

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLLEY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oxclose, Washington

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108820

Headteacher: Mr. D. Hannington

Lead inspector: Mrs. E. Graham

Dates of inspection: 20th to 23rd October 2003

Inspection number: 256459

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	213
School address:	Ayton Road Oxclose Washington
Postcode:	NE38 0LR
Telephone number:	0191 2193740
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms. K. Hines
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holley Park School is an average sized primary school with 213 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven years. The school serves an area of Washington and draws its pupils from an increasingly wide area since the recent closure of a neighbouring school. The majority of parents and carers are in employment, and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The pupils' attainment on entry is above average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is rising and now stands at 11.8 per cent, which is well below the national average. The nature of these needs are moderate learning, social, emotional, speech or communication difficulties. A small number of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds that are Chinese, Asian Indian and Asian Pakistani but none of them speak English as an additional language. Pupil mobility has traditionally been low, the exception being 2003 when 11 pupils joined the school as a result of their school closing. The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 and has held the Healthy School Standard since 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16431	Mrs. E. Graham	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Citizenship Design and technology
11358	Mrs. V. Lamb	Lay inspector	
32179	Mrs. M. Armstrong	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum English Geography History Religious education
1550	Mr. M. Pinch	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** that is very well led and managed. The teaching is good and contributes to the improving standards in Years 1 and 2 and the well above average standards in Years 3 to 6. The pupils' very good behaviour and their enthusiasm for school are major factors in the very good achievement they have made by the time they leave the school. The school gives **good value** for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils achieve well in reception to Year 2. They achieve very well in Years 3 to 6.
- The head teacher leads the school very well.
- Subject leaders work very hard to make sure that the curriculum is exciting.
- Talented teachers provide very good learning opportunities that interest and motivate their pupils.
- Some of the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve as well as they should because teaching does not always provide activities that challenge them sufficiently.
- The pupils love coming to school, work hard and behave extremely well.
- There is no continuous access to a suitable area for reception children to participate in outdoor activities.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Although there was a drop in test results in 2002, overall standards in Years 3 to 6 have continued to rise with far more pupils attaining the higher level in 2003. This is due to improved teaching and learning. Standards at the end of Year 2 were average at the time of the last inspection and are now above average. Assessment is now used well to help teachers plan appropriate work and this means that the tasks are almost always pitched at the right level. On the very few occasions when this is not so, in Years 1 and 2, tasks are not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. The governing body is now effective.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A	C	C
Mathematics	A	B	B	B
Science	A	A	C	C

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

Pupils achieve very well to attain well above average standards by the time they leave the school. In the reception class, children get off to a very good start and their achievement is good. They attain standards above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. The attainment of pupils in Years 1 and 2 has fluctuated in recent years but test results have shown an upward trend in 2002 and again in 2003. Pupils presently in Year 2 are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics and attaining standards above those expected for their age. Test results for pupils in Year 6 dipped in 2002, reflecting the average ability of that year group. The 2003 test results are much more representative of the high standards achieved in previous years. Pupils presently in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well and standards are well above expectations in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds make good progress and those who are identified as gifted and talented achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 but a small number of the most able are not achieving as well as they should in Years 1 and 2 in

reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is at least good or better in all subjects, except ICT by the end of Year 2, where it is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities are very well developed. They have very good attitudes towards their work. Their attendance is good. They work very hard and their behaviour is very good. They respond very well to the very good provision that the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching is good overall. Talented teachers help pupils to learn effectively. The teaching is very good in Years 3 to 6, where there is some innovative and very challenging teaching that helps pupils to learn very well. Teaching in reception to Year 2 is good overall and often very good but in Years 1 and 2 it does not always provide activities that are sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Assessment procedures and marking of work are usually good and help pupils to move on in their work.

The curriculum is very good. However, provision for children's physical development in the Foundation Stage is limited by the lack of a suitable outdoor play area. Teachers link subjects very well so that teaching time is used very efficiently. There is very good provision for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities outside the school day. The care, welfare and support of pupils are very good. There is a very good partnership with parents. Links with the community are good and partnerships with other schools are well developed

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The head teacher leads the staff very well in providing a very good education for pupils. Governance is good. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have developed good relationships with staff so that they can question and challenge the work of the school in a constructive way. Management is very good. Identifying developments and implementing action in order to raise standards are very effective and the school is now seeing the results of these in the improving achievement of pupils in the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the work of the school. The very small number of concerns relate mainly to the flexibility of the induction arrangements for children new to the school. Pupils have very positive views of the school. They say that they are fully involved in the school's work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the achievement of the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Provide an appropriate area for reception children to participate in outdoor learning activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve very well to attain well above average standards by the time they leave the school. Achievement is good in the **reception class and in Years 1 and 2** and **very good in Years 3 to 6**. Children attain standards above those expected for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the reception class. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good for all children in the reception class because they are well taught by an effective team of teachers and teaching assistants.
- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are improving; most pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well because they have very good attitudes to their work and the teaching is very good.
- The most able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do well enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory but pupils have insufficient opportunity to use their skills in different situations and therefore are unable to demonstrate achievement at the higher level.

