

INSPECTION REPORT

HAMSTERLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hamsterley

LEA area: Co. Durham

Unique reference number: 114053

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Lawrence

Lead inspector: Dr Brian Male

Dates of inspection: 7 – 8 June 2004

Inspection number: 256330

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	28
School address:	Hamsterley Bishop Auckland Co. Durham
Postcode:	DL13 3QF
Telephone number:	01388 488279
Fax number:	n/a
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Thirling
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This very small rural community primary school takes pupils from four to eleven years old, and is maintained by the Durham Local Education Authority. At the time of the inspection there were 28 full time pupils in two classes. The very small number of pupils in the school makes the usual comparisons statistically unreliable, but in general, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also below average. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities or requiring extra support for learning English. The school has been successful in achieving various national awards: the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001, the School Achievement Award in 2002, and the Artsmark Gold in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14806	Dr Brian Male	Lead Inspector	English, science, history, geography, information and communication technology, religious education
19419	Mrs Sue Boyle	Lay Inspector	
24027	Mrs Bharahiti Kutty	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education, special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. There is a friendly atmosphere where the school's 28 pupils enjoy the spacious building and extensive grounds in this very rural location. The pupils' good progress is promoted by their positive attitudes, good teaching and small classes. It is a very expensive school to run because of the very small number of pupils, but it provides **satisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school provides a wide curriculum for the pupils with a particularly good focus on the arts
- Assessment is used well to ensure that teaching is well focused on specific skills
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning
- The school's environment is used well to enhance learning
- The headteacher sets a very good tone for relationships and runs the school well
- Some lessons do not give pupils sufficient independence in their learning
- More use needs to be made of the outdoor environment for younger pupils

PROGRESS SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Teaching is better, pupils' progress is quicker, and behaviour has improved. Leadership and management have improved and the strategic planning is effective. The provision for children under five has been improved, and space and resources are now used effectively.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

As the school is very small, judgements about standards in any particular year group are inappropriate, and so the usual table of national test scores is not used in this report. For the same reason, it is not possible to report on all national curriculum subjects.

Pupils' achievement is good. In general, pupils make good progress through the school in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Within English, standards in reading are higher in writing. The wide curriculum ensures that pupils have good access to learning in all the other subjects and generally make good progress. Performance in the arts is particularly strong. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in communication, language and mathematical aspects of development, and satisfactory progress in other aspects where more independence in learning is required.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are generally keen to take part in lessons. Their behaviour is often very good in class and good around the school, but there is not always sufficient opportunity for pupils to be independent and exercise self-discipline. At times, outside play can be rather physical. For most pupils, personal qualities such as relationships and concern for others are good. Relationships are generally good, and pupils are open and friendly. The rate of attendance is excellent, and pupils arrive promptly for school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall, and the quality of teaching is good. Teachers work hard to cope with the wide age range and variety of learning needs in each class. Work is often well

suited to the different age groups and allows pupils to learn well. The small classes and high adult ratio allow individual attention to pupils and this helps promote good progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning. In some lessons, a rather formal approach does not allow the benefits of small groups to be fully exploited, and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity for independence in learning. Assessment is used well to track progress and to ensure that teaching is focused well on particular skills. The school is beginning to introduce a wider range of learning styles and this is an important next step to increase learning in many lessons.

The curriculum is particularly wide for a small school and is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors. Very good links with other schools widen the range of learning opportunities. The school is spacious and the grounds are extensive and have been well developed to provide an attractive and interesting learning environment. The school has a good partnership with parents that enhances learning, but some information about pupils' learning is rather limited.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership is good, and the headteacher sets a very good tone for relationships and runs the school well. Teachers inevitably have a very wide range of responsibilities in a very small school and carry these out appropriately, although their overview of standards could be wider in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school is managed well, and good use is made of assessment data to track progress and evaluate provision. The governance of the school is good, and governors play a full part in setting the strategic direction. They ensure all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of the school, and there is no area where a significant number would like to see improvement. Pupils are also positive about the school, and the school takes effective steps to ensure that pupils' views are sought.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to build on its good provision, the next steps for the school are to:

