

INSPECTION REPORT

GOLDEN FLATTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111581

Headteacher: Mrs K Callan

Lead inspector: Mrs J Morley

Dates of inspection: 12th - 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 256223

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	154
School address:	Seaton Lane Hartlepool
Postcode:	TS25 1HN
Telephone number:	(01429) 274711
Fax number:	(01429) 234711
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C F Hill
Date of previous inspection:	6 th July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- This school has 154 pupils and is a little smaller than average.
- It is situated on the outskirts of Hartlepool, close to the coast at Seaton Carew.
- All but one of the pupils are British and white. None has English as an additional language; there are no refugees, asylum seekers, travellers or children in care.
- Socio-economic factors are generally unfavourable.
- Attainment on entry to the school is well below average.
- At 23 per cent, pupil mobility is high.
- Staff mobility is also high: of a total teaching staff of nine, five have left and four have joined in the past two years.
- There is a 12 place resourced provision unit for pupils aged seven to eleven with moderate learning difficulties.
- One third of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need – well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is high.
- Of those with significant special educational needs, nine relate to dyslexia; nine to moderate learning difficulty; two have severe learning difficulties; three have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and one has problems associated with speech and communication.
- The school is involved in the following initiatives: Small Schools Fund; Sure Start and The Children's Fund. It also has a partnership with a local beacon school.
- It was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools Award in 2003, and received an Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25470	J Morley	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Art and design; Citizenship.
9333	K Schofield	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
25623	T Cox	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Information and communication technology; Music.
16227	J Phillips	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Design and technology; Physical education; Special Educational Needs.
29188	G Ulyatt	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Religious education; The Foundation Stage.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Services Ltd
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	14
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good and improving quality of education. The headteacher has a crystal clear vision for its development, and staff are united behind her. Although a significant number of pupils present challenging behaviour - and attainment on entry to the school is well below expectations - this is not a school that uses these circumstances as excuses for the standards it achieves. It recognises that the key to success is the creation of an environment where pupils know they are safe, secure, liked and respected. This has been achieved: relationships are outstanding and all pupils are included in the rich curriculum on offer. All pupils make good progress, leaving the school with standards that meet the national average overall. About four-fifths of teaching is of good or better quality. Good assessment systems are in place and are being rigorously used to raise attainment. Value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher leads and motivates the staff very well and, working together, they provide a delightfully welcoming school community: warm, caring, inclusive and challenging.
- All pupils achieve well: they move from standards in Nursery that are well below expectations to standards in Year 6 that meet or exceed them in all areas except writing.
- There is inconsistency in the quality and quantity of pupils' written work across the curriculum, and this leads to below average writing standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching is good (often very good from the Nursery to Year 2) because teachers establish outstanding relationships with pupils and, using these as the cornerstone, help pupils to achieve well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, and they are fully included in all the school does. Gifted and talented pupils are also well supported.
- Pupils receive very good personal support, enabling them to develop as caring and responsible young people.
- The quality and range of resources for Reception children require improvement, as does the planned use of the outside area for Nursery and Reception children.

Improvement since the last inspection (1998) has been good. Improvement since the appointment of the current headteacher (2001) has been very good. As at the last inspection, pupils reach average standards overall. Attainment has improved in information and communication technology (ICT), in design and technology and in physical education. Behaviour was good and is now very good. Relationships were good: they are now outstanding. Provision for pupils' personal development was good and is now very good. About one quarter of teaching was good or better: that proportion has been trebled. The fabric of the building has been improved, and so has the internal ambience. Corridors are fully carpeted and have comfortable seating where pupils can sit and chat, or read. They are made additionally attractive with fascinating displays. The dining room has tablecloths, flowers and cheerful yellow seating: just one of the many ways that the school lets pupils know how much they are valued.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table that follows is somewhat misleading because the data include the test results of all pupils, including those in the school's resourced provision for moderate learning difficulties (14 per cent of the cohort in 2003 and 25 per cent of the current cohort). This fundamental point is crucial to understanding all that follows in the report. In addition, the 2003 data have been negatively influenced by significant change of teacher / periods of unsatisfactory teaching for these pupils through Years 3 to 6 – issues that have now been resolved in full. In fact, **achievement for all pupils throughout the school is now good.** By the end of Reception, although children still fall short of the goals they

are expected to reach, they have progressed well. They reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Year 6 standards are also broadly average, which is commendable considering past turbulence. Writing standards need to be improved, which the school recognises and is working hard to achieve. Pupils achieve above expected standards in ICT and in physical education.

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

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, better than at the last inspection. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to work. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Eight in every ten lessons are of good or better quality. They are challenging, and taught at a good pace in an environment that is relaxed, respectful and inclusive. Where teaching is less than good there is no common weakness: for example, one lesson progressed too slowly while in another the teacher did little to motivate pupils. Weaknesses exist in some teachers' marking. Overall, however, **the quality of teaching and learning is good, and often very good.**

The planned curriculum is good, and extra-curricular activities are very good. The school is very good at supporting pupils' personal development. It provides a good level of care for pupils and successfully ensures that all have equal access to what is on offer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. Management by the headteacher and key staff is good. Governance is sound: governors fulfil all of their statutory duties and have a good understanding of how well the school is doing.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think highly of the school and like the fact that the staff and the headteacher are available and approachable. Pupils are happy at school because they know their teachers like them, and are there to help them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise writing standards by providing pupils with more independent writing opportunities across the full curriculum;
- improve the way the outside area is used in the curriculum for Nursery and Reception children, and improve resources in Reception.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

From attainment on entry that is well below average, pupils achieve average standards by the time they leave.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are improving because the school knows how to correct its weaknesses.
- Years 2 and 6 pupils reach average standards overall, but writing is weak.
- All pupils achieve well and, from Nursery to Year 2, often very well.
- Pupils attain above expected standards in ICT and physical education.

1. Nationally published data give an inaccurate picture of attainment in Year 6. Hence, in order to make sense of this report as a whole, it is crucial to interpret realistically the data that are presented in the Summary (Section A), and in the two tables below. Without explanation they are misleading. Two key points need to be made:

- * Firstly, in Years 3 to 6 the school has resourced provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Their national test results are included in the data and, understandably, they depress overall standards and disguise the real picture. Last year these pupils accounted for 14 per cent of the total cohort and they made a significant difference to the published results. This year the proportion is 25 per cent.
- * Secondly, any comparison between the school's national test results at Year 2 and Year 6 is not meaningful because there is no resourced provision for pupils below Year 3. Inevitably, the make-up of the two cohorts is always different. Although it is likely that national test results at Year 2 will always appear better than those at Year 6, this should not be taken to mean that the younger pupils outperform the older ones. All achieve well.