Commentary

1. Most children start the reception class with attainment that is above average. Good teaching and a carefully planned curriculum in the Foundation Stage helps them to achieve very well in their creative, mathematical, personal, social and emotional development and well in the acquisition of communication, language and literacy skills and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in most aspects of their physical development but opportunities for them to be involved in outdoor activities are limited by the lack of a suitable secure area in which they can play. Children with special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported in their learning. By the end of the reception class all children have attained the standards expected for age, and many above, in all the areas of learning and have a good foundation for their work in Years 1 and 2.
2. The test results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years and pupils' attainment overall has been average. However, as the table below indicates, attainment shows an upward trend in 2002, particularly in mathematics, which was well above the national average. Although there are no national comparators at the present time, the 2003 test results show that attainment has risen again, especially in writing, which shows a 10 per cent rise in the pupils reaching the higher level.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average points scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (14.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.5 (13.9)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	18.0 (15.6)	16.5 (16.2)

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

3. The additional resources and significant staff training that have been allocated to improve standards in English, mathematics and science are beginning to have an effect on the achievement in Years 1 and 2. This includes a considerable investment in the library to provide an extended range of books which is helping to raise standards in reading. Almost all pupils now achieve well, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with special educational needs. However, a small number of the most able pupils could still achieve higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Year 1, if teachers gave them better opportunities to demonstrate attainment at a higher level. Attainment in all other subjects is above national expectations and achievement is good except for ICT where standards are satisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in lessons in Years 1 and 2.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average points scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (28.5)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.9 (27.6)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	29.1 (30.5)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. The 2002 Year 6 test results were lower than previous years because fewer pupils attained the higher level in English, mathematics and science. They reflect the average ability of the year group. Although there are no national comparators at the present time, the 2003 test results show that a much higher proportion of pupils attained the higher level in all three subjects. They did particularly well in science where three quarters of the year group reached the higher level. The school has worked very hard to improve teaching and learning and to better meet the needs of its gifted and talented pupils. Additional resources and staff training focused on both priorities last year and continue to be an area for development this year. The result of this can be seen in the work of the most able pupils presently in Years 3 to 6, which is well above average. All pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make very good progress in Years 3 to 6 and achieve very well in English, mathematics, science and most other subjects by the time they leave the school because they work very hard; the teaching is very good and they have good support out of school from parents and carers. The work they are encouraged to do at home helps them to improve the work they do in lessons very effectively. The most able pupils achieve very well because they receive very challenging teaching by teachers who understand their needs. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are supported very effectively by very good support teachers and teaching assistants who provide them with activities that help them to learn at a level appropriate to their abilities.

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

The school develops pupils’ personal qualities and attitudes **very well**. **Attendance is good**. Pupils have **very good** attitudes to their work and behaviour is **very good**. **Relationships are very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like school very much and therefore attendance is good.
- They behave very well.
- Pupils’ have excellent relationships and they have very well developed personal qualities; they are reliable, mature and able to co-operate and collaborate very effectively
- They make very good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

- Attendance is good. Pupils like school very much and they arrive punctually. They have very good attitudes to their work and this helps them to learn well in class and make very good progress overall.
- Pupils' show confidence when expressing their own views. They have excellent relationships with adults and show respect for each other. In their response to the pupil questionnaires, pupils are very enthusiastic about their teachers and the fairness with which they are treated. Pupils' behaviour is very good, both in lessons and when moving around school. This is because teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and communicate these very effectively through clearly defined rules and agreed routines. Pupils have developed their skills of collaboration and co-operation very well because teachers provide regular opportunities for them to work together on activities. In a carefully planned Year 5 lesson, pupils worked together very successfully in groups to redesign the playground to represent the needs of the community. There have been no recent exclusions.
- The development of pupils' spiritual awareness is very good. Whole-school celebration assemblies are planned very well to enable pupils to recognise the achievements of themselves and others. From an early age they develop self-awareness and can recognise different emotions including happiness, sadness and anger. Pupils develop a very good awareness of their own and other cultures. A good example is seen in the 'World Faiths Board' which provides pupils with a special place for reflection as well as developing their knowledge of how people from different cultures worship. The school uses a range of opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. For example, in a very good Year 4 art and design lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed exploring line, shape, colour and texture to create mythical Aboriginal creatures.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with each other. They work and play well together and know the importance of friendship and how they can support each other. For example, the 'Big Buddies' initiative in the reception class enables young children to settle very quickly into school life with the help of a Year 5 friend. Pupils show a willingness to take responsibilities seriously; for example, they view the role of being a member of the school council as very important in representing pupils' views and ideas. Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong. They are polite and courteous to visitors and know how to look after their school building and the equipment in it. The head teacher, governors and staff work hard to ensure all pupils are happy, safe and secure in school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The teaching is almost all good or very good. The curriculum it provides is very good, as are the care, welfare and support it gives its pupils. There is a very good partnership with parents, and the links it has with the community and other schools are well developed.