- Give pupils more independence to use a range of learning styles within lessons, and more opportunities for self-discipline around the school
- Create more opportunities for the youngest pupils to learn in the outdoor environment

The school has already identified the need to extend the range of learning styles, and is already developing the outdoor facilities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Progress is good in English, mathematics, science and ICT in years 1 to 6. Children in the reception year make good progress in the communication, language and mathematical aspects of development, and satisfactory progress in other aspects where more independence is needed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Progress across the school is good, and has improved since the previous inspection
- Pupils of all abilities are enabled to make good progress
- In some lessons, a lack of independence in learning hinders better progress
- Progress in the physical, creative and personal aspects of development is slower than other areas for children in the reception year

Commentary

1. The number of pupils in each year group is so small (sometimes only one) that one pupil makes a significant difference to overall standards, and fluctuations between year groups can be large. Different year groups start at different levels, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies significantly. It is therefore more useful to refer to progress rather than standards of attainment.
2. The school's scores in national tests for seven and eleven year olds fluctuate with year groups, but they generally reflect the good progress pupils make and represent good achievement. Scores in tests for seven year olds have tended to be more consistent over the last three years than scores for eleven year olds which have fluctuated widely. The variation is accounted for by differences in the groups of pupils, and by a number of new pupils arriving during years 3 to 6.
3. Pupils' progress in English is good across the school. Standards in reading are generally higher than in writing, particularly in years 3 to 6. There is good teaching of particular writing skills in years 3 to 6, but the range of contexts for writing does not always give pupils sufficient independence to make use of these skills. Progress is also good in mathematics and science, and there is a good practical grounding that develops pupils' understanding well, but in some lessons there could be more independence for pupils to design their own investigations. There is good progress in ICT across the school. The ratio of computers to pupils is high, and pupils have good access to equipment, but more use could be made of the skills learned in ICT in subjects such as mathematics and science.
4. As other subjects (history, geography, art, music, design and technology, religious education and physical education), were only sampled, there is no formal judgement about progress in these, but the school makes good provision for a full curriculum that is particularly wide for a small school. There is very good provision for the arts, and there are good examples of work in art, drama and music.
5. Pupils make good progress through the reception year in the communication, language and mathematical aspects of development. There is a particularly good focus on these aspects and some very clear and specific teaching. Children do not always have sufficient independence in other aspects (personal, physical, creative, knowledge and understanding) or make sufficient use of the very good outside areas to extend their learning.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in terms of their targets, and pupils capable of higher attainment are well supported in their extended learning. The very small classes have the advantage of allowing individual attention to differing needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, their personal development - including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - is good. Attendance is excellent.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes and behaviour have improved since the previous inspection
- Pupils are friendly and polite
- The behaviour of the older pupils is, at times, excellent
- Attendance is consistently very high and pupils are punctual to school
- Some pupils are not always as thoughtful of others as they should be in their play

