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good teaching and a rich, varied curriculum are the main strengths of the provision but close links with parents, the community and other schools all play a part. The ethos of the school is warm and welcoming and staff take very good care of pupils.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. There is very good teaching in all years, more than at the time of the previous inspection. The school's procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the Foundation Stage, teaching is lively and exciting.
- Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from a substantial amount of very good teaching.
- Throughout the school, teachers make effective use of teaching assistants.
- Pupils always know what they should be learning because teachers share the aims of each lesson with them.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (8%)	16 (41%)	16 (41%)	4 (10%)	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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

15 In the Foundation Stage, the teacher and staff make particularly good use of their understanding of the development of young children to plan a wide range of exciting and challenging

activities. These interest young children and help them to make good progress in all areas of learning. For example, despite the chilly weather, children loved dashing from one tree to another to seek numbers or letters and so made good progress with their reading and knowledge of number.

16 A particular strength of the teaching, throughout the school, is the provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Their work is planned meticulously so that what they are doing matches the targets in their individual education plans. Programmes, such as those designed to promote literacy and mathematics skills are taught well, so pupils make good progress with reading and writing. In the language base classes, teachers focus very closely on the learning needs of each pupil. Staff, pupils and parents strive to achieve the targets set for each pupil and the results of this shared effort are evident in the fact that these pupils make very good progress. In other classes, pupils who have special educational needs are often given extra help from well-briefed teaching assistants and from work that is adapted to their needs. This all helps pupils to achieve well and gain the levels of which they are capable.

17 Throughout the school, teachers make very good use of the time and talents of teaching assistants, who often work with small groups of pupils. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching assistants and teacher work extremely closely to plan activities and to teach and act them out in the classroom. For example, before going outside children were put into groups, each with an adult 'team leader' who whipped up their enthusiasm and sense of team spirit by giving them team badges and a chant. She also ensured that they understood the rules for being outside and what the task involved. In Years 1 to 6, teaching assistants often work with groups of lower attaining pupils or those who have special educational needs. This involves encouraging pupils and motivating them to complete their work or try their hardest. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching.

18 At the start of lessons teachers let pupils know what they are going to learn. Sometimes the objectives are written on the board for pupils to read and refer to during the lesson. At other times, teachers share the objectives verbally, particularly in the Foundation Stage. In sharing the learning aims teachers also ensure that pupils are aware of how each lesson in a series fits into the whole. For example, pupils in Year 5 showed considerable patience when making clay pots because they knew that the whole process would take several lessons. Teachers refer back to the learning objectives throughout lessons and, in this way, pupils do not lose sight of what they are aiming to achieve. Teachers also use the time at the end of the lesson to spend a few minutes talking about whether pupils have achieved the learning objectives. If not, they decide what needs to be done next to help them. Sharing the objectives is a very good feature of the teaching and one that is used consistently throughout the school. It has a marked impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. For example, because they know what they have to achieve in the lesson pupils settle down to their work quickly and help one another when necessary.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good and is substantially enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs very well, but is not yet fully meeting the needs of pupils who are gifted or talented. The accommodation and resources are generally good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is reviewed regularly to take account of national and local initiatives.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The good range of after-school activities and visits are popular with pupils.
- There is a good level of staffing so pupils get plenty of help and attention.
- Although satisfactory, the school's provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is at an early stage.

## **Commentary**

19 The curriculum is well planned and reviewed regularly to improve learning. There is an effective culture of continuous review and evaluation of practice. Good teamwork means that changes are considered by all staff and so are not mere paper exercises. The school takes account of national and local guidelines and dovetails these to what is already working well. It regularly uses external consultants to make this process more efficient. Two successful recent examples are in religious education and information and communication technology. In these cases, the outcome was that learning objectives were clearer to both teachers and pupils. The school is keen to try good practice that has been successful elsewhere. For example, it has introduced the Digital Excellence Award scheme, which is helping to raise standards in information and communication technology. The school has dealt with all the curriculum issues from the last inspection. Schemes of work in all subjects are now broad and balanced, and there are more activities requiring pupils to work independently.

20 The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. These pupils benefit from the calm, orderly routines and very good relationships that are evident throughout the school. They have comprehensive individual education plans which are used daily and kept up to date. There is a strong team of well-qualified support staff. These colleagues work closely with class teachers to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. The school is determined to include everyone. This is evident in the various and excellent ways that pupils from the language base classes are drawn into contributing to class lessons. Pupils are integrated as much as possible into the main school classes. They all spend every afternoon with the correct class for their age, with support if appropriate, and also attend the literacy and numeracy sessions. Teachers in the language base classes do all they can to make integration a success. Pupils are prepared beforehand for the lessons, so they have a flying start and teachers are advised on strategies to help them to succeed. For example, to make sure these pupils understand their instructions, teachers always ask them to repeat what they need to do.

21 A wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs enrich the curriculum. These are popular and well attended. In these groups, pupils develop skills in team games, music, languages and dance. Many are keen to join interest groups such as chess, computers and drama. The school has a valuable programme of visits and visitors to support learning in subjects such as history.

22 The good number of qualified, experienced teaching and support staff supports the curriculum well. They work together to make sure that all pupils benefit from what the school provides. The accommodation inside and outside has been improved recently, so this is now good. The amount and suitability of resources are good overall.

