

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BLESSED JOHN DUCKETT ROMAN CATHOLIC  
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tow Law, Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114283

Headteacher: Miss M C Mullen

Lead inspector: Mr D Hardman

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 255540

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	105
School address:	Smith Street Tow Law Bishop Auckland Durham
Postcode:	DL13 4AU
Telephone number:	01388 731082
Fax number:	01388 731082
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Flynn
Date of previous inspection:	29/06/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Blessed John Duckett RC Primary School is smaller than the average sized school nationally, with 77 pupils on roll including 10 children in the reception class. In addition, a further 28 children attend the nursery on a part time basis. These children are taught in a joint nursery and reception class. All pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The school is involved with the Primary Leadership Programme, Wear Valley Learning Partnership and the Sport Co-ordinator Programme. There is a broad social mix in the school and the full range of ability is represented. Children's attainment when they start school shows that many have very limited skills, especially in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none for whom English is an additional language. There are 16 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. 16.8 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, this is in line with the national average and 1.8 per cent have statements of special educational need, which is in line with the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. There are a relatively high percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal entry times.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17794	D Hardman	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Music
			Physical education
			Special Educational Needs
			English as an additional language
19335	K Lee	Lay inspector	
30834	A Lawson	Team inspector	English
			History
			Geography
			Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited  
 14 Enterprise House  
 Kingsway  
 Team Valley  
 Gateshead  
 Tyne & Wear  
 NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

# 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>15</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>23</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school** where good quality teaching ensures all pupils reach their potential and achieve well in lessons. The school provides good value for money. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) but is below the level expected in English. This represents good achievement for pupils during their time in school because many pupils enter school with poor skills, especially in language and literacy. Leadership and management by the headteacher, key staff and governors are good. However, some details are missing from the school improvement plan, especially for English. Staff value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs, and work hard to make sure they get the best from their time in school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Standards in writing are not high enough and the school has rightly highlighted this for further development.
- Children make a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception class because of very good teaching.
- Relationships, both in school and with the community, are very good.
- Provision for personal development is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good behaviour.
- The school improvement plan is not detailed enough.

Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Good leadership and management have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved because the observations of teaching and learning by the headteacher and key staff are used effectively to share good practice and remedy weaknesses. Good improvements have been made to enrich the curriculum and links with the community are now very good. The assessment of pupils' attainment is now good and used well to guide teachers' future planning. This shows clearly what pupils in each age group are expected to learn and the activities required to meet the aims. The health and safety issues raised in the last report have all been successfully resolved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - poor  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good**, especially in reading, mathematics and science. However, pupils' achievements in writing, including those with special educational needs, are satisfactory. The table shows that the National Curriculum test results in 2003 were in line with the national average in English and below average for mathematics and science. However, there were few pupils taking the tests and a turnover of nearly 20 per cent of pupils in the year group adversely affected results. In addition, 27 per cent of pupils in that year group had special educational needs and this had an adverse effect on the school's overall results. There was a similar high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the previous year group. Currently, by Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected in mathematics, science and ICT but below the level expected in English. However, the school's efforts to raise pupils' attainment have

been successful in reading and their attainment is in line with the levels expected. By Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age in reading, mathematics, science and ICT but below the level expected in speaking, listening and writing. Children's attainment in the reception class is below the level expected for their age in language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development and in the other areas of learning. However, their achievements are very good and they rapidly improve over time because of very good teaching and well organised activities that enhance their learning.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, their relationships with others are very good. Attendance, for the present year, is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good,** as a result pupils' learning is good and their skills, knowledge and understanding improve as they move through the school. The teaching for children in the nursery and reception class is very good, which is a major factor in their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by good teaching that provides challenging activities. As a result, these pupils make good progress throughout the school. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good and the results of these assessments are used well to tailor work for pupils of different ability. Good use is made of opportunities to enrich the broad curriculum with visitors, educational visits and by using the links with other schools to enhance learning. The provision for care, guidance and support is good. The partnership with parents is good and with the community very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership provided by the headteacher is a major factor in the quality of teamwork in the school. The management of the school is good and the monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and key staff is bringing about improvement and so raising standards. However, the school improvement plan, especially for writing, is not detailed enough to show how improvements are to be monitored by the co-ordinators or how much the appropriate initiatives are likely to cost. Despite this, the governance of the school is good and governors fulfil their statutory duties. The school uses funds designated for particular purposes well and the governors and the headteacher keep a close eye on spending to ensure the school gets the best value possible for all initiatives.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and the opportunities they have to talk to staff. Pupils speak highly of their school and they are keen to attend. Pupils explain how they enjoy their work in school and comment very favourably on their visits, especially the residential ones. Pupils recognise the value of having a School Council and are keen to discuss their ideas with the headteacher at their regular meetings.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in writing;
- Ensure that future plans for the development of the school, particularly for English, are more detailed.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievements are good in lessons. By Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected in reading, mathematics, science and ICT. However, their attainment in speaking, listening and writing is below the levels expected. In the present Year 6, pupils' achievements are good and they achieve standards that are in line with the levels expected for their age in reading, mathematics, science and ICT but their achievement in writing is just satisfactory and pupils' attainment in English is below the level expected for their age. Children's achievements in the present reception class are very good. The very small numbers of pupils in each year group mean the standards fluctuate considerably, often dependant on how many have special educational needs, but overall standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The trend of pupils' attainment over time is slightly below the national trend.

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

- Children in the nursery and reception class are given a very good start to their education.
- Pupils achieve well because teachers use assessments well to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged to enable them, whatever their ability, to make good progress. However, standards in writing are not high enough and the school has rightly focussed on this aspect of pupils' achievements.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and build effectively on their previous experiences.