Commentary

7. Pupils like being in a small school and work hard. They are interested in their work, and so they concentrate and often behave very well in class. When pupils enjoy the work and the activities are exciting, such as the visit to the village pond for science, their behaviour is excellent. The behaviour of the children in the reception year is more often satisfactory than good. This is because adults are not always explicit about how children should behave, and are not always quick enough to pick up on poor behaviour or to praise behaviour that is good. Some of the procedures and routines across the school, such as moving to and from classrooms, are quite formal, and do not give pupils the independence to show that they can be responsible and sensible. The school has never had to exclude a pupil for bad behaviour.
8. Pupils are very comfortable in adult company, and are respectful towards adults. Teachers provide good role models for respect and good relationships. Pupils generally get on well with each other but there are times when they fall out. These sorts of issues are of a minor nature, and parents and pupils are very happy that issues are sorted out well.
9. Standards of behaviour have improved since the previous inspection and are now good, but some of the play on occasion is too physical, and pupils do not always give enough thought to each other. This was evident when pupils were using the new climbing equipment. Pupils were naturally very excited, but their enthusiasm spilled over into actions that were not as thoughtful of others as they should have been. Play improved significantly when basic rules were established and awareness of others was raised.
10. Pupils are encouraged to think about the needs of others, and to appreciate the natural world. Through this they are developing personally well, particularly in terms of their spiritual development. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong, although there could be more emphasis on this, particularly for the very youngest children. Pupils enjoy learning about their own and other cultures, and their social and cultural development is supported effectively, particularly through visits out to places of interest, and visitors to school. Older pupils acting as buddies are expected to look after younger pupils, and they do this responsibly, particularly in formal situations, such as when they are expected to escort the youngest children to the school gate at home time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	1.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall, The curriculum is wide for a small school, and there is good enhancement. Support for learning is good and is based firmly on assessment of their progress. The good partnership with parents contributes to learning. The overall provision has improved since the previous inspection.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Procedures for assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection
- Assessment is used well to focus lessons on particular skills
- Teachers work hard to involve pupils in a wide range of work in the mixed aged classes
- Some lessons do not give pupils sufficient independence in their learning
- More use needs to be made of the outdoor environment for younger pupils
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	8	11	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. Teachers work hard and are committed to the welfare of their pupils. They are concerned to provide their pupils with a wide range of experiences to develop their understanding. Teaching is good overall in all of the subjects where judgements were made: English, mathematics and science. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in other subjects for overall judgements to be made. Teaching is good overall in the communication, language and mathematical aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum, it was not possible to make a judgement about other aspects. Teaching assistants work well with individual pupils and groups and make a valuable contribution to learning.
12. Work is often well suited to the different age groups and based on the learning needs of the different groups. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, year 1 pupils were working out the difference between two numbers, whilst year 2 were involved in more complicated patterns, and reception children were involved in practical tasks. This requires a great deal of work and organisation by the teachers, although the very small size of the classes and high adult to pupil ratio helps significantly. The small classes also help to target teaching to individual pupils, and in the above lesson there were also different tasks for pupils within the year groups. It is here that assessment information is often used effectively to meet differing needs. Good knowledge of assessment requirements means that lessons are often well focused on specific skills. For example, in a good year 3-6 English lesson, the skills of a persuasive style of writing were well analysed and examples considered so that pupils could incorporate them into their own writing.
13. The best lessons create a sense of excitement and enthuse the pupils whilst retaining the focus on learning. For example, in a very good year 3-6 science lesson, pupils went to the village pond and, with the assistance of a local Environment Director, explored the wide variety of life it contained with the aid of nets and trays. This was not only exciting, but well focused on the

national curriculum learning requirements, and gave older pupils good opportunities to attain the higher levels. A very good geography lesson with the younger class also enthused the pupils through the acting out of a 'Katie Morag' story with pupils dressed as the various characters, but also developed pupils' understanding well in terms of contrasting the local area with a more distant one, which is the higher expectation for older pupils.

14. In some lessons, there is a rather formal approach which does not give pupils sufficient independence to explore their own ideas or develop their own approaches. These are often requirements of the national curriculum, particularly at the Foundation Stage. The school plans to extend the range of learning styles in use through such techniques as 'accelerated learning' and 'mind-mapping', but, although there were specific times for 'brain-gym', the learning techniques are not yet woven into lessons. There are many opportunities for discussion during lessons but most of these are between pupils and teachers, and there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas or plan their work in pairs or small groups. There are many advantages of a very high ratio of adults to pupils, but independence in learning is seldom one of them.
15. Teaching of pupils in the reception year has been improved significantly since the previous inspection, and the creation of an extra activity room has been very helpful here. When the class is split the reception year children are taken by the teaching assistant who works well with them. There could, however, be more occasions when they are taken by the teacher. The outside environment is rich in learning opportunities, but insufficient use is made of it by younger pupils to extend their learning in the physical, creative, knowledge and understanding aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
16. There is good support for pupils who have special educational needs that enables them to make good progress. Good teaching of pupils capable of higher attainment is successful in ensuring that they also make good progress. Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively, but there are times, such as the introduction to lessons when they are not directly involved. Their use at these times could allow the teacher to focus more specifically on different year groups.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good overall. Pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. The staffing level is very generous. The accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weakness