Teaching and learning

The **teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6**. It helps children to learn effectively so that most achieve well in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 and very well Years 3 to 6. Assessment is usually good and is well used to plan work at the right level. However, in Years 1 and 2 it is not always used effectively in English and mathematics to plan work that is challenging enough for the most able pupils and as a result these pupils are not able to demonstrate work at the higher level.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers keep their skills and knowledge up to date through an impressive programme of staff training.
- Teachers give pupils very good opportunities to work together and to discuss and share their ideas.
- Science is very well taught throughout the school.
- The most able pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 because of the challenging work.
- The teaching of mathematics and English in Years 1 and 2 does not always promote standards that are high enough for the most able pupils.
- Teachers manage the difficulties caused by the open plan accommodation very well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection In 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13	11	1	1	0	0

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

9. The teaching overall is good with a good proportion of it very good.
10. One of the school's priorities in the last two years has been to improve the achievement of the most able pupils in the school. A very good programme of staff development has helped teachers to improve their own skills and knowledge and to have the confidence to experiment with different ways of approaching the teaching of pupils they identify as particularly gifted and talented. The teaching of these pupils is particularly effective in Years 3 to 6 when the school has allocated a teacher to provide for them in a separate group for some English and mathematics lessons. These lessons help this group of pupils to learn very effectively and to achieve very well because the teacher encourages them to experiment with a range of possibilities and to think creatively; she judges the pace and her interventions very well. They are taught the skills of lateral thinking and the teacher provides very challenging problems for them to solve using these skills. The pupils enjoy the challenge and respond by showing that they are inventive, persistent and independent. Although teachers in Years 1 and 2 have begun to provide challenging work for the most able pupils in many lessons, occasionally in English and mathematics they organise the children into groups that contain pupils of all abilities. In these lessons, they do not provide the groups with work that is sufficiently different for the most able pupils and so these pupils are unable to demonstrate achievement at the higher level.
11. Teachers have impressive knowledge of the subjects they teach because they are involved in regular training and staff development that is identified when they review their performance with the head teacher. They have been able to improve their teaching of literacy and numeracy by observing excellent teaching of these subjects in other schools. There is, as a result, some very good teaching of English and mathematics that makes very good use of teaching methods based on a thorough understanding of how pupils learn. Teachers use their thorough

knowledge of all curriculum areas to make very good links between subjects so that pupils can transfer their knowledge and understanding from one subject to another.

12. Teachers make very good use of a wide range of resources and teaching methods that they choose carefully to interest and motivate their pupils. They plan work that often involves their pupils in investigation and discussion. They often take a practical approach so that pupils of all abilities have a chance to be fully involved in the lesson. For example, in history they investigate from the point of view of an archaeologist and are able to handle real artefacts. In most cases, teachers use assessment well to judge what individual pupils can achieve. In a personal and social education lesson the teacher skilfully organises pupils so that they can take on the roles of different members of the community in a mock public meeting about a new playground development. Pupils are given roles that they can understand so that their self-esteem is maintained. For example, pupils with special educational needs represent the views of the children who will use the playground, while the most able pupils represent the views of the council officials. Teachers use time very productively. Short sessions immediately before and after breaks are used very effectively to consolidate previous work.
13. There is good support from skilled special needs teachers and teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs and this helps them to make good progress.
14. Science lessons are particularly well taught throughout the school and give pupils very good opportunities to develop independent learning and investigative skills. Teachers help pupils to develop very good working habits from an early age so that they know the most effective ways of doing things, such as recording their results, for example. Their teachers encourage them to be independent and to make their own decisions. As early as Year 1 they make their own choices from alternatives such as bar graphs or picture charts when they are researching the eye colours in the class. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching provides them very well with the skills necessary to work with others to suggest and test out a hypothesis. The subject provides a very good example of how effectively teachers assess pupils' work and use this to plan work that is at the right level for pupils with special educational needs and those who are very able. Their knowledge of pupils' achievement helps teachers to set relevant homework that helps pupils to improve their work. As a result the pupils really like the subject.
15. The open plan arrangement of most classrooms and the lack of space for the large teaching groups are sometimes disruptive to learning. However, teachers manage the difficulties creatively and, by agreeing when to time activities, disruption is kept to a minimum. In addition, the hall and library are used effectively when teachers need more space, or for music lessons that could disrupt neighbouring classes.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **very good**. It provides a broad range of very good learning opportunities that meet the needs and interests of the pupils in the school very well. It covers all subjects very effectively and makes very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. The curriculum is enriched and broadened by very good opportunities provided by learning outside the school day and an emphasis on the arts. Learning resources are very good and the school makes very good use of the limited accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good range of opportunities that meet the needs of pupils so that most learn very well.
- Extremely good provision for learning outside the school day.
- Effective links across and between many subjects.
- Particular emphasis on the arts.
- Very good opportunities for multi-cultural development.
- Very good provision for personal and social education.
- Lack of suitable outdoor play provision for the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