#### **Commentary**

1 In the nursery and reception class the teacher organises support assistants very well and they work very well together to ensure that all children have very good opportunities to develop their skills and achieve very well. All children benefit from very good teaching because of the very good relationships. For example, they co-operate well in the activities they undertake in all areas of learning and this improves their confidence and skills, especially in language and communication. When children start school, they have very low skills. Boys in particular have poor skills in reading, writing and mathematics. All children make very good progress and most reach standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

2 In Year 2, pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 was below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. However, there was a very small number of pupils taking the tests and a significant number had special educational needs which brought the overall standard down. The results show that pupils' attainment is improving from a very low starting point when they enter school. In the present Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected for their age in reading, mathematics, science and ICT, but below average in speaking, listening and writing. Pupils' attainment is improving because teaching is good and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well implemented. This represents good achievement for these groups of pupils from when they first entered the school, except in writing where achievement is satisfactory. Although year groups vary quite considerably because of the number of pupils with special educational needs, the school makes good use of the analysis of pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests and optional tests and this has resulted in the setting of realistic targets to focus on improving the weaker areas of pupils' knowledge and skills. The tables showing the National Curriculum test results are omitted because so few pupils sat the tests in 2003.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (19.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.5 (21.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.5 (22.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3 National Curriculum test results in 2003 were in line with the national average in English and below average for mathematics and science. However, there were few pupils taking the tests and a turnover of nearly 20 per cent of pupils in the year group adversely affected results. In addition, 27 per cent of pupils in that year group had special educational needs and this had an adverse effect on the school's overall results. Currently, by Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the level expected in mathematics, science and ICT but below the level expected in speaking, listening and writing. However, the school's efforts to raise pupils' attainment has been successful in reading and their attainment is in line with the levels expected. Improvement over time is the result of teachers' good use of assessments and the setting of challenging but achievable targets for each of the subjects. This represents improving achievement for this group of pupils from when they first entered school. Teaching is improving because leadership is good at identifying what is and is not working and building on the strengths and remedying the weaknesses. However, because the improvement plan for writing lacks sufficient detail, standards in writing are not rising quickly enough. For example, there is no clear indication of who should undertake the monitoring and how and when this should be done to check pupils' achievements,

4 Pupils' attainment in ICT is at the level expected in Years 2 and 6, there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their work in other subjects and so enhance their learning. Pupils are keen to use the computers and their skills gradually improve especially in word processing, using the Internet for research and in supporting some work in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' work was sampled in other subjects of the National Curriculum but there was insufficient information to make firm judgements about provision.

5 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, set against their individual learning targets. The quality of individual education plans is good. They enable pupils to progress in small, well defined stages. Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, they attain standards that represent good achievement, in relation to their abilities. When working in pairs or small groups, or when receiving individual tuition, they benefit from working with well trained learning support staff. This has a positive effect on their learning and the standards they achieve. The school makes good use of assessment information to identify pupils' needs at an early stage in their learning and for target setting in their individual education plans. It is a similar picture for pupils who are gifted and talented, as their skills are assessed and appropriate work is provided to challenge and extend them.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, their relationships with others are very good. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Attendance is now satisfactory and improving.

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

- Pupils' good attitudes have a positive effect on their learning. Pupils are hard working and respond enthusiastically to the school's high expectations.
- Pupils behave well creating an orderly environment where all are cared for and respected.
- Pupils' personal development is good, pupils understand justice and fairness well. They work and play alongside each other in harmony.

- Children's behaviour and attitudes in the Foundation Stage are very good.

6 Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are happy at school and usually arrive on time. Attendance is now satisfactory because there has been some recent improvement in levels of attendance. Pupils make good use of their time in school and work hard throughout the day. They listen well to their teachers and work well alone or in groups as required. Pupils are interested in their work and respond well to questions and instructions. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in their personal, social, moral and emotional development. This is because of the very good example provided by all staff and helpers and the way children are encouraged to be co-operative in all their activities.

7 The good behaviour in school complements the good attitudes well and creates a friendly and mutually supportive environment. The school makes its expectations about how well pupils should behave clear and has an effective system of rewards and sanctions to support this. As a result, pupils' self discipline is good and they are considerate and co-operative in their activities. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Lunchtimes are orderly and sociable, and pupils present themselves as friendly and caring. The small school family atmosphere makes a very valuable contribution to their attainment in this area.

8 The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and provision is good. A key issue for the school to improve at the previous inspection was the social and cultural development of pupils. This is now done well. In social development, good opportunities are given for pupils of all ages to form positive and lasting friendships with each other. For example, on entry to the reception year, the children are paired with a Year 6 pupil, who takes care of them at play times and lunch times for up to two weeks. As a result, older pupils develop responsible attitudes towards younger children and the friendships made form lasting bonds. Relationships in school are very good. Cultural development is good. The school's very effective links with the local community provide ample opportunities for pupils to find out about and to celebrate their own cultural and industrial heritage. Visits and visitors are used very effectively to widen pupils' experiences of the multicultural nature of society. The opportunity to listen to an Indian musician playing the sitar, to enjoy a dance workshop with visiting Hungarian dancers and to learn glass engraving skills from a visiting artist, have all had a positive effect on cultural development.

## Attendance

Owing to the school's efforts pupils' attendance is now satisfactory.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.5%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	0.0
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.*

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions last year.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
77	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

9 The quality of education provided by the school is good. There is good provision for pupils in mathematics, science and ICT. Provision for English is satisfactory. There is also good provision for pupils' personal development. Good learning opportunities increase their desire to learn and mean that pupils do well. Good provision has been maintained since the previous inspection.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good. This has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning which is also good. Teachers know their pupils well and provide a wide range of activities to meet their needs. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good and the information is used well to tailor the work for pupils of different attainment. The quality of teaching has been improved since the last inspection report and the quality of resources and their use has improved significantly.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good use made of assessment information to tailor the work for different attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and for those who are gifted and talented.
- The quality of teaching for children in the nursery and reception class is very good.
- Teaching is good and lessons are interesting for pupils. As a result, they enjoy coming to school and try hard in their work.
- The management of behaviour is very good and all pupils, whatever their ability, are given equal opportunities to succeed.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are fully included in lessons.