2. Despite these factors, the 2003 Year 6 test results are described by the headteacher as 'disappointing' and 'not good enough'. The school fell short of its targets, and she is frank in saying that more pupils should have achieved the expected Level 4. She investigated immediately, and is satisfied that subsequent action, including better use of staff expertise, is resolving the problem and will result in an upturn in standards this year. Inspectors agree with her: standards for those pupils who do not have significant special needs now meet expectations in most subjects, and exceed them in two. Clearly though, 2004 test data are unlikely to make this evident because the proportion of pupils from resourced provision has nearly doubled this year (five from a total cohort of 20). Moreover, a further three pupils in the year group are on the school's register of SEN.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.6 (25.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.4 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	24.8 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In comparison with similar schools in 2003, Year 2 pupils attained standards in reading and mathematics that were well above average, and writing standards that were average. The all school comparison showed average standards in reading and mathematics, and well below average attainment in writing. However, the problem is not restricted to Years 1 and 2: in fact it is greater in Years 3 to 6. The school is aware that it needs to improve pupils' writing: it is one of a group of sensibly prioritised targets in the current improvement plan.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.5 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
maths	16.2 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The trend in Year 2 results is an upward one: improvement is more rapid than the national rate. The trend in Year 6 is neither a valid nor reliable piece of datum and is best set to one side: it is almost entirely dependent on the proportion of pupils with significant SEN in the cohort.
5. Pupils' achievement is a more straightforward picture: good for everyone.
- * Those in resourced provision achieve well because they are consistently well taught in a way that takes account of their special needs. This pertains both to when they are taught as a discrete group or when – as is largely the case – they join pupils of their own age in the other classes.
 - * Children achieve well, and often very well in Nursery and Reception, benefiting from good and often very good teaching. They enter the school with skills that are well below those expected in the key areas of personal, social and emotional development; and in communication, language and literacy. In mathematical development their skills are particularly poor. They leave the Reception year closer to the standards expected because of their good - often very good – progress.
 - * There is no slowing down in Years 1 and 2: provision is equally good. As a result, by the end of this period pupils have fully made up the significant shortfall with which they entered Nursery.
 - * Progress through Years 3 to 6 remains good overall, but with slightly less consistency. Standards in Years 4, 5 and 6 still show the hallmark of the disrupted or poor teaching that these pupils experienced before last year. Nevertheless, there is good improvement and, by the end of Year 6, standards overall meet expectations.
6. Standards in English overall meet expectations in Year 2 although writing standards are weak. By Year 6 English standards are unsatisfactory overall because the weakness in writing is more evident. Standards in mathematics and science meet expectations in Years 2 and 6, as do those in design and technology, geography, history and religious education. Throughout the school, standards in ICT and physical education are better than those expected nationally: both have improved since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good and their very good behaviour has become a strength of the school. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' attitudes are very good, enabling them to sustain interest in their work.
- Relationships between pupils and adults, as well as relationships with each other, are excellent.
- Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and when pupils are at play.
- The school sets extremely high expectations for pupils' conduct, and works meticulously to achieve them, particularly through pupils' personal development.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
- The school has made significant improvements in management methods aimed at promoting good attendance.

Commentary

7. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good, and the vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents' questionnaires all confirmed that children are happy in school. A group of parents with children in the Nursery came into school to see a most impressive presentation of their children's work. The highlight of the event was a wonderful performance of singing and playing of percussion instruments by a very happy band of youngsters who had started school in the previous week.
8. Pupils with SEN have the same good attitudes and values as their classmates. These pupils are generally well managed by support staff so that they cause no appreciable distraction for the other pupils. Pupils of all ages mix well at playtime and lunchtime. Those with SEN take a full and active part in lessons, and in activities at playtimes.
9. Pupils' relationships with adults and with each other are outstanding and have a positive impact on their personal development. In class they work well together and at play, including the times when they play in year-group football teams. It is evident that all pupils are valued. Leadership strategy ensures that *'pupils' voices will be heard and their views matter'*.
10. Pupils strive to excel, motivated by their own determination and an appealing incentive of *'golden'* rewards. Their success is acknowledged in class and particularly at special assemblies. Staff members are adept at identifying pupils' strengths, which are then given recognition and appreciated by other members of the school community.
11. The school promotes high expectations. Consequently, pupils' willingness to take responsibility is very good. The self-governing School Council has representatives from each class and initiates many mature projects. They use their allocated budget for the benefit of the school community, such as the purchasing of playground equipment and furniture. On their own initiative, they publish a newspaper.
12. Remarkably, pupils at the school have been selected as partners in a scheme to design a local park. The project, shared between two schools, has a budget of £75,000. Pupils are not over-awed by the enormity of the work because, in the past, a similar assignment was taken on for a large commercial company, the outcome of which was a Queen's Award.
13. Other personal development enterprises include two kinds of 'buddy' scheme. One of them provides new entrants to the Reception Class with a Year 6 buddy, who helps them during the first week in school. The other is for pupils in the playground to ensure that a pupil in need can always have a friend.
14. Pupils are very well behaved, polite and courteous, responding well to the high level of pastoral care provided by the school. A few pupils display challenging behaviour, but staff work well together to consistently reinforce good behaviour, dealing quickly and effectively with any that is inappropriate. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection.
15. In lessons, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils in the resourced unit for SEN are very good. They are attentive, respond very well to the teacher and support assistant, show a high level of respect for equipment, are keen to take part in activities and are very supportive towards one-another.
16. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils excluded has fallen significantly, and the school now has a policy of *'zero exclusions'*. The following table shows exclusions in the last year, all of which were related to two pupils:

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
194	13	0
2	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

17. Pupils build up a strong spiritual sense of their community, which strengthens their relationships with each other. Moral values are promoted through the school's programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), and a developing sense of citizenship is encouraged in the whole-class discussion periods known as 'circle time'. There are opportunities for pupils to enhance their social development through taking responsibility, which they do with commitment and pride. For some pupils, self-esteem and confidence are promoted by having adult mentors. The 'Buddy Scheme' enables Year 6 pupils to develop their emotional and social maturity.

18. Most children in the Foundation Stage enter school with underdeveloped social and behavioural skills. They quickly respond to the practices in the school by emulating the very good role models of the teaching and support staff.

19. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a good understanding of culture in subjects such as history, music, and especially in art. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is promoted through religious education, where they learn about the major world faiths. The school ensures that there are displays that help pupils to be aware of different cultures.

20. Attendance is close to the national average. However, the school's action to promote attendance is very good. It continually endeavours to raise the level of attendance and received an award last year for the most improved school in Hartlepool. Recently, a new post has been created for a Social Inclusion Assistant. Amongst her tasks will be the establishment of close liaison with parents to improve the attendance levels.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	1.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is already good, and plans for the development of the school suggest a further improvement in the quality of provision in the future.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching overall is good. From the Nursery to Year 2 it is often very good. Pupils learn well, and often very well. Assessment is good, and the information it generates is used by senior managers and by individual teachers to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- There was no common pattern to the weakness in the few lessons that were less than good.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good, as is that for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- Assessment is used well to raise standards.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	14(30)	24(52)	7(15)	1(2)	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.

