

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ETHERLEY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114097

Headteacher: Mr J S Copeland

Lead inspector: Neil Tonge

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 March 2004

Inspection number: 256081

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	276
School address:	Clarence Gardens Etherley Lane Bishop Auckland County Durham
Postcode:	DL14 7RB
Telephone number:	01388 603105
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bradley
Date of previous inspection:	27 – 29 April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Etherley Lane Primary School is situated in the small market town of Bishop Auckland in County Durham. There are 276 pupils on roll, and they are almost exclusively of white British origin. They come from a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. The socio-economic profile of the school is broadly average and the attainment of pupils on entry is typical for their age. There is very little pupil mobility or turn-over of staff. Approximately nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 17 per cent. Forty-six pupils have special educational needs and four have a statement of special educational needs. These figures are broadly average. Special needs comprise predominantly learning needs but also include behavioural problems, profound learning difficulties, multi-sense impairment and communication problems. The school had an additional wing built in 2000 to accommodate increasing numbers. In last year's national tests the school attained results that placed it in the top 200 schools in the country. It has received certificates of achievement from the Department of Education and Skills for the last three successive years.

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1157	Neil Tonge	Lead inspector	English Geography History Religious education Personal and social education
12636	Sylvia Bullerwell	Lay inspector	
1189	Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language Music Physical education
33161	Carol Jeanne Simpson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school. Children enter reception with standards that are broadly typical for their age. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. In national tests their results are in the top five per cent in the country. This is achieved because of the very good leadership of the school, the very good teaching, thorough procedures for monitoring pupil progress and taking necessary action and ensuring that each pupil is valued. The cost of educating pupils is below the average for the authority and bearing in mind the very good performance of the school, it provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science because teaching is very effective.
- The headteacher's leadership is excellent, and the very good leadership at all levels reflects a shared commitment to succeed.
- Pupils achieve very well because they are carefully monitored and supported when they need help.
- Pupils' progress is tracked very thoroughly and teachers plan appropriate work to challenge the different levels of ability.
- Relationships within school are very good and as a result pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and they behave very well.
- There is a very strong commitment to valuing every pupil and this ensures that all pupils have opportunities to fulfil their potential.
- Standards in physical development in reception are being held back by the lack of outdoor play facilities.

Since the school was inspected in 1998 the rate of improvement has been very good. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have improved significantly, along with many other subjects in the curriculum, and they are now consistently high. Improvements in teachers' planning, the use of assessment to plan activities, the implementation of schemes of work and the development of subject leaders have all been accomplished successfully. Monitoring of school performance is particularly effective and is a significant factor in promoting the very good attainment and achievement of pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A*	A*	A*	A
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
Science	A*	A*	A*	A*

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

**The achievement of pupils is very good overall.** When pupils begin school their attainment is broadly typical for their age. By the end of reception children are well on course achieve the goals that they are expected to reach because the curriculum is well planned and taught. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievement is good. This is because teachers have high expectations of their pupils, good subject knowledge and make very good use of assessment to plan effectively to meet the needs of different abilities of pupils. In the Year 2 2003 national tests, however, results were below average in reading and well

below average in writing because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This year group was exceptional.

Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science because pupils' progress is carefully monitored, they are given targets to aim for and teaching is very good.

**Pupil's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Pupils work happily together and show tolerance and respect because they are expected to do so and understand why. The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They want to learn because most lessons are made interesting and they have trust and confidence in their teachers, who motivate them to want to succeed. Standards of behaviour are very good throughout the school at all times. The attendance rate is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.** Children get a good start to school in the Foundation Stage because teaching is good. The overall standard of very good teaching is maintained throughout Years 1 to 6 because of the very good relationships that exist and the appropriate and imaginative activities that are planned for the pupils. As a result pupils achieve highly. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and they prepare appropriate work for all abilities of pupils. Teachers provide appropriate praise and encouragement and pupils respond well by concentrating well and working hard.

The school offers a very good curriculum, which is broad and balanced, and enriched with visits, visitors and a very broad range of out-of-school activities. Literacy and numeracy and computer skills are well developed across the curriculum. Health and safety procedures are effective in practice but records of activities in this area are not always completed formally.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership of a well-motivated staff that work very effectively as a team. Subject coordinators are very effective in reviewing performance in their subject areas and have a good overview of standards. Governors bring a good range of expertise to their role, have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide challenging support, as well as ensuring that all legal requirements are met. As a consequence, they are very effective in shaping the direction of the school.

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

Partnership with parents is very good. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and events that happen at school, and are appreciative of the efforts made by the headteacher and others to listen to their concerns. This ensures that the home supports the work of the school well and this contributes significantly to their child's achievement. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they know they are cared for and valued by their teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the outdoor play provision for the children in reception, including the provision of large play equipment.
- Ensure that written records of health and safety checks are kept.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards on entry in the Foundation Stage, overall, are average and children achieve well. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average and achievement is good. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average and for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achievement is very good.

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

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 because of very good teaching, high expectations of what pupils can do and very good leadership of these subjects.
- Overall, pupils' achievement is very good because of the careful tracking of their performance and the effective action given to those pupils in need of extra help.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including the gifted and talented, achieve very well in English, mathematics and science.
- Whilst most children attain the early learning goals in physical development by the end of reception, standards are held back by the lack of outdoor play equipment.

#### **Commentary**

1. The well above average standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science represent very good progress since the last inspection and have been achieved through the very good management systems put in place, particularly the very effective tracking of pupil progress, setting pupil targets in English, mathematics and science and taking effective action to improve pupils' performance, and very good teaching. The trend of improvement in all the core subjects is in line with the national trend and the school has sustained a very high performance, being placed in the top five per cent of schools nationally over the last three years. The school met its targets. Parents' confidence in the standards and achievement of the school is well justified. Pupils similarly have trust in their teachers to do the best for them and have a clear view of what they need to do to improve.
2. In general terms, attainment on entry fluctuates slightly from year to year but it is usually broadly average. There are exceptions however, even to this general pattern, which need to be taken into account in assessing achievement and standards. For example, there are a greater proportion of children with special educational needs in Year 3 and a greater proportion of above average children in the current reception class.
3. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage, particularly those pupils who have attended nursery. Assessment information at the end of reception shows that these pupils reach nearly all the goals that are expected for children of this age and some exceed them. This is because their curriculum is well planned with interesting and challenging activities, particularly those that develop their language and literacy skills. The restricted opportunities for outdoor play, however, hold back the development of children's physical skills and imaginative play.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (17.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.4 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.2 (17.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*