### Commentary

10 Teachers regularly use a range of assessments, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. The information available from these tests is used well to identify pupils' weaknesses and to guide teachers' planning, for example, by setting targets to improve pupils' attainment. The assessment of pupils' progress is a unified system used effectively by all staff. Pupils gain sufficient information on how well they are achieving and there are clear targets for what they must do next to improve. However, especially for older pupils in English, the same learning targets are given to all pupils. They are not revised often enough as work is marked and, consequently, pupils are not always involved in deciding when they have met their targets and in setting the next ones.

11 During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons. The headteacher and key staff have undertaken a rigorous programme of observing colleagues' teaching and the discussions on successful practice help to ensure that all pupils are learning effectively. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used well and, because of this, pupils' standards are improving in English and mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and expect them to work hard and achieve their best. As a result, pupils respond well to the challenges and, in discussions, comment favourably on their enjoyment of lessons and on how well they think they are improving.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5	13	6	0	0	0

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

12 The quality of teaching for children in the nursery and reception class is very good. The teacher is confident in the planning which takes good account of children's individual needs and includes valuable daily opportunities for imaginative play. The children's learning is supported by thoroughly prepared, practical activities and experiences that are wide ranging and interesting. This motivates children to learn very well. Staff use resources very well and bring enthusiasm, skill and understanding to children's learning. Every opportunity is taken to develop spoken language, literacy and numeracy skills by careful questioning and vocabulary development. There is a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for structured play activities. All adults are good examples for children to follow because they treat everyone with care, courtesy and respect. The use of teaching assistants is very good and makes a significant contribution to children's learning because of the opportunities provided for children to express their ideas and use a wide range of materials in their activities.

13 The teaching of basic skills is good and teachers make lessons interesting, which results in pupils being attentive and eager to answer questions. Teachers' planning is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The pace of lessons is good and pupils have very good relationships with teachers and adults in the classroom, which means that most pupils are keen to please teachers and do well. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort are very high and pupils are expected to do their best. Teachers use the literacy strategy effectively and plan lessons that are challenging and interesting. For example, in an English lesson for pupils in a Year 5 and 6 class they were challenged well to use their knowledge to identify the key features of a fable.

14 Teachers know and manage their pupils well and provide good support for different activities. The very good relationships between staff and pupils create a secure climate in which to learn. The school has an established system to encourage pupils to read and learn spellings at home and this has a positive effect on their learning. The setting of regular homework is consistent across the school and parents support their children well in the activities given. The school ensures that all pupils, whatever their abilities, are included in all activities, which makes a positive contribution to their learning. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers plan activities well and ensure these are closely matched to pupils' needs. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for short periods of time to work in small groups to boost their skills and confidence. For example, a number of lower attaining pupils receive intensive support through the additional literacy support, giving them greater confidence to tackle work across the whole curriculum.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum. The curriculum is made more interesting by a good range of visits and frequent visitors into school, which support learning well. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and those that are provided are of good quality. There are good resources for English, mathematics, science and ICT and these are used well to support learning. There are adequate resources for all other subjects. Resources in the Foundation Stage are very good. The school makes the best use it can of rather limited accommodation and overall, the accommodation is satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The school provides well for those pupils with special educational needs.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to make lessons more interesting and this represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Links with the local secondary schools are very good. This prepares older children very well for the next stage of education.
- The school library cannot be used during physical education lessons and lunch times and this limits the opportunities that pupils have to use it.

## **Commentary**

15 In the Foundation Stage, children have a wide variety of learning experiences that have a very positive effect on their achievement. Activities are very well planned and organised and the staff work together as a very effective team. Appropriate emphasis is given to the support of their personal, social and emotional development and children form very good relationships and have positive attitudes to new learning experiences. This prepares them very well for the next stage of learning.

16 Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, either in small groups or individually. As a result of this support, pupils with special educational needs achieve well against the targets set for them.

17 A good feature of the school curriculum is the very effective use made of visits and visitors to make lessons more interesting. The school provides pupils of all ages with frequent opportunities to learn from first hand experiences and this has a positive effect on their learning. Community links are very positive and pupils are often involved in local events, such as naming windmills at the new wind turbine farm, or designing information boards for local industrial heritage sites. This ensures all pupils receive a curriculum that is relevant and meaningful to them and as such represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.

18 Satisfactory provision is made for extra-curricular activities and those that are provided are of good quality. The school makes effective use of their involvement in the School Sport Co-ordinator programme and their positive links with the local community to provide coaching in sports skills. Good provision is made for personal, health and social education. Effective use is made of the school nurse, the local police and fire service to provide pupils with a well-planned curriculum.

19 Very positive links have been forged with local secondary schools and pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from a good range of activities taught by specialist staff. Ex-pupils come on visits to talk to the pupils about their positive experiences of secondary education, which give older pupils the opportunity to talk about any concerns they may have. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their secondary education and look forward to new challenges and experiences with positive attitudes.

20 Accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are very good and are used to good effect to provide interesting and lively learning activities. The quality and range of resources in the Foundation Stage benefit from the very good links with parents, who, through fund raising events, provide a very good source of funding for younger children. Resources for English, mathematics, science and ICT are all good and this has a positive effect on both teaching and learning. The accommodation overall is satisfactory. It is well organised and scrupulously clean and well maintained, but space is limited. The school makes the best use it can of its accommodation. The location of the library in the hall means that pupils are not able to use it during physical education lessons and lunch times and this limits its use and accessibility.

