

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FORDLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cramlington

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108611

Acting headteacher: Mr. Malcolm Hargreaves

Lead inspector: Dr Alan Jarvis

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 256144

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 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	414
School address:	Dudley Drive Dudley Cramlington
Postcode:	NE23 7AL
Telephone number:	0191 2008030
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. Mrs A Richardson
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fordley community primary school is larger than most primary schools. It has a diverse social intake but overall the area is more disadvantaged than normal. About one per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic families, which is very low. Three pupils do not speak English as their first language and are at an early stage of learning to speak the language. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is generally well below average; attainment at the start of full time education in the reception class is below average. However, the intake can vary and in the main school some classes, such as in Year 2, have fewer pupils with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils designated as having a special educational need is average. Most of these pupils have needs such as dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech, hearing, physical and autistic needs which can be tackled with in-class support. Six of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is also an average proportion. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is a little below average. The school achieved the "Healthy Schools" award in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2711	Dr. Alan Jarvis	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
13459	Eva Mills	Lay inspector	
25623	Ted Cox	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Music
19120	Derek Patterson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
20962	Chris Ifould	Team inspector	English Geography History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a fairly satisfactory** school with some good features. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and pupils achieve satisfactorily. The acting headteacher is strongly supported by his staff. Together they provide sound leadership and management. The school provides satisfactory value for money despite a tight budget.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- An exciting and vibrant learning environment based on play and first hand experiences in the nursery and reception classes results in the children making a flying start to school life.
- The very good accommodation is used well and has a positive impact on standards.
- Whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and very good in the nursery and reception, some uneven teaching in older classes results in variable standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Good systems of assessment are in place, although the information is not fully used to set sufficiently ambitious goals.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning.
- Improving standards in writing and speaking are paving the way for higher standards across subjects but remain an area for the school to focus on.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, is improving steadily and has consolidated its effectiveness. Provision in art and design and design and technology is now secure. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and it is used well across the curriculum. Music is an emerging strength of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 table shows a steadily improving picture in English and the marked dip in standards last year in science. Performance was in line with similar schools, as it was in most recent years.

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** In the Foundation Stage almost all pupils achieve well, although standards in Reception are below average overall. This is an improvement on their standards on entry and a direct result of very good teaching. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Year 1 and well in Years 2 and 3. Standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6, but varies in different year groups. It is consistently good in Year 3, generally satisfactory in Year 4, and sometimes good in Years 5 and 6. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in English and pupils are achieving well. Standards are on course to be above average in mathematics, as they were in Year 2 for this group of pupils. Standards in science have recovered slightly and are now above average in Year 2 but weaknesses in scientific enquiry have not yet been fully addressed and mean that they are still average in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve well but the average and higher attaining pupils mostly achieve satisfactorily.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good overall.** Most pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Attendance is satisfactory, but would be better if fewer parents took their children on holiday in term time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **satisfactory quality of education.** Teaching and learning are **satisfactory overall.** Teaching is consistently very good in the Foundation Stage and consistently good or better in Years 2 and 3. In other years, teaching, although occasionally good, is mostly satisfactory. Some very good specialist teaching was seen in music. Although some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Year 1, this is not typical. Good assessment information is available but this is not always well used to set targets for individual pupils. The curriculum is very good in the nursery and reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, although scientific enquiry needs strengthening and the mathematics curriculum enlivening. Although the number of teaching assistants is low, overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has good links with parents and the community and very good links with Seaton Burn Community College.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The governing body use their own areas of expertise effectively and provide good challenge and support to the school. All statutory requirements are met except that some essential information in the governor's annual report to parents is missing. This is easily remedied. The Foundation Stage and special educational needs are led well. The acting headteacher has created a positive climate for learning and staff are focusing on the right areas for development. Whilst most management functions are carried out satisfactorily, pupils' progress is not tracked sufficiently well.

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

Parents are very satisfied with nearly all aspects of the school. However some feel that more could be done to counteract the misbehaviour of a small number of pupils. Pupils also like most things but are also concerned about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils and feel that some lessons are not interesting enough. Inspectors support these views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 so that pupils consistently achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- Refine systems for tracking pupils' progress and action planning so that goal setting is more specific to individual needs.
- Systematically develop speaking and writing skills in all subjects so that pupils become confident speakers and fluent writers.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure parents get all the information they require in the governors' annual report.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

*Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is not yet consistently good in all years and subjects with some pupils not working to their full potential. Pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, from generally below average standards at the start of compulsory education. Standards could be higher, especially by the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children consistently achieve highly in the Foundation Stage and work to their full capabilities.
- Achievement is good in Years 2 and 3. However, it is predominantly satisfactory in other years where pupils mostly work within or just above their capabilities.
- Standards in writing and speaking are particularly weak on entry, and remain so through the school. These hinder their progress and standards achieved.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well; average and higher attaining pupils mostly achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 6.
- Standards have risen in art and design, design and technology, and information and communication technology (ICT) and are now average.

#### Commentary

*The tables shown in this section give average point scores for pupils. Each level in the national curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term. So, if a school's points are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.*

1. Since the last inspection average standards have generally been sustained by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They have been rising in line with the national trend. However, occasionally standards have been lower, reflecting years with weaker year groups. In the past two years weaknesses have emerged in writing and mathematics. The point scores in the first table illustrate this. They show that results in last year's tests were below average in reading and mathematics and writing. This was because of the weaker year group, which contained more boys with special educational needs than usual.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (16.1)	15.9 (15.8)
Writing	13.8 (15.1)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.0 (16.2)	16.4 (16.5)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In the Year 6 tests in 2003 the point scores show that standards were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Improvement has been uneven in recent years. The results in English continued the steady improvement over recent years whilst those in mathematics arrested and reversed some decline seen since 2000. The results in science were a great surprise to the school as previously standards had consistently been well above



average. The large dip last year coincided with a change in format of the tests. This exposed weaknesses in the school's approach to teaching scientific enquiry through Years 3 to 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.3)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2 (26.5)	27.0 (26.7)
Science	27.9 (30.1)	28.8 (28.3)