16. The overall quality of the curriculum for all pupils is very good and meets statutory requirements. The necessary dominance of literacy and numeracy in lessons is carefully balanced with a broad range of other subjects and activities, particularly in the arts. Pupils have very good opportunities to extend their skills in literacy and numeracy. They use these effectively to support their learning in other subjects of the curriculum. They are taught ICT skills very effectively and pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good opportunities to use these in other subjects. In Years 1 and 2 the opportunities are more limited and should be extended.
17. The school usually achieves high standards in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests, to which the secure implementation of the National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy make a significant contribution. The school has developed interesting ways of making connections between subjects that help pupils to learn more effectively. Pupils, for example, use ICT *PowerPoint* presentation to illustrate life in ancient Egypt. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good because teachers, the special needs support teacher and teaching assistants provide activities that are well matched to their needs. The curriculum is supported by an impressive range of good quality resources and monitoring systems. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and serves them well in achieving their early learning goals.
18. A strength of the school is the opportunity it provides for learning outside the school day for pupils in Years 1 to 6. They enjoy a wide range of sporting activities, which include fencing, football, gymnastics and cross-country running, together with dancing, recorder, gardening and Healthy Heart clubs. Alongside these, visits and events are held that cross a broad range of the social and cultural spectrum. Pupils entertain the public, support the World Wildlife Fund, learn how to cycle safely, sing Indian music with Gurukul and visit places of interest such as residential outdoor centres, Eden Camp and the Stadium of Light. As well as broadening pupils' learning in subjects such as history and geography, learning outside the school contributes significantly to pupils' personal, social, cultural and health education. Particular emphasis is placed on the arts and very good opportunities are provided for pupils to sing, play music, dance, draw and paint and create visually pleasing artefacts such as banners and embroideries.
19. The curriculum is very well planned and there are clear links between subjects. Pupils make tapestries that tell stories about the Vikings that they study in history, which enhances their understanding of historical events and life in past times. As a matter of course, teachers plan the use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects to support clearer understanding and effective learning. The curriculum provided for problem solving and investigations in science is very good and is often dependent on measuring techniques learned in mathematics. Opportunities to use these skills in other contexts help pupils in learning independently and encourage them to investigate.
20. The Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark and the Healthy School Standard recognise formally the good provision made for the learning of literacy and numeracy skills and for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has formed useful partnerships with local primary and secondary schools through which learning outside the school day is successfully promoted.
21. Accommodation in the school is barely adequate but space is used creatively and is not seen to be significantly detrimental to the delivery of the curriculum. However, provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage is inadequate and is limiting some aspects of physical development for children in the reception class. The quality of resources is very good overall; they make a significant contribution to the quality of education that the school provides. They are used very well by teachers to make lessons interesting and exciting for pupils. Teaching spaces provide a rich and stimulating environment and outdoor areas are well maintained.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and support of pupils are very good. Teachers monitor pupils' achievements and personal development very effectively, identifying things they do well and not so well and giving pointers for improvement. Pupils are given very good opportunities to be involved in school developments and their views are regularly sought.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take their duty of care towards pupils very seriously.
- Relationships are very good.
- Very good support, advice and guidance are given to pupils throughout school.
- The school values pupils' views and involves them in new developments.

Commentary

22. The school has effective procedures for child protection and actively promotes pupils' welfare by providing opportunities for them to learn how to keep safe. Health and safety risk assessments, when the school looks at the potential risks in activities, are in place and the school has achieved an award for promoting healthy living. Supervision is very good. Teachers and other adults are present at strategic points around school during breaks and lunchtime and older pupils help them with routine jobs like checking pupils in and out of the building. Pupils in Year 5 team up with children in the reception class to keep them happily occupied on the playground.
23. The very good relationships that staff establish with pupils are the basis for the support given to pupils throughout the school. Teachers monitor pupils' achievements and personal development carefully and make very good use of this information to help them continue to make progress. They support pupils very well in finding out how they are progressing, identifying things they do well and not so well and giving pointers for improvement in their comments in pupils' workbooks and annual progress reports. Pupils particularly value the records of their achievements that are begun in the reception class and added to as they get older. Pupils' relationships with others are exemplary and they feel that, although most people behave themselves very well all the time, everyone is safe in school because staff always deal with any unsatisfactory behaviour quickly and effectively. Teachers and support staff respond conscientiously to pupils' personal needs so that each pupil has easy access to several trusted adults that they can turn to throughout the school day. There are good procedures for settling children into school that the school tries to match to the needs of individual pupils. However, some parents, who go out to work, find the irregularity of the first few weeks of term inconvenient. Most parents appreciate the home visits before children start in the reception class, and the buddies from Year 5 who help them get to know school and make friends mean that children's emotional development is very well supported. Parents are welcomed into school so that they can communicate easily with staff and help their child to feel secure. Good links are established with other primary schools and the secondary schools that pupils transfer to and these enable pupils to make the move with ease.
24. There is a very strong commitment amongst staff to involve pupils in the life of the school and teachers provide many opportunities to encourage pupils to develop independence and grow as individuals. Pupils of all ages help teachers and each other in the classrooms and older pupils have a range of responsibilities as monitors. In Year 4, for instance, pupils learn how to use special mats provided by the teacher that have on them basic literacy and numeracy facts so that they do not need to disturb anyone else. The school council, suggestion box, and circle time are very effective ways of seeking pupils' views and these work well. The council is particularly well organised and includes pupils from all age groups. Staff take suggestions seriously and actively involve pupils in bringing about suitable new developments. The school takes many opportunities to celebrate pupils' achievements and this helps pupils feel confident and well motivated. Information packs issued to all families are a particularly good way of

encouraging pupils with their homework and so guide them towards the good working habits that they will need for the next stage of their education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a **very good partnership with parents**. Good links are established within the community and links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of opportunities for parents to participate in the work of the school.
- There is a high level of support from parents for the school.
- There are very good links with other schools.
- Induction arrangements are difficult for some parents who work, others feel that they benefit their children.

