

INSPECTION REPORT

DUBMIRE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Houghton-Le-Spring

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 133558

Headteacher: Mrs Joan Hobbs

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Clark

Dates of inspection: 28th - 30th June 2004

Inspection number: 255997

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:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	367
School address:	Britannia Terrace Fence Houses Houghton-Le-Spring Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	DH4 6HL
Telephone number:	0191 382 3071
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ethel Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	n/a

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dubmire Primary School is larger than most other primary schools and serves the local area. Most pupils come from the immediate area which is largely rented or local authority housing, with some owner occupied properties. Overall, the school's socio-economic context is well below average. Its take up for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are of white British ethnic background; 2 per cent come from Asian British, black British Caribbean, black British African, Chinese and other mixed backgrounds. One per cent of the school's population are asylum seekers and currently two pupils are learning English as an additional language. When children first start school, their attainment is well below that expected of their age, particularly their communication skills, language, personal and social development. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average (23 per cent), as is the proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational need. The range of needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication problems, physical disabilities and autism. The school opened in September 2002, an amalgamation of an infant and junior school, on a new site with additional facilities for community sports and arts. There have been several changes of staff in the last year and a half; two are on temporary contracts. At the time of the inspection, three teachers were on supply.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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14591	Richard Perkin	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music English as an additional language
17685	Linda Spooner	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography Religious education The Foundation Stage Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a rapidly improving and already effective school. Standards are broadly average and pupils of all needs and abilities are now achieving well overall. Teaching is good and pupils' personal development is very good. The school is well led and managed under the very good educational guidance of the headteacher. It is well regarded by both parents and pupils and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership from the headteacher has led to good teaching and a substantial improvement in standards and achievement in a short time;
- Pupils behave very well and there is very good provision for their personal development;
- Pupils' learning is enriched by very good extra-curricular activities, very strong links with the local community and high quality accommodation;
- Standards in writing are below average;
- The role of the assistant headteachers is underdeveloped;
- Assessment is not always accurate enough to form a sound basis for planning and pupils' targets are too general.

The school opened in September 2002 and has not been inspected before.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is good, overall, including that of pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. No significant differences were seen between the achievement of girls and boys. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well and make good progress in all their areas of learning. However, few are likely to meet the goals expected of children of this age by the time they move into Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well. Standards are below average overall in reading, writing and mathematics, largely because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and significant learning difficulties in this particular year group. Standards in reading are close to the national average by the end of Year 2. Achievement dips in Year 3 but improves rapidly in Years 4 to 6. Overall, pupils achieve well. Standards in the current Year 6 are slightly below average in English; they are average in reading but below average in writing. Standards are in line with nationally expected levels in both mathematics and science. This is a marked improvement on the school's results in its first year, when standards were well below average in English and science and in the bottom 5 per cent nationally in mathematics. The as yet unvalidated results in 2004 show a substantial increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in all three subjects and a marked improvement in the proportion reaching the higher level. The school has exceeded its realistic targets by a wide margin. It is not possible to show trends over time or patterns in the attainment of particular groups of pupils because the school only opened in 2002.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they behave very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in the nursery and in Years 2 and 6, where some excellent teaching was seen. Teaching and learning are good in the reception classes and in Years 1, 4 and 5 but poor teaching in some lessons in Year 3 results in ineffective learning at times. In most lessons, teachers expect a great deal from their pupils. They give clear explanations and give pupils lots of opportunities to express their own ideas. Teachers have high expectations; consequently, pupils' behaviour is very good and they work hard, both in groups and individually. Weaknesses in teaching are seen when lessons are not sufficiently well planned or organised, explanations are muddled and the work is not matched to pupils' needs, resulting in lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Teaching assistants are used satisfactorily; they give good quality assistance to pupils with special educational needs. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are good in terms of marking their work but assessment is not always accurate enough to form a sound basis for planning what pupils need to learn next or to set them precise targets.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which, with very good provision for extra-curricular activities, promotes good achievement. The good curriculum for nursery and reception children gives them a good start to their education. The very good accommodation and resources and very good support for learning outside of the school day, promote pupils' personal development very well. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is satisfactory and very good links with the community and other schools contribute well to pupils' learning and good achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher; other members of staff assist the headteacher well. The role of the assistant headteachers, however, is still developing; management of Key Stage 1 is better than management of Key Stage 2. The governance of the school is good and all statutory requirements are met. Management systems are effective and enable pupils to achieve well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the education the school provides for their children and have no significant concerns about it. Pupils like coming to school and take a keen interest in the range of activities it provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school;
- Develop the role of the assistant headteachers, particularly with reference to Key Stage 2;
- Improve the accuracy of assessment so as to form a sound basis for planning and to set pupils specific targets to help them learn effectively.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good and pupils reach standards that are overall broadly average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' performance in the national tests has significantly improved from last year;
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well;
- Standards in writing throughout the school are below average;
- Standards in physical education and singing are good.

Commentary

1. Children start nursery with attainment overall well below that expected for their age in all the areas of learning, but most noticeably so in communication, language and literacy. They achieve well in the nursery and reception classes because of good teaching and a stimulating learning environment but, by the end of their reception year, few are likely to meet the goals expected in any of the areas of learning.
2. Last year was the first for which confirmed national test results are available because the school only opened in 2002. It is not possible, therefore, to show trends over time or patterns in the attainment of particular groups. Performance for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 was below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals, results were broadly the same in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Standards for pupils in the present Year 2 have improved and are now average in reading and below average in speaking and listening and, more markedly, in writing. Standards are below average in mathematics. The underachievement by girls in last year's tests is not evident in the present Year 2 and appears to be related to a particular group of pupils. The main reason that standards overall are below rather than in line with national expectations in the current Year 2, is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom have significant learning difficulties. Teacher assessments in science in 2003 showed standards to be well below average. Pupils at present in Year 2 are attaining broadly at expected levels for their age.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (n/a)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.3 (n/a)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.8 (n/a)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The group of pupils who took the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2003 included a substantial number of pupils with special educational needs, who had also performed poorly when they took the national tests when they were age 7. Standards in English and science in 2003 were well below the national average and the average for schools with similar rates of prior attainment. In mathematics, the results were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally and were well below the average for similar schools. The school has consequently set conservative targets for 2004 and beyond. These targets, judging by the unconfirmed test