21 The number of staff is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are a good number of support staff overall and these contribute well to the achievement of those pupils with special educational needs. Support staff in the Foundation Stage make a major contribution to the success of the provision.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Provision is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. The school offers its pupils a caring and supportive environment where all are valued and respected. There are good procedures relating to child protection, health and safety. The good standard of support and guidance enables pupils to settle quickly into the school environment. There are good procedures for seeking the views of pupils.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The personal and academic support and guidance offered to pupils are good.
- Pupils build confident and trusting relationships with adults.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Pupils new to the school benefit from very good induction arrangements.

## **Commentary**

22 The school is a happy and well ordered place. Staff treat pupils with respect and sensitivity. The health and safety arrangements are good and the procedures for child protection are good. The very good relationships that exist in the school community and the good provision for pupils' social and moral development create a caring and supportive environment. Pupils are happy and confident and this has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils are proud to be members of the School Council and they are very keen to air their views. This is a very good way to ensure that pupils are consulted on many aspects of school life.

23 The academic support and guidance offered to pupils are good. Pupils are well motivated and success is recognised and rewarded. The school involves pupils in their own learning well. Pupils understand the purpose of their lessons and know what to do to improve. The personal support offered to all pupils is good. Each individual is well known and cared for and this is evident in the confident and happy pupils seen in the school.

24 Pupils feel that adults in school listen to them well and offer assistance and encouragement if needed. Pupils new to the school benefit from good induction procedures. For children entering the Foundation Stage the procedures are very good and include a variety of meetings, visits and information packs. The school has good procedures to identify pupils who may need additional help in order to get the benefit of the full curriculum. When a concern is first raised, either by a parent or a class teacher, the pupil is monitored closely. Class teachers, and the special educational needs co-ordinator, support parents well by discussing ways they can work in partnership to support a pupil's needs. The school invites parents to a meeting early in the school year where provision is discussed.

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

The partnership with parents is good and partnerships with the community are very good. There are very good links with other schools. These partnerships make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. There has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the previous inspection.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school encourages the involvement of parents to support their children's learning and parents have very positive views about the school.
- Information to parents, including reports on pupils' progress, is good.
- The very good links with the community help to extend pupils' learning and experience.

## **Commentary**

25 The quality of information provided for parents is good. There has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the previous inspection. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire thought that they were well informed about the progress of their children. Both parents and teachers make very good use of the time immediately before school to discuss any areas of concern or celebration. The school keeps parents up to date with school matters and events through regular newsletters. These provide useful information to back up the prospectus, which is written in a very friendly style and paints a good picture of the school's aims and procedures. Parents are very happy that the headteacher is approachable and that they can talk to staff informally at the start and end of the day. In addition, the school provides regular opportunities for parents to

discuss pupils' progress and good written reports are provided at the end of each year. This all helps to promote a very good partnership with parents, which supports pupils' life in school.

26 The school's links with the community and its partnership with other schools are very good. These links have a positive effect upon the quality of the experiences and opportunities offered to pupils and teachers. The local community provides a good resource to support learning. Visits to a variety of places further afield enrich pupils' lives. Local people and professionals come into school to share their expertise. Links with other schools provide very good support for the staff and pupils, for example with teachers from the comprehensive school giving pupils "taster" lessons in all subjects.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership by the headteacher and key staff is good. The involvement in and governance of the school by the governing body is good. The management of the school by the headteacher and governing body is good. When children start school, many have pronounced speech and language problems and the amount of professional speech therapy available to them from other agencies is very limited. This affects how well some children speak. This is a barrier to how well some children develop their vocabulary.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and key staff provide a very clear sense of direction for the school enabling a strong drive to raise standards and improve pupils' achievements.
- The headteacher delegates responsibilities well so that a wide range of aspects connected with the work of the school are checked effectively. However, the school improvement plan, especially for writing, is not detailed enough to show how improvements are to be specifically monitored by the co-ordinator. In addition, there is no clear plan of what the strategies for enriching curricular opportunities through the use of authors, poets and artists are likely to cost.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and assists in shaping a clear vision for its work.

### **Commentary**

27 The headteacher and staff meet regularly to discuss common issues and oversee work in the different aspects and subjects of the school. An approach involving an assessment of each pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding and using the information to plan the next step in their learning has been firmly established. This process has been instrumental in improving pupils' achievements. A very clear sense of direction is apparent, standards are gradually improving and pupils achieve well when compared to their previous attainment. The leader of the Foundation Stage provides a very clear vision and sense of purpose with a series of well planned activities that interest and motivate children and lead to good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by the school's special educational needs co-ordinator who ensures the school responds appropriately to pupils' needs, advises colleagues and checks on provision. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are planned and, as a result, pupils make good progress.

28 The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor their colleagues' teaching, check lesson plans and scrutinise samples of pupils' work. All teachers have their literacy and numeracy lessons observed regularly, as well as lessons in other subjects as they become the focus of the school improvement plan. Teachers receive detailed feedback on the quality of their lessons and areas for improvement are identified. At a subsequent time the headteacher follows up the areas for improvement that have been identified by carrying out a further lesson observation to ensure that the class teacher has addressed these satisfactorily.

29 The governing body is involved closely in improving standards and providing constructive criticism of the work of the school. Governors have kept a close eye on the extent to which the key issues arising from the previous report have been addressed. They have a clear idea of the school's standards in English, mathematics and science. Governors monitor the school budget each term. The bursar plays a significant and important role in this process by providing written monitoring information on the budget. The high carry over figure, shown below, from the previous year came from new funds allocated to the school late in the financial year. These have been used wisely to improve resources, including new ICT equipment, and the present forecast for the balance this year is approximately £3,000, which is well within the recommended guidelines. The governing body is very committed to providing a successful service for the school and this is demonstrated clearly by the governors' arrangements to hold an extra meeting each term devoted to discussing school business and progress towards the targets in the school improvement plan. The headteacher provides regular, clear reports on progress. However, the lack of detail, especially for improving pupils' writing skills, means that governors do not have a clear baseline by which they can judge progress and so effectively monitor this aspect of the school's work.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£306,528	Balance from previous year	£30,169
Total expenditure	£308,418	Balance carried forward to the next	£28,279
Expenditure per pupil	£3,389		

30 The school's results in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests are analysed to identify pupils' weaker areas of knowledge, skills and understanding. The findings are used to ensure that teachers place careful emphasis on these areas so that pupils improve the following year. The headteacher analyses the results of each test to make sure that boys' and girls' performances are similar. If there is a difference, steps are taken to address it. Teachers are set objectives that are linked with the current aims of the school improvement plan and with their own teaching under the school's approach to performance management. For example, the school has identified the weaknesses in pupils' writing and has planned a strategy to introduce pupils to writers, poets and artists in a bid to stimulate their desire to write. This is appropriate and is likely to prove successful over time. However, there is no clear indication of who should undertake the monitoring or how and when this should be done and the improvements are not adequately costed.



