

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DENE HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Peterlee

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114200

Headteacher: Mr G Ayre

Lead inspector: Mr M J Mayhew

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 255966

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	310
School address:	Manor Way Peterlee County Durham
Postcode:	SR8 5RL
Telephone number:	0191 5862937
Fax number:	0191 5866809
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Williams
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This bigger than average-sized primary school was rebuilt six years ago in Peterlee, near the coast of County Durham. Socio-economic circumstances are among the lowest in the country. There are 310 girls and boys on roll, aged from four to eleven. Fifty pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, which equates to a proportion that is about the same as the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is slightly below the average. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is part of an Education Action Zone, and it has Investor in People status. The current year's intake into the Reception classes is the first in which many of the children had pre-school Nursery or playgroup experience. Records show that children's attainment on entry is normally well below that expected nationally. As an exception, the current year's intake, which is smaller than usual, displayed about average attainment when they started at the school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22197	Mr M J Mayhew	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Science; Information and communication technology; Physical education; Religious education.
11468	Mrs J Menes	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23658	Dr S Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English; Geography; History; Personal, social and health education.
14851	Mr G Laws	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art and design; Design and technology; Music.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This successful school provides a good quality of education for its pupils.** It gives good value for money. Teaching is good overall, and much of it is very good. Pupils achieve well, despite reaching lower than nationally expected standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. This is because their attainment on entry is often very low, and they have much to do to catch up. The headteacher leads the school very well and gives it clear direction.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- good quality teaching that has considerable strengths;
- the work of the very effective headteacher, and of other managers, who continually strive to improve the quality of education and to raise the standards that pupils attain;
- the pupils, who achieve well personally and behave very well, have good attitudes to their learning, and do their best to attain as highly as they can;
- its good curriculum, which is strengthened and deepened by the provision of many experiences not normally available to pupils of this age group;
- the very good care and attention given to every pupil, and the good support given to those with special educational needs (SEN);
- teachers' marking of pupils' work, which does not point out to pupils clearly enough how they can improve;
- the lower than normally expected standards by the age of 11 in English, especially in speaking skills, mathematics and science, even though pupils achieve well.

The school has made a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards reached at 11 are not as good as they were, but there has been a fall in attainment of the pupils when they enter the school, and they still achieve well. Teaching is good throughout the school, because there are better and more rigorously applied systems for monitoring and promoting its quality. Similarly, assessment plays a more crucial role in providing work that matches pupils' learning needs, including those of pupils who have the potential for higher attainment. Standards overall have kept pace with the national trend.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**Pupils achieve well overall.** Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. The majority of those currently in the Reception classes are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Poor levels of speaking and listening skills through the school hinder possibilities for higher attainment for most pupils in most subjects, including writing, by the age of 11. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards at the end of Year 2 are average in reading and writing; they are average in science and below average in mathematics. Standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are below average, despite pupils making good progress overall from a very low starting point when they started at the school. Pupils also achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT), and in religious education.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils have good attitudes to their schoolwork and contribute very well to the strong caring, family ethos of the school. Behaviour is very good because the school has expectations for pupils' good conduct that are consistently very high. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education, with some very good features. Teaching is good overall.** It is never less than good in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 and 2. Indeed, it is often very good across the school, and that is why pupils make good progress overall. In many lessons, pupils make very good progress. Teaching assistants support the work of the teachers very well. There are good systems for assessing pupils' attainment, and these are used well to plan work that matches each pupil's learning needs. However, the marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently rigorous in pointing out the best ways for pupils to improve their work. The good curriculum is very well extended and deepened by an unusually high number of visits, visitors to the school and other valuable learning opportunities. Care and welfare are very good, and pupils, including those with SEN, are given good support. Links with parents and with the local community are good, and there are very good links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is well led and managed overall.** The headteacher's clear vision for the school translates into very practical and capable leadership. Good management ensures that all pupils are fully included in what the school has to offer them. The school is a vibrant and happy community that works hard to improve. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and supports the school satisfactorily.

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

Parents are very pleased with what the school provides for their children. There are good procedures for informing them of their children's progress. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and learning new things. They like their teachers, and feel secure in knowing that adults in whom they have confidence are always available.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- devise and consistently implement a process of marking pupils' work that gives them better guidance and targets for improvement;
- raise standards further by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, giving special emphasis to improving pupils' speaking skills.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils across the school, including those in the Reception classes, achieve well. Achievement for pupils with SEN is good. Standards in Year 2 are satisfactory in reading and writing; they are below average at Year 6 in the core subjects. Standards in speaking are well below average from Year 1 to Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning, and especially so in the personal, social and emotional area.
- From a low starting point on entry, pupils across the school learn and achieve well, although their attainment by Year 6 does not reach the national average overall in any of the core subjects.
- Pupils' speaking skills across the school are well below national expectations and have a negative impact on attainment in other subjects.

#### Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage, those in the Reception classes, do well, so that most reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. They achieve well because the teachers and others who work in the Reception classes give them very good support for learning, and because the teachers use teaching styles that interest children and provide very well for their individual needs. Children currently in the Reception classes are likely to reach expectations for their age by Year 1, because they entered the Reception classes at average levels of attainment. This is an exception since, in most years, the attainment on entry is below or well below average. All children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development, because they have very good relationships with their teachers and with other children. They take turns, and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.5 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to do well because the teaching is very good. Current Year 2 pupils reach expected standards in reading, writing and science. Their attainment in mathematics is below average. These judgements broadly match the results of last year's national tests at the end of Year 2. Last year, pupils attained better in writing than those in similar schools, and about the same as them in reading and mathematics. There is no comparative data for science. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is about the same as at the previous inspection, but pupils achieve better because the teaching is better overall, and the curriculum is richer.



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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
English	25.4 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.8 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.6 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. As at Year 2, this judgement generally matches the results of last year's statutory assessments, although attainment in English, whilst still below average, is better than it was last year. In each of the core subjects, fewer pupils than the national average reach the higher than expected Level 5. This is because more than the usual proportion of pupils through the school have weak speaking skills. As a result, they do not have the breadth of vocabulary necessary to express themselves fully in tests, especially those for English; neither are they able to interpret mathematical problems well enough in order to choose correct mathematical procedures to find an answer. Nevertheless, in comparison with similar schools, selected on the basis of pupils' similar attainment when they were in Year 2, the school's results are higher in mathematics and science, and about the same in English.