results for 2004, will be greatly surpassed. The results in 2004 show a very marked increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in all three subjects and also a considerable improvement in the proportion reaching the higher level.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.4 (n/a)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.0 (n/a)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.6 (n/a)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. The inspection findings for pupils at present in Year 6 are that standards in mathematics and science are broadly average. In English, reading standards are average but standards in writing are lower, so that overall attainment in English is below average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are at expected levels for their age. Pupils' good achievement in mathematics has been brought about by consistently good or better teaching and by targeted training for staff. The improvements in science are the result of good teaching in the large majority of lessons. Both reading and writing have been given much attention by the literacy team and the addition of extra guided reading sessions has had a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are at expected levels and pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and the rich facilities for developing their ICT skills. Standards in physical education are good and benefit from the very good accommodation. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement on standards in religious education or other subjects.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective help they receive in lessons. Those for whom English is an additional language achieve well because they are supported sensitively in regular sessions with an expert support teacher from the local education authority. Additionally, teachers are well aware of their needs. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated and achieve as well as the other pupils. For the most part, higher attainers achieve well because they are given challenging work in most lessons. In a small number of lessons, however, their needs are not fully met. Pupils identified as having a particular talent in art and design benefit from the extra opportunities they have in working alongside artists.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. They are growing in maturity, because the school fosters their personal development very well. Arrangements for promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are very good. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory, but improving, and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes help them to learn effectively;
- A very good range of activities is provided for the pupils who are very keen to participate in all the school offers;
- Very good relationships help create a happy learning environment;
- High expectations of behaviour are set and achieved; the school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment;
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very well and helps them become mature and responsible.

Commentary

6. Pupils like coming to school, are keen to learn and find lessons interesting. They feel that teachers make learning fun and they enjoy the variety of experiences that the school offers. Pupils' good attitudes to school and to their work contribute well to their personal development, attainment and achievement. This positive attitude to work is encouraged from the moment the children enter the nursery. In the reception year, children make good progress towards the goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs have equally positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons. It is only on a small number of occasions that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, due to unsatisfactory or poor teaching, and this hinders pupils' progress. The high participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities illustrates pupils' enthusiasm for school and contributes to their good overall achievement.
7. The school gives a very high profile to pupils' social and moral development. Relationships are very good throughout the school because pupils have a very good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community. This helps to create a happy environment in which pupils want to learn. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and almost always try to do what they know is right. They appreciate the individual rewards and 'house' awards system for good work and behaviour and know that their efforts are valued. There is little bullying and pupils are respectful of those who come from different cultural backgrounds. If any form of harassment does occur, parents and pupils agree that it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by a member of staff. There have been three fixed term exclusions during the last school year involving one boy and one girl. This is a success when consideration is given to the number of pupils and an indication of the school's strong commitment to inclusion.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	385	1	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1	2	0
Black or Black British - African	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	1	0	0

8. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem is fostered by the system of monitors and helpers across the school. They willingly accept responsibility by taking on jobs in class or becoming elected to the school council. Older pupils are given a higher level of responsibility in various monitoring roles or the very important position of house captains, which have to be applied for to make sure they have suitable leadership qualities. Pupils get on very well together and collaborate very well in play and work. They are very friendly, polite and welcoming, greeting visitors with a smile or a cheerful 'hello'. They hold doors open for each other and are quick to say sorry when the need arises.

9. Spiritual development is an integral part of the curriculum and assemblies and is planned around themes that are relevant to pupils. This helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. Class discussions, especially in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) lessons, give very good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own. They show respect for the differing views of others. The school promotes racial awareness very well and celebrates the differences in the rich, multicultural society that the pupils live in. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. The multi-faith Christingle service held in school is a special occasion, bringing together people of different backgrounds and faiths to celebrate. Pupils are taught to appreciate and respect others' beliefs, ideas and culture and they show a good level of fairness and tolerance. This is nurtured in subjects such as geography, history, religious education, art and music. Many pupils are taking part in the school performance of the 'Wizard of Oz'. This contributes widely to their personal development as they benefit greatly from working with a professional musical director.
10. During the last year the school has worked closely with the local authority on the 'Spike' project, which has helped to improve significantly the levels of attendance. Pupils are well motivated by the range of class and individual rewards. Any unexplained absences are followed up rigorously. Punctuality has improved over the last year but there are still a few persistent latecomers each day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.1	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. The curriculum is satisfactory but with strengths in the very good provision of extra-curricular enrichment. Standards of care, welfare, health and safety are good. Partnerships with parents are satisfactory and those with the community are very well developed.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The range of teaching quality is from excellent to poor, leading to a dip in learning in Year 3. Very effective teaching leads to very good learning in the nursery and in Years 2 and 6 in the majority of lessons. Pupils learn well in the reception classes and in Years 1, 4 and 5, where much of the teaching is good. The checking of pupils' work is satisfactory in the main, though assessments are not always sufficiently accurate to form a basis for planning for individual needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching quality is good overall;
- Teaching is very good in the nursery but assessments of what children have achieved at the end of the reception year are misleading;
- There are considerable strengths in teaching throughout the school;
- The very wide range of teaching quality leads to ineffective learning at times;
- The use of assessment is inconsistent from class to class.

Commentary

11. The following table shows the range of teaching seen during the inspection. The very good and excellent teaching was mainly seen in the nursery, Year 2 and Year 6 classes. Most teaching in the reception classes and in Years 1, 4 and 5 was good. In Year 3, teaching quality was poor in mathematics and science and satisfactory in one class in literacy. Judicious management has ensured that differences in teaching quality have had a minimal impact on learning as far as possible, by pairing teachers in the same year group to plan and work together. The teaching of English, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design and physical education was good overall, enabling pupils to achieve well and make huge gains in learning this year. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in other subjects as insufficient teaching was seen.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2)	10 (17)	35 (58)	12 (20)	0 (0)	2 (3)	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.

12. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning, with particular strengths in providing imaginative and stimulating activities in all three classes. As a result, children achieve well in all areas of learning, with a small number in line to achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals. The teaching seen in the nursery was often of a very high quality. Skilful use of songs and rhymes to reinforce learning contributed to a seamless succession of activities, in which children had a lot of free choice to decide what to do. Teaching was good in one of the reception classes and satisfactory in the other. However, because the teachers plan together and work with different groups from both classes, children receive a balanced education and learn well. Teachers and nursery nurses work effectively together and this makes a valuable contribution to the good provision being made. Assessment ensures that teachers and support staff have a clear view about how well the children are doing in relation to the activities and learning targets planned in lessons. Sound use is made of these assessments to help teachers plan what needs to be learnt next. However, assessments at the end of the reception year are not precise enough. Teachers do not take enough account of all of the expectations in each area of learning. This results in an inflated profile of achievement and does not provide a clear enough picture of standards when the children transfer to Year 1.
13. In the majority of lessons, there is very good encouragement of pupils with the result that they learn well. Resources are used effectively, explanations are clear and teachers have high expectations of what pupils will learn. There are good strategies to involve pupils through frequent opportunities to talk over ideas with a partner. In guided reading sessions, pupils learn very well from each other as they read a book together and share ideas. In most classes, pupils learn productively and show good levels of concentration and independence. In lessons where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teachers' very good relationships with pupils and insistence on high standards of behaviour continue to be notable strengths and ensure that pupils are attentive and concentrate well. Planning is good and assessment of pupils' work enables pupils of different abilities to make progress. However, evaluations of what was taught in previous lessons are not always used sufficiently well to plan what pupils need to learn next or to set pupils targets for the next stage of learning.