4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well because teaching is well structured and activities are interesting. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and the school is quick to provide additional help where it is needed. The school anticipated the lower results at the end of Year 2 in 2003 because approximately one quarter of the pupils had special educational needs. The school provided a range of appropriate support for these pupils, who are now in Year 3, and as a consequence of these measures, all the pupils made the anticipated progress. Each pupil's needs have been analysed and programmes devised to support their progress. In addition, amongst other measures, they have been given additional teaching assistant time to help them as a whole class. There has been some disruption to teaching in Years 1 and 2, and the discontinuity has had a slight adverse affect on standards. Standards are broadly average when pupils enter Year 1 and above average by the time they leave. As a consequence their achievement is good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (30.1)	26.8 (27)
Mathematics	29.9 (29.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.7 (31.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is very good. This is because teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can do and pupils rise to the occasion. Teachers provide a great deal of individual support for their pupils, set work that is appropriately challenging and monitor pupils' performance carefully so that help can be provided when it is needed. Very good relationships ensure that pupils want to succeed and each pupil is valued whether their academic potential is great or small.
6. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall because their progress is monitored regularly and appropriate help is given. This is because the teachers' expectations of all pupils are high and pupils with special educational needs respond to this as well as the rest. By way of illustration, a smaller class of ten Year 6 pupils has been created for English and mathematics. They are taught by the literacy coordinator and are likely to attain at or just below the expected level 4 as a consequence of this concentrated and expert support. The register of gifted and talented pupils indicates their particular needs and the school ensures that they are sufficiently challenged. Inspection evidence shows that the learning needs of the higher attainers are well met and they too are achieving very well.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. Their level of attendance is average and punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning in response to the rich curriculum mean that they achieve very well.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and the very good relationships in school create a positive learning environment.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.

**Commentary**

7. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, show very good attitudes to their work and their life in school. Children in reception are eager to explore new activities that

are planned very well by staff to be both interesting and challenging. Pupils throughout school listen carefully to their teachers and each other and confidently contribute to discussions and group work during lessons. They work hard and concentrate well, showing commitment to learning and achievement because learning is exciting. These very good attitudes are due to teachers giving importance to everything pupils do. For example, when Years 1 and 2 were learning about Mexico, they planted an avocado pip to watch how the seedling would grow. But rather than stop there, the plant was entered into an agricultural show and won first prize, giving pupils great pride in their achievements and boosting their self-esteem and confidence. Older pupils demonstrate their confidence and self-esteem in many other ways too; for example, when singing solo with a microphone during assemblies.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	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.*

8. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are a result of positive role modelling by staff and the effective promotion of mutual trust and respect. Pupils are keen to do their best to please their teachers and this results in the very good behaviour from pupils in and around school. Staff rarely need to control behaviour in lessons or the playground. Pupils who have particular behavioural needs are very well supported by staff and pupils. For example, during a meeting of the school council, pupils gave their opinions about sanctions to be used when behaviour fell below the expected level and made sensible suggestions, such as missing playtime. Members of the school council have received LEA training for anti-bullying and peer counselling. The school council, as well as the school as a whole, monitors behaviour and pupils' concerns through the 'issue boxes' in each class, where pupils regularly indicate their feelings and concerns.
  
9. Pupils' very good personal development is a result of the opportunities to be actively involved in all the school has to offer. Assemblies, personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE&C) lessons provide very good opportunities for reflection and allow pupils to discuss and to share their thoughts and feelings. Examples of this include discussing the crucifixion through interpreting paintings from different cultures in Year 6, or role playing emergency situations in Year 3 and learning how and when to use 999. Spiritual development is encouraged when pupils look for the good in others when they nominate a classmate for citizen of the week. Pupils put what they learn into action and the school is a happy, caring community. Pupils show empathy with others, have a very good understanding of right and wrong, show respect for people, property and the environment and contribute positively to the school and wider community. Pupils have good opportunities to explore other cultures through geography, for example in their study of an Indian village or in art. Through discussion, they learn to understand and respect different beliefs and cultures and this provides good preparation for living in a diverse world. Pupils are particularly proud of their fundraising efforts to support charities and also to provide the 'climbing net' for their planned adventure playground.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Pupils achieve very well because of the very good quality of teaching and learning; a broad and stimulating curriculum; the very good relationships, which foster very positive attitudes to learning; the very good care it provides for its pupils and the very good relationship the school has with its parents and the community at large.

## Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. Assessment is very good and is used very well.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, explain very well, set clear learning objectives and have high expectations of the pupils.
- Relationships are very good, which means pupils have the confidence to explore and discover.
- Assessment procedures are very good and this information is very well used to set challenging targets for pupils and to inform the planning of future lessons.
- Planning is very good. Very occasionally, summary sessions at the end of the lesson are not used well.
- The quality of marking is very good and helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

### Commentary

10. The very good quality of teaching and learning has been maintained since the last inspection, when teaching was recognised as a strength of the school. Teaching is seen at its best in Years 3-6 where high expectations and the very good subject knowledge of the teachers result in high achievement for all groups of pupils. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	7 (19%)	27 (75%)	1 (3%)	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.*

11. English, mathematics and science are all taught very well. The teachers follow the structure of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and interpret them to the best benefit of the pupils. Very occasionally however, summaries at the end of the lesson are not well used to deepen pupils' understanding or to explain the next stage in their learning.
12. Teachers plan very well. They share the learning objectives for the lessons with the pupils and, through skilled questioning, ensure that the pupils understand what the objectives mean. They choose activities which support the intended learning for the lesson and they provide carefully structured worksheets or other support materials to ensure that the pupils succeed. Very occasionally, teachers do not consider the different ways in which pupils prefer to learn; in a science lesson, for example, the pupils were told a technical name for a scientific phenomenon, but the word was not written on the whiteboard and, as a result, they found it very difficult to recall the word later in the lesson. But more usually, teachers are aware of using a different range of learning methods, for example when a Year 3 and 4 class, which contained a high proportion of lower attainers, re-enacted the battle of Marathon. This eminently active lesson was well suited to their needs. In another example, a Year 4/5 class sang a specially composed song about the water cycle, which included the technical terms they were required to learn. In this way, they were not only highly motivated by the novelty, but they were also provided with a stimulating means of remembering the key terms in the water-cycle process.
13. Very good use is made of assessment. This is true of ongoing assessment in lessons when teachers constantly monitor the work of the pupils and give help if the pupils need it, as well as more formal assessments made at the end of units of work or at the end of the year. There is an excellent and comprehensive system of tracking pupils' attainment, not only in core subjects

of English, mathematics and science, but the other subjects of the curriculum. The system is well used by all members of staff to monitor the progress of the pupils and to set targets for improvement.

14. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good and this motivates pupils to want to learn. Teachers support pupils sensitively so that their self-esteem is maintained. For example, in an excellent design and technology lesson the less able pupils were supported very unobtrusively so that they achieved as well as the more able pupils, but without undue attention being drawn to them. In the small class of lower attaining Year 6 pupils, which contains some pupils with special educational needs, the teacher, who is also the literacy coordinator, ensures that these pupils experience as much success as the higher attaining pupils.
15. Pupils respond very well in lessons. This is a consequence of the high expectations that teachers have for the pupils and the praise and encouragement they give them to succeed. As a consequence, pupils are prepared to take risks and attempt all that teachers ask them to do. They produce work of a very good presentational standard and they are attentive during explanations by teachers or other members of the class.
16. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve very well. In a Year 3 class which has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a very clear action plan of support for each individual pupil has been formulated. Through very good provision, comprising additional help from teaching assistants, speech therapists and other adults, they have made very good progress. Best use has been made of the additional support programmes which are part of the National Literacy Strategy. The progress of the pupils is continually monitored by the class teacher and adjustments are made to the programme on a regular basis.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good overall with good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is well supported by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, visitors and visits. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils benefit from a broad, relevant and very well planned curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Commentary**

17. The overall quality of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. It is now very good, providing a broad and balanced education, enriched with a very good range of visits, visitors and out-of-school activities. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum.
18. Planning is very good and is linked effectively to national guidance. In the reception classes planning of the curriculum takes good account of the needs of all children, although lack of outdoor play provision and lack of large outdoor equipment means that planning for children's physical development is not as comprehensive as it should be.
19. Effective teamwork in the Foundation Stage continually reinforces key skills in language, literacy and mathematics. Children get a good start to their education. The strong foundations laid in the reception classes are built upon very successfully in Years 1 to 6.

20. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is an example of the very good attention given to ensuring equality of access for all pupils. The school provides a thoughtfully considered and flexible range of support to meet the needs of various groups and individuals. There are good individual education plans with clearly defined targets, very good assessment procedures and an excellent tracking system that monitors progress carefully. Inclusion is a strength of the school, meeting the needs of all abilities very well.
21. Children in the Foundation Stage and those in Years 2 and 6 are well prepared for the next stages of their education. Older pupils have good opportunities to become familiar with the local secondary schools and engage in a number of link activities prior to transfer.
22. In the previous inspection the lack of secure outdoor play area and large outside play equipment was identified as a weakness for children in the Foundation Stage. Since then, attempts have been made to improve the situation with some access to outdoor provision in the full term, using the on-site nursery resources. However, this has not resolved the problem sufficiently and it remains an issue for the Foundation Stage.
23. Support for learning outside the school day is very good. The school offers a wide range of opportunities in which many pupils participate. These include country dancing and a wide range of sporting and musical clubs, as well as other activities such as a computer club and infant fun club. An extensive programme of educational visits is arranged to museums such as Bowes Museum and other places of interest to support various topics. The leavers' service last year, for example, took place in Durham Cathedral and was linked to a visit to Seahouses and the Farne Islands. Years 4 and 5 experience a residential visit to Weardale House, which not only offers good opportunities for extending pupils' skills but also their personal development. The school also has strong links with schools in Germany through town twinning. A small number of pupils are learning to lay the violin and woodwind instruments with visiting music specialists. All of these activities promote pupils' interest and learning very well.
24. Overall accommodation is good, although the stairs prevent wheelchair access to all parts of the school. The school is aware of the issue and is examining ways in which to overcome the problem. Resources for learning are good and contribute very effectively to pupils' learning and achievement. Staff are very well matched to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and some have particular expertise that provides enrichment of the curriculum, for example in music. Staff are well deployed, for example the literacy coordinator is also the class teacher for a small group of lower attaining Year 6 pupils. A new 'wing' was added to the school in 2000 to cater for growing numbers in the school, which is well subscribed to by parents. Despite the original building being somewhat older, it is well maintained and teachers make the most of wall space with bright, attractive and stimulating displays.

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

The school effectively ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff provide very good support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school is very good in seeking to involve pupils in its work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very involved in the work of the school.
- Pupils receive very good support and guidance which enables them to achieve very well.
- Pastoral care is very good and pupils feel very valued.
- The whole school reward system is very effective in promoting effort, improvement and achievement.
- Very good induction procedures mean pupils settle quickly into school.
- Written records for health and safety could be better.

## Commentary

25. The school is very good at involving pupils in its work through giving them regular opportunities to contribute their views and take responsibility. Pupils respond to questionnaires, discuss issues at class council and school council level and contribute individual views via the class 'issue box'. They work with staff to resolve issues and improve the school environment. For example, the school council were involved in discussions about the toilet refurbishments. Disappointed at the slow progress, they wrote to the appropriate authority to voice their concerns.
26. Staff make very good use of assessment information, gained from monitoring pupils' academic achievement, to identify what pupils need to do to achieve their academic potential. Pastoral care is based on teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils through the very effective partnership the school has with parents. Pupils know they can talk to any of the adults in school and they feel they are well looked after. They know if bullying occurs it will be dealt with quickly, but say there is no bullying in school just some 'falling out'. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence are developed through the opportunities to be active in helping in school. Many pupils volunteer to be prefects, captains, buddies and monitors. In order to take on one of the major responsibilities, pupils have to complete a letter of application. Pupils with special educational needs are assisted with this requirement and are equally represented. During the inspection a group of Year 5 pupils were very pleased to be helping to keep the school environment tidy by weeding flowerbeds and the Millennium garden. They were proud to be trusted to put equipment away safely and securely when they were finished.
27. Pupils' achievements receive public recognition in class, in display and through the school's merit system and are effective in motivating pupils to sustain the very good standards of behaviour, attitudes and effort. The ongoing reward system from Year 1 to Year 6 encourages pupils to continually strive to gain the next certificate awarded for every twenty-five house points.
28. The induction pack parents receive before children start school is very good and enables the sharing of information so school and parent can work in partnership and children will get the most out of school. Parents and children come on a visit and stay for lunch to meet staff and get to know routines. On starting school, each child is allocated a 'buddy' from Year 4, who sits with them during assembly and helps them during break times. Reception children settle very quickly into school and Year 4 pupils benefit from the responsibility of positive role modelling and promoting good relationships between different age groups.
29. Health and safety procedures are effective in practice but records of activities in this area are not always completed formally. This means that while there is no threat to pupils, the school cannot show that it has taken all the actions it should. The headteacher monitors health and safety in school with a link governor but there is no formal recording of this monitoring. Staff know if pupils are collected before the end of the day but written records are not kept. However, statutory requirements for risk assessments and a health and safety policy are met. There are very good procedures and recording for dispensing medication. Child protection procedures are in place.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents and the local community and good links with other schools.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive a range of information including a very good induction pack to support their partnership with school.
- Very good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning.