21. It is clear from the table above that over 80 per cent of lessons are of good or very good quality. By any standards this is a significant improvement since the last inspection when just 28 per cent of teaching was good or better and 10 per cent was less than satisfactory. It was evident from lesson observations that the headteacher has been able to influence the quality of teaching through advice and encouragement to staff. Key among the many common, high quality features, are the relationships between staff and pupils. In this respect the headteacher has led by example. The outstanding quality of relationships in the school is what enables good quality teaching and rapid learning to take place: pupils feel secure, liked and respected, and this enables them to do their best. Teachers make very good use of what they know of pupils' understanding from the previous lesson to adapt the content of the current one. This results in the work set being a very good match to pupils' ability to complete the task and yet be challenged by it. Finally, lessons are usually taught at a brisk pace.

22. Pupils in the resourced unit are taught well and sometimes very well. Very good teamwork exists between the teacher and teaching assistant. Their calm, patient and encouraging approach creates an environment that enables the pupils to learn effectively. Lessons are well planned and structured with tasks and activities that are well matched to the pupils' needs. Good teaching strategies bring together what pupils see, hear and feel through many practical and meaningful activities and tasks so that pupils learn effectively from real experiences. Very good close support is given to individual pupils according to their degree of learning difficulty or behavioural and emotional needs, resulting in all pupils in the unit making good progress, both educationally and personally. Teachers' attention to detail ensures that particularly able pupils are challenged and their talents encouraged. In lessons where teaching was only either satisfactory or unsatisfactory, there was no common weakness. For example, in one lesson the pace was slow. In another, the intentions of a religious education lesson were difficult to achieve because of the very limited experience that pupils brought to the lesson. Lack of enthusiasm on the part of the teacher dampened the potential for rapid progress in a literacy lesson, and in mathematics the concept of subtraction proved too difficult for pupils of lower ability. The headteacher has a very accurate perception of the quality of teaching and learning in the school and, more importantly, the skill to improve both.

23. As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well and often very well. There is no difference in the achievement of any ability group because teachers embrace the responsibility of providing well-matched work for all pupils in their classes, regardless of their capabilities.

24. Assessment is good because it plays a major and successful part in raising standards. It is very good at the whole school level, but there are elements at classroom level that require improvement. The school stores assessment data electronically, and uses technology to produce specific information, such as how much progress has been made by the pupils who received support through the Early Literacy programme. In the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT, data are updated half-termly and progress is tracked meticulously. Termly assessments are made in all other subjects, showing whether a pupil is attaining at, above or below,

the national expectations. The deputy headteacher has set up the systems very well, and data are used intelligently. She rightly says that not all staff are as adept as they need to be at identifying the National Curriculum sub-level (e.g. 3c, 3b or 3a) at which a pupil is working. The school knows this is an area for development. Pupils have targets, know what they are, and work hard to achieve them. Targets could, however, be sharper and take on a higher profile. Teachers' marking is almost always satisfactory and sometimes good. If comments were linked more frequently to pupils' targets, it would be even better.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is broad and innovative. It caters very well for all pupils, and makes very good provision for pupils' PSHE and citizenship. The school offers pupils extensive opportunities outside lessons. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

The strengths of the provision are:

- The curriculum is good because a great deal of thought has been given to managing the mixed age classes, and very good use is made of the expertise of staff and visiting teachers.
- Provision for PSHE and citizenship is very good.
- The curriculum is designed to be fully inclusive.
- The range, quantity and quality of activities outside lessons are very good.
- Good use is made of the building and its grounds and, except in Reception, resources are good.

Commentary

25. The school has put in place effective arrangements to manage problems created by the need to teach pupils in mixed age classes. The curriculum is based on a two-year programme so that topics covered during Years 3 and 4 are repeated in Years 5 and 6, albeit at a more advanced level. A thorough analysis of National Curriculum test results in 2003 led to the school making better use of the expertise of teachers. Literacy lessons in Years 4 to 6 are all taken by one teacher while another teaches all the mathematics. Similar arrangements are in place for art and physical education.

26. There is no one on the staff with expertise in music. However, the school compensates for this by arranging for pupils in Years 4 to 6 to be taught by music teachers from local secondary schools, and a volunteer pianist plays in assemblies. Despite the lack of expertise in music, pupils are given the opportunity to take part in two or three musical and dramatic productions each year involving music and drama. The curricula in science and ICT are enriched when pupils visit secondary schools and colleges, and take part in science workshops.

27. The school is committed to developing all its pupils into responsible young people. Visitors talk about the dangers to health caused by fire, smoking and drugs. Pupils take part in a healthy school week. The School Council meets regularly and is given the responsibility for deciding how money is spent to improve some areas of the school. It takes its responsibilities seriously: recently writing to parents to ask them not to smoke while waiting for pupils in the school grounds. Much thought has been given to making the school a better place for pupils to work and live in. Lunchtimes are made more pleasant because all the tables are provided with tablecloths and flowers. Pupils have bright yellow chairs, and the colour of the walls - chosen by the pupils - is bright and cheerful. Pupils respond well to this, and lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions. Quiet talking areas have been set up in corridors. Pupils in Year 6 take responsibility for preparing the overhead projector for assemblies and stand watch in the corridors to make sure that pupils return quickly to their classrooms. They are given the chance to help prepare and serve the mid-morning snack. Adults act as very good role models in the way they treat pupils and each other.

28. The school goes out of its way to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities. In Years 4 to 6, all pupils benefit from opportunities to visit local secondary schools or to be taught by their specialist teachers. Pupils in the resourced unit receive specialised teaching in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but join the rest of the school for other subjects. They are encouraged to take part in all out of school activities, and arrangements are made to transport those who live away from the school. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and ensures that they have the best opportunities to succeed.

29. An extensive range of lunchtime and after-hours clubs and activities enriches the curriculum. In these groups, pupils develop their skills in team games, athletics, swimming, golf and drama. Teams from the school compete against other schools, supported by members of the cheerleaders' club. Pupils can join interest clubs such as cookery, gardening, dance, sewing, art and computers.

30. The school has been imaginatively refurbished in the last three years. Very good use is made of the wide corridors to provide small libraries, reading and talking areas, and areas for displays. The corridors are all carpeted to make them more comfortable. A well-equipped ICT suite has been set up, and a cookery room and a new music room created. One classroom has been made into a meeting room for parents. The potential of the school grounds to support the curriculum is exploited well. A Japanese garden and wild life area are being re-established. Plans are in hand to lay an all-weather sports area for the use of the school and the community. The amount, quality and suitability of resources are good, except in the Reception class, where they are limited. (See Foundation Stage section of this report.)

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are very good and this is a major strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are very good.
- Support and advice for pupils is very good, and there is excellent support for each pupil to have a trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- Very good involvement of pupils is in place to ensure that the school seeks their views and acts on them.

Commentary

31. The school has implemented very good procedures for ensuring the safety and well being of pupils. For example, five members of staff are able to provide fully qualified first aid assistance in the event of an emergency. Safe practice is promoted in lessons and with routine preventive measures such as properly documented risk assessments.

32. Child protection procedures are known to be effective, and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. The person accountable has plans to undertake advanced training as soon as the Local Education Authority makes it available, and similar training is planned for all other staff.