14. There is a very wide range of teaching quality in the school, leading to a dip in learning in Year 3 at present. This means that pupils have a lot of catching up to do in the next year group to make up lost ground. In lessons where teaching quality is poor, the lesson usually begins well, then tails off as explanations become less and less clear. While some interesting approaches are planned, explanations are not well organised and at times are confusing, resulting in restlessness and inattention. Learning is further hampered because tasks are not differentiated to match the needs of different ability groups, and in mathematics are too easy for the majority of higher attainers. In the best teaching, teachers question very effectively and press for clear explanations. As a result, pupils work very hard, with high levels of interest. Relationships are warm and friendly and very constructive, with ample opportunities to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Tasks are very well matched to challenge pupils of different abilities and pupils have to work hard to complete their tasks to the satisfaction of their teachers.
15. Much of the marking of pupils' work gives clear points for development, reflecting the push the leadership and management of the school have had throughout the year on teachers having consistent expectations of presentation. There are some excellent examples of marking in Year 6, that teach pupils how to improve their work. The following is an example: *'Well done! You set the scene quickly, explaining how your characters come to be in their predicament. You showed me the thoughts of your characters through direct speech and direct comment. More descriptions of stimulating action and setting would have improved your story. Also remember - new line/new speaker in direct speech.'* Where the weakness lies is in the inconsistent use of assessment to determine what is taught, based on what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Pupils are not always sufficiently well involved in setting their own targets and monitoring how well they are meeting them. There is, however, some excellent practice in the school where teaching is highly effective, because the next day's lesson has been radically adapted to help pupils to understand a concept they had not grasped the day before. In Year 2, for example, pupils made measurable gains in understanding as they learnt to calculate by adjusting numbers up and down from ten, mentally using one of the many different methods the teacher demonstrated to them over the course of two days. Resources, such as a string of beads and a device that 'grabbed ten' at a time, had the children gasping with wonder. By the end, higher attainers were confidently adjusting numbers by large incremental leaps such as 59.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is enriched by a very good range of activities both during and after school, and promotes pupils personal development very well. A good curriculum for nursery and reception children gives them a good start to their education. Accommodation is very good. Resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a sound curriculum; the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good;
- The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development;
- There is very good support for learning outside of the school day;
- Accommodation and resources are very good and are used well to promote good achievement.

Commentary

16. The curriculum is satisfactory and is being adapted sensibly in accordance with the schools emerging needs. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and there is a good mix of indoor and outdoor activities to promote children's increasing independence. The school meets all statutory requirements for collective worship, religious, health and sex education and drugs awareness. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well and the decision to give extra time and emphasis to reading has paid off in terms of improved standards. The school regularly uses external consultants to pull in new ideas, such as those recently used to monitor and demonstrate the teaching of English. Schemes of work cover the National Curriculum but at present do not include the use of other subjects to improve pupils' skills in writing.
17. Strengths lie in the relatively new system of devolving partial responsibility for meeting targets in individual education plans to classroom support assistants, some of whom have received training. The objectives and related activities in individual education plans are clear and contribute well to pupils' good achievement. A particular strength is in the 'information for review' sheets that are completed by staff. These assess the current situation, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, attainment in specific areas and any other additional information. A further strength is in the quality of monitoring of planning by the special needs co-ordinator. Assessment through tracking individual progress is still at a relatively unsophisticated level, as this is mainly through analysing national and optional test scores. The co-ordinator is fully aware that this is an area for development and plans are already in place to introduce a much more detailed system to track small steps in learning in the near future.
18. The school runs a comprehensive programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), providing good access of equality and opportunity for the majority of pupils. The curriculum is doing a great deal to promote racial equality in this largely white school, through educational visits and visitors in school and in the different subjects of the curriculum.
19. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. A wide range of clubs enrich the curriculum for pupils. These are popular and well attended. Thirty-six pupils, for example, attended the Drama Club and took an active part, singing, dancing or acting. Other activities include football, netball, fitness for fun, gymnastics and dance, as well as art, textiles, choir, recorders, German, computers and chess for those pupils whose interests lie outside sport. The clubs take place all over the school, including the grounds and facilities outside, making use of the very good accommodation. In short, there is something for everyone.
20. Teachers and support staff are appropriately deployed for the delivery of the curriculum. The issue of teachers who have experience of only junior or infant classes has been addressed through, for example, co-ordinators for subject areas working together to familiarise themselves with the barriers to learning in the different age ranges. The new school building is well designed, making collaboration between teachers in the same year groups easier, and ensures very good access for all pupils including those with mobility problems.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The caring atmosphere in school helps pupils to enjoy their learning and contributes to their achievement. The school provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance. The way the school seeks and acts upon pupils' views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a welcoming place, where pupils are cared for well and helped to mature and gain in confidence;
- Teachers and other staff provide very good personal support for pupils but assessment is not always accurate enough to guide pupils' learning;
- The arrangements to help children settle into the nursery and reception classes are good;
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon. They contribute very well to the development of the school.

Commentary

21. Pupils are safe and secure at school and the good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on learning. Daily routines are well planned and pupils are carefully supervised when at work or play. The governing body has very recently taken over the responsibility of the building from the local education authority. Nevertheless, action has been taken to minimise hazards, to ensure that the building and equipment are safe for use both during and outside of the school day.
22. The school is always ready to listen to pupils and offer very good personal support as their needs arise. Relationships throughout the school are very good, so pupils feel secure and know there is always someone to whom they can turn for help. Child protection procedures are good and staff are careful to identify and support vulnerable children.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class so they take a full and active part in lessons and achieve as well as other pupils. Their achievements are regularly assessed and the information gathered used satisfactorily to build the next steps in learning. The school has usefully employed a teaching assistant with expertise in behaviour management skills. Her knowledge has been used well to introduce successful strategies, such as the traffic light system, which has helped to improve significantly the behaviour of a specific group of pupils. A small number of pupils who sometimes have difficulty in controlling their behaviour or anger are taught suitable strategies for coping. The school is successful at enabling pupils to remain in mainstream education. Information about pupils' academic achievements is not always accurate enough to form a sound basis for planning the next steps of learning.
24. Staff know pupils' difficulties well and respond effectively to meet their needs. This understanding begins before the children start school, when staff in the nursery visit families at home to exchange information about the children, in order to maximise support and guidance. Pre-visits to school and sensitive induction into the nursery and reception classes help the children to gradually ease into their new routines. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to look after the younger children at playtimes and lunchtimes, when they join the reception class.
25. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute towards improving the school. They know that their views matter and the school will try and act upon what they say. The school council helps pupils to learn about democratic decision taking and makes a real contribution to life in school. For example, the work of the council was instrumental in implementing the markings in the playground which have helped to improve the quality of playtimes. Meetings are organised well and pupils' questions and issues raised are relevant to them and the school. Their suggestions are taken seriously. The house meetings also provide a useful forum for pupils to put forward their views and concerns.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Links with the community and other schools are very good and have a good effect on pupils' learning and raising achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's emphasis on building constructive relationships with parents is good;
- Parents receive good information about the school and curriculum;
- Pupils' end of year progress reports do not give a clear indication on how well they are doing in comparison to children at other schools;
- Very good links with the community and other schools enhance curricular opportunities for pupils;
- The school enhances community life by providing a wide range of activities for its members.