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

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

31 The school makes **very good** provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and lesson planning and the rate at which children make progress, have all improved well since the previous inspection. When children start school, they have very low skills. Boys in particular have poor skills in reading, writing and mathematics. All children make very good progress and most children are in line to reach standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning. This represents very good achievement and is a direct result of very good teaching and the way the teacher and learning support staff work effectively as a team. The learning support staff work very hard and make a significant contribution to how well children achieve in the Foundation Stage. Relationships with parents are very positive. Parents are supportive in many ways and provide considerable extra funds each year for the Early Years Unit. As a result, resources are plentiful and of good quality. The accommodation is very good. Teaching areas are well organised, with children's work displayed to increase opportunities for learning.

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

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

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

- Children quickly learn to behave well and follow instructions.
- Most children develop good attitudes to learning and persevere with difficult activities.
- Children soon develop very good relationships with adults and each other.
- Good opportunities are given to enable children to work together.

#### **Commentary**

32 This area of learning is taught very well and most children are likely to achieve standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. When children first enter the school, many do not respond well to instructions and they do not behave very well. Boys in particular do not listen well to instructions and, consequently, do not know what to do when they begin an activity on their own. These weaknesses are identified quickly and, as a result, the curriculum is initially planned to give more time and emphasis to the development of social and personal skills. This is very appropriate and children's skills improve quickly. The teacher and support staff provide very clear guidance of what is acceptable and what is not, so all children learn to follow rules and their behaviour improves rapidly. In the reception year, children behave very well, they are polite and they form very good relationships with others. Boys become increasingly independent, concentrate for longer periods and co-operate well with others so the differences between the girls and boys is no longer evident. Adults act as very good examples and, because they are so well organised and give very good guidance to the children when they are working, many children work at tasks with a good degree of independence.

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

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

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

- The very good quality of teaching leads to very good achievement.
- Most children develop a positive attitude to reading and work hard.
- Staff use every opportunity to develop and extend speaking and listening skills.
- Many children have pronounced speech and language problems and the amount of professional speech therapy available to them from other agencies is very limited. This

affects how well some children speak. This is a barrier to how well some children develop their vocabulary.

### **Commentary**

33 The quality of teaching is very good. As a result, most children are likely to achieve standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. When children enter the school, they have very low skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Boys have very poor skills in these areas. Children achieve very well however, and most reception children are able to sustain a simple conversation, follow instructions carefully, show enjoyment of books and have begun to read simple sentences. The teacher and learning support staff use every opportunity to engage children in conversation. One-word answers are not accepted and children are constantly encouraged to explain their thoughts in more detail. New vocabulary is introduced and staff ensure that children pronounce new words correctly. In some instances, children have quite pronounced speech and language problems. These are identified early and very good liaison with parents ensures that children receive specialist help, but very limited speech and language therapy is available from external agencies. This poses a barrier to learning for some children and does little to improve their confidence.

34 The teacher makes very effective links with reading and writing activities and uses a very good range of resources to teach basic skills. Children learn new reading and writing skills quickly and this very good achievement means that early differences in the skills of boys and girls is less evident among older children. They are very well prepared for entry into Year 1 by the end of the reception year.

### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- The quality of teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- Children gain a good knowledge and understanding of basic number skills.
- Very good use is made of a variety of resources, which has a very positive effect on learning.

### **Commentary**

35 Most children are likely to achieve standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. This represents very good achievement from when children first enter school with very low skills. Boys have poor mathematical skills when they enter school. Teaching is very good in this area of learning. A particular strength of the teaching is the way activities are planned to include practical activities. The teacher and support staff make very effective use of a very good range of learning resources. This is effective in teaching basic number skills. Boys in particular respond very well to highly visible resources and lively activities and, consequently, they do well and soon make up for their very poor skills on entry to the school. All activities are thoroughly evaluated, these evaluations are used to plan further lessons and to provide evidence for assessment. This is a very good feature of the way the Foundation Stage staff work as a team and it is very effective in ensuring that children get the most from each learning activity. Most children have a good understanding of number up to ten and higher attaining children recognise and name numbers up to twenty.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Learning activities are very well planned to interest and engage the children.
- The skills of observation are taught very effectively and this means that early scientific skills develop well.

### **Commentary**

36 Most children are likely to achieve standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception and this represents very good achievement. Children do very well because the quality of teaching is very good. Activities are very well planned and staff make very good use of the accommodation and resources to provide activities that interest and engage the children. Most children enter school with very low levels of skill in this area of learning, but they make rapid progress because they are taught basic skills very well. For example, in a science lesson, children were taught to observe how a cube of jelly dissolved in hot water. Very good emphasis was placed on health and safety and the use of correct vocabulary, so children learnt that very hot water is dangerous, but can be held in an insulated cup. The teacher encouraged children to use their sense of sight to look at the jelly dissolving into the water, their sense of smell to catch the pungent smell of strawberries and note that the water changed colour to red. This lesson was very effective in the teaching of basic scientific principles, which extended the children's skills of observation and the use of correct vocabulary, such as "insulate" and "dissolve".