## **Commentary**

30. The school appreciates the support parents give with homework, helping in school and on visits, and providing resources for lessons such as boxes and bottles for design and technology. Very good support is given with charitable fundraising, when pupils learn to support those less fortunate than themselves. Parents buy a lot of books at the school book fair, which not only encourages good reading habits in their children but also enables the school to spend almost £1000 extra on books each year. The social and fundraising activities of the 'Friends of the School' are also very well supported which meant the provision of a television, video and digital camera for each class last year and £3000 towards play equipment this year.
31. Parents are happy with virtually all aspects of the school and its work. They receive a good range of useful information about routines and procedures of the school and are kept well informed about school life and the curriculum through regular newsletters, information sheets about methods used in school, occasional workshops and termly curriculum letters that tell them what their children are learning, resources needed and how they can help them at home. Parents meet with teachers three times a year to review their child's progress and discuss targets. The annual written reports are of good quality and they include targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science.
32. Parents feel the school uses visits and visitors well to make learning interesting and pupils agree with them. Year 6 pupils thought the 'No Smoking pantomime' was an excellent way to learn about the dangers of smoking. They also recalled their visit to the Bowes Museum when they were not only studying history but also learnt about 'cam followers' for design and technology, used their literacy and ICT skills to record and research information and then worked with an artist from Bowes to create papier-mache sculptures of action figures. The school plans its programme of enrichment activities for all ages to make best use of the community resources available. A few parents felt they would like information earlier about particular visits so they could prepare children and provide relevant resources. The school has identified the timing and naming of letters as an area for improvement but some activities in the immediate vicinity of school are sometimes dependent on the weather and are covered by the annual permission slip.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership of the school is very good and that of the headteacher, in particular, is excellent. There are very good management systems in place to evaluate the performance of the school. The governance of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governance of the school is very good because governors are well informed about the performance of the school and are actively involved in helping to shape its future.
- The headteacher has the confidence of all the staff and has inspired a shared commitment to succeed.
- There are very effective systems in place to monitor the progress of the school, particularly in the core subjects. All subject coordinators in subjects have a clear overview of standards in their subjects across the school.

## **Commentary**

33. The governance of the school is very good. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are well informed about the strength and weaknesses of the school, providing effective support as well as challenge. They also bring a range of valuable expertise to the management of the school and play a significant role in shaping its strategic direction. Spending accords with their priorities and with the principles of best value, and they monitor the budget carefully.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	570,031
Total expenditure	565,965
Expenditure per pupil	2,050

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19,339
Balance carried forward to the next	23405

34. The headteacher was appointed shortly before the previous inspection, which found a number of important aspects of school organisation in need of improvement. Under his direction the school implemented the recommendations with great success. Most importantly, the school has put in place very effective tracking systems to monitor the progress of its pupils as well as monitoring school performance as a whole. The school has achieved high results in national tests as a consequence of these initiatives while at the same time providing a fully rounded curriculum in the arts, practical subjects and the humanities. The headteacher's commitment to the welfare of staff and the provision for all in the school community has resulted in substantially improved and consistently high attainment of pupils in a happy and productive working environment.
35. The senior management team, which includes the Foundation Stage coordinator, leads an effective team of teachers and the structures and systems that are in place are very good. This is a view shared by parents. The school management plan is an effective document, consistent with the priorities for the school, and details the actions/time/person responsible and costs. The senior managers have initiated a detailed curriculum, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum, the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and requirements such as Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education. Tracking procedures for pupil performance are very good and quickly identify those that need help. This has paid dividends in improving the performance of all pupils. Co-ordinators are given time to monitor the quality of work in their subject areas and this information is collated into a picture of standards across the school in all subjects. There have been problems over the provision of swimming but this is now in the process of being resolved.
36. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO), who is also the headteacher, has an in-depth knowledge about the pupils in each year group, with a very good awareness and understanding of the range of needs within the school. Very good support is offered to the pupils, especially those with profound and specific learning difficulties. The SENCO keeps well-documented evidence and records reviews and contacts made for each of the pupils and children on the SEN register.



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

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

37. Children receive a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Children benefit from a good, well-planned curriculum. There is a good balance between self-selected and adult-directed activities with a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. Effective support from other adults makes a valuable contribution to children's learning. Assessment is very good. It is thorough and used very well to plan the next stages of learning. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
38. Children enter the two reception classes in the September of the year in which they will be five. Currently there are thirty-nine children of reception age. There are very good induction procedures and parents are very positive about the start children receive to their education. There are good links established with the local on-site nursery and other pre-school provision in the area. Most children have attended some form of pre-school prior to starting school.
39. Attainment on entry is usually broadly average, although for the current year it was above average. Progress is good in all areas of learning except physical development, where it is satisfactory. Children with special educational needs achieve as well as others in the class. Children in this year's intake are likely to achieve all the early learning goals and a significant number will exceed these except in their physical development.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

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

- Teaching is consistently very good and therefore children achieve very well.
- Classroom routines are very well established.
- Personal, social and emotional development is integral to all class activities.

#### **Commentary**

40. Children enter the school with the expected range of skills in personal, social and emotional development. These skills develop very well within the class and progress is rapid as a result of well-planned activities, very good teaching and relationships and very high expectations of behaviour. Children quickly learn classroom routines. They listen carefully to instructions and participate enthusiastically in all class activities. Children are eager to learn. They are encouraged to share, take turns and put up their hands when responding to questions. They are expected to take responsibility for tidying their work space at the end of activities, which they do sensibly, with good independence. Most children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area of their learning.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Children achieve well, particularly in speaking and listening.