- The school provides a broad curriculum with a good level of enrichment
- The participation in arts is very good
- The school makes very good use of specialist staff and links with local schools to widen the range of learning experiences and skills
- More use needs to be made of the outdoor environment for younger pupils

Commentary

17. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile activities to which pupils respond well, and this ensures good progress in learning. The range is particularly wide for such a small school, and good progress has been made since the last inspection. The staff have worked hard to improve the curriculum organisation and learning environment for the children in the reception year, and they are now good. Although the school has improved the outdoor provision, the use of this to extend children's skills and interests is not fully exploited.
18. The curriculum is well enriched through theme days and through visits and visitors. The school uses specialist staff and very good links with other schools to develop pupils' skills and interests in specific areas. For example, three pupils are offered extra tuition in clarinet, and one who has

specific talent in this is playing in the district orchestra. Pupils are given specific coaching in different sports including one in football by the Sunderland football club. The use of a specialist music teacher in years 3 to 6 is already having a positive impact on learning.

19. There is very good provision for the arts, including drama, music, poetry, painting and sculpture. The headteacher in particular instils enthusiasm in pupils and they enjoy their learning. The school has been awarded the national Gold Artsmark for achievement in this area.
20. The school is inclusive, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school provides effectively for pupils' personal development, and makes every effort to let pupils know that they are valued as individuals.
21. The spacious accommodation and grounds are well organised to offer an attractive and interesting learning environment. The staffing is very generous and the high adult ratio and the individual attention helps pupils to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and health and safety for pupils is satisfactory. Provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. There is good involvement of pupils in school life through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel well supported and listened to
- Provision for lunchtimes is very good

Commentary

22. The school pays appropriate attention to the health and safety of pupils, and there is good support from the Local Education Authority to enable appropriate risk assessments to be carried out. Staff know children well, are concerned for their welfare, and have developed trusting relationships with pupils. However, it is some time since the person with responsibility for child protection had any training and although staff, because of the size of the school, have clear lines of communication, some staff are not quite as familiar with the policy as they should be.
23. The assessment of pupils' work is well developed and this information is used well to set targets for learning. These targets are shared with parents and pupils, and pupils are supported well to achieve their targets. The school recognises the need to develop this support further to involve pupils more in the setting of their targets.
24. The school council is effective in giving pupils a voice for what happens in school. Councillors discuss issues maturely and sensibly and there are good systems for ensuring that all pupils can put forward their ideas and input into council decisions.
25. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions, which involve the whole school, and create a very good sense of community. The midday supervisor has established a good relationship with pupils, so pupils feel safe and well supported. The range of outdoor equipment has been extended well and enhances playtimes significantly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are good. Links with the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school is popular and friendly, and the headteacher is very approachable
- Parents' views are positive, and they are very supportive of the school
- The very good links with other schools enhance the curriculum
- Some information for parents is limited