37 Very positive links with the local community and the effective use of visits and visitors ensure that children learn about past events and become observant about where they live. They use a good range of equipment to develop techniques to design and build models. Children use ICT to support their learning. The teacher makes very effective use of the electronic "smartboard" to teach basic skills, so children learn how modern technology can be used to learn new things. Cultural development is very good, with children learning, for example, about Chinese writing, food and customs for the celebration of Chinese New Year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are very well planned and evaluated, ensuring that children have activities that are matched well to their abilities, which quickly build up their skills.
- Staff try to make activities fun, so that children develop positive attitudes to physical development.

### **Commentary**

38 Most children are likely to achieve standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Children achieve very well, especially in those fine skills such as cutting out using scissors, or manipulating tools and materials. Teaching is very good and activities are very well planned and organised. Resources are very good and the school makes best use of the accommodation it has. Winters in this region are bitterly cold and the school is very exposed, so consequently, outdoor activities pose a problem during very cold weather. However, staff make very good use of indoor accommodation and all children receive some form of physical exercise every day to help them develop new skills. Activities are planned to provide good links with on going themes and topics, such as "Winter" and an element of fun is included. For example, a lesson in the hall engaged children in imaginative activities such as making a snowman

and placing a carrot on his nose. Children moved gracefully to music from “The Snowman”, using scarves to move to “Walking in the air”. Day-to-day activities frequently give children the chance to manipulate tools and use small equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Varied and well-planned activities provide children with a rich range of experiences.
- Learning resources are very good, children have the opportunity to explore new techniques and use a good range of materials.

### **Commentary**

39 Most children are likely to achieve standards that are just below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Teaching is very good and gives children many opportunities and experiences to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, children achieve very well and produce attractive, skilful work of which they are very proud. Painting skills and collage techniques are taught particularly well. Music resources are of good quality and this enables children to use an interesting range of instruments to explore sounds.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in reading from the very low skills they have on entry to the school.
- The teaching of handwriting is good and pupils present their work well.
- Standards in writing are not high enough and the current school improvement plan is not detailed enough to show how improvements are going to be made.
- Learning targets in writing are not reviewed often enough for older pupils, so they do not have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.

### **Commentary**

40 By Year 2, pupils’ attainment is in line with the level expected in reading. However, their attainment in speaking, listening and writing is below the levels expected. In the present Year 6, pupils’ achievements are good and they achieve standards that are in line with the levels expected for their age in reading but their achievement in writing is just satisfactory and pupils’ attainment in English is below the level expected for their age. Boys have poor skills when compared to the girls and when compared to other schools. The teaching of basic reading skills is good and those pupils who do not have special educational needs reach standards that match national expectations. This represents good achievement. Boys do as well as girls by the end of Year 2. Boys achieve less well than girls by the end of Year 6 and by careful analysis of test data, the school has recognised this and bought a good range of books and reading materials that have a high interest factor for boys. It is too early to say how well the new resources are improving the boys’ skills, but this is being monitored. Generally, older pupils have secure technical reading skills and they show a good range of strategies when tackling unfamiliar words. This is because they are taught basic skills well. What they lack is a love and enthusiasm for books and the school has to work hard to compensate for this. The school accommodation hinders this to an extent because the school library is located in the hall, which restricts pupils’ access during physical education lessons and lunch times. Those pupils who

have special educational needs achieve well against the targets set for them and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress pupils make.

41 Children enter school with very low speaking and listening skills. Although most pupils reach standards that are below national expectations when tested at the end of Years 2 and 6, this still represents good achievement. Teachers use the first part of lessons well to encourage pupils to answer questions with more than a one word answer, which most are likely to do. Many pupils, lack the confidence and range of vocabulary to answer questions with a detailed sentence, but teachers persist and this has a positive effect on extending the pupils' vocabulary.

42 Standards in writing are not high enough and remain stubbornly below national expectations. Whilst pupils' achievement is satisfactory in writing, they do not achieve as well as they do in reading. The teaching of writing throughout the school is satisfactory overall and there are clear strengths in the teaching of handwriting. This is done with rigour and, as a result, the quality of pupils' handwriting is good. What could be improved are the opportunities for pupils to pursue more extended writing activities. The scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the school indicated that pupils write short extracts of different styles of writing, but they do not write detailed or imaginative stories, diaries or accounts. Pupils' writing lacks flair, even among some higher attaining pupils. It is clear that pupils have a limited vocabulary, as sentences and statements lack interesting words and phrases. Work often lacks imagination and this links back to the lack of enthusiasm many children show for literature generally. Those pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress in writing against the targets set for them, although they make better progress in reading.

43 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. A strength of the leadership is that the school has identified the weaknesses in pupils' writing and has planned a strategy to introduce pupils to writers, poets and artists in a bid to stimulate their desire to write. This is appropriate and is likely to prove successful over time. However, a weakness is that the current school improvement plan is not detailed enough. For example:

- There is no clear indication of who should undertake the monitoring and how and when this should be done.
- There is no clear plan of what the strategies for enriching curricular opportunities through the use of authors, poets and artists are likely to cost.

44 Unless this is tackled with more rigour, standards will remain too low and pupils' achievement in writing will continue to be weaker than their achievement in reading and speaking and listening.

45 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The way teachers assess what pupils know, understand and can do is good overall. Teachers have a good awareness of how well pupils are doing and they use the results of tests and evaluations well to plan further learning activities. What could be improved is the way individual learning targets are used to improve writing skills. This is done well in Years 1 and 2. For example, targets are given to each pupil as a result of the teacher's marking of work. Short, achievable targets are given regularly and pupils know when these have been reached. Therefore, younger pupils know what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Older pupils also have learning targets, but often, the same learning targets are given to all pupils. They are not revised often enough as work is marked and, consequently, are of limited value in helping the pupils to improve their work.