33. Through initiatives such as the 'no shouting' policy, the school has successfully developed pupils' maturity, raised standards and improved behaviour to a very high level. Pastoral care is central to many aspects of school life, resulting in an environment that makes pupils feel safe and secure. Parents confirmed the view that teachers are always available to resolve problems without making an issue of them.

34. Induction arrangements are very good for children starting the Nursery as well as for pupils who join classes in later years. These arrangements begin the work of developing good and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. They give pupils the confidence to seek support and guidance when they have concerns about their work, or a personal problem, or when they want to share a success or news of something special. Staff give a good response to such requests through their day-to-day knowledge of pupils as individuals. In a survey of pupils, every response showed that each pupil has a trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.

35. The school successfully seeks pupils' views through surveys and the School Council. The council's executive committee has confidential access to the '*problems*' box, where any pupil can make suggestions or identify problems about behaviour.

36. The level of support for pupils is extensive. For example, many of the teaching assistants are trained to act as mentors for pupils who either need guidance, or help to improve their self-esteem. For the small number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems, some of the staff specialise in offering anger management control strategies.

37. Five of the eight of the pupils placed in the school's resourced unit for pupils with learning difficulties have statements of SEN. However, although there is sufficient concern over the extent and nature of the learning difficulties of the others to provide a long-term place in the unit, only one is currently being assessed for the issue of a statement. Five other pupils from the school also have significant learning difficulties, and consequently benefit from being placed in the unit, but only one is being formally assessed with a view to securing provision through a statement. The school is aware of the need for vigilance in order to ensure that these pupils' needs continue to be met in accordance with the Code of Practice.

38. The school has effective links with most of the other professionals and support services involved in meeting SEN. In particular, a visiting SEN support teacher provides valued assessments - using a range of standardised and diagnostic tests - to determine the nature of the needs. She liaises well with staff to enable them to meet the range of learning needs within their classes. Additional support assistants are deployed well and they provide good support and guidance. Good provision is made for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties through the involvement of a mentor and play-leader. As a result, pupils make significant progress in managing their anger and behaviour, and improving their social skills. Recent, imaginative provision for gifted and talented pupils is having a good effect on standards and raising expectation of the more able.

39. A significant number of pupils registered as having SEN are identified as having speech and language difficulties. Despite staff carrying out some specific language development programmes, there is insufficient specialist support and guidance for them to more appropriately meet the needs of these pupils. Appointments for pupils to attend therapy sessions outside school during the school day are often difficult to keep, and because of non-attendance the pupils are discharged. There is a need to improve this situation so that these pupils may more consistently receive the support they require to overcome their speech and language difficulties.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

40. The school has very good links with the community and very good partnerships with schools and colleges. Although the school continually strives to increase the involvement of parents, the response remains modest.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school works very hard to involve parents and is very good at dealing with their concerns.
- Links with the community are very good, enriching learning experiences for pupils and providing good opportunities for their social development.
- Partnerships with other schools and colleges are very good.

Commentary

41. The school has made extensive arrangements to involve parents. It has recognised the importance of promoting parenting skills and makes provision for parents to come into school so that they can share the experience of the teacher working with their children. The school aims to extend the child care facility for parents. For example, 37 parents responded positively to the school's proposal to introduce a 'tea-time club'.

42. Because of the welcoming attitude of staff, the school is particularly good at resolving, informally, any concerns of parents. It has satisfactory arrangements to survey parents and gain their views. These are fed into the school's improvement planning. Clearly, parents appreciate the school's approach. Those who sent letters at the time of the inspection expressed very positive views.

43. For pupils with SEN, the school makes every effort to involve parents as partners in meeting their children's needs. They seek parental views on the progress the children make as part of each child's annual review, providing a useful questionnaire. However, despite the school's efforts at increasing collaboration, a significant minority of parents do not take part in the important annual review meetings.

44. The parent-teacher association, GF Smile (Golden Flatts Securing Money In Learning and Education) is very active. Funds have been raised for projects such as the purchase of a data projector that has enabled the school to use a specialist computer programme ('Anyzing') for working on writing skills with up to 24 pupils. The association has also invested in improving the school's adventure playground. At a more personal level, GF Smile gave Christmas presents to every pupil.

45. The school maintains written contact with parents via regular newsletters. Annual written reports provide a good insight into the performance of individual children and give advice about the future learning targets. Three consultation evenings offer opportunities for parents to review their children's progress.

46. Although the school makes considerable attempts to involve parents in the day-to-day life of the school, only one parent comes into school to help on a regular basis. Other people do help, such as a retired man who comes from a local church to play the piano in assemblies.

47. Pupils benefit from an extensive number of visitors from churches, from local agencies such as the fire service, and from the school nurse. Members of the police service spend a whole week in school giving advice and support on a wide range of topics, including drugs awareness. Pupils regularly visit the local library and benefit from involvement with shops.

48. In the past, larger commercial organisations and the local college have provided sponsorship for computers. Currently, the school is planning for the building of an all-weather pitch for both school and community use.

49. The spacious and well-equipped community room is used for many events, such as the Sure Start programme that helps with children's early years development. The school has organised successful training courses. These have enabled one parent to become a teaching assistant and a number of others to continue with more advanced computer studies at the local college.

50. Year 6 pupils have opportunities to visit and gain an understanding of what secondary schooling will be like. However, the partnerships go much wider than that. Starting in Year 5, pupils work together with teachers from the secondary schools on projects for sport as well as accredited competitions in mathematics and science.

51. Universities, colleges and schools often place students at Golden Flatts Primary School to provide suitable work experience. This is not only a compliment to the quality of the school's caring environment, but also provides an additional resource that supports pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership by the headteacher is very good. Management by key staff is good and governance is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher and her deputy are a highly effective team.
- The senior management team is dedicated to bringing about improvement.
- The school is committed to full inclusion.
- The emphasis on staff development reflects the needs of the individual as well as the school.
- Governors provide sound support.

Commentary

52. The headteacher has an impressively positive effect on the way the school operates. She has a very clear vision and high aspirations for all staff and pupils. She communicates these well so that all who work in the school are united behind her. In the past three years she has set a rigorous agenda by devising an appropriate strategic plan for improvement. The results of her hard work and dedication are evident in the improved quality of teaching, of pupils' academic performance, their welfare and their personal development. The headteacher is supported fully by a most able deputy. Analysis of all aspects of the school's work is realistic and rigorous and focuses well on appropriate priorities.

53. The senior management team have been empowered through training and support to lead the school team towards raising standards. Roles and responsibilities have been redefined to ensure that there are effective tiers of management. The team plays a strong role in whole school self-review and is actively involved in many new initiatives, such as updating and improving the quality of the 'Teachers' Handbook'. The team offers regular support and advice to all staff and works with them to ensure that school data is used to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

54. The school shows great concern for the needs of the individual. A significant minority of pupils have SEN and the school makes great efforts through careful planning and additional staff to ensure that all pupils are well supported. This means that all can take part in lessons and in the wider range of activities that the school offers.

55. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has a good understanding of the requirements of, and provision for, meeting pupils' special needs. Through very good leadership and a clear vision for the development of provision, there are efficient and effective management systems and procedures in place. The SENCO monitors the quality of provision for pupils on the register by regularly checking that targets are set to meet their special needs. Plans for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching are yet to be implemented. The SEN register is very well maintained and good, up-to-date information on the nature of pupils' needs and how they can be met is well organised and regularly shared with staff. Good training has been provided for staff in the management of pupils' behaviour and this has had a positive effect on standards.

56. The school is committed to continuous professional development and welcomes new ideas at all levels. Performance management systems are well embedded and teachers take on responsibility for their targets in a very serious way. Training and professional development are actively encouraged and staff are allocated time to disseminate their new ideas. The school uses a 'wheel of life' for each member of staff. This shows a pictorial image of career development and supports both teachers and team leaders in their work. Although the teacher responsible for the resourced unit takes good advantage of mainstream in-service training such as teaching basic literacy and numeracy, few training opportunities are accessed to provide for more specialist insight. The Graduate Teacher Programme is very well planned so that young professionals have an extensive range of supported experience throughout the school, with many worthwhile opportunities to engage in focused professional discussion. The school welcomes and trains a range of staff including Nursery nurses and teaching assistants.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	564,408.00
Total expenditure	566,917.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,047.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,721.00
Balance carried forward to the next	23,225.00

57. Governors are conscientious in carrying out their statutory duties and give generously of their time and expertise. The chair of governors is particularly active. Overall, the governing body is less actively involved in shaping the direction of the school and in holding it to account for the standards it achieves – but then it has a dynamic headteacher with a realistic understanding of how well the school is doing and the openness to keep governors fully and frankly informed. The major impact of the governing body is the practical help they are able to provide.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good in all six areas of learning, and has improved since the last inspection. This is because leadership is good and the co-ordinator, who is new in post, is a very good role model, guiding, motivating and supporting all staff. She has worked very hard to improve the quality of teaching through rigorous assessment and well focused planning. The range of experiences children have when they come to the Nursery is extremely varied. Overall attainment on entry is well below the national expectation. In mathematics and creative development attainment is particularly poor. Despite this unpromising start, all children, including those with SEN, achieve well because the teaching is good and often very good. A good pupil/teacher ratio enables children to work and play in very small groups. Interaction at all levels is sensitive to the needs of each individual. All staff work very well as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring each child's progress through regular and on-going assessment. Hence, while attainment overall at the end of Reception remains below expectations, the 'gap' has been significantly reduced.

59. The indoor curriculum is planned to ensure that activities are appropriate and relevant. The area outdoors is delightful, and a great deal of work has recently taken place to develop facilities. Staff are aware of the need to improve planning for children's learning outdoors, so that activities there have a focused learning objective. Indoor accommodation in the Nursery is good. However, the Reception class is very small for the number of children working there, and they do not have continuous access to the outside area. Resources in the Nursery are good, but in the Reception class the range and quality of resources are limited. This means that children sometimes have to wait before accessing activities of their choice.

60. Children join the Nursery either in September or January, remain there for three terms and then move into the Reception class. Staff ensure that children are well prepared to enter Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children enjoy their activities and play with confidence because staff provide well-planned learning opportunities.
- Children are very well behaved and learn how to play together because adults are good role models.
- In valuing everything that the children do, the staff give children a strong sense of their own worth.

Commentary

61. Staff have high expectations, and all children make good progress, despite early indications that the majority are likely to be below expectations by the end of the Reception class. Children develop confidence and play easily with adults and each other. Staff plan sessions whereby children choose up to three activities they would like to do and talk about. This encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning and to see it as a fun experience.

62. Staff set clear and consistent rules and children conform well. Behaviour is very good and staff are impressive role models, interacting sensitively with children as they play. This encouragement helps children to concentrate well - even when not directly supervised - as they engage in a variety of activities. Children who have just started school already know the routines well and settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss.

63. Children are learning to care about themselves and each other. They take turns to prepare healthy fruit snacks each day, learn to clear up after practical work, and to fasten coats and jackets. Staff praise and encourage children often. They take time to listen to what children have to say and value their work by displaying it well or showing it to parents and carers. Children learn well because of the continuous and caring approach of staff. This leads to trusting relationships.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's speaking and listening skills.
- Daily planned sessions teach early reading and writing skills.

Commentary

64. Early indications are that the majority of children are below expectations in this area of learning. Staff place strong emphasis on new vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. They encourage children in very small groups to talk about events from home and to draw their ideas on large sheets of paper during Talking Tables sessions. Staff have a relaxed and caring manner which gives children increased confidence to talk and listen to others. Children are encouraged to make puppets and use them to act out short scenarios.

65. Children enjoy books, and listen attentively when a story is read to them. Reception children have favourites such as the book with well-known rhymes. Staff make sure books are stored in a comfortable and inviting place and encourage children to browse. Children handle books with care. They know that print has meaning and is read from left to right. Some children in the Reception class read a range of common words and many recognise letters and the sounds they make. This is because teachers plan captivating games to match their level of interest and knowledge. For example, in the Reception class one group was finding objects beginning with the letter 't', and another group was reading words with three letters such as 'fat'. Children are making good progress in their writing skills and learn to use a range of writing tools. In the Nursery, speaking, writing and drawing are very well linked so children understand the reasons behind writing. More able children in the Reception class are beginning to write their own stories with recognisable words and letters. Some write their name from memory.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support mathematical language.
- Children make good progress in number recognition and early counting skills.

Commentary

66. Teaching and learning are good. All children achieve well and make good progress, but the majority are working well below the expected level for their age. Staff place strong emphasis on mathematical language; this helps children in their understanding. For example, in the Nursery,

when printing with shapes, staff encourage children to name the shape and discuss its length. There is also a range of accessible games to help children sort and order objects and to identify numbers. However, resources and games to promote mathematics are limited in the Reception class, which means that there are fewer activities from which children can choose. Teachers in this class use songs such as 'Five Speckled Frogs' with toy frogs, helping children to understand the idea of subtraction and the language associated with it.

67. More able children are learning to identify numbers up to 10. Children are beginning to count and staff plan practical activities to help their understanding. For example, in a good lesson in the Reception class, children threw beanbags into hoops and counted how many there were altogether. All these practical activities prepare the way well for future learning, and are very appropriate for this stage of development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Adults provide a range of interesting activities to promote all aspects of this area of learning.
- Adults place strong emphasis on early computer skills.

Commentary

68. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most are working below levels expected for their age. A good variety of appropriate and interesting activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. For example, concave and convex mirrors are fixed to the wall in the Nursery to encourage children's curiosity and questioning. Photographic evidence shows that children plant seeds and look after plants in the garden outside. With support, they have already planned and made replicas of the life cycle of the butterfly. These are fixed to the fence in the outdoor area. Adults encourage children to design and make puppets using various fastenings and fixing techniques. Each piece of work is unique to the child and valued by adults. Children use a range of tools: they use scissors independently to cut tape and paper in the Reception class, and in the Nursery they use knives to prepare the fruit snack. Children develop a sense of time when they bring in new toys from home, and adults display these alongside toys from long ago. They play with resources, including a large wooden house, and rail and road layouts. These give them ideas about their home and local environment. The school invites visitors such as the dental hygienist, firemen and nurse to share their working experiences with the children. They visit places of local interest including the Winter Gardens and museum in Sunderland.