4. Pupils also do well in ICT: those at the end of Year 2 achieve above expected standards, whilst those at the end of Year 6 achieve well and reach expected levels. Pupils throughout the school are very familiar with computers because they use them increasingly. Standards are improving because most teachers are competent in ICT and keen to develop pupils' skills across subjects, and because the school is very well equipped with computer equipment and software. Pupils are rapidly becoming independent learners in ICT.

5. Standards at Year 2 and Year 6 in religious education match the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and the guidance of Durham Local Education Authority. It is not possible to make judgements about pupils' attainment in the other subjects because they were only sampled.

6. The proportion of pupils on the school's special needs register is similar to that found nationally, although this does not fully reflect the generally low standards of pupils on entry. Pupils on the register are given good support in class so that they achieve well. In the 2003 national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6, the number who failed to reach the expected level was similar to that found nationally. This reflects the good quality of care that the school takes in identifying and meeting pupils' individual needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

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

Pupils behave **very well**, and they have **good** attitudes to school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory**.

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

- Nearly all pupils behave very well because high standards of conduct are expected, and because the school behaviour policy is applied effectively.
- Pupils work hard and achieve well, because they like school and value their teachers' efforts both to help them and to make their work interesting.
- Pupils grow in confidence because teachers work very hard to promote their self-esteem and encourage them to develop independence.
- Pupils gain an understanding of cultural diversity through very good provision in lessons and from visitors to the school.
- A small number of older boys do not always achieve the high standard of conduct of the other pupils.

#### **Commentary**

7. The headteacher and staff have created a very positive ethos of achievement and good behaviour, and a strong sense of community in the school. Teachers are very good role models in the respect and value they accord to others, so that relationships throughout the school are friendly and constructive. Teachers consistently expect high standards of behaviour and hard work from pupils. They support pupils' efforts through praise and rewards, and encourage those who find it difficult to match up to their expectations. A few of the oldest boys do not always behave as well as they could or are unwilling to work co-operatively with girls. Pupils with severe behaviour problems are well managed, and the number of exclusions is very low.

**Exclusions**

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Parent/pupil preferred not to say

No of pupils on roll
309
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	0
0	0

8. Pupils like school and are enthusiastic about the activities offered. They respond to their teachers' high expectations by working hard, and by behaving very well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to earn rewards of all kinds, and take pride in success. They are attentive in lessons, and value the efforts their teachers make to help them and to arouse their interest. They play very well together outside, and enjoy using the equipment and games provided for them.

9. Many pupils join the school with very low self-esteem, but gain confidence as they find their place in the school community. They learn to consider their own strengths and those of others, to understand and respect feelings, and to become aware of the choices they can make and the consequences that follow. Work on bullying gives pupils confidence to ask for help if they feel threatened. They take on tasks in school from an early age, and develop independence and a sense of responsibility through working in groups and participating in the school council. Most children achieve the nationally expected Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year.

10. A number of pupils are included on the SEN register for concerns over their behaviour. These pupils are managed well and fully included in school life. No significant behavioural difficulties were noted during the inspection. The number of exclusions is low and is an indicator of the success of the school's policy for behaviour management.

11. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is well provided for through collective worship and in class. Pupils respond well. They are quiet and attentive in assemblies, and willing silently to consider what they have learnt. In a district that has little experience of immigration and cultural diversity, the school has worked hard since the last inspection successfully to make pupils aware of the variety of peoples and customs in the world, and of the respect that is due to them. For example, the forthcoming Olympic games provided an opportunity for the whole school to explore a wide range of countries and customs.

## Attendance

12. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, and there is little unauthorised absence. Some pupils arrive at school late, despite good efforts by the school to remedy this. The school actively promotes good attendance through rewards, and monitors pupils' absence rigorously.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.2

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is **good** overall, as is the quality of the curriculum, which is very well enhanced by a **very good** range of out-of-class activities. There is a **very good** level of care, and links with parents and with the community are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

All the teaching and learning seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with a clear majority being good. There was a high proportion of very good teaching. These judgements show a marked improvement from the equivalent judgements made at the previous inspection, when a small minority of teaching was judged unsatisfactory. There is good use of assessment.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is most often very good in the Reception classes.
- Teachers consistently and successfully insist that pupils behave well.
- Most lessons are planned well to take account of the needs of pupils of different capabilities, because teachers take good account of the results of assessments.
- The marking of pupils' work does not indicate well enough how it could be improved.
- The teaching of pupils with SEN is good.

### Commentary

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13 (35%)	20 (54%)	4 (11%)	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.*

13. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection. This is because the school has fully implemented evaluation procedures in order to enhance and develop teachers' competences. For example, all subject co-ordinators regularly observe lessons in their subjects, and the headteacher observes and gives feedback on lessons across subjects. In this way, staff can share the most effective techniques and learn to be more effective.

14. Teachers know the children in the Reception Year well because they use very good assessment systems. The teachers are skilled in their interpretation of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and ensure that children are always engaged on tasks that take their learning forward at a good pace. Consequently, teaching is most often very good and is never less than good, and

children achieve well. Lessons in the Reception classes are characterised specifically by very good relationships between teachers and children, and children's fascination in what they learn about. All are keen to take part in activities, and teachers ensure that each child has every opportunity to do so.

15. There has been good improvement in pupils' behaviour during lessons since the previous inspection. This is because teachers across the school consistently apply the school's agreed procedures for promoting good behaviour, and manage their classes successfully to sustain pupils' interest and attention. In addition to making lessons interesting through adopting a good range of strategies, teachers expect all pupils to take increasing responsibility for their work, and to respect each others' efforts. Teachers use questions effectively to encourage all pupils to participate in class discussions, and these sessions often get lessons off to a good start, as in a very good Year 3 lesson in which pupils examined and sequenced the text of Roald Dahl's 'BFG'.

16. The good procedures for ongoing assessment, result in teachers having detailed information about pupils' progress and any difficulties they may be having. The grouping of pupils by ability in Years 5 and 6 for English and mathematics lessons, is an example of an effective strategy that makes good use of the results of assessments. Teachers plan well for these and other lessons, so that the work given to pupils mostly matches their prior levels of attainment, and suitably challenges them to learn. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, whilst teachers regularly mark pupils' work, and pupils are given class or group targets to attain in English, mathematics and science, written comments are mainly restricted to simple praise. The marking seldom sets pupils targets to achieve, against which their progress can be measured. As a result, pupils are not in a position fully to evaluate their own progress, a point of which the school is aware and is poised to address.