23 The school's provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is satisfactory but is something that staff and governors have identified as requiring further development. Together, they have agreed an appropriate policy for dealing with this small group of pupils and teachers have identified those they believe to be most able academically or talented in other areas. They have not as yet sought the views of parents in identifying gifted and talented pupils but teachers generally talk to them about clubs or coaching that they think would help promote their children's talents. At present pupils who are most able academically have their needs adequately catered for in lessons but the school does not offer a wide range of activities to pupils whose talents lie elsewhere. Although at an early stage, the school is well placed to succeed in its efforts to develop this part of its provision because of its well-established tradition of catering for the needs, interests and aptitudes of all pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

All aspects of pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The support and guidance available to pupils is very good. The school involves pupils well in its work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are safe and secure in school.
- The school does a good job in seeking the views of pupils.
- The Healthy School Award is well deserved.
- Arrangements for children to start in the reception class work well.
- The 'buddy' system helps pupils in the language base classes to make friends and settle very well into school.

## **Commentary**

24 Staff take very good care of pupils. There is good management of child protection, with the designated person having received the appropriate training. All adults in school are up to date with procedures and are clear about their responsibilities. Procedures for accidents and emergencies are good, with some staff trained in first aid. The headteacher, working closely with the caretaker, makes sure that the whole school community is safe from potential hazards.

25 The school has good systems for monitoring pupils' views and pupils know that their views matter. Through the school council pupils have successfully improved the school lunches and got rid of the plastic cutlery. All pupils have been consulted about the design for the outdoor play areas and have chosen equipment. There are now good outdoor facilities that include activity areas, an adventure area, and a butterfly garden where pupils can sit quietly. Pupils are involved with setting and reviewing their own targets in English. Pupils who have special educational needs, including those in the language base classes, are likewise involved in setting their individual personal and learning targets and contribute to their regular review. They therefore know their targets well and are confident enough to inform a teacher or teaching assistant when they feel that they have achieved them.

26 The school has received a Healthy School Award for being a healthy place for pupils and staff to learn and work in. Water is available throughout the day and there is always fruit and salad available at lunch times. Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy snacks to school and are well aware of which foods they should be eating. However, they do not always choose these. A healthy lifestyle is also promoted well through the comprehensive personal, social and health education curriculum.

27 In June and July, staff organise a series of events aimed at helping children settle into the reception class. Children visit the school on several occasions with other new starters so that when they arrive in September they already know the staff and other children well. This helps children settle easily into their new surroundings.

28 Older pupils volunteer to become 'buddies' to pupils who join the language base classes. They help them to find their way around school, introduce them to friends in the playground and are available to help with any problems or difficulties. 'Buddies' are valued and are successful in helping these pupils to feel secure and happy. As part of a speaking and listening lesson pupils in the language resource base discussed pictures of a pupil who was on his own in the playground. They talked about what he may be feeling and why and what he could do about it. Pupils suggested that if he had a 'buddy' that would help him.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Pupils benefit from the good links that the school promotes with parents, the local community and other schools.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a good relationship with parents.
- The 'Friends of the School' group have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

- Close links with the community help provide first-hand experiences for pupils.
- Links with other schools are flourishing.

## Commentary

29 The partnership between school and home has increased substantially since the previous inspection. One of the main reasons for this success is the home-school agreement that all parents sign when their children start school. This simply sets out what the school expects parents to do to help their children and what it in turn intends to do on their behalf. When asked, parents said that they value the agreement because they know what their role is and what the school is doing for them. Parents also appreciate the fact that they are kept well informed about school events and about their children's progress, saying that this happens from the Foundation Stage onwards. In Years 1 to 6 it is done through regular newsletters and very detailed, informative annual written reports, which set targets for pupils and ask parents for their comments. On an informal level, staff are always available at the start and end of the day to talk with parents, as was regularly seen during the inspection. Staff ensure that the parents of pupils who have special educational needs are always involved in reviewing and setting targets for their children. This is not always easy to do for pupils in the language base classes, because they often travel to school from some distance. This willingness to listen to the views and concerns of parents does not yet extend to seeking their views in a formal way, other than at the annual meeting with governors. However, most parents are happy with what the school provides.

30 The 'Friends of the School' is a busy and successful body that organises fund raising and social events for parents, pupils and staff. They arrange events such as raffles and discos, which are popular and well attended. Through their efforts the group raises considerable funds for the school as well as money for charity and worthy causes. Each month the headteacher meets with representatives of the group to discuss what the money should be spent on. One reason why the group is so successful is that its members are committed to the success of the school and have the best interests of pupils at heart. Consequently money is generally earmarked for improving resources such as the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. Sometimes it involves a contribution to the costs of an educational outing, at other times money is spent on resources. This year the group helped the school to purchase a computer, enabling older pupils to edit video and multi-media productions. This provided good value for money as it helped to raise standards in information and communication technology.

31 Teachers make effective use of the school's links with the local and wider community to promote pupils' learning through giving them first-hand experiences. They plan many visits by pupils to galleries and museums as part of their work in history, geography and religious education. For example, a visit to Eden Camp helps older pupils understand what life was like during the Second World War. Field trips to places such as Middleton in Teesdale are used effectively to promote pupils' geography skills. A number of people from the community also make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The emergency services, fire officers and police all visit the school to talk to pupils about their work. All of this brings the curriculum to life, so they are the things that pupils often remember best and want to talk about.