Commentary

25. The school gives parents many opportunities to become involved in their child's education and benefits from a lot of support from parents. This partnership begins before the child joins the school through home visits from staff to share information and any concerns, and once their children start school parents are able to meet teachers informally each morning and afternoon, as well as through formal appointments to discuss any issues. However, a few parents feel that the system for children to start school for short periods at various times is difficult to arrange around their working hours. Other parents recognise the benefits of the induction process for their children.
26. The school provides parents with a very wide range of high quality information about the life of the school and how they can help their children to get along well. The school has extended the traditional forms of information such as the prospectus and governors' annual report to include a website and two particularly outstanding features of communicating with parents. Firstly, the school has recently begun to report in writing to parents about their children's progress each term with a meeting between staff and parents to discuss the contents of the reports. These reports include a good amount of detail about how children are getting on and what they need to concentrate on next. Parents find the reports and meetings very useful. The meetings and drop-in sessions to see the school in action are particularly well supported by parents. Secondly, the school is working in partnership with a local independent school to provide packs of activities for parents to share with their children to help them with homework, focusing particularly on science, literacy and numeracy skills. This is also available on the Internet. Teachers and parents regularly exchange information about children's reading and parents help the school and their children by encouraging homework and helping their children to find resources for special projects. Many parents attend special events such as the harvest festival, Christmas productions and sports day. Several parents regularly help teachers in classrooms and with the running of out-of-school activities and social events and many more help with special events and outings. Parents who help out are well briefed and able to support children effectively. Staff and governors are interested in seeking parents' views and do so by questionnaires, for instance on the new reporting system and school visits, as well as through discussions in informal meetings. Parents are satisfied that concerns are acted upon very quickly.
27. The school has established good links within the local and wider community that benefit pupils' welfare and enhance their learning and personal development. Appropriate links are established with support agencies and representatives from organisations such as the police and health services visit school to talk to and work with pupils. The school has close links with the local church and takes children on excursions to a range of local venues.

28. The school works well with partner schools and colleges. There are many opportunities for pupils to share events with pupils from other primary schools and a good range of activities help pupils to move smoothly to secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership and management are **very good**. The leadership provided by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and subject leaders is **very good**. The school's management is **very effective**. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head teacher is very good.
- Subject leaders provide strong leadership.
- Staff development systems are very good.
- The governing body is effective and supports the school well.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

29. The very good leadership and management are central to the school's success. The head teacher's very strong leadership provides staff with a very clear view of the school's direction and their role in its future development. The head teacher has very high expectations that he makes very clear to staff, parents and pupils. This has resulted in a very good team spirit in the school, and staff work very effectively together in the knowledge that each individual is valued highly. Pupils too feel valued and want to do their best. This is providing a very good climate for learning in which pupils are achieving very well.
30. The governors' work together effectively. They have a good knowledge of the school through a planned programme of shared working, which includes regular visits to the school to work alongside staff. The governing body influences the work of the school through a good level of challenge and support to senior managers. It continually strives to improve its performance through attendance at a range of training activities.
31. The school improvement plan is strategic, well focused and effective. Very good self-review systems ensure that all staff contribute to the identification of improvement priorities and to the monitoring and evaluation of new initiatives. As a result, all staff have a shared vision for the school and are committed to raising achievement.
32. The finances of the school are very well managed.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	435,066
Total expenditure	449,336
Expenditure per pupil	2,213

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	41,520
Balance carried forward to the next	27,250

33. Resources are targeted very well to support individual priorities and the impact of spending on standards is carefully evaluated. For example, the range of books available in the school library has been extended, resulting in improved performance in reading in both key stages. The school applies the principles of best value very well and consults with parents on major spending decisions. Budget carry-forward has been targeted well to support educational priorities, including the employment of additional staff to support pupils with special educational

needs and those who are gifted and talented. The improvement in the attainment of the most able can already be seen in the work of pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school makes very good use of external funding to support developments in the school. A good example is seen in the school's involvement in the Independent/State Partnership, which has resulted in the development of high quality materials for helping parents to support their children's learning.