17. Pupils with SEN are fully included in all class activities. Teachers' planning reflects the targets set out in the individual education plans for these pupils. Teaching assistants play a good part in supporting them in lessons, helping them to meet their targets and praising their achievements to boost confidence. Their progress is monitored regularly, and their targets are adjusted as necessary. Some pupils are withdrawn regularly for intensive instruction by a special needs teacher or a teaching assistant. Their progress is very good at these times, because activities are carefully planned to meet their needs and taught at a brisk pace that keeps pupils interested and involved.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **good** and is extended **very well** through out-of-class activities.

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

- The curriculum is varied and stimulating.
- Resources are very good.
- There is good provision for pupils with SEN.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to learning.
- The library is inadequate.

## **Commentary**

18. There have been good improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection. The formal curriculum meets requirements, and is well planned so that pupils make good progress from year to year and are well prepared to move on to secondary education. Planning over a two-year cycle ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work. Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects are carefully planned. There is a good

programme for personal, social, health education (PSHE) and citizenship, taught partly as a separate subject, but also well integrated into other subjects and the wider life of the school. The school has shown commendable care in adopting officially recommended programmes and schemes, particularly for the benefit of lower achieving pupils.

19. The very wide-ranging programme of visits, visitors and special events is a significant strength. These activities are used very effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and to widen their experience. Good quality work is produced as a result, such as detailed accounts of visits to museums and environmental centres. Residential visits for older pupils extend opportunities for them to take responsibility and develop social skills. There is a good range of popular clubs and activities, which cater for the interests of boys and girls of all ages. This boosts pupils' interest in sports, music and subjects such as French and ICT, and is in turn reflected in their positive attitudes in lessons.

20. Good care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Suitable work is planned for pupils at different levels of attainment across all subjects, and this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in lower or higher ability sets for English and mathematics, rather than in mixed-ability classes, allowing teachers to plan appropriate work for a narrower band of needs.

21. There is good provision for pupils with SEN. The targets in their individual education plans are well informed, clearly focused and regularly adjusted in the light of assessments. Provision for pupils with weak physical co-ordination (dyspraxia) is a significant strength. The school has adopted a programme of exercises developed by the local authority. Targeted pupils are regularly withdrawn for brief, intensive practice in groups, led very effectively by the special needs teaching assistant.

22. There is a register of pupils identified as gifted or talented. It is a good feature that each of these pupils is given an individual extension plan. However, provision is variable. At best, talented mathematicians benefit from attending challenges arranged by subject specialists at the neighbouring high school. Some also attend a regular lunchtime mathematics club run by the subject co-ordinator. There are satisfactory arrangements for other pupils to be given close attention and more demanding work during normal lessons. However, opportunities to boost sporting skills are less well developed and need review.

23. The school is well staffed, with some additional teaching available for special needs groups. Some teachers exchange classes regularly so that they can teach their specialist subjects. Teaching assistants work well with teachers as a team, and give good support during lessons and through the school day, mainly to pupils with lower attainment. The number of teaching assistants has been increased significantly in the present year, and their number is now adequate. There is very good teamwork between the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) and her teaching assistant, who takes on significant responsibility. This is essential, because the co-ordinator teaches a class full-time, without a regular programme of release, and works well.

24. Resources are of very good quality overall, and are used to good effect in lessons. There are particular strengths in ICT, science and religious education. However, the library has a very small supply of information books, and some are out of date. Its use as a storage area for music equipment limits the available space. In other respects, the accommodation is good, and is very well cleaned and maintained. Very good quality displays brighten the school, celebrate pupils' best work and stimulate their interest.

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

The school provides **very well** for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance given to pupils are good, and there are good opportunities for pupils to express their views and become involved in the development of the school.

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

- The school provides very good care for pupils, and there are well-established and effective procedures for health and safety.
- Pupils can turn to adults for help and support, because there is a strong ethos of care in the school, and relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect.
- The school has a very good system for monitoring pupils' personal development, which enhances the quality of support that teachers can give.

## Commentary

25. The school is characterised by a strong ethos of care and support, so that pupils feel safe in school and are able to concentrate on their work. This ethos, based on a sense of a strong and happy community, helps newcomers to feel included and to settle quickly in the school. There are arrangements to introduce children gradually to the Reception classes, where they are very well cared for in a calm and supportive setting. Class teachers know pupils and their circumstances very well. They monitor pupils' personal development, and any problems or concerns that may arise, through an effective recording system which enables all teachers to be fully informed about the pupils for whom they are responsible. Pupils like and trust their teachers, and look to them for guidance and support. Additional help for some pupils is provided by the 'On Track' programme, which extends beyond the school gates to offer support in a wider context. Teachers help pupils to overcome difficulties in their work and set them overall targets. However, the marking of pupils' work is not as helpful as it should be. Achievement is very well supported through the structured reward system, which includes the awarding of certificates and special cups.

26. Procedures for health and safety are well established and effective, and are known to all staff. This was evident when an unexpected fire alarm caused the school to empty rapidly in a very quiet and orderly fashion. The school takes good care of pupils with special medical needs, and makes appropriate arrangements for the safety of pupils on visits out of school. Pupils are taught to take care of themselves, encouraged to eat a balanced diet, and to be aware of the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. Fruit is provided for pupils at break time and is usually popular, and drinking water is always available.

27. Pupils with SEN are well cared for. Teachers and teaching assistants develop close relationships with them, encouraging them to take a full part in school life. Those who need it are given additional help by visiting specialists. Records of the progress and needs of these pupils are well focused and well maintained.

28. The school consults pupils through questionnaires, and has a well-established school council, which involves all classes from Reception upwards in discussing ideas and problems, and in making decisions. Pupils who are not representatives are aware of the function of the council, are able to explain it and give examples of the council's work: this includes the framing of rules, the 'zoning' of activities for the playground, and the choosing of new play equipment.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **good** overall. There are **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Parents are very pleased with the school and the education their children receive.
- The school works very hard to help parents to support their children's work at home.
- There are very good links with other schools through the Education Action Zone (EAZ), and these enhance opportunities for pupils and for staff development.

## Commentary

29. The school rightly regards partnership with parents as an important part of the education process, and has worked hard to make them feel welcome and to involve them in their children's learning. Parents are very pleased with the school and with the education their children receive. They feel able to approach teachers for information or with concerns, and are confident that they will be taken seriously and kept informed of any outcomes. The school consults parents regularly and gives them feedback on any action taken.