32 The school has begun to widen and formalise its links with other schools. A number of children in the reception class have previously attended the private nursery that operates within the school premises. These links are of mutual benefit to both groups. The nursery children use the school's hall and have a space to operate in, but they additionally get used to seeing older children and get a feel for being in a school. The teaching staff benefit because they know the children when they start and there are very few problems with them settling into reception. Teachers have started a programme of work in sports with the local secondary school, which is likely to strengthen these links even further. In addition to this, a number of students from nearby universities lead very popular after-school activities such as Spanish and playing the recorder. Pupils look forward to these activities very much and say that the Spanish will be helpful when they go on holiday.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT



The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is aided by mostly good leadership and management by senior staff. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher places a high priority on developing the skills of staff and deploying them to best effect.
- The staff share a common purpose and work well as a team.
- Comprehensive, analytic procedures for tracking, give teachers a very clear insight into pupils' progress.
- Governors do a good job on behalf of the school.

### **Commentary**

33 One of the reasons why the headteacher is such a very good leader is his positive approach to staff development and training. All staff benefit from having their lessons monitored informally and more rigorously as well as from the feedback they get after these observations. This is one of the key reasons why there is far more very good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. In addition to this the headteacher makes good use of performance management to help staff continue to improve their teaching. Following a regular, annual meeting, staff agree objectives aimed at continuing to raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress. These targets also help to tackle any shortcomings in teaching or develop any strengths. The result of this is a well trained staff who are up-to-date with local and national initiatives and in a good position to continue to move the school forward. In the last year the headteacher redeployed staff into different year groups in order to use their skills most effectively. While this was innovative in approach and the changes needed much discussion with governors and staff, the effect has been positive.

34 Teachers, teaching assistants and all staff share the same aims and vision for the school. These are set out in the prospectus for parents and pupils to see and form the main thrust of everything that the school does. Staff work together when planning and there is frequent liaison between class teachers and colleagues in the language base classes. Pupils from the language base are therefore fully included in all that the school has to offer, which is one of several reasons why the system works to the benefit of all. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works in close partnership with teachers to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for this group of pupils and that they get the help and support they need to overcome their barriers to learning. In the Foundation Stage, all staff have a part to play in planning, organising and leading activities for children and in assessing their attainment and progress. Co-ordinators provide training and informal advice for their colleagues, which has helped improve teaching, particularly in information and communication technology and art and design. Teachers and lunchtime supervisors also work closely, sharing information about accidents, illness, unacceptable behaviour or, for instance, just so that the teacher can tell a parent that her child has not eaten much at lunch. This all means that everyone is pulling in the same direction, so it is evident from first stepping into the school that this is a place where children come first.

35 A strength of the school's leadership and management lies in the clear, manageable procedures adopted for recording and tracking pupils' attainment. This is possible because the procedures used for assessing pupils' progress are detailed and thorough, providing teachers with the information they need to measure attainment and report to parents. A simple, effective tracking system allows teachers to see at a glance, which pupils have or have not progressed well enough during the year. When pupils have not made sufficient progress teachers are quick to do something about it, which is one of the key reasons why pupils achieve well in this school. In addition to tracking pupils' academic progress, teachers also keep written records of their personal development. This too is very effective in identifying any problems that may affect pupils' life in school.

36        Governors are active in their support and work on behalf of the school. They work closely with teachers, ensuring that the school fulfils all its statutory requirements and contribute to many of the policies that underpin the school's success. Governors keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and the breadth of the curriculum. They do this by going into the school to see for themselves and by requesting regular reports and information from the headteacher and co-ordinators. As a result, they are very well informed about every aspect of the school's work and have used this knowledge to help staff set relevant priorities for further development and improvement. Governors share the same long-term view of how the school should develop and have wisely husbanded money to ensure that staffing levels remain constant in the next year. This is the reason for the larger than average carry-over in the budget. Governors rightly feel that this is justified because of the significant contribution that teaching assistants make to the quality of provision, especially their very good support for pupils in the language base classes.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	458,625
Total expenditure	468,690
Expenditure per pupil	2,441

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	44,309
Balance carried forward to the next	34,244

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

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

Teaching and learning are often very good. The Foundation Stage leader is an excellent role model for teachers and children, and manages an enthusiastic team with children's learning at the heart of all they do. Detailed assessment procedures and regular observations support the way staff challenge, teach and play with children.

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

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn at a fast rate because teaching is very good.
- Children learn how to play together because adults are good, caring role models.

#### **Commentary**

37 Staff are very good role models and adopt a caring approach. They make learning fun so children enjoy every activity and show high levels of concentration. They show pride in the wood sculptures they make and great interest and excitement in exploring nature and science. Children take their responsibilities so seriously that on one particular day, after snack time, they gently reminded the teacher that she had forgotten to ask them to wash the dishes. Behaviour is very good; adults have high expectations and encourage good manners. Children are very sure about acceptable behaviour; they follow rules and routines very well, lining up sensibly when moving around the building. Staff praise children and listen carefully to what they have to say. This helps children develop self-esteem. They offer very good support to children who have special educational needs so they also achieve very well. Children are confident and most happily talk with adults.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn well because staff adopt a systematic approach to teaching basic reading and writing skills.
- Staff encourage children to talk and they respond by expressing their ideas confidently.

#### **Commentary**

38 Children enjoy acting out letter sounds and learning words that end in 'at', 'og' and 'ig'; they achieve well. They are very good listeners and this has a significant impact on their learning. Teachers plan inspiring activities to develop speaking skills. In role-play children act out the story of the 'Three Pigs' but are encouraged to change the role of the characters. This really develops their ideas for writing stories later in life. They understand that stories have a beginning, a middle and an ending. All children have favourite stories and know how to handle books correctly. They sometimes make their own storybooks. The majority are learning to read, but the scheme used is too bland to generate enough discussion. A few children are already beginning to write simple sentences and can spell words accurately.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children achieve very well.
- Staff make sure that children understand that mathematics is all around them.