*There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Achievement seen in lessons was consistently very good in the Foundation Stage, where children consistently work towards the limits of their capabilities. Most children start school in the nursery with very low standards, particularly in their literacy. However, all groups of pupils consistently achieve well and standards improve because of the very good teaching and learning, a very rich curriculum and very supportive ethos for learning in the Foundation Stage. Standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception class in most areas of learning although children will reach the goals expected of them in their personal, social and emotional development and their physical development.
4. Achievement in lessons is good by the end of Year 2. In Year 1, where the classes have more pupils with behavioural needs than normal, pupils mostly achieve satisfactorily and within their capabilities. However, occasionally limited progress is made in lessons because misbehaviour by some pupils is not managed sufficiently well. In contrast achievement is consistently good in Year 2 and pupils work beyond their capabilities.
5. The current Year 2 classes are a more able group. Pupils are doing well in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading and writing mainly because of the consistently good teaching. Good work is insisted upon. For example, one of the Year 2 teachers said that "if the pupils' presentation is not up to scratch I don't accept it and they soon get the message that sloppy work is not acceptable". Standards are average in mathematics because of a good focus on practical mathematics and consistently good teaching. Standards in science this year are on course to be above average again because of the good teaching and clear focus to scientific enquiry. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT and religious education, where standards are average.
6. By the end of Year 6 achievement seen in lessons is satisfactory overall. However, there is considerable variation between different year groups and much less evidence of pupils working to their full capability. This is directly because the quality of teaching is uneven and is not yet consistently good in these years. Pupils consistently work well beyond their capabilities in Year 3 and generally well within their capabilities in Year 4, rarely being stretched in this year group. In Years 5 and 6, achievement varies with pupils mostly working within or slightly above their capabilities. Satisfactory achievement is also substantiated by the schools own data and past results in the Year 6 tests, which show that the school's performance through these years is satisfactory compared with similar schools.
7. By the end of Year 6 average standards were seen in English, science, ICT and religious education. Standards in mathematics are above average, which they were for these pupils at the end of Year 2 in both subjects. Standards could be higher. Literacy and numeracy skills could be more systematically developed across the curriculum. In mathematics the curriculum lacks richness, time is not always used to the full in some lessons and the methods used lack challenge, especially for the average and higher attaining pupils. In science, standards have recovered a little from the large fall last year but standards in scientific enquiry remain a weaker area of the subject. Work around the school in art and design and design and technology and assessed work shows that standards are broadly average. Standards in music have also risen

and are an emerging strength due to the very good teaching of the specialist music co-ordinator.

8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they move through the school. This is because the co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership to pupils, the small number of able and committed teaching assistants provide good support and effective monitoring and recording systems are established to give pupils the best possible chances to succeed. However, average and higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to work to their full capabilities, especially in Years 3 to 6.

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

Attendance is satisfactory. Behaviour is good overall and the vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to their work. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development, is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in the Foundation Stage are very enthusiastic, work hard and are keen to please.
- Pupils in most classes have good attitudes to their work but these are not always capitalised upon.
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Assemblies provide themes which successfully promote understanding of other cultures.
- Relationships between the majority of pupils are good.

### **Commentary**

9. Most pupils in the school show good attitudes to their learning, especially in the Foundation Stage where children are very keen to please and work consistently well, paying good attention to their teachers. Teachers in the Foundation Stage work very well to encourage children to listen to each other, develop confidence and work independently. In Years 2 and 3 pupils readily respond to the consistently good teaching, maintain interest and respond enthusiastically to the challenging tasks that are set. In Years 4 to 6 pupils' attitudes are generally good. However, their independent learning skills and full capabilities are not always capitalised upon to ensure they consistently achieve well.
10. The school works closely with parents and encourages regular attendance. The school has overcome the problems in the recording of attendance data which led to the incorrect publication of some figures. Although attendance rates are close to those achieved nationally they are not as high as they might be because a significant minority of parents take their children on holiday during term time. Punctuality is good.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.4	School data:	1.8
National data:	5.8	National data:	0.4

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

11. Some parents have concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. These concerns are confirmed by pupils themselves. Behaviour overall is good. Most pupils are sensible when moving around school, polite and courteous to adults and keen to please. In the majority of lessons pupils behave well. They get on well with each other and with their teachers and observe the school rules well. There are, however, a number of pupils in the school who exhibit challenging behaviour and some have recognised behavioural problems. The monitoring

of incidents of misbehaviour is rigorous and the school works hard to limit the effects of the conduct of these few pupils on others. There have been no exclusions this year. The headteacher sees it his duty to keep pupils who constantly misbehave in school so they can work to address the issue. Improvements in the behaviour of pupils in the playground have been brought about by the introduction of more play equipment and the better organisation of lunchtimes. However the measures currently being taken are not wholly effective and pupils and parents report that some pupils constantly re-offend.

12. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are well behaved, and respond well to the encouragement they receive. This helps boost their confidence and enables them to take pride in their achievements. However, a small number of pupils have limited concentration and do not behave well when teachers' control strategies are occasionally ineffective, such as those seen in Year 1.
13. The school cultivates the personal development of the majority of pupils well. Older pupils are given responsibilities around school and some volunteer to help catering staff to clear away after lunch. Assemblies are effective in helping pupils to gain understanding in ethical and cultural issues and older pupils were keen to discuss the recent themes involving Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds but the school does its best to highlight cultural diversity. Work carried out in personal, health, social and citizenship education promotes personal development and the 'Golden Rules' incorporate manners and thoughtfulness.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Very good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures pupils make a strong start to school life. The very good accommodation is used well and has a positive impact on standards. The good links with parents and the local community and very good links with other schools are further strengths.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good. Consistently good or better teaching is also evident in Years 2 and 3, as is the very good teaching of music by the specialist teacher in Years 3 to 6. However, teaching in Years 1 and Years 4 to 6 does not yet ensure that pupils achieve consistently well and work to the good levels they do in other year groups. Assessment of pupils' work is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching and excellent use of support staff in the nursery and reception classes result in all groups of children make a flying start to their learning.
- High quality learning environments in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 act as a spur to learning and encourage pupils to give of their best.
- There is not enough good teaching in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs and this contributes to them achieving well.
- Good assessment procedures are in place in nearly all subjects but the information has not been consistently developed to give pupils learning targets and ownership of their learning.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	16 (31%)	14 (27%)	20 (35%)	2 (4%)	0	0
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*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.*

14. Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with a very stimulating learning environment in which they can flourish and work to their full capability. Very well established daily routines, very thorough planning and assessment of each pupil's learning needs are collectively used to provide activities which are in tune with pupils' learning needs and provide high levels of challenge. All adults in the Foundation Stage work extremely closely together to ensure that pupils give of their very best. Their eyes and ears constantly pick up how well each child is doing so that the very best use can be made of the time available.
15. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection, both in Year 1, but with different teachers. Other observations of the same teachers and evidence of the work in their classrooms show that these were not typical of their normal practice. Both lessons did not happen well because the behaviour of a small number of children could not be contained. This led to learning of the whole class suffering. Occasionally, this is reported to happen in other classes. A firmer approach needs to be taken.
16. High quality learning environments have been established in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. These provide the pupils with rich sources of stimuli for their learning, help celebrate good work and show pupils the standards they should aspire to. For example, the Year 1 classes have exciting examples of two- and three-dimensional display which enliven the pupils' spirits and help them in their everyday work. In contrast, most other classrooms are dull, although the Year 3 classroom is a noticeable exception.
17. Around one in five pupils say that their lessons are uninteresting and lack fun. This view is much more prevalent for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, it is too inconsistent in quality and often lacks good pace and challenge. Good practice is not evenly shared, particularly in mathematics and science. In mathematics time is not always used well. Worksheets are overused at the expense of other methods, dulling learning and limiting pupils' independent learning skills. In science, a variety of approaches are used to teach scientific enquiry and no one "good" model has been consistently adopted. Consequently varying degrees of challenge are presented and pupils' learning does not uniformly develop at a good rate.
18. Although satisfactory overall, effective teaching and learning are not yet the norm in Years 3 to 6, although teachers generally have a good command of all subjects and take care in planning. In some good lessons seen in Years 5 and 6, learning objectives were shared with pupils in language they understood, teachers were clear about the standards they were looking for and time was taken to ensure that progress in learning was reviewed towards the end of the lesson. However, this three-part lesson structure was not always as well implemented and this resulted in pupils working well within their capabilities rather than stretching themselves. This was particularly the case in Year 4. Some, but not all, teachers adapt the learning in lessons to provide good levels of challenge for the average and higher attaining pupils. Careless errors or unsatisfactory presentation of work remain unchecked or not commented upon. This lack of rigour and insistence on high standards leads to work being accepted that is not the best of which pupils are capable.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are included well in learning because work is usually matched to their needs. Approaches to the identification, monitoring and recording of pupils with special educational needs are rigorous and consistently good. Teachers work hard to ensure that these pupils successfully meet the targets on their individual education plans. Able, talented and committed teaching assistants are usually well used to enable pupils, mostly with special educational needs, to make the best possible progress. However, less care is taken to provide average and higher attaining pupils with constant challenge.

20. Thorough systems of assessment are in place in English, mathematics and science and give teachers a clear idea of how each pupil is doing. This information is used to organise the setting arrangements and group pupils in each class according to their ability. In these subjects, teachers record the national curriculum level each pupil is expected to reach in each year. The information is often used by individual teachers to set challenging learning targets for individual pupils in lessons but it has not been developed consistently well by all teachers to give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. In other subjects, the assessment procedures provide useful confirmation to teachers that the curriculum is being securely covered and average standards are being met.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils. This has a sound impact on pupils' achievement. This is an improvement as the art and design, design and technology and music curriculum were unsatisfactory at the last inspection. The school provides a satisfactory range of visits, visitors and clubs to enrich pupils' learning. Good use is made of ICT in most subjects. The very good accommodation is used well and has a positive impact on standards. Adequate resources support pupils' learning but more good quality resources are needed.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- English, mathematics and science are prominent in the school's curriculum, enabling most pupils to make at least sound, and sometimes good, gains in learning.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils who have special educational needs but the teaching assistants are too few in numbers to give pupils the best possible chance to succeed.
- Some pupils find some aspects of the curriculum dull.
- The very good curriculum in the Foundation Stage ensures children receive a "flying start".
- The very good accommodation is having a positive impact on the drive to raise standards.

### **Commentary**

21. All subjects required by the national curriculum are represented, with English, mathematics and science given good emphasis. In most years pupils are included satisfactorily in their learning but a particularly good focus is given to pupils with special educational needs, the Foundation Stage and Years 2 and 3. As a result, pupils steadily build on their understanding as they move through the school, with good achievement evident in English. The school teaches French successfully to older pupils, and has received a Healthy Schools Initiative award. There is a clear framework for developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, although this still needs matching carefully to their needs in some subjects. Developing links between subjects are helping to make learning more relevant for pupils. The use of English and mathematics through other subjects is evident, but requires further development. Pupils have equal access to all subjects of the national curriculum.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to achieve well. This is because work is usually carefully matched to their needs in English and mathematics, and they are making good progress towards the targets set for them. In other subjects, they make at least sound progress, especially when directly supported.
23. There are too few first-hand and "real life" experiences, to bring the curriculum to life, especially in Years 4 to 6. Pupils complete too many worksheets in some subjects, to make learning relevant and exciting for them. As a result some pupils said that some lessons, such as in mathematics, were dull. In science, the curriculum does not emphasise investigations enough or promote an enquiry approach. A number of visits, visitors and after-school clubs help to extend pupils' learning. Visits such as those to Tynemouth Priory and the Hancock Museum and visitors such as theatre and music groups enrich pupils' experiences. Good curriculum

links with local industry, such as a local chemical works, are mutually beneficial. Clubs, including sport and ICT, also help to develop important skills.

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good and takes account of the early learning goals. Consequently, children in the nursery and reception classes take part in a wide range of planned and carefully structured activities and experiences, which allows them to flourish.
25. The very good accommodation (the school was a former middle school) is used well and helps drive up standards. For example, a large gymnasium is regularly used to develop skills in physical education. Resource deficiencies, such as a lack of artefacts in religious education, have largely been overcome to ensure that there are sufficient resources in all subjects to support pupils' learning. Provision for the "Arts" has improved.

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

The school has good arrangements in place to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with satisfactory support and guidance and has satisfactory measures in place to involve them in the work of the school and its development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children in the Foundation Stage have extremely trusting relationships with all adults in the school community.
- Staff know pupils very well and are aware of their personal circumstances, resulting in very good pastoral care.
- Good day-to-day procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health, welfare and safety.
- Effective steps have been taken to improve playground safety and pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes.
- Although there is good monitoring of instances of bullying and serious misbehaviour around school, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils remains a concern.

### **Commentary**

26. The school provides a caring, safe environment which is conducive to learning and in which pupils feel valued. The Foundation Stage provides a very good start where the very good induction arrangements coupled with the care and concern of staff ensure that children feel secure. Children are confident to approach their teachers, knowing that they will listen to them. This continues through the school. Staff are aware of pupils' personal circumstances, are conscious of their needs and are therefore able to provide very good personal support.
27. There are good links with supporting agencies and health professionals. Child protection procedures are secure with experienced staff in charge. Healthy living is promoted well and the school has an award for this. The school has due regard for the welfare and safety of pupils and safe practices are observed in school and on visits out of school. Parents agree that the staff of the school take good care of their children.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for. Teachers plan well for their needs, especially in English and mathematics. A small number of able and committed teaching assistants support them well. Teachers adopt consistent approaches to the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and monitoring and recording their progress.
29. The school has recognised the need to take steps to improve the behaviour of pupils in the playground and to ensure pupils' safety. To this end improvements have been made with playground markings, the provision of more play equipment and the designation of areas for younger children. This has been effective and pupils report that they feel more secure. Incidents

of misbehaviour are monitored well but there are still occasions when the actions of a small minority of pupils cause concern for other pupils.