30. Communication with parents is good. They are well informed about their children's progress and what they need to do to improve. Parents like the regular newsletters, and feel very well informed about the school when their children join Reception. They are given guidance on how to help their children at home and regular information on the curriculum for all year groups. The school makes use of a variety of attractive and imaginative aids to home learning for different age groups, which pupils take home to use alongside their parents. These include mathematics games, story sacks for the youngest children and 'curiosity kits' for Year 4 pupils. Parents help in school and, for example, have been involved in making the story sacks. Grandparents are invited to school one afternoon and given tea by the pupils. The 'On Track' programme has added a further dimension to home/school links and to links with other agencies in the community. Parents of pupils with SEN are invited to annual reviews and kept fully informed of their children's progress.

31. The school makes good use of the community to support the curriculum and add interest and variety to pupils' learning; this is done through visits, for example to museums and nature reserves, and visitors to school, such as the police and fire brigade. There are links with business, such as those with Sunderland Football Club, which enabled pupils to visit the Stadium of Light.

32. Links with other local schools have been strengthened by the success of the EAZ. Opportunities are provided for gifted and talented children, and schools collaborate to organise sporting events such as the Mini Commonwealth Games. One very successful event was a carol service, in which the music department of the local secondary school provided pupil musicians and worked with the primary school to perform the music for a service in the local church. Strong links with other schools support staff development and ease the transfer of pupils to secondary school.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership, and the governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher provides enlightened, decisive leadership.
- Key staff support the headteacher well.
- Teamwork is a key feature in management processes.
- Financial management is prudent.

## Commentary

33. The headteacher's leadership is very good. He provides sustained support and guidance for the teachers and pupils, and is widely respected. The shared vision of the headteacher, staff, governors and parents ensures that the ethos of the school, based on care and mutual respect, is apparent in everything it does.

34. Staff with leadership and managerial responsibilities are fully committed to the school's values. Everyone supports everyone else, whatever their level of responsibility. All structures are geared to providing ever better opportunities for pupils to learn. This corporate sense of duty and responsibility permeates the daily practice in the school and fosters a secure, stimulating environment for children. The deputy headteacher has been in post for only a few weeks, but is already fully supportive of the headteacher and other senior staff.

35. Monitoring strategies are successful, having been carefully planned to ensure that co-ordinators have time regularly to evaluate standards of work and the quality of teaching, and to make recommendations for improvement. All co-ordinators contribute to the comprehensive development plan.

36. The chair of governors is fully committed to the school and, under his leadership, the governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily. There is a suitable committee structure. The governors' knowledge of the school comes largely through information provided by the headteacher and the occasional visit with a particular focus by some of the governors. Some governors work either part-time or full-time in the school, and this helps them to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is supportive, but currently not fully involved in decision making and in shaping the direction of the school.

37. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. Recommended procedures are carefully followed and record keeping is systematic. Funding for pupils with SEN is spent appropriately for their benefit.

38. When staff join the school, they quickly settle in. This is partly due to the friendliness that is evident throughout the school. There are effective procedures that help them to understand routines and expectations. All staff in Dene House review their own performance, and line management procedures are thorough. This self-review feeds into the regular staff meetings that help to shape the school's development. Performance management is well established, and is informed by the detailed assessment data that is collated by the headteacher.

39. The school is used regularly by Sunderland University for training support assistants and for trainee teachers. This reflects the university's confidence that aspiring professionals will be exposed to good practice and fully inclusive approaches to education.

## Financial information

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

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	707,251.00
Total expenditure	682,134.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,200.00

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	24,903.00
Balance carried forward to the next	25,118.00

40. Astute financial planning ensures that funds are directed to the school's educational priorities. Good use is made of money from a variety of sources. For example, the EAZ has helped to provide a 'state of the art' computer suite, which is helping significantly to improve pupils' skills in ICT. The principles of 'best value' are applied consistently. Day-to-day budgetary controls are fully in place. Efficient administration by the office staff frees time for the headteacher to concentrate on the school's central purpose, teaching and learning.



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

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

41. There is very good provision overall in both Reception classes, and children make at least good progress. This matches the judgement made at the previous inspection. Overall, children currently in the Reception classes are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. This is because of the very good organisation, very good teaching and careful monitoring of children's progress. Time limitations mean that it is not possible to make secure judgements on standards and provision in **creative development**, but all activities are planned in such a way that all areas of learning are taught and often interwoven, making learning relevant and fun.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well and become self-confident because adults create a calm, secure environment, provide opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own actions, and have high expectations of good behaviour.
- Children have very good attitudes to their tasks and activities.

#### **Commentary**

42. Children achieve very well in this area of learning, because the teaching is very good. In most years, many children start in the Reception classes with low levels of personal, social and emotional skills. Very good relationships, good teamwork and the quiet manner of the staff, ensure that there is a peaceful and supportive atmosphere in both classrooms. This has a calming effect on all the children, who settle very quickly to the good range of activities set out for them each session. Children move around the rooms with confidence and purpose, and take advantage of the good space available. At the late point in the academic year that the inspection took place, all children listened carefully to their teachers and were keen to carry out their instructions. They worked happily individually, or in pairs and small groups. Their attitudes and behaviour were very good at all times, because they had developed a genuine desire to do well and to please their friends and their teachers. They take turns, and treat each other and adults with respect. By the time they leave the Reception classes, children have made very good progress and will achieve the goals expected for their age in this area of learning.

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

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

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

- Children make good gains in their literacy skills because the carefully planned and organised tasks are suitably challenging for their different abilities.
- Good attention is paid to the development of children's speaking and listening skills.

## Commentary

43. Activities are well planned to stimulate excitement and communication, and children's responses confirm the positive impact of this approach. Children enjoy their reading. They listen carefully to stories and take delight in looking at books. This is the result of very good teaching that provides very well for the development of reading skills. As a result, most children recognise and sound out most letters of the alphabet by the end of the academic year. A high proportion of children read simple sentences and stories independently, and some can read and re-order words to make sentences, for example, about the story of 'Titch'. Higher attainers listen to stories at a 'listening centre' and follow the words and pictures in a book. Both teachers emphasise the development of children's speaking skills. They do this by posing carefully structured questions that successfully encourage children to respond in full sentences. This level of skilled support results in children attaining expected standards in reading. Teachers provide them with quality experiences for writing, so that, by the end of the Reception Year, many children write, without help, simple sentences that are easily read. Teachers' gentle persistence and the pace of different activities keep children fully focussed on developing key skills.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The teaching of mathematical skills is good, so children gain a secure understanding of numbers.
- Teachers use practical means well to enhance children's learning.