### Commentary

39 Teachers place very good emphasis on number skills and make learning fun. They incorporate mathematics in all they do. Children know which house comes first, second and third in the 'Three Pigs' story. Those who get the snack ready count the number of children at the table and collect the exact number of bowls. Children count forwards and backwards from 18 at registration time. They make their own street of houses with numbers on them. Children play with cylinders and realise there is a circle at each end. They know a brick is a cuboid. They buy and sell goods in the 'shop' and make long and short lines using natural materials. They build tall and short houses and know the difference. Outdoors they collect two of each item, including stones and twigs so they can make symmetrical patterns. These exciting activities help children to see that mathematics is everywhere.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### A lesson that was made extremely exciting for children who were reluctant to engage in more traditional counting and number activities.

In an outstanding lesson the teacher wanted children to sequence numbers to ten. She read a captivating letter that explained that Pig was trying to get home. The children had to help order the numbers onto stepping-stones so Pig could get to his house. They had to count on one more or two more steps as Pig slowly made his way home. Children's learning was so good that one child said, 'two goes in the middle of one and three'. This excellent introduction to the lesson was followed up with role-play using an exact miniature scenario. This meant children had the pleasurable experience of playing with numbers again.  
Great, but what overall impact? Lots of achievement, children highly motivated, outstanding attainment?

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding range of activities captivates children's imagination.
- The innovative, hands-on approach to learning ensures children make very good progress.

### Commentary

40 Children experience an extensive range of fascinating, fun activities. Staff plan through topics and are ingenious in the way they manage to develop learning opportunities around the story of the 'Three Pigs'. Outside, children play with straw, build with sticks, make mud bricks, mix cement and lay bricks. Through these excellent activities they talk about the strength of materials and what happens to them when mixed with water. They design various houses and construct these using a range of commercial and 'junk' materials. They know which type of glue to choose to join different materials together. Children enjoy using the computer and are already working towards 'digital excellence' targets. Children happily discuss home events, parties and celebrations and staff listen carefully to all they say. Staff take children outside in small groups throughout the day so they learn all about the plants and trees in the environment; they often visit the butterfly garden. They examine materials used in the school building in order to find out which materials were best for building houses. Local and national events are celebrated in a way that inspires children. At harvest

time they make vegetable soup and sell fruit and vegetables in the 'shop'. They take part in a Nativity play with children from the private nursery. Various activities to support their understanding of the multi-cultural society in which we live are planned throughout the year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because teaching is very focused on the development of physical skills and movement.

### **Commentary**

41 Children benefit from a strong outdoor curriculum so they run vigorously and experience large spaces daily. They have three sessions in the school hall each week where lessons focus on skill development. In the lesson seen very good attention was given to many aspects of physical development. Children listened and responded immediately to instructions. They showed good body control. The majority learned to bounce and catch a ball because the teacher demonstrated clearly, making sure children were certain about the posture and techniques needed. Consequently by the end of the lesson, children achieved very well and had a clear sense of satisfaction. Children are encouraged to become aware of changes in their body. They feel their heart beat and know why the speed is accelerated. Children engage in many regular activities that help develop their fine finger skills. They push components together, and use hammers, brushes, glue spreaders and pencils well. Teachers ensure children learn to pour liquid carefully at snack time and as they play.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The extensive range of activities inspires children to be creative in all they do.

### **Commentary**

42 There is an extensive range of creative materials and adults encourage children to experiment with them for themselves. Staff inspire children with the work of artists such as Lowry and Rennie Mackintosh. Children paint, use collage and many natural materials in their work. They are inspired by a large wood sculpture called Stanley to create their own models. In music they make their own instruments and use the well-displayed range whenever they wish. They clap to the sound of their name, tap rhythms and listen to music during play. They know many rhymes and songs. Role-play is actively encouraged and generally links to the topic. This is often well supported by staff, so children's imaginations are stretched to the limit. In role-play one child, wearing a wolf hat was heard to say, 'Mammy, can I go out and eat some people yet?'

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in English and other subjects.
- Although pupils in Year 2 spell well, this is not the case in Year 6, where pupils' spellings are often incorrect.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Marking is thorough, telling pupils what they are doing well and how to improve their written work.

#### Commentary

43 Standards in speaking and listening are above those expected since all teachers daily require pupils to speak in small or large groups and listen to the views of adults and other children. At the beginning of many lessons, teachers plan time for pupils to talk about what they have already learned and discuss the next stage of their work. For example, in a very good religious education lesson pupils in Year 3 took part in a lively discussion about the life of Moses. They talked animatedly about why he had been hidden in a basket as a baby and showed their understanding of the politics of the situation in their answers to questions about the king and slavery. The positive effect that these many chances to talk have on pupils' confidence is evident by the end of Year 6. Here, they talk assuredly in a wide range of situations and are keen to listen to and question the points of views of others. This respect for the views of others stems from teachers' high expectations that pupils will be polite and not interrupt when others are speaking. Another reason why pupils listen intently is that teachers read books and stories to them almost every day. Often this is done with a real sense of drama and a flair for expression that makes pupils want to listen. For example, in a very good lesson, pupils in Year 6 hung onto every word as the teacher built up the tension when reading a thrilling excerpt from a book about an enormous worm and its victims.