30. There are good whole-school assessment procedures in place, which provide clear information on how well each pupil is doing. This is gathered through regular testing and an evaluation of pupils' work. It gives senior management and subject co-ordinators a clear overview of standards.

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

The school has good links with parents and the community and very effective links with other schools. There are also good links with the local community and with local businesses.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with good opportunities to discuss pupils' progress although written reports could provide more information on pupils' targets.
- The school provides a good programme of Family Learning where parents can work alongside their children.
- There is a high level of parental help in school, especially for younger children, and on visits out of school and this is beneficial to pupils' learning.
- The strong links with the nearby high school help to ensure a smooth transfer to the next stage of education.
- Some required information is not published in the governors' annual report to parents.

### **Commentary**

31. The majority of parents are very supportive of the school and feel that the school works well with them in the education of their children. Staff are approachable and parents are welcome in school, either to discuss any concerns they may have or to help in lessons or on out-of-school visits. Parents raise valuable funds for the school and support events well. Parents and other relatives of reception children worked alongside their children making puppets and many parents have donated large toys for use in the playground. Most parents feel that the school listens to their views and takes them seriously but some feel that the school does not do enough to allay their concerns about the aggressive behaviour of a small number of pupils. The inspectors' view is that the school is doing all that it reasonably can.
32. A programme of Family Learning is provided, with courses in literacy and numeracy which not only benefit the parents but also enable them to help their children at home. Regular and constructive information is exchanged between the school and parents of pupils with a special educational need, which fosters a spirit of working together.
33. Parents are given ample opportunities to discuss pupils' progress. Consultation evenings are provided at least twice a year along with an annual written report and the opportunity to discuss it. These written reports are satisfactory and give parents adequate information about what their children are doing and how well they are doing. They could be improved if they included targets and guidance on what they need to do to achieve them, as they now do in the Foundation Stage.
34. Many parents feel that the information provided for them has improved recently. Newsletters are friendly and pleasant in tone. Parents are provided with sufficient information about the topics their children are undertaking and in the weeks before national assessments tests they are advised on how they can support their children without causing them stress. Information provided about the school in the prospectus is satisfactory. However, the governors' annual report to parents does not provide some required information, including the national comparative results for assessment tests and information on the admissions of disabled pupils.

35. The school has very strong links with the local high school to which most pupils transfer. As well as the good arrangements made for pupils to visit the high school, there is liaison within subject areas. The arrangements made for the transfer of pupils are greatly beneficial and pupils feel well supported when moving on to the next stage of their education.
36. The school is an integral part of the community and the building is used well by community groups. Pupils recently helped to design a brochure for the local doctors' surgery and there are good links with the local church. The school also makes good use of the wider community including visits to places of interest such as St Mary's lighthouse, Warkworth Castle and museums in Newcastle. A local firm provides useful support and sponsorship.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management, including those of the acting headteacher, are satisfactory overall and a factor in the satisfactory achievement of pupils. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. The governance of the school is good; all statutory requirements are met apart from some minor omissions in the annual governors' report to parents.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governors use their expertise well to support and challenge staff.
- The management of issues relating to special educational needs is very good.
- Some positive steps have been taken to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching but a sharper focus is needed if standards and achievement are to further improve.
- The school improvement plan does not always focus on what precise actions need to be taken to improve standards and the key priorities for long term development.

### **Commentary**

37. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their visits and reports and presentations from senior staff and subject co-ordinators. The expertise of the experienced and new governors is shared effectively and focused on ensuring the school operates smoothly and inclusively. Through their committee work and visits to talk to staff, governors are supportive and challenge the school when needed. They are very keen to improve their own performance with new governors attending a good range of courses and more experienced governors keeping up to date within their areas of responsibility and expertise. The governors play an important role in financial management and work hard to ensure best value for the school. The omissions from the governors' annual report are easily remedied.
38. The experienced and able special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) oversees this important area very effectively. This is because very good systems are established to ensure that approaches are consistent across the school, records are conscientiously maintained and regularly updated, and relationships with external agencies are very good.
39. A productive climate for learning has been established. Aspects of the curriculum and the quality of teaching were criticised at the last inspection. Concerted effort by the co-ordinators of art and design, design and technology, ICT and music and staff training have successfully ensured that the curriculum and teaching in these subjects are now secure. Good arrangements for performance management are now established which give teachers annual targets related to whole school issues and to improve the quality of their teaching. However, these are insufficiently embedded within the school development plan and do not focus enough on ensuring that teaching in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good.
40. The quality of the development plan was criticised at the last inspection. Although this has been strengthened and is now satisfactory overall, some weaknesses remain. Improvements have



included better use of information from test results and staff performance to pinpoint issues. Staff are clear about the key priorities of improving standards in writing and the continuing need to regulate the behaviour of a small number of difficult pupils. The plan is now underpinned by a suitable set of action plans for each subject of the national curriculum. However, the plan is not always sufficiently precise about the role of individual teachers in implementing planning and lack of time for co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning results in some staff not implementing the plan with sufficient rigour. Some longer term strategic developments across all spheres have been carefully identified but are less well charted.

41. There is little flexibility in the budget, which is currently in deficit. Falling pupil numbers, spending on security (necessitated by vandalism) and reduced government grants have meant that, despite some staff cuts, the expenditure exceeded income last year. The school spends more than normal on its teaching staff, which the governors are keen to maintain at good levels. Special grants are spent well. However, the deficit budget restricts the school's ability to invest in further teaching assistants, curriculum resources and staff training, particularly in Years 3 to 6, as a way of raising achievement. Strategies have been agreed with the local education authority to improve the school's financial situation. The school is fairly effective and the below average expenditure leads to satisfactory value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	962,198	Balance from previous year	-4,412
Total expenditure	983,741	Balance carried forward to the next	-45,270
Expenditure per pupil	2,325		

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

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

42. The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good in all areas of learning and is one of the strengths of the school. The area is very well led and managed.
43. The children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average. Their speaking skills and knowledge of vocabulary are particularly poor. However, they enter a vibrant and stimulating atmosphere where the teacher and nursery nurses do all they can to provide a curriculum that is matched very well to the children's needs and where children are quickly made to feel secure. This high quality provision continues in the reception classes where the very good start that children receive in the nursery is built on effectively. There is a very strong drive for learning. Children achieve well in all areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes because the teaching is consistently very good and nursery nurses provide very high quality support. Relationships are very good and enable children to work in a happy environment. Children's progress is very carefully monitored and activities are matched well to their needs. Good provision is made for children with special educational needs. The previous inspection did not report on the whole of the Foundation Stage because of the way the school was then organised with reception and Year 1 classes taught together. Current arrangements provide more suitable opportunities for reception children and, consequently, there has been good improvement.