69. Adults place strong emphasis on helping children develop early technology skills. Nursery children expressed great delight and satisfaction when completing a computer game. They use art programs to create lovely pictures. In the Reception class children learn to program the 'Roamer' to make two or three sequential movements in response to the *Bear Hunt* story.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers make good use of the hall for structured lessons.
- Regular opportunities for physical development are limited because teachers make insufficient use of the outside play area.

Commentary

70. Despite the lack of ready access for all children to the outside area, they have lessons in the hall where they learn a range of physical skills: to crawl in different directions, walk like a crab and pull themselves along using their elbows. They have opportunities to run vigorously and use tricycles, but the lack of planned outdoor activities restricts their progress. Teachers emphasise the importance of healthy living. During lessons children are asked to feel their heart: before and after vigorous exercise. Children prepare and eat healthy snacks each day. They learn to develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, scissors and brushes, and use small construction equipment with some dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

71. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the work on display indicates that standards are below expectations. Teachers encourage the use of role-play through puppets and offer plenty of opportunities for art-related activities. In music, children learn simple rhythm patterns in the Reception class and in the Nursery they learn songs and rhymes, which they perform for parents each week.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- English standards are sound in Year 2 and below average in Year 6: in both instances writing is the weak feature.
- Pupils achieve well overall.
- Listening standards are good.
- Opportunities to write are incidental rather than planned.

Commentary

72. Standards are much the same as they were at the last inspection. Pupils start Year 1 with communication, language and literacy skills that are below expectations, despite the fact that they have made good progress through Nursery and Reception. By the end of Year 2 standards meet expectations overall: good in listening, average in reading and speaking but weak in writing. In Year 6, overall English standards fall short of expectations because writing is a significantly weak feature. Provision for pupils in the resourced unit is good and they achieve in line with their capacity to do so.

73. It appears from this bald data that pupils make good progress until Year 2 and that it fails to be good enough thereafter. This is not the case. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, often very good, and pupils progress in line with the quality of teaching they receive. In Year 3 progress slows to being satisfactory but then picks up again. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 make good progress: the same teacher teaches them all – a sensible response to last year's disappointing results. The low standards are the result of two factors:

- * the quality of teaching that Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils received when they were younger;
- * the inadequate writing opportunities across the curriculum (dealt with in full at the end of this section).

74. Standards in listening are good throughout the school. In lessons, pupils are attentive and seldom need to have information or instructions repeated. Speaking skills are satisfactory. Pupils are sociable: they greet visitors amicably and appear relaxed when talking to them. They speak with confidence in their classroom because they know their contributions will be valued and their views respected.

75. Reading skills meet expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Although most Year 6 pupils read with fluency, their understanding of what they have read lags a little behind, particularly in the more difficult skills of inference and deduction. The school ensures that pupils have regular access to books and encourages them to choose non-fiction as well as fiction. The quality and range of books on offer are good. Pupils take a reading book home on a daily basis and most say they read regularly to an adult. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved.

76. Writing skills are not good enough. At the beginning of this school year, the writing skills of the pupils currently in Year 1 were very poor. Considering this, it is to the credit of the staff in Years 1 and 2 that pupils attain as well as they do: their task has been an uphill one. However, things have changed. With a different teacher in the Reception class, these children are already way ahead of last year's cohort. This bodes well for the future. Teaching is sound in Year 3 and good thereafter. As a result of good overall teaching, pupils learn the nuts and bolts of writing well enough. It is the opportunity to develop these skills within a range of different contexts that is not good enough.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

77. Provision in literacy lessons themselves is good. However, having been taught the basic skills of writing, pupils then need opportunities to practise them. It is the quality of these opportunities that varies from class to class. It is best in Years 1 and 2 and less good thereafter, but there is room for improvement throughout the school. Currently, no 'master plan' exists in the school for developing writing skills – no means of ensuring that all pupils have enough writing opportunities of the kind that will help them to become competent writers. As a result:

- * too much writing is confined to English lessons and the rest of the curriculum does not take its share of responsibility;
- * too much writing is supported by worksheets, by 'sentence stems' or by 'exercises', and too little is 'from scratch writing' – the child, an idea, a pencil, and a blank sheet of paper.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well.
- Occasionally, less-able pupils do not have sufficient use of appropriate practical materials.
- Teaching and learning are good in both main-school and in the resourced unit.
- The subject is well managed and generously resourced.

Commentary

78. Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment below that expected, despite rapid progress through Nursery and Reception classes. Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 with the result that by the end of Year 2 standards meet expectations. Pupils in Year 1 often make very good progress because their activities are designed to build carefully and systematically on what they already know.

79. Standards by the end of Year 6 also meet expectations. This does not mean that progress is simply satisfactory over these four years. In fact, it is good overall, but better in Years 4 to 6 than in Year 3. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 have experienced periods of weaker teaching in the past, and are in the process of making up that shortfall. If the school builds on pupils' attainment through Years 3 to 6, then the current attainment of Year 2 pupils bodes well for the future.

80. In the resourced unit for pupils with learning difficulties pupils make good progress towards understanding place value up to 1000. They become confident in using number lines, 100 square or counting materials to add and subtract and record these calculations correctly. By Year 6, most pupils achieve a good basic understanding of fractions, tell the time accurately, measure to the nearest half centimetre, read a range of scales, use money practically and have a good knowledge of two and three dimensional shapes.

81. Overall, the quality of teaching mathematics is good. A substantial amount is very good, but there are some occasions where pupils' learning is insecure. This is because it is insufficiently supported by meaningful work with practical activity and materials. For the youngest pupils, very good teaching, using well-chosen counters and good structured apparatus with an imaginative use of 'characters', creates challenges that the children enjoy. Consistently, lessons are well structured, work is suitably matched to pupils' levels of attainment, and good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties to ensure that they are effectively included. Very good relationships between staff and pupils, and team-work with the learning support assistants, result in pupils being keenly interested and well motivated. Teachers use effective strategies to engage and motivate pupils. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher's use of strategic questions and challenges such as 'beat the calculator' created a high level of interest and concentration. The school makes use of expertise on the staff, and the same teacher teaches the two classes for Year 4 to 6 pupils. This works well. In the resourced unit, the teacher and assistant work together effectively as a team using a calm, patient and practical approach. They ensure that all pupils are set tasks that are well matched to their learning needs.

82. The subject is well led and managed and teachers are deployed strategically to make best use of their skills. The co-ordinator monitors work in other classes effectively through looking at pupils' books and teachers' planning, and observing lessons. Staff have had suitable training in teaching numeracy and this has had a good effect on the quality of teaching and learning. A recent focus on assessment and recording pupils' progress has improved the targets set for pupils. Overall, these measures have resulted in the improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

83. The mathematical skills that pupils learn give them the essential information to help them with their work in other subjects, especially science and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good.
- The leadership and management of the co-ordinator are good, and an effective system of assessment is being put in place.
- Good provision is made for pupils in the resourced unit.
- Good links have been established with local secondary schools, but some refinement is needed.
- Other subjects, in particular ICT, are used to support science well.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils what they have done well and how they can improve.
- Pupils have positive attitudes, are enthusiastic and show good thinking skills.