44 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and analyses the results of national tests very closely. This rigorous monitoring revealed a weakness in pupils' spelling that teachers have been quick to address by making changes to the way that spelling is taught. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are now taught to listen to the sounds of letters and to recognise patterns of spelling. As a result, most pupils in Year 2 spell words such as 'light', 'flower' and 'growl' correctly. They recognise that although 'fair' and 'fare' sound the same they are spelled differently depending on the meaning. All of this is paying dividends and standards of spelling are above those expected by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, teachers are good at ensuring that pupils' spellings are relevant to the work they are doing. For example, pupils in Year 5 were asked to learn words such as 'technical' and 'particle' as part of their work in science. This works well, helping to improve pupils' presentation and recording of work in other subjects at the same time as they improve their spelling. The problem in Years 3 to 6 is that pupils have not got the foundations of spelling because of the way it was taught in the past. This means that many pupils in Year 6 still spell words as they sound so although standards are average they are not as high as the school wishes.

45 The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is particularly good and results from teachers and teaching assistants having a very good understanding of how these pupils learn and adapting lessons to meet their individual needs. Pupils who have language and communication difficulties are given help from specialists from outside of the school and achieve very well because of the support they get in the language base classes and when they join in with other lessons. Pupils' targets are always specific and achievable and staff monitor their progress meticulously. In this way they know how and when to intervene, employing new strategies or approaches to help

them learn. In lessons, teachers provide simpler tasks or worksheets to help them with their writing and in many lessons they benefit from working in small groups helped by an adult. Parents and pupils are invited to make their contributions, which enabled one boy to make the comment ' I like writing, but writing is hard' on his target sheet. The high quality of help means that a small number of these pupils overcome their barriers to learning, achieving the levels expected for their age in national tests. This is a real success for the school and one of which they are rightly proud.

46 Teaching in English is good overall, but teachers mark pupils' work and set individual targets exceptionally well. In their marking, teachers take time to give pupils praise for effort, respond to the stories they have written and explain where they are going wrong. For example, comments such as ' use adjectives to describe things' and 'much better now that you have used interesting words' help pupils understand exactly what they need to do to get better. In addition to this, teachers set targets for pupils so that they have something to aim for. Pupils are involved in the setting of targets such as 'always do my best handwriting' and try hard to work towards them. Teachers gently remind pupils of their targets when they feel it is necessary, so pupils are always aware of what they need to do to improve.

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

47 Pupils make good use of their language and literacy skills in all lessons and in their day-to-day interactions with other pupils. In many lessons, and for homework pupils read books, articles and websites on the Internet to research facts and information. They enter into debate and discussion in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils' books show that they write for many reasons. Whether it is the recording of a scientific experiment or a fairly detailed plan for design and technology, pupils see the importance of reading and writing to their success in school and beyond.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now well above those expected.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics.
- All pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning.
- Subject leadership is good and the monitoring of teaching and learning is well developed.

### **Commentary**

48 Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and the result of this is that standards are now well above the expected level. The school does well for its pupils, with all groups making good progress and achieving well. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by teachers in classes. Pupils in the language base classes achieve very well because of the very good support they receive and because the work they do challenges them but matches their stage of development at the same time. Boys and girls throughout the school are currently making similar progress.

49 Pupils' numeracy skills have improved because they are taught to consider a variety of strategies. By Year 2, pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of place value and recall addition and number facts to at least 10. They are taught to recognise number patterns and use different strategies when calculating. As pupils move up the school the speed and range of their mental calculations increases. Pupils in Year 4 increase the number of strategies they use to add and subtract numbers up to 1000. By Year 6, more able pupils use multiplication and division to calculate numbers beyond 1000, plot co-ordinates, measure angles and collect and present data.

50 The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy as the basis for planning in the subject has made a significant contribution to the rise in standards. The scheme used by the school ensures that all strands are fully covered and provides a useful basis for assessment. Marking is consistent and sometimes indicates to pupils how they can improve. Work in books shows that pupils have many chances to practise and improve their number skills. However planning does not include enough chances for them to use their skills in problem solving and investigative ways. Pupils frequently use computers to practise numeracy skills in their classroom.

51 The subject leader monitors pupils' work in detail and has a very good grasp of the strengths and areas for development. The school is beginning to look at different ways of widening the curriculum to give a better focus on problem solving. There has been an impressive analysis of standards over recent years that effectively helps to set priorities for development as well as to highlight those areas of substantial success.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52 The school is beginning to forge links between different areas of the curriculum and pupils regularly use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science. They calculate the percentage of rainfall in the rainforests in information and communication technology and research historical timelines in most year groups. This ensures they develop an appreciation of mathematics and the way it can be used in different areas to improve their understanding.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A fair amount of very good teaching has helped raise standards which are now above those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged and working at the right level.
- There is very good provision for experimental and investigative science.
- Most teachers expect pupils to record their own results, ideas and deductions. However in a very small number of lessons, the pupils use undemanding worksheets and so make slower progress.

### **Commentary**

53 Pupils are achieving well. Standards are better than they were at the last inspection, when they were average. Pupils now reach higher than expected levels of attainment by Year 6. This matches the results of the most recent national tests. The strengths seen last time remain, for example the emphasis on practical investigations and the pupils' positive attitudes. Teaching was then good, but it is now even better. Teachers' expectations are higher and the quality of lessons is more consistent throughout the school. These are the main reasons for the rise in standards.