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

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

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

- Children settle in well and are happy because supportive relationships have been established.
- Children behave very well.
- Children play well together, learn to take turns and form friendships because adults are very good role models and adults give children the chance to make personal choices.
- Planning and teaching are very good and ensure pupils achieve well. Children are likely to reach average standards by the end of the reception class.

#### **Commentary**

44. Staff are very caring and work hard to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. Because of this and the excellent examples set by all adults, children achieve well. When they start in the nursery, children seldom stay at activities for very long. However, older children include them in activities and help them when they do not know what to do. Consequently, children quickly settle in to school routines and feel happy and secure. The imaginative and exciting activities provided by the staff ensure that children show sustained concentration and behave very well. They learn to make decisions for themselves when they choose which activities to pursue. Staff are sensitive to the needs of children, for example, when they feel upset at the arrival of a new baby. From this, children in the nursery learn to care for each other. They quickly learn to play together and form friendship groups. For example, children in a reception class waited patiently to use climbing apparatus in physical education lessons, and shared toys without arguing. Staff use circle time when milk and fruit are given out to teach children to say "Thank you." Children are polite and welcoming to visitors and develop the confidence to start conversations. They clear away after activities. Children are developing a good sense of responsibility. For example, while waiting to go to the hall, one boy hung up coats that had fallen onto the floor in the corridor without being asked.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop the children's communication skills and vocabulary.
- Many children enter school with poor speech and limited vocabulary.
- Although children achieve well in both classes, standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception year.

### Commentary

45. Teachers and nursery nurses provide many very good opportunities in all activities for children to develop their language skills, which are very low when they enter the nursery. When children start in the nursery, many have poor speaking skills and some do not listen very well. Some do not know enough words to explain what they want to say. In the reception classes, children did not know what hay or a toaster was. Staff work hard to overcome this. For example, when children were given fruit to eat with their milk, the teacher asked them to describe how the fruit tasted and felt, encouraging them to use words such as crunchy and juicy. Staff in the reception classes developed children's listening skills and made them think about the meaning of words when they asked questions such as "What pet needs a tank, some gravel and water plants?" Very good provision is made for children with special educational needs in both the nursery and reception classes, who are given suitable work by the teachers and help from outside agencies. In the nursery, children learn that writing carries meaning when they pretend to write prescriptions in the Health Centre play area; by the end of the reception year, higher and some average attaining children write about rabbits in sentences. However, lower achieving children and those with special educational needs cannot yet write all the letter shapes correctly. Nursery children talk about their favourite books and turn pages in the correct order; in the reception classes, children read books from the reading schemes.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because staff know what children understand and can do and build systematically on it.
- Staff constantly reinforce counting skills.
- Despite the very good quality of teaching and the many practical activities, few children reach the expected learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Nevertheless, from a very low starting point, children achieve well.

### Commentary

46. Staff take every opportunity in all areas of learning to develop children's understanding of number. In the nursery, children repeat rhymes such as "Once I caught a fish alive" and they work out how many children need cartons of milk. Staff use familiar objects such as teddy bears to show children how to add numbers and to teach the language of size. In the reception classes, children use coins to buy toys. Higher attaining children work out which coins to use to make small amounts of money. The same children write down simple addition sums with values up to twenty pence. However, average attaining children find it difficult to understand the idea of adding numbers. Very good provision is made for children with special educational needs, who play games such as money lotto to help them learn the value of coins. However, they have difficulty because they cannot recognise the numbers on the coins.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are planned very well and link with other areas of learning.
- Adult help supports children very well.
- Adults use questions well to develop children's knowledge of the world about them.
- Children achieve well in both classes but overall standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception year, although those in the ICT and science components are a little higher.

### Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are very good and ensure that children achieve well. A very good variety of interesting activities stimulate children's curiosity. They develop a sense of old and new when they look at their own toys and those played with by their parents. Children learn how to care for rabbits as pets and use the knowledge gained to say how they would look after a dog. Challenging questions from the teacher led to children saying the rabbit would need a hutch, fresh water and food and sawdust. They develop knowledge of the characteristics of different materials through their play with sand, water and play dough. Children use a range of materials, scissors and glue spreaders to make different types of puppets.
48. Teachers make good links with other areas of learning. When reception children read the story, "Handa's Surprise", they learnt about fruits common in other countries, such as mangoes and guavas. Nursery children learn how the teacher used sand to make plastic bottles stand upright in rhyming songs. They use construction materials imaginatively to build towers. Teachers introduce children to computers early. They use the mouse to select tools in a drawing program to make self-portraits and compile a book about toys. Children study celebrations such as New Year, the Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day. They were fascinated to be shown how to write Chinese characters.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given many opportunities to develop their skills in outdoor play.
- Very good use is made of resources to develop children's confidence when using apparatus.
- Teaching and learning are very good and most children are on line to achieve the goals expected by the end of the reception year.

### Commentary

49. Children develop an awareness of a healthy lifestyle when they drink milk each day and have healthy snacks. Teachers use resources well to challenge children in their activities and build their confidence. For example, nursery children practised walking backwards, safe in the knowledge that they would not hurt themselves if they fell on the rubber covered play surface. Very good teaching, which emphasised safe ways of working, led to reception children working confidently on mats and low climbing frames in the school gymnasium. Reception children learnt to ride and control large wheeled toys during playtimes. Children are given many opportunities to develop fine finger skills. Nursery children roll and shape dough. They pour sand into bottles. Children use pencils, scissors and brushes to create pictures. They control a computer mouse very well to select items from the screen. Reception children worked very

well in groups to demonstrate different types of machine after listening to “Today I made a fine machine”.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although children achieve well in both classes, standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception year.
- A good range of activities support children’s learning very well.

### Commentary

50. Teaching is very good in both the nursery and reception and so children achieve well. A very good range of play and activity areas stimulate children’s imagination. Nursery children dressed as dentists and nurses in the Health Centre to examine adults’ teeth and take their temperature. In the reception classes, children acting as the receptionist in the toy museum held long and detailed conversations with imaginary callers. In the nursery children made tracks in the sand tray for tractors and lorries to follow. Children dress up as people from other countries. In a physical education lesson, reception children used their imagination well to find different ways of moving along benches and rolling over mats. Children paint pictures and make collages. Reception children stuck wool onto puppets they made to represent hair and decorate snake puppets with shiny plastic shapes. Nursery children joined in counting and clapping songs and continued singing in small groups after the teacher had left.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

*English is reported in full below. Work in **French** was sampled. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson pupils learned how to ask each other’s ages and linked this to their prior knowledge of how to ask a name. The class teacher followed a televised series. In Year 6 most teaching is led by a specialist language teacher provided as part of a link to the local secondary school.*

### English

Provision for English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good by the end of Years 2 and 6 and, as a result, the pupils’ achievement is also good. However, standards of teaching and learning are not consistent throughout the school, so the pupils do not always sustain the progress that they are capable of.
- The co-ordinator leads and manages teaching and learning well. She knows the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and takes effective action.
- The pupils’ low standard of communication when they enter the school is a hindrance to their progress in speaking and writing through much of their time at the school.
- The effectiveness of the school’s development plan and performance management is diminished by a lack of clear targets and success criteria for the subject. Targets for individual pupils are not used sufficiently in teaching and learning to promote the achievement of their full potential.