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

46 The use of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides some good opportunities for pupils to write accounts and reports in history and religious education. In most lessons, teachers ensure that appropriate technical vocabulary is used and this has a positive effect on the extension of vocabulary. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT skills to support their learning in English.

## MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well because suitable work is planned to meet their different needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The school has maintained pupils' standards found in the previous inspection report.

### Commentary

47 The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and those that are gifted or talented make good progress in lessons. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve well in lessons because they work hard, the teaching is good and lessons are well planned. For example, teachers plan appropriate activities for the full ability range in each class by setting work at different levels. This ensures pupils understand what they are doing and make good progress during lessons. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in lessons because most teachers split these pupils into two groups, setting different tasks for them at suitably challenging levels. New learning targets are shared with pupils so that they are aware of what they are supposed to know and do by the end of the lesson. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this motivates pupils to achieve well and to focus on the tasks set. Teachers' planning shows that work set is very well matched to the needs of pupils and they use teaching assistants effectively so pupils benefit from working in small groups.

48 Pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 is in line with the levels expected for their age. This shows good achievement for pupils as some year groups are very small and significant numbers of pupils have special educational needs. These achievements are the result of good teaching throughout the school and the effective leadership and management in the subject. Although the number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests is small, there has been analysis of test results to find out which areas of mathematics need improving. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, receive good support from the class teachers and classroom assistants.

49 Pupils in Year 1 build on the positive start they have in the Foundation Stage through a range of practically based activities. They learn to count, add and subtract with increasing accuracy. There is very good emphasis on the teaching of basic number skills, for example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils ordered numbers and identified the mid point between two given numbers. In Year 2, pupils identify and name a range of two and three dimensional shapes and know the number of sides and corners of each shape. Pupils use and understand basic fractions when showing the time on clocks as  $\frac{1}{4}$  to or  $\frac{1}{2}$  past the hour. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils worked with two digit numbers and broke them down to solve multiplication problems. They create graphs from information they have gathered and interpret the data correctly. Pupils tackle problems which involve fractions and use the knowledge well when measuring in  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  metres. Higher attaining pupils are given challenging problems to solve, for example, "How long would it take to travel 33 kilometres at 6 kilometres per hour?"

50 Leadership and management of the subject are good. Discussions show that staff work closely together and frequently discuss pupils' progress in the subject. The co-ordinator has completed observations in lessons and undertaken scrutiny of pupils' work. The information gained has been used to guide future school developments. Guidance for teachers follows the numeracy strategy closely. Assessment is good and individual targets are set for pupils. As a result, they know how well they are achieving and what they must do next to improve further.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

51 Mathematics is used well in a variety of ways across the curriculum, for example, pupils measure and record temperatures in science, draw plans in geography and collect data in a variety of subjects. Pupils and teachers use computers to support pupils' mathematical skills regularly, for example, when collecting data and making graphs and pie charts to show the results.

## SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils of all abilities achieve well because suitable work is planned to meet their different needs.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to science.
- Teachers ensure that the work in science complements learning in the key skills of literacy and numeracy.

### Commentary

52 Pupils' attainment in science in Years 2 and 6 is in line with the levels expected for their ages. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and the quality of pupils' written work has improved. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of scientific processes, because teaching is good and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subject content and have clear group targets for lessons that are shared with pupils. For example, in a good Year 5 and 6 lesson there was good pace and the teacher linked the work to ICT skills when measuring changes in temperature using a sensor. There were skilful and challenging questions asked that reinforced pupils' learning well.

53 A further strength of the teaching is that work in science complements learning in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. The emphasis on using key vocabulary is consistent throughout the school and extends pupils' language skills. The investigative approach to science provides opportunities for accurate measurement, the recording of data in graphs and tables and the interpretation of this data. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson comparing solids and liquids, pupils first discussed the properties of each one and then recorded their results to make charts showing the similarities and differences between the materials available. The good range of resources available were used well and enhanced pupils' understanding of the properties of different materials. Teachers ensure that pupils improve their literacy and numeracy skills well by encouraging the use of correct scientific language and by recording the progress of experiments accurately before making tally charts, graphs and pie charts to show their results.

54 There are very good relationships between staff and pupils and this makes a positive contribution to their very good attitudes to the subject. As a result, pupils feel confident when offering suggestions and answering questions in class. Teaching assistants give those pupils with special educational needs good support in lessons. Often, teaching assistants sit close by them and explain new vocabulary. They help pupils to take a full and active part in lessons and this enables them to make good progress in the targets set for them. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson on changes of temperature, the teaching assistant encouraged good discussions to explain how the sensor was showing results on the screen as water cooled.

55 Leadership and management of the subject are good. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and based on a different focus each time. The co-ordinator also arranges for samples of pupils' work in science to be scrutinised carefully to ensure that the work they are undertaking is appropriate for their particular learning needs. These different checking processes make sure that

the work carried out in science is effective, as a result pupils achieve well when improving their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are now good and this, coupled with good teaching and learning, means that pupils achieve well. For example, the introduction and use of “smartboards” by teachers and pupils is having a significant impact on pupils’ attainment and achievements.
- Pupils’ attitudes and relationships are good and pupils are very keen to use computers and improve their knowledge and understanding of ICT.
- Pupils in Year 6 use computers confidently to find information on the Internet and to support their work in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

56 Pupils’ attainment by Years 2 and 6 in ICT is in line with the level expected for their age. Their achievements are good. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Teaching and learning are good and many pupils use computers confidently. This has a significant impact on pupils’ achievements, attainment and attitudes in lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class improved their knowledge of how to create a musical pattern using a computer program. The teacher used the “smartboard” very effectively to demonstrate how the different notes could be put into a sequence to make an interesting composition.