34. The leadership provided by subject co-ordinators is very strong. They have a very clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses within their subjects and provide very effective support for staff. The role of all co-ordinators is clearly understood and their contribution to school review has been enhanced by increasing the time available to them for monitoring and evaluating standards. Exemplary systems for staff development ensure teachers are very well supported in their professional development.
35. The school analyses performance data well. For example, it accurately identified the relatively lower achievement of the most able pupils in the school. An impressive programme of training has provided teachers with very good skills for teaching gifted and talented pupils. This has already improved pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6. Staff are working hard to adapt the teaching methods that have worked so well to the younger pupils in the school. The data analysis, together with effective monitoring systems, provides useful information to inform improvement planning. Systems for managing the deployment and workload of staff are very good. A strong partnership exists between the school and the University of Sunderland, resulting in the school making a very good contribution to initial teacher training. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children achieve very well and reach standards well above the expectations in the creative, mathematical and personal, social and emotional areas of learning. They achieve well and reach standards above expectations in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the reception class. The lack of an enclosed outdoor learning area restricts progress in some aspects of physical development. The teaching is good overall and much of it is very good. The teacher and teaching assistants work together very effectively, planning carefully to provide the children with a wide range of experiences matched very well to their individual needs and abilities. Very good support is provided for the small number of children who have special educational needs. Induction procedures are good overall and staff work very well together as a team to provide a safe, secure environment as children start school. Children's progress is carefully checked so that activities are well matched to individual needs and abilities. Well-briefed parents and governors support children very effectively, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher and teaching assistants work very well together as a team.
- Staff know children and families well.
- Children are very well supported through effective guidance and encouragement.

Commentary

37. Induction arrangements are good. Staff work hard to get to know children and their families well and as a result children settle quickly into school. Children are warmly welcomed at the start of the school day and children with special educational needs are very well supported. The teacher and teaching assistants have clear and consistent expectations of how children should behave, resulting in most children working and playing sensibly together. When necessary, adults correct children firmly but gently; this makes the children aware of their actions and ensures that they have every opportunity to learn. Children grow quickly in confidence, use their time well and learn to take responsibility in the classroom. They make good progress in the development of self-awareness. For example, most children can dress for physical activity within a set period of time and there is a very high level of support for children who find this difficult.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher, teaching assistants, parents and governors take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Children with special educational needs make very good progress because of the targeted support they receive.

Commentary

38. Nearly all children are on course to reach the expected targets by the end of the reception year. This is because the school has worked very hard at implementing a very good strategy to teach children important basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. The approaches used to teach reading are sound and systematically build upon skills and knowledge. Very good opportunities are provided for children to develop speaking and listening skills in their play, for example in the 'Spaceship' or under the 'Holley Park Season Tree'. Adult-focused activities provide children with a range of opportunities to develop pencil control and to learn to form letters correctly. Most children listen carefully and learn to use language creatively; for example, following a walk in the woods one child talked about "the brush of tree branches" to describe what she had heard. Well-briefed parents and governors support children's learning very well and encourage them to talk about favourite stories and rhymes. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because support is targeted very well to meet their individual learning needs.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff encourage children to use correct mathematical vocabulary.
- Teachers provide very good opportunities to build number into everyday activities.

Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are very good in the reception class. Staff make very good use of all opportunities to develop children's mathematical understanding. For example, children count confidently when singing 'Five Purple Monsters'. Teachers effectively make links for the children between different areas of learning. For example, they encourage children to use mathematical language in a range of activities. This is seen when children use mirrors to observe and paint their faces and also develop their understanding of 'above', 'below' and 'in the middle'. By the end of the reception year, most children have been effectively taught an understanding of numbers up to 10. They can compare lengths, tell the time to half past and use 'greater' and 'smaller' to compare size and quantities. More able children can count in twos and 10s, know about odd and even numbers and add and subtract to 20. Teaching assistants have very good subject knowledge that they use very well to provide good learning experiences. They make very effective use of games and other resources to help children make very good progress in their mathematical development. An example seen was the very good use made of ICT to help the children to consolidate language relating to the shape and size of two-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is very good use of the local environment to support children's learning.

Commentary

40. Children are curious and eager to explore their surroundings. Teaching is imaginative, resulting in a good pace in the children's learning. Staff provide children with a wide range of experiences to find out about the natural world. For example, they develop a good understanding of seasonal changes when investigating the 'Autumn Colour Tables'. Through a well-planned visit to Washington Wildfowl Park, they develop their understanding of the life cycle of the frog and can identify frogspawn, tadpoles and an adult frog. By the end of the reception year, the children have been taught effectively how to use ICT to support their learning. They concentrate well and enjoy using the computers as was seen in the good progress they made in learning to use the *Paint* program on the computer.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in physical education lessons is very good.
- The wider community is very well used to support children's learning.
- The absence of an enclosed outdoor play area restricts children's progress in some aspects of physical development.

Commentary

41. Physical education lessons are very well organised with very effective planned support from teaching assistants. Very good teaching results in children making good progress in developing their confidence and skills in controlling body movements. There is a good range of opportunities for children to develop their motor skills including cutting, tracing and mark making. Very good use is made of the wider community to develop health and body awareness. For example, in a lesson led by the school nurse, children made very good progress in the development of knowledge about healthy eating and keeping clean when they listened very carefully to the story of Geordie Grub. Children display good physical skills when playing with the new outdoor equipment including large bikes, scooters and wagons. However, the absence of an enclosed outdoor learning area slows down the overall progress children make because the time for them to use the outdoor equipment is limited.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are very good opportunities for children to explore a range of media.