### Commentary

51. Pupils' communication skills are below average for their age when they enter the school but very effective teaching in Reception and Year 2 has raised their attainment and brought it into line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. The current Year 6 pupils achieved below national expectations at the end of Year 2 but good teaching in Years 3, 5 and 6 has brought their overall attainment up to national standards. Teaching in Years 1 and 4 is satisfactory overall but Year 1 pupils' inappropriate talking wastes time during lessons while those in Year 4 are given insufficient opportunities to develop their range of speaking for different audiences and purposes. Despite these weaknesses teaching is good overall.
52. Pupils achieve better in reading and listening than they do in speaking and writing. Pupils are generally keen to learn, particularly when teaching is effective and activities are well matched to their needs. All classes have regular timetabled guided and individual reading sessions in addition to daily literacy lessons, and books are sent home regularly. Older pupils say that they do not read at home, alone or with an adult, as often as when they were younger. While the school is effective in teaching pupils the features and uses of a good range of writing styles, their limited vocabulary and tendency not to speak in sentences unless prompted often lead to oral and written work lacking rich and expressive language or clear organisation. Some classes have a good display of key vocabulary that can be easily read by pupils and used in their responses. Handwriting skills have not been taught well but the purchase and use of a new scheme is beginning to redress this.
53. The most successful lessons began with a clear explanation of what the lesson or group of lessons were to be about, followed by good modelling of the activity and well-focused questioning. These helped pupils to understand what was expected and to sustain their efforts throughout the lesson. In one class there was a good balance between individual questioning and whole class response, when pupils were asked to either nod or shake their heads, or put hands on their heads or over their mouths. Teachers checked on the pupils' understanding and what they had done by going back at the end of the lesson to the original objective. This also helped pupils to recognise how effectively they had learned.
54. Leadership and management are good. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has worked with staff to produce a thorough set of targets for key stages, years and groups to guide planning and improve the pupils' writing skills. She has also ensured that the subject is well resourced. Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills and this is another factor leading to good achievement. Their assessments are used to set the targets groups are expected to achieve each term. However, pupils do not have specific personal targets that they can refer to in lessons to improve their writing and there are few comments or indications in marking to help them improve their own work.

### **English across the curriculum**

55. The school recognises that it has not yet rigorously identified opportunities to teach and practise pupils' literacy through other subjects. Individual teachers have begun this task, for instance when younger pupils list facts about Mary Seacole. Older pupils make notes as they watch a programme about climates and write as journalists about Anne Boleyn's execution. Pupils are adept at entering and amending text in word processing and presentation programs.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and are above average by the end of Year 6, as at the time of the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is unduly varied, though it is consistently good in Years 2 and 3, and at least satisfactory overall.
- Pupils are not yet made sufficiently aware of how to improve, especially in Years 4 to 6.
- The activities provided in Years 3 to 6 lack sparkle.
- Numeracy skills are not yet developed well enough in other subjects.

## Commentary

56. Standards in mathematics are below average at the start of compulsory education. However, by the end of Year 2 pupils achieve well and they reach average standards. The good achievement is largely due to the good teaching in Year 2, which helps pupils to make good gains in learning over the year. Standards for this year's Year 6 pupils are likely to be above average. This is because the current Year 6 pupils performed well at the end of Year 2. However, achievement for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is uneven, and is satisfactory overall. This is due to the quality of teaching and learning, which is unacceptably varied and too often pupils are not stretched as much as they might be. Because teaching and learning are not consistently good across Years 3 to 6, a trend of rising standards is not yet securely established.
57. Teaching is satisfactory overall but it is consistently good in Year 2. Examples of very good teaching were observed in Years 3 and 6, but unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Year 1. In the good lessons seen teachers had high expectations and pitched work at appropriately challenging levels for most pupils. Purposeful questioning helped develop a clear understanding of new knowledge. High levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships and secure subject knowledge helped to keep pupils motivated and involved. As a result, pupils put much effort into getting it right. Teaching assistants worked well with pupils with special educational needs and other less able pupils. These positive features of lessons help to explain the good attitudes to learning and mostly good behaviour seen during the inspection, which contribute to the standards achieved. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, ineffective classroom management prevented pupils from making satisfactory progress. In a number of lessons, time was not used to best effect to benefit pupils. Some teachers use displays well to celebrate pupils' work, interest and involve them, especially in Years 1 to 3.
58. Pupils do not yet have precise targets to help them to see how to make progress. Some teachers do not share lesson targets with pupils consistently to give them a clear sense of direction or evaluate with them near the end of the lesson the extent to which they have been met. Marking, although conscientiously undertaken, does not consistently help pupils to move forward with their learning.
59. The grouping of pupils by ability is having a positive impact on their achievements because work is more carefully matched to their needs. Teachers monitor pupils' work carefully, maintaining informative records to help them identify what pupils know and understand and what requires attention. They are placing increased emphasis on the provision of opportunities to develop initiative and understanding through investigative and problem solving tasks, although some pupils are not confident explaining how they solve problems. However, "real-life" mathematics is not used often enough to help pupils appreciate the importance of number in our daily lives and to bring the curriculum to life for them. Worksheets are overused as a resource for learning, and some introductions to lessons are too long, which caused some pupils to comment that mathematics was their least liked subject.
60. The subject is soundly led and managed. Satisfactory progress has been made in improving standards and the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has compiled satisfactory plans for the subject's continued development. However, priorities lack clear time scales for their completion to ensure there is enough rigour in the process. Regular

discussions with pupils to seek their views about mathematics, and the monitoring of pupils' work and teaching and learning, are not yet fully embedded in the school's work to enable him to find out what works and what requires development.