## Commentary

44. Teachers carefully organise a range of practical activities for children to gain confidence and become competent in mathematics. Lessons often begin with counting rhymes, which is fun, and builds children's confidence and familiarity with numbers. By the end of the Reception Year, most have a good understanding of the relative values of numbers to 10, and some to 20. Very good teaching encompasses a range of very effective techniques. For example, resources are well prepared and easily to hand, and the habit of teachers sitting on the floor with children for some activities, creates a good learning atmosphere. Consequently, in one lesson children quickly and efficiently learned to describe and correctly name relative sizes, such as shortest, longer and longest. Subsequent activities, which the children chose for themselves from prepared resources, included use of a computer, cutting out different lengths, and simple modelling with play dough. Children like their mathematics learning because teachers make it interesting and relevant to their everyday experiences.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

45. It was not possible to make an overall judgement in this wide area of provision, but children are skilled across a good range of activities. From the lessons seen, informal talks with children, and a scrutiny of their past work, it is confirmed that they will reach, or exceed, the expected goals by the end of the year, because the teaching is good. Imaginative activities are provided for children, such as designing a rug for the 'Three Bears', and talking about their different houses and the materials from which they are made. They observe and discuss the weather before adding their observations to a weather chart. Children are confident in using computers as aids to their learning in other areas, such as reading and number. For example, they input instructions into a floor robot, giving it directions to follow a planned pathway. Children gain a good insight into science by sowing

cornflower seeds and watching them grow into tiny plants, and learning the names of their parts; they also study butterflies with the same purpose.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

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

- Children listen carefully to their teachers in order to carry out instructions.
- Although teaching and learning is good, children do not have access to a variety of wheeled toys.

### **Commentary**

46. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. They use and control small equipment, such as pencils and crayons, with confidence, and their paintings show a good level of accuracy in portraying, for example, easily recognisable pictures of people and the 'Three Bears.' Teachers use the indoor facilities well, and children respond by trying very hard, for example, to develop a sequence of controlled movements on high and low floor apparatus. Some of this work is normally found only in classes higher up the primary school. In a good lesson, children were given time to improve and refine their movements before proudly demonstrating them to their friends. This built their self-esteem and successfully encouraged high standards. The current building work and extensions mean that children have too few outside experiences and limited choice of outside equipment, but occasional controlled use of the schools' adventure playground goes some way to make up for this temporary deficiency. The school rightly has plans to introduce more large, wheeled toys, such as tricycles, after the completion of the building.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Standards are below expectations at the end of Year 6, and speaking skills are weak.
- Marking is not used effectively enough to raise standards.

### **Commentary**

47. Standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Overall, pupils achieve well. Listening is average through the school, but speaking is well below average and is a significant weakness. Standards in reading and writing are average in the current Year 2, but below average in Year 6. Pupils with SEN are fully included. The literacy targets in their individual education plans are well thought out to guide their development in small steps. Class work is adjusted so that they work successfully, and teaching assistants give them good guidance.

48. Many pupils enter the school with standards in language and literacy that are well below average. They make very good progress in the infants in learning the basic skills of reading and writing, generally achieving results close to national averages in the Year 2 tests. Compared with similar schools, the results in 2003 were average in reading and above average in writing.

49. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, but standards are affected by their generally limited vocabulary and sentence patterns, together with a marked lack of confidence in speaking and writing formally at length. These weaknesses are evident in Years 1 and 2, but they become more significant with the increasing demands of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. They are particularly evident in the performance of boys, who generally under-perform girls by a greater margin than found nationally. Results in the Year 6 tests in the last two years were well below the national average. Nevertheless, the 2003 results were average compared with similar schools and represented satisfactory achievement by those pupils compared with their Year 2 test results.

50. Standards in listening are satisfactory through the school, because teachers have consistently high expectations for attentiveness, and manage lessons well. Nevertheless, the attention of some pupils, particularly boys, wanders quickly if teachers talk for more than a few minutes without actively involving them. Pupils in Year 2 are keen to answer questions, though many do not pronounce words correctly or clearly enough, resulting in mistakes in writing. These weaknesses continue to Year 6, where most pupils are confident only when speaking informally and in short sentences, with some dialect or slang usage. Elements of drama are used to extend pupils' range, for instance when pupils in Years 3 and 4 performed well in a school assembly, with more able pupils performing a script from memory without prompts. During lessons, though, pupils through the school need more insistent coaching in clear speech. The final review (plenary) at the end of lessons could be used more effectively to give regular practice in speaking formally at length.

51. The early stages of reading are well structured. Year 2 pupils recognise many common words and have secure skills in sounding out unfamiliar words. Books are clearly graded for difficulty to ensure that confidence builds steadily. Recent purchases of good quality fiction have helped to boost interest, so that by Year 6 many pupils read books at the expected level. Lower attaining pupils sound out unfamiliar words successfully, and the number reaching the lower levels in the national tests is similar to the national average. Higher attaining pupils choose difficult books and achieve well. However, not all pupils read regularly at home, and a significant number lack the breadth of experience generally found. Most have very limited ability to compare books, explain character and 'read between the lines'.

52. By Year 2, standards of spelling and punctuation are average. Pupils with higher attainment write lively stories, using dialogue well for dramatic effect. Handwriting develops well, with most pupils using a joined style by Year 3, although they do not learn to write in ink. By Year 6, average attaining pupils structure longer pieces of writing using paragraphs. Most write confidently, but briefly, about personal experiences in informal style, and even more able pupils lack the language range expected in formal writing. Frequent encounters with formal exercises and tightly structured tasks give good support to lower attaining pupils, who achieve well as a result. For more able pupils, though, such guidance is often too limiting, so that they do not consistently develop skills in planning, improving and correcting their own work. Boys in particular need more training in checking their own work for accuracy, with higher expectations for use of a dictionary and thesaurus. Nevertheless, word processing is used very effectively for occasional pieces, such as the autobiographies in the Year 5/6 class, which are corrected and presented to a good standard.