Commentary

42. The lively and enthusiastic teaching helps the children to achieve very well in this area of learning. Children enjoy working with a wide range of materials including paint, textiles, crayons and felt pens. They enjoy mixing colours and most are able to choose colour for a specific purpose. Interesting activities help children to develop their observational skills very well and teachers use the school environment effectively to provide stimulus for artwork. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good subject knowledge that they use to teach singing and poetry very effectively. The children make very good progress in their knowledge of a repertoire of songs and rhymes and they are able to match movement appropriately to music. In a very

good singing lesson, children matched the movements of a penguin when singing the *Penguin Song*. Very good support is provided for children who find it difficult to respond to sound with body movement.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are very good overall.
- Literacy skills are developed very well across the curriculum.
- Leadership of English is very good.
- Teaching is very good, particularly in Years 3 to 6, because teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- The activities planned occasionally fail to challenge the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2 sufficiently.

Commentary

43. Standards in English are well above those expected nationally by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in reading and writing. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make very good progress and achievement is very high. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they make very good progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented are carefully identified through the school's assessment system. The provision made for them is good overall, and very good teaching results in this group of pupils making very good progress in Years 3 to 6.
44. Teachers plan lessons that help to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively. In Year 2 they are encouraged to listen carefully to instructions and are able to use a wide range of interesting vocabulary when answering questions in lessons. By Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills have developed well. Most pupils are confident about speaking formally during class discussions as well as informally during group and paired activities because they have had interesting and varied opportunities throughout the school to develop and use their skills. Very good opportunities are provided, for example in a personal and social education lesson, for them to present views that are not their own in a convincing and articulate way.
45. Pupils read very well and the wide range of reading material available to them in classrooms and in the well-resourced library extends their interest. Most pupils quickly select key points from non-fiction books and use the Internet competently to research topics further. For example, in a study of the Egyptians, Year 6 pupils gathered information from a range of sources and arranged it skilfully into a *PowerPoint* presentation. Teachers use guided reading and writing sessions very well to help pupils to look deeper into the text or to be more creative in their writing. Pupils write imaginatively; for example, in a Year 4 lesson, able pupils used phrases like "flashes of lightning were like burning arrows hitting the sun" to describe their survival from a Viking invasion. Homework is set regularly and it fully supports pupils' learning; for example the literacy homework books used in Year 6 are used very effectively to reinforce key skills by giving pupils relevant tasks that help to consolidate the work they have done in school.
46. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge including a thorough grasp of the literacy strategy. They plan systematically so that skills can be practised and developed from Year 1 to Year 6. Where teaching is very good, teachers make very good use of time and match activities very well to pupils' abilities, resulting in pupils

making very good progress in their learning. Occasionally, teachers do not provide work that is matched well enough to the needs of more able pupils when they are taught in mixed ability groups in Years 1 and 2 and this limits their achievement.

47. The presentation of pupils' work is usually very good. In some instances pupils do not apply their joined-up style when writing across the curriculum. All teachers mark work regularly and celebrate pupils' good work. Where it is very good, marking gives an accurate indication of what pupils can do and how they can improve. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' work and these are used well to ensure pupils make good progress across year groups. Teachers set targets for individual pupils based on this careful assessment of what they can and cannot do. This is used very well, particularly in Years 3 to 6, to ensure that pupils know what the next steps in their learning will be.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Provision for developing literacy across the curriculum is very good. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their literacy skills in other subjects, resulting in them being able to write at length, particularly in history and geography. In very good lessons, teachers are skilled at asking children to clarify their ideas when putting forward an opinion. This is seen in the gifted and talented programme which provides a very good structure for developing pupils' discussion skills throughout the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and enthusiastic teaching and learning enable pupils to attain high standards.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and because of this plan lessons well.
- Tasks are almost always well matched to pupils' ability.
- Teachers use individual targets effectively to help pupils learn.
- In Year 1, the pace of learning and pupils' progress is lacking in some lessons.
- Very good leadership and management result in very good training for teachers.

Commentary

49. Mathematics is well taught in Years 1 and 2 and very well taught in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are carefully planned and enthusiastically delivered. A good example was seen in Year 6 when the lively and enthusiastic delivery by the teacher helped to motivate and involve the pupils very effectively. As a result, pupils learn well and both standards and achievement are good for almost all pupils in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. However, in one Year 1 lesson a small number of the most able pupils did not achieve as well as they should because the work they were given was too easy for them.
50. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She works effectively with the senior management team during the annual review process to identify areas in which teachers require additional training. This has included visiting other schools to observe excellent teaching of mathematics. As a result teachers have very good subject knowledge and manage lessons well. These well-organised, well-taught lessons encourage pupils to enjoy their work and they have a very good attitude to learning mathematics. The objectives of lessons are well explained and pupils know what they are expected to do and what they are expected to learn. Pupils are well supported in their work, particularly those who have special educational needs, by teaching assistants who are mindful of pupils' individual targets and who carefully target those in need of particular help. This contributes significantly to the continuity of learning in lessons and assists pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers use a wide range of suitable resources which both help to secure understanding, present challenges and invite questions.