Commentary

26. Since the opening of the school, much has been done to establish its place within the community and gain the support of parents. The school is increasingly seen as a central part of the community and parents are pleased with the education it provides for their children. Right from the start of the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools parents have been involved with changes taking place to establish the new primary school. For example, they were consulted fully about a name for the school, its logo and the colours of the uniform.
27. The school seeks various ways of encouraging parents to become actively involved in school life and their children's learning. Nursery staff begin to build trusting relationships with parents when they visit families at home before the children are first admitted to school. The partnership is built upon successfully when children start school. At the start of each day, parents are welcomed into the nursery to help settle their children. Staff are readily accessible to talk to parents should they have any concerns about their children. The 'Talk Talk' initiative, introduced with the help of 'Sure Start', enables parents to become involved in their children's learning through literacy based activities. 'Chatterbox', a similar scheme, has been introduced in the parent and toddler group, which encourages parents to take an interest in their children's learning from a very early stage. Parents of Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the extra classes designed to boost achievement, as they learnt what their children needed to learn in preparation for the end of year tests. This is very helpful as it means they are able to support their children at home. Many parents attend assemblies and other events involving their children, but very few parents help in school regularly. A parents' association has not yet been set up but parental support for raising money to help various charities is good.
28. Communication with parents is good. Regular newsletters and booklets keep parents very well informed of topics to be covered each term, day-to-day matters and school life. Parents have good opportunities to find out about how their children are progressing through meetings and the twice yearly interim reports. These reports include targets for future learning and provide a useful focal point for discussion. The end of year reports give a satisfactory summary of pupils' achievements but they do not give a clear indication of the attainment level pupils are working at or if they are performing as expected for their age. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are provided with satisfactory opportunities to attend annual and termly reviews as appropriate.

29. The school makes make full use of local resources in terms of working with people and visiting places to bring learning alive for the pupils. Pupils are designing and making a school banner, which will be shortly unveiled at a special service in school with many members of the community invited and taking part in the celebrations. Very good relationships with the Parent and Toddler Group, held on the school premises, help forge early links with parents and ensure a smooth transition of children into school. The school works closely with the local secondary schools and other primary schools. There are regular opportunities for the sharing of curricular issues and staff expertise. The links with other schools enable pupils to take part in competitive events and this adds to their social development.
30. The school provides a base for a wide range of out of school activities for pupils and members of the community. Out of normal hours, the school is buzzing and alive with children and adults attending the activities on offer. This has enhanced community life tremendously, as local facilities are few and activities are provided at minimal costs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is assisted very well by the deputy headteacher and well by other members of staff. The governance of the school is good and all statutory requirements are met. The good management systems are effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good, purposeful leadership from the headteacher has led to a substantial improvement in standards in a short time;
- The role of the governing body is developing rapidly and its work is focused on helping shape the direction of the school;
- The deputy headteacher makes a significant contribution to the leadership of the school. She has been influential in her role of developing assessment systems. She leads and manages the special needs provision well;
- The role of the assistant headteachers is underdeveloped and does not contribute substantially to the leadership and management of the school;
- Arrangements for checking the performance of the school are good and the effective action taken to address areas of weakness has played an important part in raising standards and pupils' achievement.

Commentary

31. The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has been successful in creating a warm, caring school but also maintains a very clear focus upon raising standards and how she is going to achieve this. She has steered the school firmly through a period of significant and fundamental change; two schools have amalgamated successfully to form a primary school and have moved into new, purpose built premises. As the school develops into a fully fledged primary school, much credit for the rapid improvements and growth is due to the committed leadership of the headteacher. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and together they have established a very effective working partnership. They have complementary skills and share the same ambitions to see the school succeed for the benefit of the pupils.

32. The main priority for the headteacher and governors has been the efficient organisation of the school to establish a firm foundation for its future development. The work of the governing body was instrumental in first ensuring that the headteacher and staff were appointed and then achieving the move of two schools into one building. The headteacher and governors, in consultation with the local authority, chose to maintain the stability of previous appointments and expertise as the new staffing structure was established. During the past two years there has been a great deal to do and the leadership and management have effectively addressed staffing difficulties, some of which pre-dated amalgamation, and ongoing building issues. The school is now operating well and many efficient systems are in place.
33. The governing body is effective. Its role has developed rapidly and this represents quite an achievement in the short time it has been established. Governors have given the headteacher their full support in setting up this new school and shaping its future direction. They have developed a good range of strategies for checking on the work of the school. For example, they visit the school, observing lessons and talking to children helps them gain a good understanding of the main strengths and areas for development. During the inspection, the governor responsible for ICT joined Year 6 pupils working with 'PowerPoint', preparing presentations for their parents. In consequence, governors have access to a lot of useful information to help them make decisions about the school's future direction. Through their commitment and involvement, they have a good input into the development of the school.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed well by the deputy headteacher. She is relatively new to the post and priority has been given to those pupils with statements and preparing documentation for formal statutory assessment, together with other remedial work in getting records back up-to-date. She has a clear overview of the strengths and areas for development and has taken appropriate action to deal with changes that have needed to be made, in order to improve the provision. One of the priorities for development is to look at assessment and develop a system to monitor small steps in pupils' learning. The school has a firm commitment to inclusion, particularly pupils who have been excluded from other schools. The deputy headteacher has done much work in introducing new whole school systems for tracking pupils' progress. This links in very well with her studies for a national leadership qualification. The role of the assistant headteachers is underdeveloped; they are involved in routine and organisational matters and responsible for communicating issues from staff to the senior management meetings. However, the management of Key Stage 1 shows a better grasp of the role and its attendant responsibilities, whereas the management of Key Stage 2 does not yet contribute substantially to the overall leadership and management of the school by, for example, taking greater responsibility for standards and the quality of teaching.
35. The 2003 test results at the end of Year 6, the school's first set of performance data, were poor. Results in other non-statutory tests were also very disappointing and unexpected. A detailed analysis of the results year group by year group showed where the weaknesses lay. For example, it emerged that pupils had missed out on a lot of basic work in mathematics, such as fractions, measures and calculation. There was a similar picture in reading and writing, with a large number of pupils scoring below average for their age. This led to further self-evaluation by the headteacher and a request to the local authority to visit the school to verify concerns. An authority review of teaching and learning was extensive and revealed that teaching and learning was inconsistent across the school and, within the National Literacy Strategy, it was not good enough. Following the review, a great deal of time has been spent on improving teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching literacy and numeracy. Staff have observed demonstration lessons by consultants and colleagues and have then had the opportunity to put strategies into practice. Further monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders took place to ensure improvements were taking place quickly enough. This effective action has led to good teaching and a substantial improvement in standards and achievement in a short time.