Commentary

26. The school is open and friendly, and parents find staff approachable. Parents feel that they are listened to, and that concerns are sorted out very well. Parents show their interest by attending meetings and events by coming to parent consultation evenings and by supporting the work of the friends' association. The school responds well to parents' needs; for example, by providing appropriate Family Learning Courses designed to help parents support learning at home. Parents are consulted about what they would like for the school and their views are taken into account.
27. The prospectus is very detailed and clear. Learning targets are shared with parents, but the number of formal opportunities for parents to meet teachers to find out about the progress their child has made are fewer than usual. The pupil annual reports, although sufficiently detailed about what pupils can do, are not always clear about the progress pupils have made or what pupils need to do to improve their work. Information for parents about what their children will be learning, in advance of the work, is generally in the form of letters home about proposed visits or visitors to school. This again is less than is normally found. Routines at the start and end of the day do not encourage parents into the classrooms. Parents consequently miss out on opportunities to see the work their children are currently doing.
28. The rural nature of the school means that links with the community are fairly local and few in number, however they enhance the curriculum and pupils' personal development well.
29. The school takes good advantage of the holiday programmes and workshops offered by the secondary school. It works very well with other small schools as well as bigger inner-city schools to provide pupils with exciting experiences, which include working alongside pupils from other schools. The school also makes very good use of the expertise of the specialist teachers at the secondary school to support the curriculum. The very effective transfer programme means that pupils make the transition from this very small primary school to a much bigger secondary school very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both good. A clear strategic direction has been set by the headteacher and governors, and management effectively promotes learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets a very good tone for relationships and runs the school well
- Good use is made of assessment data to track progress and evaluate provision
- Subject leaders' overview of standards needs to be wider in subjects other than English and mathematics
- Governors play a full part in setting the strategic direction of the school
- The school has successfully addressed the issues in leadership and management raised by the previous report, and the overall effectiveness has improved

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides a very good role model for the caring and thoughtful relationships that she seeks to establish in the school. The structure and style of leadership and management is appropriately informal in this small school, and staff work together well as an effective team. There is innovative leadership of teaching and the curriculum that ensures that pupils have a wide range of experiences and that thought is given to meeting the needs of pupils within the mixed age classes. The school has responded well to the issues raised by the previous report and ensured that all necessary steps have been taken. There is a good commitment to inclusiveness, and the leadership ensures that each individual matters.
31. The governance of the school is good. Governors are active in their involvement of the school and are influential in shaping the school's strategic direction. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and its areas of development. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
32. Strategic planning is effective. Governors take a full part in this and have a very good overview of the school. The school's development planning process is very thorough, and is based on an exhaustive audit, that is almost too detailed for such a small school. With such a small number of pupils and classes, many issues are individual and well known to staff. This enables priorities to be clear.
33. Management is good. There is a close focus on pupils' achievement, and a wide range of data is reviewed to ensure that provision is evaluated effectively. Performance management and staff development programmes are appropriate and contribute to the school's effectiveness. Subject leaders have a good overview of their subjects in English and mathematics, but their awareness of progress across the school in other subjects is more limited. This is an area the school already intends to develop.
34. The school's finances are managed generally effectively, and the principles of best value are implemented appropriately. The school is extremely expensive to run, costing approximately two and a half times the national average. There is a very high adult to pupil ratio, even for a small school, and a great proportion of the resources are spent on this. This staffing is generally deployed well, but there are times such as the general introductions to lessons when teaching assistants are not involved directly.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	169411
Total expenditure	172337
Expenditure per pupil	5559

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	10161
Balance carried forward to the next year	7235

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There were only four children in Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection in a class with year 1 and 2 pupils. With such small numbers it is neither possible nor appropriate to make the usual judgements about each area of learning. The children make a good start in developing their skills in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. The class teacher and support assistant work very well together as a team to provide a safe and secure learning environment for these young children. The induction arrangements enable children to settle in quickly with the general routine of the school. Parents are generally happy about the support children receive in school and they are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last inspection and the overall quality of provision is now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in communication language and literacy and in mathematical development is good and children achieve well
- Assessment and observation information are used well to cater for individual needs. This is an improvement since last inspection
- More use needs to be made of the outdoor area to extend children's interests and skills
- A better balance between adult directed and child initiated activities is needed to develop children's independence and to extend their imagination