### **Numeracy across the curriculum**

61. The development of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through other subjects is not given enough emphasis. For example, in science pupils display data in charts and graphs. However, these sometimes lack precision with older pupils joining up the points in graphs rather than drawing a line of best fit. However, some links are evident, such as in ICT, where older pupils engage in data handling. Opportunities tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning, although the profile of numeracy is clearly developing.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils achieve well and standards are now above average in Year 2, but they remain average by Year 6 and should be higher.
- Pupils have a good, broad knowledge of science and, when taught well, show good attitudes to their work.
- A good emphasis is given to investigations in Years 1 and 2. However, in Years 3 to 6 there is insufficient emphasis on developing a spirit of enquiry and systematically developing the skills needed for pupils to become good investigators.
- Good systems of assessment are in place but insufficient use is made of the information gained to tackle weaknesses in standards and provide all pupils with clear targets for learning.
- A good and varied range of scientific writing is encouraged but pupils are not always secure when writing or explaining their predictions, explanations and descriptions.

#### **Commentary**

62. Pupils are not yet working to their full capability in all years. There are several reasons for this. Teaching and learning are good through Years 1 and 2 but, although satisfactory overall, vary unduly through Years 3 to 6 because teachers are not consistently setting clear objectives for lessons and evaluating how much has been learnt by the end of the lesson. Classroom displays are much more vibrant in Years 1, 2 and 3 than in Years 4 to 6, which provides more stimuli and a spur to learning earlier on. The curriculum is well planned in Years 1 and 2, providing both richness and the systematic development of investigative skills. In Years 3 to 6, good attention is paid to developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and vocabulary but scientific enquiry is not developed progressively. This is because teachers are using different approaches and insufficient emphasis is given to developing a spirit of enquiry.
63. The main reason why pupils do better by the end of Year 2 than the end of Year 6 is that there is more consistently good teaching. Teaching is good by the end of Year 2 and satisfactory by the end of Year 6. In lessons seen in Years 2 pupils were provided with good challenge and asked "What do you think will happen when these different cars roll down the ramps?" Pupils were very clear as to what they had to do and worked very purposefully and independently in small groups. Questions were rich in scientific vocabulary and pupils' own results were carefully discussed, making sure that the key learning points had been covered. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 was mainly satisfactory. Pupils' investigative work was tightly directed, giving them much less opportunity to work to their full capabilities. Very similar work was given to pupils of differing abilities, which meant that some were marking time. Some good questioning was seen in Year 5 which helped pupils to explore the very difficult idea of why there is night and day but in other lessons seen questions did not provide good levels of challenge for average and higher attaining pupils. The good focus given to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding is



helping to sustain above average standards. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 insist on good presentation but in later years slipshod work is sometimes allowed.

64. Pupils' weaker writing and speaking skills are inhibiting higher standards in science. Teachers are taking some positive steps to address this by encouraging a wide variety of writing styles, particularly in Years 3 to 6. For example, work in books and on display features sequencing exercises, keys, report writing, making a list of instructions and linking ideas together in a "concept map". The main weakness, however, is that many pupils lack confidence in constructing sentences that allow them to write short but effective descriptions, explanations and scientific relationships.
65. Good assessment procedures are in place and provide staff with an annual overview of how well pupils are doing. Regular tests also provide additional information. The information is used to good effect in Years 1 and 2, where tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and classroom discussions help pupils to focus on the areas they need to improve. In Years 3 to 6 less use is made of the information. Pupils do not have their own small targets to work towards to give them a better understanding of their own learning. Teachers have not yet identified the key areas they need to focus their teaching on in each year. Although marking is often positive and there are some good examples of teachers helping pupils to improve their work, this is not consistent and uniformly formative.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The weaknesses in the subject are well known but the co-ordinator has had insufficient non-contact time to monitor individual teachers in Years 3 to 6 and provide the support needed to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further. There are adequate resources for the subject in Years 1 and 2 but the tight budget is restricting investigative work to be fully resourced in later years. The co-ordinator and staff know that there is a weakness in scientific enquiry in Years 3 to 6 but the current plan of action does not pin-point what each teacher needs to do in order to rectify the situation. A good revision programme is provided in Year 6 and helps provide a boost to pupils' learning and the standards reached in the national curriculum tests. Overall, satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is well led and managed. Consequently, standards have improved since the last inspection and good use is now made of ICT across the curriculum.
- Good information from assessment is not yet being used to enable average and higher attaining pupils to fully work to their capabilities.

### **Commentary**

67. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection where standards were below average. There are several reasons for this. Good quality staff training has increased teachers' own confidence in using ICT and ensured that teaching is now satisfactory by the end of Years 2 and 6. Improved provision of computers in each classroom has led to ICT being used more often. An ICT suite has been established with each class now having access at least once per week to help develop their skills. A more secure scheme of work is in place which ensures that pupils cover the right material at the right time. All groups of pupils are now achieving satisfactorily by the end of Years 2 and 6 because of satisfactory teaching.
68. During the inspection, pupils in the different year groups undertook a variety of work in the computer suite. Good use was made of a projector to demonstrate how best to use the

computers and software related to each task. Good support was provided by a range of knowledgeable adults so that individual pupils could be well supported and kept on task. Teaching in the suite had sufficient challenge to enable pupils to work productively but did not have the level of challenge that ensured all groups of pupils constantly stretched themselves.

69. Pupils' use of computers to develop ideas and make things happen was an important weakness at the last inspection. This aspect has improved and is now satisfactory. For example, pupils in Year 6 had completed a survey on what drinks pupils in different year groups preferred. This information was successfully developed on the computer in which pupils combined graphics, text, sound and colour to produce pleasing presentations. A good link has been developed with the nearby Longbenton College to provide a whole day's teaching for Year 6 pupils where they learn how to control robots. However, standards could be higher in this area. Although there has been a good investment in upgrading the stock of computers and software more equipment is needed within the school. For example, the school has no programmable robots for use in Years 3 to 6 and no equipment in science to sense and monitor the environment that pupils can use on a regular basis.
70. The subject is well led and managed and this has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. A popular computer club runs twice per week. Work is sampled and assessed each year, which gives staff a good overview of standards in each year group. However, this information is not used fully to plan lessons and plan more challenging work for pupils that would enable them to extend their capabilities and know the next steps in their learning.

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

71. Teachers carefully identify opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have learnt in the computer suite through other subjects using the classroom computers. ICT is used particularly well to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 used word processing programs to help write antonyms and an "I like ...." poem whilst those in Years 5 and 6 used this software to enhance their written work in several subjects. Maths games on the computer helped to develop numeracy skills in Year 1 whilst in Year 4 a group of pupils used the computers to work independently on their mathematical skills. Year 5 pupils used the Internet to research flutes in their technology work and to find out information about "night and day".