Commentary

84. Standards are at expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6, and all pupils achieve well. In the resourced unit, pupils' achievements are also good because they carry out investigations, become familiar with the use of measuring equipment, such as thermometers, and are challenged to predict and test out their ideas.

85. Standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection, but are rising again following a fall in standards in recent years. Arrangements for the leadership and management of the subject have improved. More attention is paid to analysing pupils' work, including the results of national tests. Teachers' planning takes account of these analyses, and time is made available for the co-ordinator to check planning and to monitor teaching and learning. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and gives good support to her colleagues. Good links have been established with local secondary schools so that, for half a term, specialist secondary teachers teach pupils in Years 4 and 5. However, this initiative is in its early stages and these visits are not yet being used as well as they might be. The worksheets used do not encourage pupils to develop their scientific writing, and no decisions have yet been taken about who should mark the work. As a result, it remains unmarked, and no one is clear whether or not pupils have understood what they have been doing. A decision about who is responsible for the marking is now in hand.

86. At Golden Flatts, teachers plan lessons well and explain carefully to pupils what they will be learning. Staff understand the requirements of the subject well. Pupils are taught good, scientific skills from an early age. For example, in Year 1 they learn to observe each other's actions closely in identifying pushing and pulling, and they record what they find out. Investigations catch pupils' interest and make them enthusiastic. As a result, they learn very well. For example, in Year 6 pupils built electrical circuits to find out if the speed of an electric motor could be changed. When faced with the problem of deciding how fast the motors were turning, some pupils showed good thinking skills by deciding to listen to the sound they made. Teachers make good use of other subjects to support work in science: Year 6 pupils used computers in the ICT suite to log on to a web site that showed them how to use symbols to draw electrical circuits.

87. The co-ordinator has introduced a system of assessments which take place each half term at the end of a topic. These, combined with information supplied by the Local Education Authority, help teachers to identify weaknesses. A new computer program uses assessment details to enable teachers to plan work targeted at helping individuals and groups. Some teachers make on-the-spot assessments of their lessons and amend their planning accordingly to give pupils suitable work. However, not all do this successfully, and some groups of pupils do not learn as much as they could. For example, in a Year 3 class, lower attaining pupils spent too long drawing a grid to record

measurements when they might have been given a ready-prepared one. Consequently, they did not complete their work. Marking is also variable. At best, the teacher makes comments about the scientific content of the work and shows pupils how to improve. Marking is less helpful when comments concentrate solely on punctuation or the use of capital letters.

88. The school is determined to raise standards, and tries hard to make science interesting for pupils. As well as seeking out and using the expertise available in local secondary schools, pupils take part in workshops, and links with local industries are being sought. These steps, and the increased use of assessment and monitoring, put the school in a good position to raise standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above expectations in Years 2 and 6.
- Achievement is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support work in other subjects.

Commentary

89. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The school is much better equipped and teachers have benefited from training. They make good use of the computer room to teach new skills and to use ICT to support work in other subjects.

90. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers. They make good progress because teaching is good. Teachers plan their work carefully and classroom assistants support pupils well. By the end of Year 2 pupils use word processing and drawing programs to present their work: poems about winter are good examples. They open their own files to find the work they need, highlight pictures and move text around the screen, and save their work. Pupils use the tools in a graphics program to draw pictures of bonfire night. They use a digital camera to produce models for self-portraits. Year 6 pupils work with design software to draw a cam wheel. They use a spreadsheet to collect information about the pocket money given to pupils in their class, selecting appropriate functions to carry out rapid calculations. Pupils present work obtained from the Internet in geography lessons in a variety of ways using multi-media presentations. They enter instructions to operate simple models. In Year 5, pupils include tables in reports to make their intentions clearer.

91. Year 6 pupils are well aware of the advantages of using computers in the home and the office, and are alive to the dangers caused by computer hackers, and allowing children unsupervised access to chat rooms. They are confident and eager users of computers and have found out how to use short cuts, such as using the 'control' and 's' keys to save work. In the resourced unit, pupils make good progress and become competent users of computers. For example, they show good skills in using a database to identify objects.

92. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides helpful advice and support for his colleagues. Assessment procedures are good and are being further improved by the collection of samples of pupils' work to help teachers assess standards. Year 6 pupils benefit from using the facilities of a local college of technology.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

93. The use of ICT in other subjects is good. In a science lesson, pupils used a web site on the Internet to learn how to draw electrical circuits. Mathematical skills are developed when information entered into a spreadsheet is used to draw graphs to show the height of pupils. Pupils use drawing programs to produce artwork in the style of artists such as Paul Klee and Mondrian. A new computer system, enabling the work of 12 pupils to be simultaneously viewed on a large screen, has been bought to improve standards in writing.

HUMANITIES

Provision in history and geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Relationships are outstanding and teachers make sure that work is well matched to pupils' ability.
- Pupils' make clear connections to their own lives with information gained.
- Resources, artefacts, visits and out of school projects, support the curriculum well.
- Subjects leaders have begun to monitor teaching and learning.

Commentary

94. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and are broadly in line with national expectations. The amount of written work in books varies between year groups, but is unsatisfactory overall. The majority of pupils illustrate their work well. Teaching is good in both key stages: teachers assess pupils well and then plan activities to match the level of understanding of each individual. They have high expectations and challenge pupils, helping them develop their ideas. Good use is made of support staff who work alongside pupils so that all are included and fully involved in lessons. Teachers are very good role models and encourage all pupils to help and support each other. They value the efforts of each pupil, so all are confident to answer questions and participate in the lessons. Several pupils in Year 2 were heard to say, 'I'll share the glossary sheet with you'.

95. Pupils in Year 6 talk with enthusiasm and knowledge about the Ancient Greeks and are clear about the legacy they left behind. For example, they see comparisons between tragedy and comedy in Greek theatre, with acting today. They show a clear understanding about the physical features of mountain ranges. They know the adverse impact humans are having on nature when they talk about the way sheep farming is destroying plant life in mountainous regions.

96. Pupils now use the Internet to research and download information to support their learning. Good use is made of the local area and visits are planned to places of interest, including Beamish Museum. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit an outward-bound centre. This makes a very positive contribution to their learning because they see and experience the natural environment at first-hand. Pupils in infant classes visit various museums including Preston Park and Stockton Quayside. This makes topic work come alive for them and helps them to have a clearer understanding about the past. The school has developed its own museum and has an extensive range of artefacts displayed in an interesting way for pupils. Displays in corridors are fascinating and make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of chronology.