54 All pupils make good progress in remembering and understanding scientific facts and in their skills in experimenting. This is because teachers plan lessons well, and make sure the work meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. Those who have special educational needs make particularly good progress, because of the help they receive both from teachers and the strong team of teaching assistants. Pupils from the language base classes take a full part in science lessons and are encouraged to share their discoveries with the rest of the class. More able pupils usually find that there is an extra challenge to keep them on their toes. These pupils enjoy this, and work very hard to improve. As a result, some are working at well above average levels by the end of Year 6.



55 Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are all good. Teachers clear explanations of scientific ideas are based on their good subject knowledge. Teachers prepare plenty of equipment, so lessons are active and purposeful. As a result, pupils enjoy science, listen well and work hard. Nearly all teachers insist that pupils write up their findings in their own words, which helps them to remember and understand their findings. Occasionally this does not happen, for example when pupils have a worksheet which only needs colouring or a few words added. This does not make the best use either of the pupils' good literacy skills or their willingness to 'have a go'. Marking is effective. Teachers explain to pupils why they have gone wrong or why a piece of work is good. The pupils respond well to this, for example, writing their own comments such as "I was wrong because..." or "The thing I would improve is..."

56 From a very early age, pupils benefit from the emphasis given to developing independence and experimental skills. In Year 1, for example, the teacher pretended to be quite out of her depth in devising a test to compare magnets. This ruse produced a long session of serious investigating as the class rallied round to help. When they meet magnets again, in Year 3, pupils show that they know how to gather data carefully and they are able to refine their tests. For example, one group, faced with an inconclusive result, decided to gradually increase the weight of sand in their tin until the weakest magnet failed. They already understand fair testing, and are beginning to recognise that scientists sometimes get it wrong the first time. These ideas are developed well because, in the best lessons seen, teachers used questions and suggestions very well to steer thinking, rather than giving the solution.

57 Due to this confident teaching, pupils are learning to make good use of the data they collect from their experiments. They present their results clearly, using charts, graphs and sometimes computers. However many pupils go beyond this. They check for rogue results and examine the figures to see where further tests might be needed. When pupils in Year 6 tested the effects of different lengths of electric wire in a circuit, they found that the differences were too small to be convincing. The teacher asked some probing questions, but expected pupils to take responsibility for resolving this dilemma. The class rose to the challenge, for example, some pupils decided to join several lengths of wire to see if this made a difference, whilst others suggested improvements to the measuring devices. This very good balance between the development of scientific knowledge and investigation skills means that pupils are on the way to becoming independent thinkers. In a few lessons, teachers miss opportunities to make the most of data in this way. For example, when pupils in Year 4 study friction they all make a neat, accurate chart in newtons. However they do not use this to suggest a general rule, or develop their understanding with extra tests.

58 Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses present and leads by example in her teaching. She has been particularly effective in managing the curriculum, raising the quality of teaching and setting up good assessment systems. The co-ordinator keeps a careful eye on teachers' planning and pupils' work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Improvements have been made since the previous inspection so standards of attainment are now above expectations in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning in information and communication technology lessons are good.
- Pupils' achievement is good, so that by Year 6 they use computers confidently and benefit from a very good range of resources.
- Pupils enjoy learning, so they work hard.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

### **Commentary**

59 The school is better equipped now than at the last inspection and teachers have benefited from training. The information and communication technology suite allows pupils to work individually or in pairs and the introduction of laptop computers has given the school greater flexibility in the way lessons are planned. The introduction of the 'Digital Excellence' scheme is starting to provide more challenging experiences for more able pupils. It is also helping to push up standards by providing an accurate assessment of pupils' present skills so these can be built on in the lessons.

60 Teachers are confident when teaching information and communication technology and make good use of the interactive whiteboard to teach whole class groups. For example, they demonstrate effectively the functions of a spreadsheet to Year 6 pupils. They share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils so pupils know what is expected of them and how well they have succeeded. Teachers use the talents and expertise of the teaching assistants very well to support pupils who have special educational needs. This enables these pupils to be fully included in the lessons and successfully complete the same work as everybody else. Pupils from the language base classes have an extra lunchtime session, along with older pupils, in the information and communication technology base, which provides them with extra practice and help with any problems. This helps them to achieve very well.

61 Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers. By the end of Year 2, pupils use word processing and drawing programs to present their work, which they save and print. They are excited by the Internet and talk enthusiastically about using it to find information and send e-mails to friends in Iraq. Year 6 pupils demonstrate confidently how to prepare multi-media presentations complete with a sound track and are looking forward to making a film next term.

62 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides helpful advice and support for colleagues. The school has clearly identified how it intends to develop the subject and is committed to raising standards further as part of the 'Digital Excellence' scheme.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

63 The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils use digital cameras to record their models in design and technology, they use word processing to present work in English and, in Year 6, display complex results in science as block and line graphs. Pupils' mathematical skills are supported when they use a spreadsheet to calculate the amount of rainforest lost in a year. Pupils use the Internet to gather information in history, geography, religious education and science.