### **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.*

72. Scrutiny of Year 2 **geography** work showed pupils reaching average standards with pupils producing plans of their classrooms. They also learn their own addresses, how to recognise the countries of Great Britain by their shape, and the countries' flags. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson, pupils made notes about climates around the world guided by the teacher who wrote key vocabulary for them to copy. Pupils then extended their notes to add to keys surrounding a world map where they had coloured climatic zones. They spoke confidently about how the inhabitants coped with the heat of deserts, the cold of polar regions and the wet of temperate zones. The recently appointed co-ordinator stressed her commitment to encourage opportunities for pupils to study from first hand information.
73. In **history**, Year 2 pupils are also reaching average standards and have learnt about life in the trenches in 'Flanders Field' in World War 1 and the significance of Remembrance Day. They took care in writing and drawing their responses on commercial worksheets. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson seen, the teacher had prepared useful 'artefacts' and recording sheets so that pupils could learn how the ancient Greeks used written language. Pupils compared the letters with those of our own alphabet. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has worked effectively to resolve

issues around duplication of topics and has identified good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through visits to local historical sites.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits, visitors and the use of religious artefacts help to bring the subject to life for pupils.
- The subject is soundly led, but there are areas which require development.

### Commentary

74. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus, as at the time of the last inspection, and achievement is satisfactory because teaching is satisfactory. For example, Year 2 pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of Judaism, supported well through colourful and informative classroom displays. They make and learn about torah scrolls, the yad, mantle and Star of David. The emphasis at this stage is on learning about religion rather than learning from religion. However, in a Year 6 lesson which contributed to moral and social development, pupils learnt to appreciate that they are part of and have responsibilities to different communities. They discover the significance of various religious artefacts to people of different faiths, partly through Internet research. Pupils are now learning from religion and how it affects their daily lives.
75. Pupils in Year 2 visit the local church, learn about the importance of the pulpit, lectern and font, and in a good link with art, make stained glass windows. They visit the Newcastle mosque, discovering why most mosques have domes and minarets. The local vicar is a regular visitor, leading assemblies to help give pupils greater insight into the liturgies and symbols of the Christian faiths. Religious artefacts are used well in lessons and through displays to extend pupils' learning and help bring the subject to life. This helps explain why pupils showed good attitudes to learning in the lessons seen. Resources to support pupils' learning in religious education are now satisfactory. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.
76. The subject is soundly led and managed. However, the subject is not high profile in many classrooms because not all teachers enjoy teaching it. There are few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning to enable the co-ordinator to have a clear picture of standards across the school. Assessment procedures are currently underdeveloped.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Music is reported on in full. Work in art and design, design and technology and physical education was sampled.*

77. In **art and design** provision has been strengthened since the last inspection. Displays of work show that by the end of Year 6 pupils have used a good range of media. For example, they have used paint, crayons and pastels to catch the mood of trees in woods and shells from the beach to create three-dimensional pictures. They used sketchbooks effectively to practise techniques using pencils to draw closely observed birds such as swallows for an environmental project with a local factory. In a satisfactory lesson seen in Year 6 the teacher encouraged pupils to practise their drawings of masks suitable for a celebration in St Lucia. The good discussion at the start of the lesson led to pupils producing a variety of designs. However, some pupils did not think carefully enough about making their designs relevant to the culture and environment of St Lucia. In a satisfactory Year 2 lesson seen, pupils drew pictures representing event happening before and after a picture they had been given. The good introduction and good support from adults ensured that most pupils do this. However, not

enough attention was paid to developing pupils' artistic skills. For example, the drawings of people by many pupils were immature.

78. The weaknesses reported at the last inspection in Years 3 to 6 in **design and technology** have been addressed well. Work on display shows that all teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their designing and making skills in all years. One effective lesson was seen in Year 3. Teaching was good and pupils achieved well, stretching their capabilities and learning how professionals in the food industry design tests on sandwiches and use people's sense of texture, smell and taste to find out what consumers really like.
79. In **physical education**, standards in the dance component, observed in Years 1 and 5, and in athletics, seen in Year 6, were broadly average. Teaching and learning are unacceptably varied, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. In two good lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the teachers' subject knowledge was secure, the pace was brisk, the development of important skills was given good emphasis, good work undertaken by pupils was shared with others and the teachers' expectations were high. These good qualities ensured that pupils achieved well and had positive attitudes to learning. However, in a Year 1 lesson judged unsatisfactory, ineffective control strategies prevented pupils from making satisfactory progress. The co-ordinator is a good teacher of physical education, and leads the subject well. There are clear plans for its future development. Popular and well-led Sports' clubs, such as football, gymnastics and judo, extend pupils' learning.

## Music

Provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching when music is taught by the subject co-ordinator leads to above average standards by Year 6.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and good management because she has known the subject very well and is enthusiastically moving the subject forward.
- Good provision is made for gifted and talented pupils.

### Commentary

80. Music is an emerging strength of the school. Not enough lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 to make judgements. However, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection.
81. The quality of learning and teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good when the lessons are taught by the subject co-ordinator, who is a music specialist. She has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they respond very well. For example, pupils use musical terms such as rondo, glissando and ostinato confidently, and explain what the terms mean. They read musical scores well and talk knowledgeably about how the instruments go together to create a piece of music. Very good questioning by the teacher leads pupils to refine their playing and they learn to play tuned and untuned percussion with varying dynamics and tempo. Learning is very good because the teacher arranges pupils in blocks as in an orchestra and rehearses each set of instruments before adding other instruments. Pupils learn what they have to do to improve because they are encouraged to analyse how well they have played. There are no other teachers with musical expertise. In a Year 4 lesson, teaching was sound but pupils were not given enough help in composing music to match a poem, "Our Town". Consequently, they did not think carefully enough about how they could use instruments to represent traffic sounds.
82. The subject is led very well and the co-ordinator is a good role model for her colleagues. Management is good although the co-ordinator is not given time to monitor teaching and learning in lessons and she does not check lesson plans. The co-ordinator has worked hard

since the previous inspection to raise the profile of music in the school. A musician from the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra works with pupils across the school, including Nursery children. Pupils from the school have listened to concerts given by the orchestra; other visitors have performed clog dances, jazz, African drumming and dancing. The co-ordinator runs a music club for gifted and talented pupils in Years 5 and 6 and pupils are given the chance to learn to play violins and brass and woodwind instruments. The school choir is gaining a growing reputation through singing in concerts in school and the local church.

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

*Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled.*

83. A sound emphasis is given to this area of the curriculum. Pupils learn about the use and misuse of drugs and the importance of a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. Sex education is taught within the agreed syllabus. Most teachers ensure there are regular class discussions about issues which concern pupils. Assemblies cover a series of themes such as bullying, and provide a useful vehicle for raising awareness of personal and social issues. However, work in this important area is not yet fully embedded within the school's curriculum and has been prioritised for future development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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