## Commentary

41. Attainment is average when children start in the Foundation Stage. They achieve well as a result of the well-planned activities, carefully matched to their abilities. Relationships with teaching and support staff are a strength, enabling children to quickly become involved with the different grouping arrangements for the year group; they listen well, follow instructions carefully and are confident when speaking to adults and other children. They are given good opportunities to develop an appreciation of books, which they take home daily. They know a good number of initial sounds, and a significant number of higher attainers read the early books in the reading scheme with fluency and increasing expression. In a well-planned lesson using the text of 'Mr Gumpy' children showed good recall of events, remembering words such as 'bleating' and 'tramples'. In role-play they respond in extended sentences with clarity. High attainers built simple words with plausible attempts at words such as 'rabbit' as they made their own zigzag books about the story.
42. Children's language skills are developed well as a result of activities based on their needs and regular well-focussed questions that challenge children to use their language and extend their skills in a variety of classroom situations. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1 and a significant number will exceed them.

## Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Basic number skills are reinforced well.
- A good variety of practical activities are provided to help.

## Commentary

43. Children enter the Foundation Stage with average mathematical skills. They achieve well. A variety of number rhymes and songs support children's learning very well. All count and recognise numbers up to 10, counting to 50 and beyond in the case of higher attainers. They add two sets together and know some numbers that add up to 10. Higher attainers are beginning to record simple number additions. There is a good focus on mathematical language and so children confidently understand terms such as 'one more than' and comparative language of length and weight. They recognise and name basic shape and continue patterns of two and three shapes. Mathematics is made exciting for children by a good range of practical activities such as sorting different items according to whether they are heavy or light. Role-play is used effectively to support learning, as in the travel agents where pupils counted money and became familiar with holiday prices and mathematical symbols. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning and a good number will exceed them by the time they start in Year 1.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and helps children to achieve well.
- Good use is made of the resources available.
- Effective questioning by the adults enhances children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.

## Commentary

44. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the expected level of attainment for their age. Teachers provide a good range of experiences that enable children to make good progress in their knowledge about the world. Well-planned lessons make good links to other areas of learning, for example through role-play in the travel agents, where children make telephone calls, write messages, talk to 'customers' and count and sort money.
45. Children are introduced to simple maps and plans and recognise key features such as rivers and trees. They learn about the seasons and weather, dressing the teddy on the computer for summer and winter. Many have good control of the mouse and all know how to 'click' and 'drag' to move objects about. Children name body parts correctly and identify healthy and unhealthy food. They are familiar with famous people such as Guy Fawkes. They compare when they were a baby with now, observing how they have changed. They are familiar with magnets. Children make simple designs of vehicles and use construction kits and recycled materials to create their vehicle. Through role-play they learn about different countries such as China.
46. Through stories they learn about people in the Bible such as Zaccheus and Jonah and know about 'the creation' and 'the nativity'. The classroom assistant extends children's knowledge well with well-directed questions. She gives good support to this area of learning. Activities are enhanced as a result of the good use made of resources. All are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and a good proportion will exceed them.

## Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The adults help children to develop their control of small manipulative skills well through well-structured activities.
- The lack of a secure outside play area and lack of large wheeled toys limit opportunities for this aspect of imaginative play and the manipulation of large equipment.

## Commentary

47. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the expected physical skills for their age. The adults help children to develop good manipulative skills because there are good opportunities for well-structured activities involving cutting, sticking, painting, and pencil skills. They quickly learn to control a pencil and paintbrush carefully. They cut and stick with good skills. When dressing and undressing for games outside they do so with a good level of independence. They develop an increasing awareness of the space around them as they run, jump and hop with appropriate skill. When passing a ball to each other most throw and catch as expected but a small number have more limited co-ordination for these tasks. They listen carefully to instructions and follow these obediently. Overall control and co-ordination are satisfactory but the lack of experiences with large wheeled toys outside limits these skills. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## Creative development

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well as a result.
- Teachers provide a good range of experiences.
- Good opportunities are provided for role-play.

## Commentary

48. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the creative skills expected for their age. Good teaching ensures children experience a wide range of interesting activities through a variety of media. As a result they develop good creative and imaginative skills. Role-play areas provide good opportunities for imaginative play and they have a good impact on literacy and mathematics skills as well as developing children's confidence and self-esteem. Good use of music, songs and rhymes effectively enhances creative and mathematical understanding. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning and a significant number are likely to exceed them.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils attain well above average standards in English by the time they leave the school because teaching is very good.
- The school tracks the progress of its pupils very well, identifies their needs early and puts effective programmes of support into place for them.
- The subject is well led and managed.

## Commentary

49. Current standards in **speaking and listening** are above average in Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Pupils in Year 2 talk confidently to their teachers. They are encouraged to give full responses using a wide range of vocabulary. Year 6 respond well to their teacher's questions, take an active part in discussions and share their thoughts and ideas sensibly. They regularly enjoy role-plays and debates and pupils take part in drama and musical productions that enable them to develop their performance skills in front of a large audience.
50. Standards in **writing** are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 write in full sentences and make consistent use of capital letters and full stops. They are encouraged to use interesting vocabulary when writing. During one lesson, for example, the teacher worked with a small group of pupils helping them to extend their vocabulary when describing the setting for a story and they produced interesting vocabulary.
51. Standards in **reading** are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 6. Pupils of all ages are keen to read and achieve well. Teachers and parents work together well to promote good reading habits. Staff listen regularly to individual pupils' reading, while parents are encouraged to share books with children at home on a daily basis. Teachers are aware of the need to encourage boys, in particular, to read regularly, and staff ensure that there are plenty of action-packed books that will appeal to them. Pupils in Year 2 talk with interest about the books they are reading and retell the story in some detail. They use a range of strategies to read unknown words, and most can read simple stories confidently. By Year 6, most pupils read a wide variety of texts fluently and tackle unknown words competently. They discuss the development of different characters and deduce additional details from the text. Pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses to discover the meaning of unknown words and use library skills well to locate information on a variety of topics.