Commentary

35. Children make sound progress in developing their **personal, social and emotional development** and they are set to attain the early learning goal by the time they leave reception class. The good relationships between staff and children and the caring environment created by the staff help children to gain confidence in attempting the tasks set for them. They concentrate well and try their best. However, there are comparatively few opportunities where children can decide on what they want to do and try things out for themselves. This restricts their independence and imagination. Children are encouraged to take turns and share the resources. They do this well even when not directly supervised by the staff.
36. There is a strong focus in developing children's **communication, language and literacy skills**. Teaching and learning are good, and children achieve well. Children are very confident to talk about what they have seen and experienced. Staff use puppets and other prompts well to extend their use of language to sequence their thinking. However, children's listening skills are not well developed, and in their enthusiasm to express their views and thoughts children often forget the need to listen to others. Children make good progress in their reading and writing skills. They are given good opportunities to learn about writing for different purposes whether it is writing a letter of invitation or making a list of things they have seen and heard on their 'listening walk'. They are beginning to write simple sentences using their knowledge about letter sounds and words effectively.
37. The teacher takes every opportunity to develop and extend children's **mathematical development** through different areas of learning. Good teaching and an interesting range of practical activities develops children's understanding of numbers well. Children enjoy the activities, and they count and sort objects confidently. They can work out what is one more or less than a number, and have a good understanding of shape and measure. The teaching is good and children achieve well.

38. Children make good progress in the scientific aspect of **knowledge and understanding of the world**, and can use their observations well to find similarities and differences, patterns and change. In the lesson observed in this aspect, children were given good opportunities to find out about the ways in which different wheeled toys moved. They can identify some the features of their local area. There were relatively few opportunities seen where children were able to explore their interests or find out things for themselves.
39. Children are given appropriate opportunities to develop their **physical skills** through regular physical education lessons. Children show confidence in their movements, but their awareness on how to use the space is less well developed. They show appropriate control and co-ordination in using the new playground equipment such as the climbing frame during break times. They use small tools such as a paint brush effectively to make their pictures and paintings. More could be done to use the outdoor area more effectively and give children free access to them more often.
40. In **creative development**, children are given many opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture in work such as drawing, paintings and collage work, but in some cases, children do not have sufficient independence to choose their own colours, materials and approaches. Staff develop children's music skills through different activities. Children have the opportunity to take part in whole school and small group singing, although they find it hard to sing in tune, and there are good formal drama activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall
- Progress represents good achievement across the school, and this has risen since the previous inspection

Commentary

41. Good teaching promotes good progress and achievement across the school. There is a good emphasis on the subject, and pupils are involved in a good range of activities.
42. Writing is well taught across the school and promotes pupils' good progress and achievement. Pupils quickly acquire basic writing skills of spelling, punctuation and sentence construction through years 1 and 2. There is a very close focus on basic skills in lessons and pupils are given a good range of opportunities to practise these skills. There is a good approach to the advanced skills in years 3 to 6, but the range of contexts in which pupils write does not always give them sufficient independence to make use of these skills. Therefore, skills in writing do not develop as well as those in reading. There are some opportunities for pupils to discuss the quality of their writing with teachers, but relatively few occasions for them to discuss work together in joint appraisal. Some use is made of ICT for pupils to write and present their work, but more use could be made of its potential for pupils to improve their work in terms of style and clarity.
43. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in reading across the school. Younger pupils are heard reading individually and in groups, and there is a good focus on reading skills within the Literacy Hour for older pupils. Within these sessions, there is a good focus on the literary features of the texts as well as the recognition of words. Most pupils enjoy reading and many talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors.