## **HUMANITIES**

64 **History** was sampled by looking at pupils' books, displays and photographs and talking with them about their work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils talked excitedly about historical events such as Viking raids and the great fire of London and are able to explain why things happened as they did. Teachers bring these events to life with exciting activities, such as writing with Mr Pepys' quill pen. Despite their enthusiasm, pupils are not so sure how different people might interpret the same event in history. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 know that there are different types of evidence and are learning to interpret some of these. For example, pupils in Year 3 study photographs of Roman sites, or look at accounts of Boudicca's campaign. By Year 6 they can extract useful evidence from wartime school logbooks and prepare relevant interviews for visitors who lived through World War Two. Pupils are used to doing their own research, using the Internet and the school library. Teachers make good use of visits to museums to give pupils first-hand experiences of the topics they are studying. Pupils enjoy these visits and afterwards produce some of their best work. For example, following a visit to Eden Camp pupils in Year 6 wrote emotive and sometimes very sad letters to their fathers in an imaginary war.

65 **Geography** was sampled in the same way. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to interpret local maps and use a key and begin to use aerial photographs, plans and atlases to find things out in

geography. Pupils have a reasonable knowledge of where places are locally, but several are much weaker on European or world maps. They can compare the features of different places sensibly. Pupils in Year 6 analyse data as part of this process when they compare the rainforests with their own area. Teachers make good use of pupils' literacy skills, for example, when pupils in Year 5 write sensitive accounts and letters about the daily struggle for water in Ghana. Pupils are beginning to understand some of the effects of environmental change. In Year 3 they look at ways that villages and towns grow, then in Year 5 and 6 pupils study the impact of mining or changes in water supplies. The curriculum is well thought out and provides for a logical development of skills and knowledge.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good and well-organised.
- Interesting lessons make the work relevant to pupils' lives, and so promote very good attitudes to religious belief.
- The subject is taught very well so learning is good.

### Commentary

66 Overall, standards match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils reach above average standards in the way that they reflect on beliefs and are able to relate these to their own and other people's lives. This is because both teaching and relationships are very good, so pupils gain a lot from stimulating, thoughtful discussions. They are building up a reasonable store of knowledge about people, events and faiths. A minor weakness is that they sometimes find it hard to put these in context. For example, some pupils can not say which stories Jesus told, which are about his life or which are events in the Old Testament.

67 Teaching is very good overall, and one lesson in Year 1 was excellent. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, tell stories very well and explain difficult ideas clearly. As a result, the pupils are fully involved and eager to contribute. In Year 4, for example, pupils were able to share their own experiences of forgiveness very well, because the teacher had given them a deeper understanding of what it meant. Teachers deal sensitively and knowledgeably with the main world religions, so pupils are interested and open-minded. Pupils in Year 5, were enjoying the preparations for a visit to a Hindu temple. They had gathered a range of information and showed a good understanding of the deities and symbols. One pupil, for example, was able to explain: 'at Diwali, people remove their anger, hate and jealousy from themselves.'

68 Teachers make good use of the pupils' literacy and research skills in lessons. In Year 3, for example, pupils found extra information on Moses and the plagues from the Internet and books. They were so pleased by this, that some were unstoppable in the final part of the lesson, wanting to tell the whole story to the class. Pupils regularly extend their knowledge and understanding through writing. In Year 6, for example, pupils write very lively interviews with characters in the Christmas story. During one very successful lesson on pilgrimages, the whole class tried to imagine their feelings at the end of the journey. They showed remarkable empathy, offering thoughts such as 'Purified is not really the word, how could anyone not want to come here?'

69 The subject leader has been effective in building teamwork, setting up a manageable assessment system and revising the curriculum. The whole school worked with an external consultant to adapt local and national guidelines into an up-to-date scheme of work. The result is a curriculum that all teachers feel happy with, and this is one of the reasons for the very good teaching.

## Example of outstanding practice

### How a teacher brought religious education to life and promoted pupils' spiritual development through the use of light, sound and suspense.

Year 1 knew something was up. The quiet room was closed and dark, but they could hear the organ music and see flickering light through the glass. 'Let's do the register in whispers.' On their tables were neat piles of coloured paper, modelling tools and the best pens. The teacher led them silently through the door. Everyone settled down with little gasps at the transformation, the statues, pictures and artefacts lit by huge candles. They talked about their recent church visit, handled the objects, and listened to music by Bach. The teacher whispered 'What did you notice, which parts did you like best, can you describe them?' 'I've tried to make our space special, but I need more ideas, will you help?' In no time everyone had chosen, collected tools and was hard at work. The final visit to the 'Church' was a triumph as pupils displayed and described the finished work, everything from the Red Sea to Herod's soldiers. A special place and a special lesson.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70 It is clear that **design and technology** is an integral part of the curriculum planned for pupils. Although no lessons were seen, pupils talked about the work they had done earlier in the year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have planned and made a range of models. The puppets made by pupils in Year 2 resemble pupils' designs and include good finishing details, such as ribbons on a 'sleeping beauty' puppet. In these classes teachers have incorporated pupils' work in design and technology into work on other subjects. During Years 3 to 6 pupils go on to broaden their designing, making and evaluating skills. Their plans for making musical instruments, or moving monster models are detailed and often include step-by-step instructions and information about materials and colours. However, they rarely include measurements. As they get older, pupils make joints, use a widening range of tools and begin to explore food technology. When asked, pupils of all ages say that they enjoy the work they are given in this subject and are keen to talk about how they would improve their models if making them again.