52. Achievement is very good in English overall, including writing, because pupils enter school with broadly average attainment and by the time they leave it is normally well above average. Of the current Year 6 pupils, nearly half are confidently working at the higher level 5 now, while the rest of the class are already achieving the expected level 4. The remaining ten pupils, who are a mixture of lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs, who are taught literacy in the smaller Year 6 class, receive concentrated and successful support from the literacy coordinator and are expected to attain at or just below the expected level 4. On this current performance, the school is likely to attain well above average results in English and to meet the ambitious targets that have been set for them. This is due to very effective teaching and very good systems for tracking pupil progress. Crucially, the setting of individual targets for pupils to reach, which teachers refer to in their good quality marking and which is consistently applied by all teachers, has been instrumental in pupils' good improvement.
53. The pupils make very good progress because of very good lesson planning, which effectively takes into account the different abilities of pupils. This was well exemplified in a very good Year 6 lesson, in which the teacher had not only ensured that the objective of the lesson, centred on writing a piece of persuasive writing, was clearly understood, but also that the activities set for the range of abilities of pupils were appropriate and challenging. As a consequence, pupils concentrated very hard and produced a first draft of very convincing argument. At the end of the lesson, pupils presented their findings to the rest of the class and the quality of their work was evaluated thoughtfully by themselves and their classmates. The school makes great efforts to ensure that lower attainers, including pupils with special educational needs, are effectively helped. In the smaller Year 6 class, pupils received considerable individual help to construct a piece of persuasive writing on whether pupils should have to wear school uniform. Pupils researched the reasons well on material that could be easily understood, and through the use of a writing template, ordered their writing effectively.
54. Teachers have good subject expertise as a result of the National Literacy Strategy and their expectations of what pupils can do are high. Teachers encourage and insist on the best from everyone. Marking is very good and provides pupils with a clear understanding about what they need to do to improve. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils make similar progress to their classmates. This is achieved by early identification of their needs and the effective help given by class teachers. Pupils have ready access to computers and develop their literacy skills well through the use of programs and the drafting and re-drafting of their work. Pupils use computers effectively to draft their work and older pupils use PowerPoint to present multi-media work.
55. Good leadership and management of the subject have also contributed to high standards. This is because of very good teamwork, thoughtful exploration of needs and priorities and immediate responses to them.

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

56. The development of literacy skills in other subjects is very good. Teachers, for example, encourage pupils to provide feedback orally on the work they have been doing. These are cogent, well-reasoned explanations, which help pupils improve their speaking skills. Pupils are given many opportunities to give oral presentations to the whole school in assemblies, performances and to discuss their aims in class discussions and in the school council where they learn the value of listening and building on what their peers say.
57. Pupils are required to read extensively in most subjects from a variety of formats. They also have a wide experience of writing in a variety of styles, for example, when they write an account of an experiment in science or produce a piece of persuasive writing in geography on likes and dislikes of the environment. In history they are required to read and understand a range of source material and record their findings in pieces of analytical and discursive writing on local history, for example. These opportunities to extend literacy skills are included in other subjects and the school is using history extensively to develop pupils' abilities to write at length.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average, due to very good teaching, by the time pupils leave the school.
- Lessons are very well planned and a very good pace results in pupils making very good progress.
- The subject is very well monitored with very good tracking of pupils' performance and systematic target setting.
- Insistence by the teachers on high quality presentation results in pupils showing clearly what they have done.
- Using and applying mathematics is slightly less well developed than other areas of the subject.
- ICT is well used in the classroom as an integral part of the lesson.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards are well above average and achievement is very good by the end of Year 6. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect to provide a structured approach to learning. No matter what their ability, pupils work hard and produce a high volume of work that reflects all aspects of the subject. Tasks are adapted to suit each ability level and pupils with special educational needs are supported well during lessons, enabling them to take a full and active part. As a result, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their abilities. Pupils' interest is caught and maintained. The combination of structured planning, effective use of good resources and imaginative delivery has raised standards throughout the school so that they are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Current standards have been sustained since the previous inspection and are attributable to the very good teaching of mathematics.
59. Throughout the school great importance is placed on the acquisition of quick and effective ways of mental calculation. This is achieved by an emphasis on regular practice in lessons and enthusiastic teaching. Lessons start with a brisk mental arithmetic session which pupils enjoy. The pupils' mental agility was evident during lessons in the confident way in which they continued complex series of numbers. Pupils in Year 2, for example, easily moved from counting in 2's to counting in 20's to 300 and beyond, while pupils in Year 6 quickly and accurately counted in tenths, reducing the fractions to their lowest terms.
60. Teachers encourage pupils to find different ways of solving problems as they are encountered and by consistently using mathematical language, pupils' technical vocabulary develops rapidly. Very good assessment throughout the lesson enables the teachers to provide explain how to set about solving problems as soon as the pupils encounter difficulties. This ensures that pupils make very good progress during the lesson.
61. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 reveals that they recognise that mathematics is very well taught throughout the school. They say that teachers explain very well and help them when they are having difficulties. They show excellent attitudes to their work and great eagerness to learn. A group of low attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 receive very good teaching in a small group and they make very good progress as a result. Their work is carefully marked and supportive comments ensure that they know whether they have met the targets and what they need to do to improve.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is very experienced. She carefully monitors new initiatives and has a clear view of provision throughout the school. New support material has been purchased to address the need for

improving using and applying mathematics in Years 1 and 2. A comprehensive tracking system is well used to set both individual and group targets for pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Mathematical skills are used well in science when data is presented in the form of bar charts and graphs. Pupils use their measuring skills very ably in design and technology, and in geography they carry out surveys, analyse data and use co-ordinates in map work.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- Standards, which have risen since the last inspection, are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Very good subject knowledge of the teachers, combined with carefully structured explanations, ensures that teaching is very clear and pupils are able to grasp new ideas easily.
- Lessons are very well planned and activities set for pupils are very well prepared so that learning builds throughout the lesson.
- Pupils are involved in scientific enquiry in all year groups, but in Years 1 and 2 there is insufficient recording of results.