53. Teaching is good overall. All lessons seen in Years 1 to 3 were very good. In Years 4 to 6, one lesson was satisfactory and the others were good. It is a strength that all lessons have a clear focus and are well organised, with good teamwork by teachers, assistants and helpers. Texts for close study are well chosen for their interest and relevance. Teachers adjust their questions so that pupils of all abilities can join in, and good relationships make for a happy working atmosphere. Pupils in all classes behave well. In the best lessons, instruction is energetic and brisk, with effective use of the board to note key points. During their explanations, some teachers make very effective use of quick tasks, for instance where pupils make notes with a partner. This ensures that all are actively involved, practise new skills and prepare better quality answers. Weaknesses in teaching include complicated explanations that lose the attention of some pupils, low expectations for the depth and detail of pupils' answers, and not expecting pupils to check the accuracy of their work before handing

it in. Much of the impact of marking is lost because pupils are not consistently set further work on identified weaknesses or expected to make corrections.

54. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching and standards are regularly monitored. Assessment information is used well to set targets for individuals and year groups. Many officially recommended programmes have been introduced to boost standards. The subject has a high profile in the life of the school. Teachers show very good skills in displaying pupils' best work and print of all kinds to stimulate interest.

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

55. It is a good feature that writing opportunities in other subjects are co-ordinated with literacy targets. Key technical terms are often listed in lesson plans, but in general, teachers need to be more persistent in requiring these terms to be used, and in coaching pupils to explain ideas and processes in full. The school library is inadequate, with little stock, limiting pupils' opportunity to find information independently.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Planning is systematic.
- Good teaching leads to good progress by most pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive in all lessons.
- Teachers and support assistants work together effectively.

### **Commentary**

56. In recent years, pupils have started school with weak mathematical skills. Effective teaching in all classes helps them to achieve well throughout the school. Although the proportion of pupils reaching nationally expected standards is below average, the great majority, including those with special educational needs, make the most of their ability. Their desire to learn is a significant factor in their good progress.

57. Whilst standards at Year 2 are below average, pupils in the infants begin to recognise mathematical patterns and relationships, and develop a range of strategies for doing calculations. They identify basic shapes, such as triangles and rectangles, and mental arithmetic flourishes. The heavy concentration on number work gives pupils a solid grounding in essential skills. When practised in isolation, particular skills such as addition or multiplication are generally performed accurately. However, many pupils are less secure when selecting skills to solve problems. Lessons are planned very carefully to help pupils overcome this difficulty. Work is always matched to the different ability levels in the group, and problem-solving activities gather pace and offer greater challenge as pupils mature.

58. By the end of Year 6, standards are still below average, but strenuous efforts to move pupils up to the next National Curriculum attainment level are beginning to pay dividends. The booster classes taken by the headteacher, and Easter revision classes, help pupils to realise their potential. Target sheets contain explicit descriptions of skills that need to be mastered. In particular, pupils have difficulty with estimation and negative numbers. The increasing use of ICT throughout the school is providing more opportunities to interpret data, with pupils drawing their own conclusions. Weaknesses in communication create problems for many pupils as they try to explain their reasoning. Teachers work on this assiduously. The development of mental arithmetic skills is often

impressive. For example, pupils with learning difficulties have learned how to 'round' numbers and could quickly calculate  $49 + 49$  and  $20 \times 49$  mentally.

59. Teaching is always at least good, and is often very good. Planning responds well to pupils' individual needs. Teachers know their pupils well and have a thorough understanding of mathematical principles. Pupils are being taught to develop strategies that will help them to become more independent as they grow older. Questioning is probing, and all lessons have good pace and appropriate challenge. Explanations are usually crystal clear. Classroom management is tight, yet benevolent. Pupils respond very positively to this. They ask sensible questions and are invariably keen to contribute. Marking is carried out diligently, but does not often provide comments that show pupils how to improve. Teachers usually accomplish this by talking to children in class or when they hand their books back. Pupils with SEN are supported very well.

60. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are divided into 'sets' that put together the highest and lowest attainers, with middle range attainers being taught together. This is being monitored very carefully and will require rigorous evaluation to guarantee continued good progress.

61. The co-ordinator has established procedures for assessment and target setting that are beginning to have an impact on standards. The curriculum framework provides ample opportunities for investigative work and problem solving. Monitoring of teaching and learning is well established. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

62. Attainment is slightly lower than reported at the time of the previous inspection. However, pupils who are now in the school started at a lower level, and progress is more rapid. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and assessment is tighter. Pupils of all abilities are now challenged appropriately. This represents good improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Teachers seize every opportunity to consolidate mathematical concepts. In many lessons there are references to key skills. In geography, pupils interpret graphs and construct simple charts. Data handling features regularly in design and technology and in science lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils regularly carry out scientific investigations.
- Pupils in the juniors make a good start to their learning, because teaching and learning are very good.
- Below average writing skills restrict most pupils' rate of progress.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils to achieve higher standards.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards in Year 2 are average, and match those of the 2003 assessments and those found at the time of the previous inspection. Standards at Year 6 are below average, which is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. However, the current Year 6 pupils started at a lower level, and their achievement is good.

65. Due to timetabling arrangements, no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, so it is not possible to judge teaching for those age groups. However, from talking to pupils and looking closely at their

work, it is clear that they are taught all the required elements of the National Curriculum and that they achieve well. Most pupils have adequate knowledge of a range of scientific facts and

principles normally expected for their ages. There are enough occasions for them to carry out simple scientific investigations. A few higher attaining pupils have more detailed knowledge. For example, they can apply their understanding of how simple electrical circuits work to more complex arrangements of components.

66. Pupils have a good start in the juniors because they receive very good teaching that ensures very good learning. This is achieved partly through the skilled way in which the teacher draws out what pupils have discovered in their work and encourages them, for example, in learning about friction between a moving body and a surface. This approach involves on-going assessment, the results of which the teacher uses to fine tune planning for subsequent lessons and to match work to the needs of individuals or groups. By the end of Year 6, many pupils have a secure enough knowledge of scientific facts to reach at least expected levels of attainment. They understand and have carried out sufficient scientific investigations. However, only the highest attaining pupils have enough scientific vocabulary and ability to write at length to the desired standard. As a result, not enough pupils achieve the expected Level 4 in the statutory assessment tests. A considerable use of commercially produced worksheets in some classes does not help to improve the quality of pupils' writing in the subject.

67. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and discuss it with them. However, teachers' approach to marking is inconsistent across year groups and sometimes between classes in the same or mixed year group. Teachers do not give enough guidance in their marking about what pupils need to do to improve their work, nor do they set pupils targets to achieve, against which they can evaluate their own progress. Additionally, teachers' expectations of how pupils should lay out their work differ. Consequently, the quality of finished work varies considerably, even within groups of pupils defined by ability.