44. Pupils make generally good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Most listen well and are confident speakers from an early age. The small classes and friendly atmosphere help in this respect. There are many opportunities for discussion, but most of these are directed by teachers, and there are comparatively few opportunities for pupils to discuss things with each other in pairs or small groups. These are often features of the extended range of learning methods that the school is seeking to promote.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. There is some good use of other subjects such as history and geography to extend reading and writing skills. Drama is used well to extend speaking skills, particularly with the younger pupils. Pupils make good use of ICT through the Internet to develop reading skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good across the school, and pupils achieve well
- The school has good systems in place to track pupils' progress, and assessment information is used well to plan for individual needs
- Progress is particularly good in number and algebra
- Progress is quicker than at the time of the previous inspection

Commentary

46. The school has good systems in place to track pupils' progress and set targets. They show that achievement is good in most aspects of mathematics. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in terms of the targets set for them. Pupils across the school do particularly well in number and algebra. Although there are some good examples of pupils being offered the opportunity to develop their problem solving skills, pupils are less secure on this aspect compared to others. The marking of pupils' work tells pupils how well they have done and what they need to do next.

47. The teaching of mathematics is generally good across the school. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Teachers know their pupils well and use this information effectively in lessons to challenge and support their learning. Lessons are well prepared to cater for the different age groups in these mixed age classes. There was a good example in years 3 to 6 where the pupils drew and compared various shapes and the teacher used these practical activities to extend pupils' understanding of area and perimeter. More practical activities such as this would make learning in mathematics more interesting and fun for pupils.

48. The co-ordination of mathematics has been effective in ensuring that pupils make good progress. She has offered booster classes to the current year 5 and 6 pupils and this has helped them to apply and practise their skills. The school uses the Family Learning Programme to help parents become involved in their children's learning in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. There is evidence of pupils using mathematics in subjects such as science and design and technology. However, there is very little evidence of the use of ICT to enhance learning in mathematics. This is one of the areas identified by school for further improvement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good, and this level has been maintained since the previous inspection
- Pupils are involved in a good range of practical activities

Commentary

50. The school provides a wide science curriculum and ensures that due weight is attached to the various parts of the curriculum. Teaching is good across the school and this promotes good progress and achievement. The teaching of the subject is based well on practical activities to develop pupils' understanding and promote their investigative skills. The subject leader has ensured that the required programmes of study are followed through a cycle of units appropriate to the mixed age classes.
51. In the best lessons, there is a sense of excitement as well as a close focus on the particular concepts to be developed. The year 3-6 pond-dipping lesson has already been mentioned as providing both excitement and very good opportunities for developing understanding of the variety and inter-dependence of life. Although they all engaged in the same task, good questioning from the adults ensured that pupils from the different age groups were able to work at levels appropriate to their development. The preparation was thorough and little time was spent before pupils were engaged in the practicalities of netting small creatures from the pond. Their attitudes and respect for life were very good indeed.
52. In some lessons, although the appropriate content is covered, pupils do not have sufficient independence to plan and carry out their own investigations. These are requirements of the National Curriculum, and often serve to extend pupils' understanding. For example, a lesson on forces gave some good experiences with movements and making comparisons, but did not require older pupils to link cause and effect in their planning.
53. There is some good use of mathematical charts and graphs within the subject to record and analyse findings.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of equipment and a high ratio of computers to pupils
- Pupils use ICT confidently in a range of contexts, but comparatively little in mathematics
- Overall achievement is good, and has improved since the previous inspection

Commentary

54. It was not possible to see any direct teaching of ICT during the inspection. Pupils were observed using spelling programs in English, and number programs in mathematics, and there is plenty of evidence in pupils' books of their use of ICT in a variety of contexts. For example, digital photography is used frequently to illustrate science and geography, older pupils often use the Internet to research topics in a variety of subjects, and younger pupils use paint and draw

programs in art. Many pupils have computers at home and have developed a range of skills in this context.