#### **Commentary**

64. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were average by the end of Year 2 and achievement was satisfactory. At the end of Year 6 standards were above the average and progress was good. Over the last six years standards in science have risen considerably so that in the national tests of 2003, the attainment of the pupils at the end of Year 6 was in the top five per cent both of schools nationally and compared to similar schools. This indicates very good improvement for the school. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in the current Year 6 are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good, considering that they are broadly average on entry. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and as a consequence achieve very well.
65. The very good quality of teaching has enabled the impressive improvements in the subject to be made. In all lessons seen, pupils were involved in a practical approach to the subject and were required to predict, hypothesise, carry out a fair test, observe and record their findings at levels appropriate to their age and ability. While there was less evidence of recording in Years 1 and 2, this was not the case in Years 3 – 6. Carefully structured recording sheets provided by the subject leader encouraged logical scientific thinking by the pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confidently recording, using graphs, charts and diagrams as appropriate.
66. Lessons were characterised by the teachers' very good subject knowledge, high quality questioning and insistence on the use of correct scientific vocabulary. In one Year 5 lesson the investigation did not go according to plan, but the confident explanation by the teacher ensured that misconceptions were not allowed to continue and the reasons behind such outcomes were logically and scientifically explained.
67. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is aware of the strengths and weaknesses through joint planning sessions with class teachers, classroom visits, monitoring of the work in pupils' books and through regular discussions at staff meetings. A comprehensive audit has been carried out and plans are in place to resource all classrooms. When new initiatives are introduced, these are carefully evaluated so as to ensure that the high standards are maintained. Targets are set for each pupil and these are

systematically used to develop activities for the next unit of work as well as to track overall progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources, standards and teaching have significantly improved since the last inspection.
- Very good use is made of classroom computers to support learning in other subjects.
- Tracking of the progress made by pupils is very good.
- Displays around the school exemplify the well above average standards and the importance of the subject.

### **Commentary**

68. Only two lessons were observed, but it was possible to judge standards across the school from observations of the use of computers in other subjects, through the pupils' workbooks, displays around the school and in conversation with the pupils. The previous report found that standards were at the expected levels, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved significantly since then, and are now above average at the end of Year 2 and well above at the end of Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs as well as the gifted and talented, achieve very well. An effective programme of professional development has contributed significantly to the development of teachers' confidence and subject knowledge.
69. The school made a decision to improve the number of computers in the classrooms, rather than installing most of the computers in a computer suite. In this way they hoped to provide ready access for all subjects. The high standards achieved at the end of Year 6 indicate that this decision has been very successful. There is an overall ratio of one computer for every eight pupils. There are at least three, and sometimes four, computers in each classroom and they are constantly in use. Skills are effectively taught and then applied in the context of other subjects.
70. Very good use is made of work books in which the pupils record the work they have done. This provides clear evidence of the progress they have made and enables the subject leader to monitor standards.
71. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and provides a very good role model for effective teaching and learning. She liaises regularly with other subject leaders to ensure that they are aware of opportunities for developing ICT links throughout the curriculum. She has realistic plans for future developments, recorded in a comprehensive action plan, to ensure continued high quality provision.

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

72. Classroom computers are consistently used throughout the school day and in support of all subjects in the curriculum. A good, and improving, range of software and access to the Internet is used to support learning in other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics, geography, history, art and design and science. Pupils use a digital camera to record their work in subjects such as design and technology and physical education as well as for visits and in multi-media presentations.



## HUMANITIES

*Geography and history were inspected in detail and are reported in full below. It was only possible to see one lesson in religious education and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on standards or teaching and learning.*

73. In **religious education**, there is a good balance for pupils between acquiring knowledge of faiths such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, and the exploration and understanding of life experiences such as the need for rules to live by. For example, Year 6 pupils show good understanding and explanations for the tenets of Islam and how this affects the lives of believers. They show good understanding of the range of role models in their lives and are alert to the dangers of stereotyping groups and individuals. In the good Year 6 lesson seen, pupils' understanding of differing cultural interpretations was well explored when pupils commented on a variety of ways in which the figure of Christ was depicted. This stimulated a high level of debate and pupils showed enthusiasm and good reasoning skills.

### Geography

The provision for geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in geography are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good because of good teaching.

#### Commentary

74. Overall, standards are average in Years 1 and 2 and achievement is satisfactory, but they are above the average at the end of Year 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in the class. Very good attention is paid to developing pupils' geographical skills as well as increasing their knowledge about places.
75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop the skills of mapping the immediate area through guided walks. Average attaining pupils can identify some principal features and explain their function. Higher attaining pupils can produce accurate pictures of the main features on their way to school and can distinguish between natural and built features. Most pupils understand the function of how these features are represented on a map and how symbols are used and can use two-figure grid references to locate places. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to consider the best way of constructing a tally chart in preparation for a traffic census. A variety of methods derived from the pupils' own suggestions were discussed and evaluated. As a result, pupils appreciated that some ways of recording information were better than others. Pupils willingly shared ideas with one another and presented their methods for evaluation by the rest of the class. This stimulated good reasoning skills.
76. By the end of Year 6, pupils have extended their geographical knowledge and skills. They can explain the distinguishing features of contrasting localities, for example, a major city and an area in which a national park is situated. They can describe and explain the similarities and differences of mountain environments in different parts of the world. Information and communication technology is used well to find information from the Internet and to develop an understanding of geographical features such as the working of the water cycle. Sometimes the teacher is inspirational in developing an original approach to ordinarily 'dry' topics such as the water cycle, as was the case in a lesson for the Year 4/5 class. Pupils were enthused by the teacher's original composition of the 'water cycle song' and understood not only the process involved, but also the key words that characterised it:

*Where does it come from?  
Where does it go?  
Where does it come from?  
Rain want to know.*

*The sun is shining brightly on the deep blue sea.  
Water vapours rise EVAPORATION see  
Goes up and up and up to make the clouds so high  
It forms CONDENSATION right up in the sky.  
The clouds drift on and on until they reach the top  
PRECIPITATION falls with snow or hail and drops  
It falls upon the ground and in between the rocks.  
It soaks into the soil just like it wets your socks.  
It travels very slowly underneath the ground  
Through underlying rocks it moves without a sound  
It goes into the river on and on it flows  
Back into the sea now everybody knows.*

77. Coordination of the subject is good; although the coordinator has just taken on the responsibility, she has clear ideas about improvements in the subject. There is a good scheme of work in place and the coordinator monitors standards through sampling pieces of work, reviewing planning and collating information about standards across the school through end-of-topic assessments.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in history are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good, as a result of good teaching.