68. It is not possible to judge the quality of leadership and management. The current subject co-ordinator has very recently joined the school, so she does not yet have a complete picture of the arrangements for this part of the curriculum. Nevertheless, she is enthusiastic and determined to help the school to raise pupils' attainment in this core subject. The teachers take every suitable opportunity for pupils to use ICT to help their learning, for example, in drawing up graphs of measurements to do with friction investigations.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

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

- The good improvements in resources mean that pupils of all ages and capabilities can make good progress.
- Pupils across the school use computers regularly.
- Good standards are attained in word processing, researching for information, and constructing both simple and complex presentations.
- Staff are well trained in the subject.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards in ICT are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and in line with them by the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 at the previous inspection were above expectations. Since then, however, the expectations for standards have risen nationally, and the school has done well to achieve the standards that it has. Nevertheless, whilst most pupils develop their keyboard and other computing skills well, the majority do not have the writing skills to achieve higher than the expected level at the end of Year 6.



70. Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the previous inspection, with the introduction of a very well equipped room of networked computers that provides for at least one per pair of pupils when a whole class is present. These computers serve pupils' needs well, both in enhancing learning and in developing their ICT skills, supplementing the good teaching that they experience. As a result, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. All pupils have at least one session per week in this room, sometimes more than one session, and all have equal access to the ICT curriculum.

71. By the end of Year 6, pupils considerably enhance some of their work by 'importing' original photographs they have taken with a digital camera. Additionally, they select and embellish 'word art' to make their work eye-catching. Even pupils in the infants write about their favourite fruit, for example, and then add a picture. Conversely, pupils in Year 2 create a picture on screen, and then add text to name or explain their work.

72. Pupils in the juniors, especially in Years 5 and 6, show that they use computers effectively to research, for example to produce a report about what happened 'this week' in a chosen historical period. Most teachers are skilled in the use of computers, and ably challenge pupils to pursue tasks that take their learning forward at a good pace. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She has a practical, hands-on approach to monitoring the development and use of ICT learning in the school. As a result, all pupils by Year 6 have had experience in all aspects of the ICT curriculum, including data-logging and control systems, and they produce good PowerPoint presentations.

73. The good use of the interactive whiteboards acquired for several classrooms positively influences the impact of ICT across the school curriculum. Both pupils and teachers use them well. Because some of the computers in classrooms are out of date, they are not suitable for current learning requirements. The school recognises this and is actively pursuing means of updating them. Pupils say how much they enjoy their lessons in ICT. This is confirmed in lessons, where behaviour is usually good or better, and pupils of all ages work together on their tasks with enthusiasm and care.

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

74. Good account is taken of the need for pupils to use computers to enhance learning across subjects. Consequently, there are many examples of good quality word-processed work on display and in portfolio collections. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 5 competently researched from the Internet information about the year 1949. They constructed a table and inserted some of the information they had collected. This demonstrated how well teachers and pupils use ICT in subjects such as history and mathematics where, in another lesson, Year 6 pupils entered in tables information about weather conditions in different countries. They then constructed graphs and analysed them.

### **HUMANITIES**

75. **History** was sampled and no secure judgement can be made on the quality of provision. Planning is soundly based on official guidance. Recent work in Year 6 is broadly in line with the expected standard, and this reflects the finding of the previous inspection. Pupils responded well to a good range of imaginative tasks in studying changes in Britain since the 1930s. Neither lessons, nor pupils' work from years other than Years 5 and 6 were seen.

## Geography

Provision is **good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum is well planned and resourced.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and work hard.

### Commentary

76. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The scheme of work meets National Curriculum requirements, with good use of visits and practical activities to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils achieve well, because work is adjusted carefully to match their differing abilities.

77. Pupils in Year 2 understand where they live within the British Isles and that different parts of the world experience different weather patterns. Year 6 work is neatly presented in project folders. Maps and diagrams, for instance, of river formation, are accurately labelled. Factual accounts indicate sound understanding. Lower attaining pupils achieve well because findings are recorded in different ways: drawing, diagrams, charts and maps, as well as written accounts.

78. Teaching is good overall, and two very good lessons were seen: one in the infants and one in the juniors. Lessons are planned in detail and imaginatively resourced, with the result that pupils show strong interest in the work. For instance, pupils in the Year 5/6 class collaborated well when studying photographs, factual data and a town plan, without adult supervision, and behaved very sensibly when tasting different types of curry. Pupils in Year 2 worked hard and with great care to produce a poster promoting a seaside resort. The task was very good practice for their writing skills, and the teacher used discussion very effectively to review their learning of key principles.

79. In a stimulating recent initiative on the theme 'The Olympic Games', each class chose a major country to study, with the resulting work being attractively displayed in the school hall. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils successfully learn about major world faiths.

### Commentary

80. Standards at Years 2 and 6 are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus, and this matches the judgement made at the previous inspection. Pupils with SEN make similar progress to that of other pupils. Only two lessons were observed. However, there is enough evidence from these two lessons, and from talking to pupils and examining their work, to indicate that pupils achieve well through the school.

81. By Year 2, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of some important festivals in the Christian calendar, and relate with reasonable accuracy some stories from the Bible. They are helped to acquire this knowledge not only in lessons, but also in assemblies, for example when they

heard about Jesus and the tax collector, Zacchaeus. Stories such as this, and some that they hear about other religions, such as the meditations of Buddha about helping others, are strong factors in helping to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Similarly, lessons and assemblies for pupils in the juniors, significantly aid this aspect of pupils' learning. One assembly about children of all races and from all faiths, built very well on pupils' understanding of individuality, and of the freedom of all to strive for what they see as their ambition.

82. By Year 6, pupils relate verbally what they know about a good range of world religions, including Hinduism and Sikhism. Independent writing by the higher attaining pupils displays some insight into aspects of faith, and the stories upon which they are founded. For example, some pupils are particularly knowledgeable about Diwali, and the lives of Rama and Sita. Lower attaining pupils have considerable difficulty in expressing their thoughts clearly in writing. Getting pupils lower in the juniors to copy out long sections of prose constructed by their teacher, does not help them to understand what they are writing about. Nevertheless, writing exercises, such as those comparing a Sikh gurdwara with a Christian church, are useful means for developing pupils' ability to understand through comparing and contrasting. To help pupils to do this, they are taken to local churches, including Durham Cathedral. They also use computers and books satisfactorily to find out about other religions.

83. The school is well endowed with religious artefacts and other suitable resources, which teachers use well to illuminate pupils' learning through attractive displays. The generally good teaching uses other techniques to good effect. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked pupils to act out Hindu ceremonies to bring them to life.