55. Some older pupils have developed good skills in desk-top publishing and presentational programs such as 'PowerPoint' and have put together good presentations using sophisticated techniques and incorporating images and text from a variety of sources. For example, one older pupil had made a very good PowerPoint presentation about her history topic on the Romans and had drawn upon the Internet for text and pictures. Older pupils have also developed skills in the use of measurement and control techniques and are able to use the computer to control a Lego vehicle that they have made. This represents good achievement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. There is some good use of ICT in a range of subjects through Internet use, digital photography and presentational programs. Word-processing is used in English for writing and presenting work, but comparatively little use is made to amend and improve work, and comparatively little use is made of ICT in mathematics or science.

HUMANITIES

57. It was only possible to sample subjects in this area. One lesson was seen in each of geography and religious education, and no lesson was seen in history.
58. There was very good teaching of **geography** in the one lesson seen and pupils were involved in interesting drama activities that were very effective in developing their understanding. The 'Katie Morag' story was well used to point to the differences between life on the Scottish island and the mainland, and also the differences between the island and the pupils' own village. This enabled older pupils to attain the higher expected level (Level 3).
59. In general, pupils cover the nationally expected programmes in both history and geography through an appropriate cycle geared to the mixed age classes and ensuring that pupils do not repeat topics. Work in pupils' books indicates that progress is generally satisfactory, but that not all lessons are as successful as the one described above in pushing pupils to the highest possible levels. Discussion with pupils confirms this to be the case. There is some good use made of visits and visitors to involve pupils in a range of interesting activities and extend their experiences beyond their small rural village. The very good links made with a large urban primary school are very helpful in this respect.
60. Work in pupils' books indicates that the **religious education** programme is centred mainly on the Christian religion. Pupils develop good knowledge within this aspect of the subject. Some good links are made to moral and social issues with links to issues of importance in pupils' own lives. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions, which form part of the agreed syllabus, are not so well developed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

61. No lesson was seen in art and design or design and technology. One physical education lesson in Years 1 and 2, and the introduction of a music lesson delivered by the specialist teacher were observed. Therefore it is not possible to make any overall judgement on the quality of provision, teaching or standards in these subjects.
62. A scrutiny of displays around the school showed a varied and interesting selection of work in **art and design**. The work included some good examples of observational drawings and paintings as well sculpture and textile work. Some of their drawings and sketches are of high standards.

For example, the work by pupils in years 3 to 6 on the millennium bridge and their still life sketches show that they are confident to use different media. The school places high priority in developing pupils' creative skills alongside their academic skills, and has been awarded the Artsmark Gold for its work. There are good links with art and other subjects, and good opportunities to learn about art from different periods and cultures.

63. It was not possible to see much work in **design and technology**. However, the older pupils' design of a money container shows how they used their designs to make their final models and to decide what they could do differently next time. This is good achievement.
64. It was only possible to observe the introduction of a **music** lesson by the specialist teacher with older pupils. This indicated that pupils are beginning to compose their own rhythms, although they found it hard to get the pitch right in their singing. The use of a specialist teacher is having a positive impact on learning and in extending pupils' specific talent and interests. Three pupils receive specialist tuition in clarinet and the standards of some pupils' performance is of high quality.
65. Only one lesson was observed in **physical education**. This was with younger pupils. The lesson was satisfactory in developing pupils' athletic skills in running and developing the team effort in the relay race. The school provides good opportunities to develop pupils' skills in different sports and games through after school clubs and links with other schools. The facilities to develop pupils' skills in physical education are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION (PSHCE)

66. It was possible to see only one PSHCE lesson, and so no overall judgement can be made. The school's main provision comes through its supportive ethos and the individual support that can be given to each pupil. There is an appropriate formal programme of teaching, with 'circle time' (where pupils discuss matters of personal importance) being used effectively, particularly for younger pupils. There is not such regular use of circle time with older pupils, yet many would benefit from this, especially where there are incidents of thoughtlessness in the playground. The school's aim to encourage self-discipline within its PSHCE programme is not entirely consistent with the rather formal and teacher-directed elements of some school procedures.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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