71 When asked, pupils said that they enjoy the work they do in **physical education**. The school follows a comprehensive programme of work, which ensures that pupils have a broad, rich range of sport, gymnastics, athletics, swimming and dance. It also ensures that they build on their skills as they get older and have ample opportunities to improve their competence. A wide range of popular after-school clubs taking place throughout the year further encourages pupils' love of exercise and helps them do well in sports tournaments. These include football, cross country running, dance, netball and rugby. Each week there is a games club for younger pupils in Years 4 and 5 who do not play football for the school. Pupils attend galas organised by a local comprehensive school for the group of cluster schools. The school encourages external expertise; for example, a coach from Durham Rugby Club trains pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils say that they enjoy physical education. Those in Year 6 said that in lessons each group had to design and set up its own apparatus before deciding how they will perform their work; they enjoy this very much. They say teachers are always there to 'give a hand' and to help them improve.

### Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen and now match those expected by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers ensure that skills and techniques are taught discretely.
- Pupils enjoy working with clay and try hard to do their best.

### Commentary

72 Following criticisms in the previous report staff have worked hard to improve provision and in doing so have succeeded in raising standards to those expected by the end of Year 6. With clear direction from the co-ordinator, staff have adapted a good quality scheme of work and in doing so ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. Relevant training has helped improve the quality of teaching, which is mostly satisfactory with a small number of lessons that are taught well. For example, pupils in Year 2 created lively pictures of the great fire of London because the teacher showed them how to apply a colour wash and use collage techniques to create a middle and foreground to their pictures. One of the reasons why standards have improved is that teachers now make greater use of computers in art and design. From Year 1 onwards pupils use computers to create designs and pictures. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are increasingly using them to research the life and work of famous artists, though their knowledge of these is limited.

73 Art and design is now taught for its own sake. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are taught skills such as mixing paint and adding shadows and shade, incorporating these features into many of their pictures and designs in Years 3 to 6. As pupils get older, teachers ensure that they widen their knowledge of shape and form by using models and digital cameras to help pupils draw bodies in movement. While this is working well, the drawings of many pupils in Years 3 and 4 are fairly naïve. For example, people are drawn with circles for feet and heads come right out of bodies without a neck. However, pupils in Year 5 benefit from some very good teaching. Some high quality charcoal and chalk portraits show a big improvement in pupils' ability to look closely and draw what they see.

74 Pupils enjoy their work in art and design tremendously and are extremely keen to talk about what they are doing. For example, pupils in Year 5 talked about the problems they were encountering when making containers out of clay. Though the teacher had talked them through all the pitfalls and shown them which techniques to use for building up their pots, a number of pupils struggled to get size and shape to match their intentions. Despite this they persevered for the whole of an afternoon and were very proud of what they had achieved by the end of it. Pupils from the language base classes often overcome their barriers to learning and do as well as other pupils in art and design lessons. This careful attention to time is now a feature of the teaching. Teachers ensure that pupils have time to complete their work or get a good bit of it done in the lesson, which means that pupils feel a sense of success and purpose.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are now satisfactory.
- The school encourages the support of volunteers and outside agencies to improve standards.

## **Commentary**

75 The school has worked hard to improve standards. Following the previous report the school employed a music instructor for a substantial period of time to work with teachers. The result is that teachers have improved in knowledge and confidence; standards in music have improved and are now at the level expected. The music scheme used by the school, supports non-specialist teachers well. Pupils listen to a range of music from different cultures and eras. They enjoy singing and have regular opportunities to compose with percussion instruments and perform for others.

76 The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons is good. Pupils, including those from the language base classes achieve steadily. Teachers make music lessons an enjoyable experience for pupils. They make sure that they use a variety of percussion instruments and listen to a variety of music. In junior classes teachers encourage pupils to work in small groups and compose music based on a particular theme. Pupils learn to collaborate well and listen to the work

of others. Good emphasis is given to rhythm and beat, so pupils' skills improve. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing tunefully and develop very good listening skills. They explore opposites such as loud and quiet and fast and slow and teachers help them to make clear links with music through well-chosen pieces such as Vivaldi's 'Winter'.

77 Music is a popular subject with pupils. The music club is well attended by boys and girls. Here pupils sing songs, in the Maori and Hebrew languages; they sing in two parts and learn to improve their performance. Several pupils benefit from peripatetic music tuition. They learn to play instruments including, strings, trombone, trumpet and French horn. Pupils who have extra tuition say they help others in their class because of their better knowledge. University students also visit the school offering recorder tuition to pupils from Year 3 upwards. A significant number of pupils gain much from taking part in local events and other musical experiences, such as singing at the Gala Theatre in collaboration with the local comprehensive school. The performance of 'Toby's Ark' in school involved every pupil. Since the previous inspection pupils now have a wider range of musical experiences.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

78 The school's programme for promoting pupils' personal and social development was not inspected in depth, but much of what was seen during the inspection formed part of this aspect of its work. Teachers' planning shows that the school has a well planned programme in place to teach pupils personal and social skills, keeping them healthy and helping them develop into mature young citizens. This leads to a very good work ethic where pupils behave very well, take responsibilities, show respect and help each other. The school involves visitors who help pupils learn about making sensible life choices. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils reacted with horror when the school nurse used a jar of tar to show what their lungs might look after smoking for a year.

79 On a day-to-day basis, pupils all contribute to the class and school rules. The elected school council has a beneficial influence on school life, giving many pupils experience of responsibility and decision making. The very good relationships between pupils and adults give pupils the confidence to express opinions and ask questions, knowing their contributions will be respected.

80 The speech and language lessons in the language resource base contribute very effectively to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils learn to take turns and listen carefully to others. They are all given time and opportunities to speak and express their opinions, as they discuss relevant issues such as why someone may feel sad and what could be done about it.

## 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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).*