36. The performance of staff is managed effectively and arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good. The headteacher has created effective teaching teams by pairing experienced and less experienced teachers who share a year group. This works well, with a balance of new ideas and expertise with experience. The poor teaching in Year 3 has been identified and appropriate steps taken to remedy the situation. Teams for leading and managing literacy, art and ICT are good but the leadership of science is underdeveloped. A very good appointment has been made. An experienced co-ordinator for mathematics joins the school in September as a Year 6 teacher. Her teaching of mathematics was observed and it is of a high standard.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	856,336	Balance from previous year	70,485
Total expenditure	880,125	Balance carried forward to the next	46,696
Expenditure per pupil	2,573		

37. The school opened in September 2002 and, therefore, did not have a full budget allocation for the year April 2002 to March 2003. Financial management over the past two years, particularly through the process of setting up and equipping a new school, has been good. Prudent budgeting has enabled the school to make an efficient transition to primary status. The school actively pursues principles of good practice, with regard to obtaining best value for the school, and monitors spending carefully. At the time of setting up the new school, the headteacher and governors successfully secured funding to provide the additional facilities for sports and arts activities. The facilities enhance community life and are extremely well used.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected in most areas of learning, particularly in communication skills, personal development, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, although the full range of ability is represented. In the nursery, almost 20 per cent of the children are included on the school's register for special educational needs. The percentage across the reception year is much smaller, at 5 per cent. Children who have special educational needs are provided with good adult support and achieve well. Teaching is good overall and, as a result, the children achieve well in all areas of learning, with some in line to achieve or exceed the early learning targets, though the majority are unlikely to meet the goals expected at the start of Year 1. The teaching seen in the nursery was often of a very high quality. Teaching was good in one of the reception classes and satisfactory in the other, but joint planning and teaching by the two reception teachers in both classes ensures that children receive equality of access and opportunity in their learning. Teachers and nursery nurses work effectively together and this makes a valuable contribution to the good provision being made. Joint planning across the Foundation Stage is detailed and takes appropriate account of all six areas of learning. Daily literacy and numeracy lessons are taught in the reception classes and this prepares the children well for work in Year 1. Long-term planning and photographic evidence show that the children are provided with a wide range of interesting opportunities for learning, often enriched by visits and visitors.
39. A particular strength lies in the regular planning meetings, enabling staff to gain a continuous overview of what has been achieved in relation to the activities and learning targets planned in lessons. However, at the end of the reception year assessment of the achievement of each child against the early learning targets is not precise enough. Teachers do not take enough account of all of the expectations in each area of learning to provide an accurate picture of standards when the children transfer to Year 1. The accommodation and resources are of a high quality and their use is planned carefully to meet the children's learning needs. Effective use is made of the outside learning area. Relationships with parents are very positive and teachers provide them with good information.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in this area of learning. The balance between adult support and self-choice activities is carefully planned and children become increasingly independent.

Commentary

40. Children, accompanied by parents or carers, come into the nursery confidently. They settle happily to the interesting range of activities provided. They are very well behaved and have positive relationships with others and very good attitudes to work. Adults provide a welcoming feel to the start of each session. Independence is consistently encouraged by the very good organisation of the activities and resources. The good provision for personal development continues in the reception classes. For example, in a lesson linked to the story 'The Rainbow Fish', children showed much sensitivity to the needs of others. Many opportunities are provided for children to learn about themselves and others. Staff are very good role models through what they say and do. Routines are very clearly set and children know what is expected of them. Teaching is very good. Teachers and support staff know the children well. Each child is highly valued as an individual and their behaviour, attitudes and relationships are in line with expectations.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In most lessons, teachers and support staff provide good opportunities for children to develop communication skills. Occasionally, children are not given enough time to reflect on the question being asked before responding;
- Children are provided with many opportunities to develop reading and writing skills as they move through the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

41. Teaching is good overall and activities are planned effectively to capture the children's interest. Children in both the nursery and reception classes listen attentively to adults and to other children. In one of the reception class lessons, children began to lose concentration when the activities did not capture and keep their interest. By the end of the reception year, the substantial majority are attentive to what others say and to what is happening in stories. Although the speaking skills of the majority are not as well developed as those seen in most schools, children are achieving well from a relatively low starting point. Teachers plan many opportunities that help children to use language for communication and to help them organise their thinking. Sometimes adults do not provide children with enough time to think before they respond to questions and so opportunities are missed to develop their communication skills further.
42. Although most children are unlikely to reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year, they achieve well and a small proportion are likely to meet or exceed the level expected. By the end of the reception year, most children are beginning to read from the early books in the school's reading scheme. They draw on what they interpret from the pictures and some recognise a few familiar words. The links between sounds and letters are taught well throughout the nursery and reception classes. By the start of Year 1, more able children identify and hear letter sounds at the start, end and in the middle of simple words. In writing, children in the nursery are beginning to use marks and strings of letters to communicate. They are given good reasons for writing, such as menus in the role play area or sending invitations to come to the teddy bears' picnic. By the end of reception, a large number of children are able to use their knowledge of letters to write words they know. Higher ability children write more complex words and phrases such as, 'I like the smell of sausages' (sausages).