## **Commentary**

78. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are above average and pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs. Good literacy skills contribute significantly to this attainment. Teachers have enthusiasm for history and a very good understanding of the requirements of history in the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning are enhanced through visits and visitors to the school.
79. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop a good understanding of 'now' and 'then' through topics such as 'Seaside holidays long ago' and through examining the differences between Victorian photographs and those of today. A visitor to the classroom talked about toys he used to play with and pupils were able to identify the differences between now and then.
80. Pupils continue to develop their research skills as they progress through the school. In Year 3 pupils discuss successfully the 'push' and 'pull' factors that led the Angles, Saxons and Jutes to invade and settle in England and to distinguish between terms such as 'invaders' and 'settlers'. Pupils, dressed in appropriate costumes, launched their boats for England and sang with gusto:

*Row, row, row the boat  
On the stormy sea,  
Off to Britain we will go,  
Leaving Saxony.  
Row, row, row the boat,  
Up the river Tyne,  
Off to Jarrow we will go,  
This land it looks so fine.*

81. They appreciate that there are varying interpretations of the past, for example, when they study the way in which the historical character 'Bodicca' is represented.
82. Teaching and learning are good because activities are well planned, challenging and interesting. In a lesson with Year 3/4 pupils, which has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the teacher organised a very active lesson to keep pupils of lower concentration levels well engaged. Pupils greatly enjoyed their role play in a re-enactment of the battle of Marathon. The discussion that followed enabled these pupils to appreciate why there were different viewpoints about the battle between the Athenians, Spartans and the Persians. Very good relationships also contribute to successful learning.
83. The pupils' enjoyment of history is stimulated and extended by a good range of outside visits, for example to the Roman fort at South Shields and Bowes Museum. In Year 6, they explore the Victorian origins of Bishop Auckland through the use of a good range of source material, such as census information, photographs and maps. Visitors to school develop their appreciation of the past as a living entity, for example when they recount differences in their childhood and the environment as a whole.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Music was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were all sampled.*

84. Only one lesson of **art and design** was observed. In this successful lesson, lower attaining Year 6 pupils extended their skills in working with clay. The lesson was very well planned and included the use of computers and the development of pupils' literacy skills by introducing specialist artistic vocabulary. The pupils were adept at using a range of modelling tools and when individual pupils produced good work, it was greeted with praise from the teacher and spontaneous applause from the rest of the class. Art and design is well integrated across the curriculum, including pattern work linked with ICT in Year 3 and a study of William Morris as part of a history topic in Year 6. Good advantage is taken of the opportunity to work with artists in the community. Following a visit to Bowes Museum, Year 6 pupils worked with an artist in school and produced good examples of three-dimensional models of figures in motion based on the work of Alberto Giacometti. The whole process was recorded using digital cameras. The good use of sketchbooks is evident in all year groups to assemble ideas as well as to develop skills and to record findings of research. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above what is expected of pupils of this age, and this represents very good improvement since the last inspection.
85. In the religious education lesson observed, Year 6 pupils were given great insights into the techniques artists from different cultures had used to depict various aspects of the theme, including background details and the use of light. Pupils responded well to this stimulus and were able to explain how the painting techniques produced the particular images.
86. From **design and technology** work seen during the inspection, the design and execution of plans for winches and hinges for example, pupils produce some very good work by the end of Year 2. Similarly, the slippers and the toys produced by pupils in Years 3 - 6 are of high quality and are the result of detailed plans, which are closely followed and carefully evaluated. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. In the one lesson seen, which was excellent, pupils were constantly challenged to produce work of the highest standard when making and evaluating biscuits
87. The subject is given a high profile in the school, with models and the accompanying design process carefully displayed throughout the school. A display in the library of work from all ages in the school exemplifies the high standards achieved. The subject leader is very well established and has received specific training to enable her to carry out her role with great confidence. She monitors lessons, looks at planning, discusses work with the pupils and

regularly audits resources. She has a clear idea of how she will continue to ensure that the high achievement is maintained and enhanced.

88. Owing to timetabling arrangements and the hall being out of action, three lessons were seen in **physical education**, but it was not possible to observe gymnastics indoors. Two of the three lessons seen were cut short due to poor weather conditions. In Year 2 pupils practised balancing a beanbag on a bat and worked together in pairs to improve these skills. Although teaching and learning were satisfactory the task was not demanding enough to challenge some pupils and some higher attainers, in particular, were not achieving as well as they might. In Years 5 and 6 two classes shared the playground space. In the mixed Year 5/6 class pupils worked in pairs to practise chest passes and shoulder passes. Skills were carefully taught. Pupils worked at a good pace with sustained effort to improve their skill, achieving average standards. In the Year 6 class, pupils moved at speed along 'floor ladders' and over small hurdles, using a variety of stepping patterns. They moved accurately and briskly through their sequence, many using complex but agile footwork. They were well motivated by the new equipment and worked with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The pace was brisk and standards were above average. Teaching and learning in both lessons were good and pupils achieved well as a result. Last year the school was awarded the Activemark for achievement in physical education and is now working towards the next stage of this award. Above average standards are also reflected in the many successful team results in sports such as rugby and football.
89. The good range of extra-curricular clubs have a positive impact on standards in games and athletics as well as contributing well to pupils' personal development. At present, there is no provision for swimming due to the closure of the pool used. The school is seeking alternative arrangements to address this shortcoming at the earliest opportunity.

## Music

The provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good.

### Commentary

90. In music, two lessons were observed. In addition, music was observed daily in assemblies and instrumental tuition was observed. From these observations, teachers' planning and discussions with subject leaders, indications are that standards in music are above average and pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 6.
91. Teaching is good. Teachers' planning reflects national guidance, which has been adapted well and supplemented to meet the school's needs. All aspects of the subjects are covered well. Since the last inspection schemes of work have been updated, new resources purchased and staff have received 'further training'. The subject is well managed and soundly led.
92. Music observed in assemblies indicates lively and tuneful singing of an above average standard. The recorder group performs regularly in assemblies to accompany singing and this is good. In addition a small group use tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments to accompany the hymns. A small number of pupils receive outside specialist teaching for violin, clarinet or oboe. This specialist teaching helps to raise the achievement of higher-attaining pupils. The good attention to inclusion in the school enables all pupils to achieve well and some pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well in music, which raises their confidence and self-esteem. Composition was the main objective of the two good lessons observed. In Year 1 pupils used a good range of percussion instruments to accompany the story 'Teddy's Day', improvising imaginative sound effects while Year 5 and 6 pupils worked in groups to develop good original pieces based on a poem 'Space Journey'. Skills in

composition, in these examples, were average. Pupils acquire an appropriate musical vocabulary and they practise diligently to refine their performance. Teaching and learning in these lessons were good. Older pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 benefit from specialist teaching by the subject leader.

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

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*

93. The school's planning for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE&C) is good. There is a strong ethos within the school, which promotes this aspect of the pupils' learning successfully. There is a clear programme for health education in Year 6 that covers sex and relationships education and puberty, and also raises pupils' awareness of the dangers of drugs. This work is also linked to science throughout the school. The school council and friendship systems are used effectively to promote the pupils' sense of being part of a community, being responsible and making friends, especially with the younger children in the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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