97. Subject leadership for both subjects is good and has a significant impact on ensuring the good quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Subject leaders observe teaching and monitor pupils' progress. They know how provision can be improved and are taking appropriate action.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers monitor pupils' progress well.
- Resources support pupils understanding.
- Discussions sometimes focus round concepts that are too difficult for pupils to understand.
- Subject leadership is good and is beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

Commentary

98. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards remain in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are gaining a sound understanding of major faiths including Islam and Christianity. In discussions with Year 6 pupils it is evident that they enjoy learning about different faiths. They are knowledgeable and remember a great deal about what they have been taught. Teachers use assessment well and make sure that the work planned matches pupils' ability.

99. Teachers make good use of resources such as the Qu'ran and the Muslim prayer mat to inspire pupils and secure their understanding about the rites and rituals of Islam. Pupils who handle the *holy book* wash their hands up to the elbow beforehand and then they learn why the prayer mat should face east towards Mecca.

100. In lessons seen, much of the work focused around discussion and ideas. This practice supports pupils' personal development well. However, some of the ideas were beyond the understanding of most pupils and therefore progress was limited. For example, pupils have difficulty understanding the way Muslims see god through the '99 Beautiful Names' because many pupils do not follow a faith at home.

101. Subject leadership is good overall and the co-ordinator has monitored plans and analysed the work which pupils produce. A programme for lesson observations is now in place to help to develop a picture of coverage across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

102. There was insufficient evidence in **art and design** and in **music** to make secure judgements about provision.

103. Just one lesson was seen in **art and design** and the work on display and in pupils' sketchbooks represented part of the curriculum only. There was, for example, limited evidence of three-dimensional art or of work resulting from studying the techniques used by other artists. The use made of sketchbooks was variable: few classes used them to experiment with different techniques. Nevertheless, most of the work on display met the expected standard. Year 1 pupils produced some very good portraits.

104. One **music** lesson was seen, taken by a teacher from a local secondary school. It was very good because the teacher was a skilled musician and made the lesson enjoyable for pupils. Their response was of the highest order: they tried really hard in all they did. They identified individual instruments and learnt words such as 'composer' and 'conductor'. They made good progress when they tried out the school's instruments in preparation for future work. This was because the teacher

insisted on them thinking carefully about the quality of the sound they made. They sang in unison very well, producing a good tone and phrasing their words well. This quality of singing, which was repeated in assemblies when a volunteer pianist accompanied pupils, is an improvement since the previous inspection.

105. The management of the subject is good. The school makes strenuous efforts to compensate for the lack of musical expertise on the staff, arranging for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 to be taught by teachers from local secondary schools. A volunteer pianist plays in assembly. Despite the lack of musical expertise, pupils perform musicals each year accompanied by pre-recorded music. Resources are good.

Design and technology

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' attain the expected standards.
- The subject is well led and managed.

106. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop their skills of measuring, cutting and fixing through designing and making wheeled vehicles. They learn about different fruits and vegetables when investigating, choosing and preparing their chosen salads. They experiment with repeating patterns and test out their design ideas using computer programs to draw and colour 'Joseph's dream-coat'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 consolidated good skills when planning to make a musical instrument. They made appropriate choices, showing a good understanding of the properties of materials and the requirements of their design for meeting its purpose.

107. Pupils with SEN learn effectively through testing their ideas as they experiment with a range of materials and collect items to produce different sounds. More able pupils achieve the bronze award in learning challenges at a technology college. Pupils gain good knowledge and understanding of the use of control technology such as in operating elaborate and exciting models of fairground equipment.

108. Too few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. The two lessons observed were good. They were well planned and the tasks matched pupils' learning needs. Good use was made of opportunities for pupils to use their experiences in science and mathematics to help with their choices of materials and to develop their technical vocabulary.

109. The subject is well managed. Topics have been established to give pupils a well-balanced experience as they move through the school. The co-ordinator monitors work of colleagues through lesson plans and pupils' work, but does not yet monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Good opportunities extend more able pupils through exciting 'Master Classes' and courses at a technology college. There is good provision for, and use of, resources, including the use of the Internet for pupils to research their topics. A good level of staff expertise has been developed. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' achievement in physical education - including swimming and a range of sports - is good. Most attain mainly average standards and some reach high standards.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

110. All evidence points to pupils making good progress towards above expected standards. This was evident in the lessons seen. In addition, good standards are achieved in swimming, and the vast majority of pupils become competent swimmers. Older non-swimmers are provided with good additional opportunities to learn, and more competent swimmers gain success in swimming competitions and galas. Pupils often achieve high standards in games and athletics as a result of the involvement of specialist coaches for football, netball, cricket, golf and rugby, and many opportunities to compete in school and year-group teams at regular tournaments, festivals and league matches. The school successfully engages boys, girls and pupils with special needs in all these sporting activities through its commitment to all pupils having an equal opportunity to take part.

111. Teaching is consistently good. Clear instruction, good demonstration and good progressive challenges extend pupils' knowledge of their body and movement control. Pupils respond thoughtfully. Pupils with SEN are effectively included in all lessons and activities with the strategic support of the learning support assistants. Teachers make good use of opportunities to link activities to pupils' knowledge in other subjects: positional vocabulary or the effects of exercise on the body, for example. Teaching enables pupils to learn from each other: they are keen to demonstrate their skills and are regularly challenged to evaluate the movement of others and to suggest ways in which it can be improved.

112. Leadership and management are very good. The school benefits from having two very well qualified and experienced teachers who share their skills with other staff. The co-ordinator is actively involved with development through the local cluster of schools and a current focus is on improving systems for assessment, recording and reporting. Effective links have been established with local sports development officers. This brings to the school a wide range of expertise, opportunities and resources. The staff are enthusiastic and overall there is a good level of expertise and commitment, including supporting the school's residential outdoor activities courses, which significantly enhances pupils' physical, social and personal skills. Overall, there have been many good improvements since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

113. The importance the school places on this element of the curriculum is readily evident in pupils' conduct, their relationships and their work ethic. All are strong and hard earned. A significant minority of pupils has difficulty in controlling their behaviour and emotions. However, their success is due to the care and commitment of the headteacher and staff. Relationships are outstandingly good, and pupils can be left in no doubt that their teachers like and care about them. As a result, they feel safe and secure, and happy to give something in return.

114. This is not the kind of school that makes the low attainment of its pupils on entry an excuse for low standards later on. Nor does it expect less than the best of behaviour because so many pupils find it difficult to behave well. On the contrary, expectations are high and pupils rise to meet them. This is why they concentrate well, have harmonious relationships and achieve well. The work ethic is evident in classrooms and pupils are happy to be at school. The conduct encouraged has a positive impact on pupils' work.

115. Pupils' horizons are widened because 'What's in the news?' is a regular feature in lessons in Years 3 to 6. Sensitive issues can be discussed in circle time because pupils are relaxed enough to talk about them. Responsibilities are real: £1000 for the school council to spend on playground development, for example. The school is visually welcoming and offers the best, showing pupils what is possible: lunchtime tables have tablecloths, flowers and bright furniture; corridors are wide and comfortable arm chairs allow pupils to sit and browse through books or enjoy interactive displays.

116. Overall, this provision is very good and a credit to the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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