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics is made purposeful through a wide range of focus and play activities and this helps the children to enjoy learning;
- Mathematical skills and language are taught systematically.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are good overall and children achieve well, though they are unlikely to meet the goals expected at the end of the reception year. Children in the nursery count numbers to five with adult support, with some higher ability children able to place numbers in the correct order. Teaching in the lesson seen was very good and very enjoyable for all. For example, with adult help the children were able to order five teddy bears of different sizes. Through a very carefully planned balance of songs, rhymes, instructions and repetition learning was rapid. Counting activities are challenging and, through the wide range of language development and creative opportunities, many recognise a number of colours and some simple shapes. Children in the reception classes are beginning to learn about time. In the lessons observed, and with adult help, most were able to read o'clock, with some higher ability children able to read half past the hour. Work in books shows that the more able children are beginning to use their number knowledge to add and subtract numbers to ten. The majority of children are working with number recognition, counting and adding numbers to five or ten.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of key words and language for thinking is carefully planned into activities through discussions and skilful questioning;
- Effective use is made of both the inside and outside environment.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good and, although attainment is below expectations, children achieve well. Children are provided with a wide range of carefully planned and stimulating activities. This builds well on their previous experiences and helps them achieve well. Children in the nursery are provided with many opportunities to explore the world around them. In one activity, for example, children learned much about the different parts of a plant. Planning is based on the provision of practical activities and learning through play, both indoors and in the outside learning area.
45. Work in books indicates that by the end of reception, for example, higher ability children accurately classify materials into simple groups according to their texture. They explore things through trying them out, such as finding out whether or not a boat made from malleable material will float or sink. The majority do not yet have the key language skills to help them deal with more abstract ideas. This aspect of the curriculum is enriched by activities such as visits to the Fire Station and Sunderland Museum, and a visit by the dental hygienist. Computers are almost always available as part of the free choice activities. Children who choose to work on these make satisfactory use of the mouse to control events on the screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given time to explore a wide range of activities in the classrooms and through the provision of regular opportunities to play and learn outside.

Commentary

46. Teaching is good. By the end of the reception year, most children move with confidence, control and co-ordination and are in line to attain the expected goals in this aspect. Fewer children are likely to meet the expected Learning Goals in the development of skills that require more precise movements, such as using scissors and pencil control. By the end of reception, skills such as running, climbing and controlling a range of wheeled toys are in line with expectations. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to improve writing, colouring and cutting and sticking skills. Although these are not as well developed as is expected of children of this age, they achieve well over time.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good balance between adult involvement and independence results in children confidently building up their skills and being able to make their own choices.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good. Attainment in this area of learning is in line with expectations by the end of the reception year, particularly in art and music activities. Opportunities for role play encourage the children to relate well to others as they develop language, imagination and practical skills. Standards in this aspect of learning are not yet in line with expectations. A good number of the children do not have the language skills to act out a sequence of events as in a story and, at the same time, keep a sense of character. Good opportunities are provided for children in both the nursery and reception classes to explore paints and other materials independently, as well as with adult support. As a result, children are developing in confidence. Children in the nursery join in with a wide range of familiar rhymes and songs. By the end of reception, they sing rhythmically in class and assemblies, although some find it difficult to do the actions at the same time. Role play is planned and provided for both indoors and outside. In one reception lesson, for example, the children were pirates, shaking half filled plastic bottles of water to represent the waves on the sea.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards show considerable improvement, though they are slightly below average overall;
- The quality of leadership and management is good and has led to considerable improvement in a short time;
- Teaching and learning are good overall;
- Writing is in need of improvement;
- Achievement is good; pupils apply themselves well in lessons.

Commentary

48. Standards in the 2003 national tests were well below average by the end of Year 6, both nationally and compared to similar schools. Standards in the current Year 6 are markedly better. Although below average overall, they are much closer to nationally expected levels. Standards in reading are broadly average, while those in writing and speaking and listening are slightly below by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, standards were average in reading and below average in writing in the 2003 national tests. In the current Year 2, standards in both reading and writing are well below average because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and significant learning difficulties in that particular year group. Pupils achieve well in relation to the level at which they start.
49. Good leadership has led to a clear focus on raising the standards of pupils after the poor results in last year's national tests, following the opening of the new school. The increase in the monitoring of lessons and standards by the literacy team, the headteacher and deputy, and analysis of pupils' performance, which highlighted the reasons for the levels achieved, has led to considerable improvement in standards, particularly in reading. Reading is now taught as an additional lesson to literacy in all classes. Lessons are well planned in most classes to develop pupils' skills in reading and to give average and higher attainers the chance to develop their comprehension skills, and to push on the reading of lower attainers. For example, higher attainers in Year 6 worked together to adapt information in a book on eclipses for younger readers. They quickly worked out that they had to '*make the technical language more interesting*' and to '*simplify the language using shorter sentences and words*'. Pupils work together well on their tasks. These are well chosen to match the needs of different ability groups, to guide their reading so that they learn to read with greater understanding. The books are new and aptly chosen to interest both boys and girls and to challenge the different levels of ability in each class.
50. Teaching is now good overall and pupils are learning effectively in most classes. In a good lesson in Year 1, all aspects of the literacy hour were effectively covered. Pupils were reminded of their visit to the wildfowl park when asked to spell the word swan in their phonic work, bringing their own experiences to the spelling process. All pupils joined in enthusiastically in reading and all children had good pencil control when writing independently. In one Year 3 class, however, some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in which the teacher did not have full control of the class, and many pupils did not achieve or make progress. Further examination of pupils' books in that class showed that the majority of pupils had made unsatisfactory progress over the course of the year.
51. Standards are below average in writing. This is because the teaching of writing has not been sufficiently systematic to ensure that pupils learn to write at length, accurately and using a wide range of vocabulary and interestingly structured sentences, building on what has been taught previously. There are clear indications, however, that this is improving and the comprehensive strategy the literacy team has in place for next year shows a thorough understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards further. There is ample evidence in the majority of classes of a rich diet of productive tasks leading to good progress in writing throughout the year. This is the result of consistently good and sometimes very good teaching, as in Year 6, for example, where there is a good balance between the development of basic skills, such as spelling and handwriting, and more advanced skills, such as writing paragraphs and using interesting ways to begin and join sentences. There is good systematic teaching of how to write in different styles and genres such as newspaper reports, and pupils are given a useful range of strategies to help them structure their writing and generate ideas, using flashbacks, for example, when writing stories. Marking is often a sound balance between praise and encouragement, often pointed at a particular skill, for example, '*I like the way you use capital letters for names*'. At present, pupils' targets in writing do not match individual needs sufficiently well and they are not involved well enough in monitoring their own progress towards them.

52. Pupils achieve well because they have good attitudes to learning and generally behave well. In most lessons, pupils are given opportunities for purposeful speaking and listening and gain a great deal from discussing ideas in groups or with a partner. Standards in all aspects of English are now improving. Good provision is made for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs. Looking at the standards achieved in the school now, there are clear indicators that there has been a marked improvement in the quality of work produced by the pupils. One pupil in Year 6, for example, wrote a very effective Haiku; *'Brown leaves swirl and twirl, they crunch underneath my feet, autumn is here now.'* The children are in line this year to improve on the test performance of last year, the school's first year of opening.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. While this remains an area for further development, teachers are beginning to ensure that pupils use their skills in reading and writing in other subjects, such as ICT, history and science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved dramatically this year because of very effective leadership and management;
- Teaching is good overall, though there is a very wide range from excellent to poor which adversely affects learning in Year 3;
- There are considerable strengths in the way lessons are planned and taught but target setting is not always used effectively;
- The very good leadership and management of the subject have made a strong contribution to the improved standards seen across the school.