57 Pupils in Years 2 and 6 explain how they save their work and how to print the finished product. In Year 6 pupils use multi-media presentations in their English studies to record the week’s events in a diary. They incorporate photographs taken with the digital camera to enhance the presentation of their work. In some subjects, there is good use of ICT to enhance pupils’ work. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used the Internet for research into their historical studies of Dr Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 show the good use of computers to enhance their mathematical studies when collecting data on hair and eye colour of their classmates and producing a graph of the results. Older pupils are confident using ICT and explain how to enlarge an imported picture and to move it around the screen to improve the visual effect of their work. They describe how to use a spreadsheet and use the facilities of the program to show the costs of a class party using different amounts of food. They describe with great enthusiasm how they used digital cameras on their residential field trip to record the events of the week.

58 The leadership and management of the subject are good because there is clear guidance for the subject that teachers follow and a well developed improvement plan. This plan shows the detailed continuing improvement intended and the appropriate training for staff as new initiatives are started. In addition, the co-ordinator ensures that all teachers use the “smartboards” and using these in many lessons enhances teaching and pupils’ understanding of the use of ICT considerably. The co-ordinator runs a very good “Animation Club” where all Year 6 pupils have opportunities to develop their ICT skills further. At present, pupils are working on animating their own drawn figures as part of their “multi-media” presentation.

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

59 The school is making sound progress in developing the use of ICT across the curriculum. Discussions with pupils across the school show they understand how computers can help them in many aspects of their school life, for example, creating graphs in mathematics, using the e-mail facility to improve their language work and recording the results of experiments in science.



There are areas of good practice in the school, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use the facilities of multi-media programs to create their own slide shows and use spreadsheets to display collected data as graphs and pie charts.

## HUMANITIES

60 In humanities, work was sampled in **geography** and **history**, with one lesson seen in each subject. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. In the samples of pupils' work examined pupils present their work well.

61 One lesson was observed in **geography** for pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class and samples of pupils' work throughout the school were examined. In the lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. Early geographical skills were developed soundly as pupils used atlases to locate Minneapolis in America. The school makes effective use of the locality to provide interesting learning opportunities. For example, pupils in Year 2 identify different types of house in the area and know that Crook is about 10 minutes away by car. In Year 6, pupils study different environments and name familiar mountain ranges in Scotland and the Himalayas. The co-ordinator for history and geography provides good support to staff and has observed lessons and scrutinised work and wall displays to ensure that the curriculum is well covered and suitable during a two year cycle.

62 In the **history** lesson seen, teaching was good. The teacher shared the learning objective with the pupils and gave very clear instructions. Consequently, pupils knew what they had to do. Pupils know that a range of sources can be used to find out about the Vikings and they know that books and the Internet are good sources of information. In discussion with pupils, it was evident that they have a developing knowledge and understanding of Vikings and most have an understanding of chronology. By Year 6, pupils' understanding of Victorian Britain is shown in their written accounts of the harsh working conditions in factories, farms and mines.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63 Only one lesson was seen in **art and design**, **music** and **physical education**. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. It is not therefore possible to make firm judgements about provision in these subjects. In addition to the lessons observed, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, examined teachers' planning and spoke to pupils about what they had learned in the subjects.

64 It is evident from classroom observations and the quality of work on display, that the school views **art and design** as an important subject. Pieces of art work are well displayed; they reflect the care pupils take in completing them and the skills they have been taught in order to achieve standards that are in line with expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers are pleased to celebrate pupils' achievements by creating displays of work. For example, pupils in Year 6 completed stunning paintings in the style of Lowry, which show very good use of match stick figures to populate the landscape. This positive picture of art and design has been maintained since the previous inspection.

65 By the time they reach Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of the whole **design and technology** process. They plan their work carefully, giving thought to materials and tools. They understand the importance of working with accurate measurements and use prior knowledge well at the design stage. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used knowledge of structures well when designing a shelter and linked the work closely to mathematics when they had to work out the cost of materials. The teacher's good planning ensured pupils' designs were successful because of the prompting to think carefully about all the possible considerations before moving on to the construction stage. Pupils evaluated the success of their designs and constructions and made good suggestions on how they could be improved. This positive picture has been maintained since the previous inspection.

66 Only one lesson in **music** for pupils in Years 1 and 2 was observed. In this session, pupils made satisfactory progress in identifying the sounds made by different percussion instruments. Pupils describe the sound of the glockenspiel as "smooth" and the wooden block as "jerky". Singing a variety of hymns is also planned for the assemblies, for example, pupils sang tunefully and put a great deal of effort and concentration into learning a new hymn during a practice session. 67 In

**physical education**, it is evident that all strands of the subject are regularly taught. The regular residential visits support pupils' physical development well. In a lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class, pupils improved their gymnastic skills when moving in different ways along a "space ladder" placed on the floor. Pupils enjoyed the session and worked hard to improve their physical control as they moved up and down the ladders using a variety of steps at different speeds.

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

68 No lessons were seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. **Personal, social and health education** is an integral part of the curriculum and teachers make use of every opportunity to promote the positive values of the school. Much work is covered through discussion when teachers and pupils talk about specific events. In lessons seen and through assemblies the themes helped pupils to develop confidence to express themselves on issues that affect them, such as how to make others happy or how others may feel. Pupils are given time to reflect and consider issues during collective worship. During lessons and break times older pupils take responsibility; for instance they look after younger ones, tidy classrooms and put away chairs after lunch. At lunchtimes, pupils socialise well and chat happily to each other.

69 Pupils develop a sense of **citizenship** through a variety of approaches. They receive teaching and visits from a number of people who assist with pupils' learning about a range of aspects that help them to grow and develop towards being good citizens. Pupils are taught how to look after their health and safety during science lessons when they learn how to identify dangerous hazards in the home. They also learn about healthy diets that will enable them to eat in a healthy manner as well as be able to pass on information to others. Pupils receive important education on the dangers of drugs. Such opportunities help them with moral decisions in life.

## 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	2
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
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*