84. The subject is soundly led and managed by the co-ordinator, who monitors pupils' work and the curriculum through direct observation of lessons. Much work has recently been accomplished in drawing together the locally Agreed Syllabus with national recommendations. As a result, the curriculum is better arranged to meet pupils' learning needs, and teachers have better guidance available to them.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

**Art and design, design and technology, and music were sampled.**

Provision in this area of learning is **satisfactory** overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Painting, particularly in Reception classes, is bold and often imaginative.
- Evaluating designs and products is well established.
- Provision of opportunities to learn a musical instrument is a positive feature.
- There is insufficient emphasis on three-dimensional work in art.

### **Commentary**

#### **Music**

85. Two music lessons were observed briefly. In both, pupils enjoyed practical activities. Year 2 pupils used their mouths, bodies and percussion to simulate 'weather music'. They showed a good understanding of dynamics. Girls were particularly creative. All pupils in the Year 4 class were learning to play the recorder. Their ability to follow musical notation is particularly impressive. Younger pupils, who sing tunefully and enthusiastically, dominate singing in assemblies. The school does not have a choir or undertake ensemble work, although a number of pupils are learning to play the violin or the cello. Provision reflects the small number of musicians on the staff, and is broadly similar to that reported in the last inspection.

## Design and technology

86. Teaching in both lessons observed was effective. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class were focussed throughout as they set about their designs for a bridge with gusto. One pupil explained that: 'We all know that triangles are a strong shape.' There was good evidence of collaboration as pupils considered different approaches to construction. Pupils in Year 5 knew that they were required to do their very best when making their Hindu door hanging. The teacher has very high expectations and classroom management is tight. The principles of 'design, make and evaluate' are well embedded in teaching and learning styles. Lessons are well planned. Key vocabulary and practices are explained concisely, and all pupils, whatever their ability, are fully involved throughout. Support for pupils with SEN is good.

87. In the course of their school career, pupils experience a range of areas, including food technology. Examples on display include imaginative models of a swing and a seesaw in Year 1, shoe designs in Year 4, and Rangoli patterns used in making a sari in Year 6. The satisfactory standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained.

## Art and design

88. There are many fine displays around the school, many of which incorporate art. The most impressive work is in the Reception classes, where there are eye-catching pictures using only one colour, creative garden designs and faithful representations of work by Van Gogh. Paintings by older pupils in the style of Seurat also show good attention to detail. Some silhouette painting showing townscapes is particularly atmospheric. Carefully worked designs using tessellation and work on 'reflection' show pupils' skills to good effect. However, there are few examples of three-dimensional work, although this element features in schemes of work.

89. Pupils in Year 1 show an understanding of the theme of 'camouflage' in their animal pictures. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced some interesting work on 'eyes' in the two observed lessons. The theme of 'the eyes are the mirror of your soul' provoked stimulating approaches as pupils developed techniques that employed different colours to depict a 'superhero'. The teacher in the Year 4 class was particularly adept at spotting different expressions captured by pupils in their drawings. Lessons are planned and executed effectively. Pupils are prepared to adapt their work, after self-critical analysis. The observational drawing in pupils' sketchbooks adequately conveys, for example, individual interpretation of portraits, flowers and buildings. A feeling for perspective is beginning to develop.

90. There is an annual painting competition. The visit of author Steve Biddle has stimulated an interest in Origami. Many of the qualities highlighted in the previous inspection report are still very much in evidence.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers make learning fun, so that pupils are keen to achieve.
- Lesson planning ensures that pupils learn well in small steps.

## Commentary

91. Only three lessons were seen, each of them to do with games, so it is not possible to make judgements about standards across the physical education curriculum. Nevertheless, in each of the

lessons seen, pupils achieved well in extending, refining and applying their throwing skills, and they attained expected levels of competence. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and this is

transferred well to their pupils, who learn and achieve well in lessons that move at a good pace and which they thoroughly enjoy. In a good Year 6 lesson, for example, the pupils achieved well in improving their javelin throwing skills because a fast cycle of teacher and pupil demonstration, practice and evaluation fully involved all pupils in regular, successful activity.

92. Lessons always begin with a warm-up session, which is not only essential for safety reasons, but gets the lessons off to a focussed and active start. Teachers' planning follows local and national guidance, and generally ensures that pupils learn in increasingly challenging steps that take account of their varied abilities. Notably, the activities in a good Year 3 lesson, to do with improving pupils' hitting skills using a cricket bat and ball, were arranged according to the ability of groups to do so. The higher attaining pupils used small balls, and the lower attaining used large balls. Nevertheless, the higher attaining pupils in one lesson did not receive enough attention to improve their skills as well as they might have.

93. Common to all lessons is the very good relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils. This factor leads to good levels of independence and trust, and pupils' willingly take turns to use the good resources when necessary. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in taking a full and active part in lessons, even when awaiting their turn. For example, in one lesson those waiting their turn purposefully evaluated the work of their friends, which helped to improve their own performance.

94. All aspects of physical education are taught, including swimming, and the school takes satisfactory advantage of entering teams to play competitively against other schools. The subject is well led and managed.

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

95. This curriculum area was sampled and no judgement is made on standards or the quality of provision. Overall, pupils are offered a good curriculum. The scheme of work covers all required elements, taught in separate lessons or within other subjects, particularly science and religious education. Sex education is included for older pupils, who also benefit from a substantial course in drug awareness. The programme also includes citizenship education. The 'On track' programme is a significant initiative. It targets pupils at risk of anti-social behaviour, involving them in after-class activities, and supporting them and their parents through counselling.

96. The two lessons seen were well taught. Activities were well organised and resourced so that they prompted pupils to examine their own experiences in a focused way. Through the sensitive guidance of teachers and assistants, pupils were led successfully to think more deeply about social roles and responsibilities, such as those of a mother. For instance, two boys in the Year 3/4 class decided for themselves that it was more important for a mother to look after the baby in the family than to give them treats.

97. Issues concerning pupils' personal development have a high profile in displays around the school. For instance, pupils have produced well-informed leaflets on safety in the home following a programme organised by the local fire and police services. The impact of the Healthy Schools initiative is evident in pupils' studies of the impact of diet on health. Younger pupils produce posters concerning bullying. Pupils learn about the democratic process when they speak in their class council and vote for school council members, through whom they can make their views known. In all, the range of opportunities makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and attitudes towards school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	3
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	4
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).*