Commentary

54. Standards in the 2003 national tests were well below average by the end of Year 6, both nationally and compared to similar schools. There is a very different picture now and standards are at nationally expected levels in the current Year 6 and, judging by standards in Years 4 and 5, they are set to be at least average in forthcoming years. This exceptionally good improvement, whereby the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding nationally expected standards has more than doubled within a year, is a result of the very effective interim leadership and management of the subject by the headteacher and deputy. Standards at the end of Year 2 were better last year than this. This is because of the composition of this particular year group, which has a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties which depresses the overall standard. In 2003, standards were below the national average, though average when compared to similar schools. This year, standards are well below average. Pupils achieve well overall and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are given good quality assistance in lessons.
55. One of the main reasons why pupils are now doing well is the good quality of teaching evident in most classes. Teaching is very good in Years 2 and 6 and in Year 5, where the new co-ordinator has been working with the class prior to taking up her post in September. Overall, pupils learn well. The layout of the school building enables teachers in the same year group to work very easily in teams and so, pupils throughout the school are taught in two ability groups. Planning is usually of good quality. In the best lessons, pupils within each group are further divided according to ability and activities are very well matched to their particular needs. This enables higher attaining pupils to work at a faster pace on more

challenging tasks and lower ability pupils to have additional support should they need it. In Year 2, for example, the large group of pupils with special educational needs are taught in a separate group because they are not able to keep pace with the others. In the lesson seen, they were well taught and enjoyed learning as they strived to match dots on cards to numbers and to order numbers up to ten. This meant that the class teacher could really push the learning of the pupils in the lower set, on developing their understanding of halving and doubling when solving problems. Where teaching quality is poor, as in the top set in Year 3, all pupils were given exactly the same task which was too easy for the majority of pupils. As a result, they lost concentration and learnt little. A talented boy, who finished well ahead of schedule, amused himself by playing 'snakes and ladders' on the computer, though there were more challenging mathematical games to choose from had he been guided to do so.

56. The leadership's drive to improve teaching and learning in mathematics is proving successful and throughout the school there is a remarkable homogeneity in the way oral and mental mathematics is taught. In the majority of classes, explanations are clear and pupils are given ample opportunities to explain how they arrive at their answers. In a very good lesson, the teaching made it quite clear that whatever system worked for each individual was valid, pushing for clear explanations of answers, thus developing speaking and listening skills at the same time. In the best lessons, the teaching ups the challenge so that pupils are on the edge of their seats as they try to keep up. In one lesson in Year 5, having grasped counting, multiplying and dividing in eights, pupils then began to use their knowledge to do the same with 80. A sequence of taps on the desk set a rhythm for answers and made learning fun, as the pupils thought it was a great game. In classes where teaching is very good or excellent, the planning is adjusted considerably in the light of the previous day's lesson and what is taught is tailored to the needs of individual pupils; more usually, evaluation of what pupils have learnt one day is not used when planning what is taught on the next and so the targets that pupils are set tend to be general rather than specific.
57. The leadership and management's decision to 'banish worksheets' has contributed considerably to improvements in pupils' presentation and in teachers' marking. Pupils are now learning from the comments teachers make on their completed work. As a result, in most classes pupils cover a great deal of work in a logical and systematic way, building on what they know and understand. As yet, however, pupils are not involved as much as they should be in setting their own targets and evaluating their progress towards meeting them.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Mathematics is used well in other subjects, particularly in science and ICT, and this contributes well to pupils' improved attainment. In Year 5, for example, pupils took careful measurements when studying leaves and in Year 6, graphs were used effectively to chart the growth patterns of typical males and females from birth to adulthood.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities and needs achieve well; the school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 has improved significantly since last year;
- Most teaching is good and pupils achieve well overall;
- The present arrangements for leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

59. The unconfirmed national test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2004 show a greatly improved performance from 2003, when results were well below both the national average and the average for similar schools. The broadly average standards shown in the 2004 tests match those seen during the inspection. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is also better than that indicated in last year's teacher assessments and is broadly at expected levels.
60. Teaching is good in most classes and this leads to good achievement for pupils of all needs and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from effective support and sometimes from tasks adapted to meet their particular needs. The good teaching is characterised by careful planning for each ability group in the class, by warm relationships and by very good class management, leading to good levels of behaviour and effort. The strong focus on investigation and the use of pupils' first hand experience leads to high levels of interest. For example, pupils in Year 1 thoroughly enjoyed using their senses to explore the objects in the 'mystery bags' and to taste the foods available, sometimes being surprised by the feel of spaghetti or the taste of lemon. Pupils in Year 4 were intrigued to discover what creatures had set up home under the paving stones that they had set on the field. The unclear explanations and instructions and weak class management that were seen in the small amount of weak teaching led to low levels of attention and unsatisfactory behaviour from many pupils. Consequently, achievement was low in this lesson in Year 3. There are good opportunities to use and develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in science. Pupils are encouraged to write up their own investigative reports, for example, rather than using a work sheet. There are many opportunities for accurate measuring and using charts and graphs to record data.
61. The headteacher has provided considerable support to ensure that teaching, learning and management of science are satisfactory. A sound action plan is in place for next year, when the subject will be a priority in the school's development plan. This includes plans to approve the draft policy, review the scheme of work and formalise assessment arrangements. The subject co-ordinator maintains useful links with science co-ordinators in other schools.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well, including pupils who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language;
- Attainment in the subject is not assessed precisely enough to provide an exact basis for tracking pupils' progress and setting new targets for learning;
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

62. Standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well. Teaching is never less than good, with some very good teaching seen in a Year 6 lesson. Teachers and support staff have a secure knowledge of the subject and teach with confidence and enthusiasm, which in turn stimulates and motivates the pupils who enjoy their lessons. Good links with other subjects and with real life situations provides pupils with reasons for learning. Good examples were observed in a number of lessons. Year 1 pupils produced 'pictograms' based on a traffic survey as part of a local study of the area. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson used a multimedia program linked to a river study, in order to bring together images, text and sounds to present to their parents at the end of term.

Teachers provide good levels of challenge, as in Year 2 when pupils worked out how to program a toy to move in specific directions, or in Year 5 when pupils discovered how to control output devices to make a model lighthouse work. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because they are given good adult support and many opportunities to work closely with other pupils in class.

- 63. Planning for the subject enables pupils to experience the full range of ICT opportunities. A satisfactory system is in place where individual teachers assess how well pupils have achieved the learning objectives for each unit of study. Pupils' attainment in the subject, however, is not assessed precisely enough against National Curriculum levels to provide an exact basis for planning. The school computer system is fully networked and linked to the Internet. The very high quality of accommodation and resources offers a rich learning environment.
- 64. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject. She has a good grasp of standards, knows where the subject's strengths lie and is equally clear about what needs to be done to ensure continuing improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 65. There is an appropriate balance between ICT skills teaching, mainly done in the ICT suite, and the application of these skills in other subjects. There are particularly good links with geography and mathematics. Pupils also make satisfactory use of their word processing skills in English to edit and present their work.

HUMANITIES

- 66. Only two lessons were seen in **religious education**, two in **history** and no lessons were seen in **geography**. Displays were also evaluated and books scrutinised. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about provision, standards, teaching or learning in these subjects.
- 67. Examples of work displayed in geography show the local environment is used well to help pupils to learn. In Year 1, for example, pupils carefully surveyed the different types of transport used in the area. Good use was made of their findings during the inspection in an ICT lesson, where they recorded what they had found out using pictures. Visits to places of national interest help pupils to develop an awareness of places beyond the local area. Good links were also made with ICT in Year 6, where pupils devised multimedia presentations of their work on rivers. Subject planning follows the national guidelines and is adapted appropriately to meet the school's needs.
- 68. In a good history lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher effectively used the lesson to improve both the historical enquiry and speaking and listening skills of the children. This was done by comparing holidays in the 1950's, 1960's and the present. After seeing an interview on the television about holidays in the 1950's, children were asked to devise questions of their own to find out as much as they could about the interviewee's holidays in the 1960's. Pupils learnt well and over the course of the lesson the quality of the questions improved from 'How old were you?' at the beginning of the session, to questions like 'What was the view like?' and 'Why didn't you stay somewhere with more things to do?' at the end of the lesson. Some very good teaching and learning was seen in a lesson in Year 6. Through a series of progressively more difficult questions, pupils considered the pros and cons of photographic evidence. High levels of interest were maintained throughout the lesson and pupils were constantly challenged. Support for pupils who needed extra help was well organised. Pupils did not want to stop working. ICT is used well to enhance presentation, along with artefacts relating to different topics. Scrutiny of pupils' books showed evidence of a suitable range of activities for each year group.

69. Much of the learning in religious education is through discussion. Work in books, however, indicates, that although there is a sufficient emphasis on knowledge based learning, there are not enough opportunities for older pupils, particularly by the end of Year 6, to record more reflective and informed responses to their knowledge and understanding of religion. Planning takes appropriate account of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils learn about Christianity and a range of other major faiths. Work on display shows that pupils in Year 1 are developing an awareness of the need to make positive relationships as they learn about Buddhism. Pupils in Year 4 produce storyboards about the events surrounding Easter Week. The subject plays an important part of assemblies.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. No lessons were seen in **design and technology** or **music** so no judgement can be made about provision, pupils' achievement, overall standards, teaching or leadership and management.
71. In design and technology, no lessons were seen. However, examination of planning shows that all aspects of the subject are taught in line with national guidance.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to good achievement for pupils of all abilities;
- There is good provision for pupils that are identified as talented artists;
- Leadership is effective and management sound;
- Teachers' confidence and the development of the art curriculum have benefited from training and the use of a resident artist;
- Assessment procedures for the subject are underdeveloped.

Commentary

72. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Less confident pupils and those with special educational needs are praised and supported and they consequently achieve well. Art is sometimes used with small groups to raise self-esteem. There are high expectations for pupils with a talent in art so that they too achieve well. Pupils benefit from working with artists and from the after school art club. The achievement of all pupils is enhanced by the focus on the development of skills in the subject, noticeably in skills of observing and recording in a variety of ways, using a range of tools and techniques. Work with a resident artist has increased the range of experience for pupils and has enriched the curriculum by extending opportunities for sculpture and other three-dimensional forms. Teachers' skills and confidence have developed through the workshops run by the artist and by working in their classrooms alongside her.
73. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Lessons are characterised by the effective promotion of skills, judicious praise for pupils, particularly less able pupils, and very positive relationships which lead to positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Teachers are skilled at sharing good practice and commenting on it to increase learning, but they are less good at encouraging pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others. A team of teachers lead the subject effectively and with enthusiasm.

74. The music curriculum is considerably enhanced by an after school choir and opportunities to perform. In assemblies, hymn practice and a rehearsal for 'The Wizard of Oz' standards in singing were above average. Individual pupils were confident in performing in front of other pupils. The enthusiastic and tuneful singing benefited greatly from the high quality lead provided by the nursery nurse, who played the piano and set a very good example in singing, supported well by the teachers. Teachers' confidence is being raised by working alongside a visiting expert who is helping them become familiar with the new scheme of work.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and as a result pupils reach above average standards;
- Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced.

Commentary

75. Standards achieved by the pupils are good, supported by the many out of school sports activities. A good example of this was seen in a very good Year 2 gymnastics lesson, led by a specialist gymnastic coach. Through her very good demonstrations of difficult skills, such as completing cartwheels, forward rolls and handstands, most pupils achieved high standards. Even those pupils who found some difficulty were encouraged and helped and, as a result, made very good attempts and achieved well. The skills acquired by children in the Year 2 gymnastic club no doubt contribute to the level of achievement seen in the lesson. A similar picture of high standards was seen in Year 4. In an outdoor games lesson, for instance, in which pupils were being taught basic sprinting and relay skills, the teacher constantly mixed instruction with pupil demonstration of the correct technique to the benefit of all. Visible progress could be seen for many pupils by the end of the lesson. The teaching and learning in both lessons were good. Pupils develop their skills progressively through well planned, organised activities. Pupils' enthusiasm contributes effectively to their learning. Previously acquired skills are built upon and they achieve well.
76. Activities such as regular healthy weeks contribute greatly to the other aspects of the physical education curriculum. During these weeks, aspects of health education are covered in detail. For example, increasing children's knowledge of the benefits of fitness, how the heart and circulation system work and healthy eating. Pupils learn through activities such as assessing their own fitness through set activities and keeping a fit and healthy diary. The subject is well led and managed and contributes to the good teaching and standards achieved. The very good accommodation provides very good facilities both inside and out, which further enhances the good provision and teaching of skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and through discussion pupils achieve a good understanding of complex issues.

Commentary

77. The curriculum is well planned and matched to the needs of different age and ability groups throughout the school. In Year 1, for example, lower attaining pupils learnt about road safety through discussing safe places to cross roads and acting out scenes involving crossing the road safely, following the guidance of 'lollipop lady'. In Year 2, a discussion on how to make people happy by the choice of words they used was skilfully used to develop pupils' capacity to speak clearly in sentences, as well as a means of fostering pupils' self-esteem. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to reflect on their time in this new school and comment on how they have developed in maturity. They begin to reflect on connections between their own feelings and the feelings of others. In all lessons, pupils were confident and happy to speak openly and unselfconsciously about matters that concerned them, reflecting the very good and trusting relationships evident throughout the school between adults and pupils. A measure of the school's success in promoting pupils' personal development was that when pupils were asked to consider differences between themselves and others, not one considered racial difference to be worthy of mention.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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