For example, while investigating the properties of two-dimensional shapes, a child in Year 2 discovered an isosceles trapezium in her box of resources. She asked what it was and this led to the discovery of its name and that a hexagon was formed when two were placed together.

51. Much of the teaching in mathematics is designed to extend pupils' thinking. Teachers ask challenging questions which are carefully aligned to pupils' individual or group targets. Teachers know which aspects of mathematics pupils understand well and what needs further practice and usually adjust their planning accordingly. Pupils are good at recording their work, which they do neatly and in detail, particularly by the end of Year 6. This is an expectation upon which teachers insist in order to ensure understanding of processes and problem-solving strategies. The marking of pupils' work is carried out satisfactorily overall and pupils receive praise and encouragement for good recording. However, only in some classes is the good practice of providing comments to challenge pupils' thinking about their work carried out.
52. Teachers regularly provide pupils with opportunities to work on tasks independently, usually as an extension to more guided activities. They enjoy these challenges and discuss their work with each other. The highest attaining pupils are challenged with aspects of mathematics such as exploring ways to make the largest possible total from a grid of four numbers when constrained by certain criteria.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Provision for developing mathematical skills across the curriculum is good. It is evident both in lessons and from interesting and attractive wall displays, that pupils frequently use their mathematical skills to support their work in other subjects. Younger pupils employ their knowledge of shape and numbers to direct a programmable floor robot in control technology. They also produce bar graphs to show the popularity of different foods or frequency of eye colour in their class. Older pupils use mathematical skills with good effect to support the very good science investigations that they frequently carry out.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards pupils achieve by the end of Key Stage 2 are very high.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge that helps them to provide interesting activities that challenge children's thinking.

Commentary

54. Standards in science are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and well above at the end of Year 6. Science is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has provided very good support for the subject and has carefully identified strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and has used this for staff training. As a result teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers are very well supported by very good resources that are very well organised. The science curriculum is very well planned so that each teacher knows at what level to approach a particular aspect of science. There are agreed practices that are consistently applied throughout the school. For example, early in Year 1, pupils are introduced to the main headings that all teachers use when teaching them to record their scientific investigations. Although the headings are expanded as the children move up the school, the children have already developed good working habits at an early age. This early confidence develops into a strong enthusiasm for science as the children move through the school. Many say that science is their favourite subject.

55. The very good attitudes that the pupils have towards their work and their teachers' high expectations result in good learning and high achievement in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are taught alternative ways of doing things and many of them willingly take responsibility for making their own decisions. In Year 1, for example they chose whether to record their observations about the differences in eye colour as bar graphs or picture charts and higher attaining pupils were able to decide what additional information would be useful. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants and additional teaching staff in Years 1 and 2 and this helps them to make good progress.
56. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good and very effective at providing pupils with the skills and scientific knowledge to reach very high standards in their work. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and thorough marking and the setting of relevant homework help pupils to improve their work. The pupils are excited and motivated by the practical activities that often require them to work together to investigate and experiment. They are able to suggest and test out a hypothesis and to consider progressively more complex factors. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4, for example, constructed a test to show what happened to an electric current when a conducting material such as a metal spoon was covered with an insulating material. They were able to show the result in a clear circuit diagram that incorporated appropriate electrical symbols. By the time they reach Year 6 almost all pupils are competent scientists who can use both their mathematical and literacy skills with ease to communicate their ideas using a variety of appropriate methods. They are equally confident at handling data in graphs and charts as they are in writing scientific investigations using text that is correctly punctuated.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils learn computer skills systematically.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about using ICT.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- The school has acquired a good range of software.

Commentary

57. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils use painting programs as a context through which to develop their computer skills. Pupils can open and close programs and most know how to save their work. They prepare text, change fonts and the size of print, move text and delete unwanted items. The skills that some pupils have acquired are much more advanced, usually because they use a computer at home. Most pupils control the cursor well using a mouse and work confidently through software such as 'Live Books' following the inbuilt prompts. While pupils in Years 1 and 2 use ICT to support their work in other subjects such as art and design, numeracy and literacy, these opportunities are not regular enough to have a significant impact on their achievement.
58. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build further on their skills and many can carry out complex operations using a range of programs. Control technology is introduced and a programmable vehicle is used in the early years. Pupils learn to access programs to support the use of computers in creative work in art and design. They also enjoy a class to class e-mail system, use a music program to compose music and have Internet access under supervision. Through these experiences, pupils attain a good level of computer literacy that they further enhance through the school computer club and at home. By the time pupils leave the school they have extended the use of ICT to support their learning in other subjects to good effect. They compose writing

and music using word-processing skills, store and retrieve data, generate graphs and plans to illustrate their work in science, and create *PowerPoint* presentations to illustrate learning in history and geography. At this stage, pupils' work in ICT has become purposeful.

59. The school presently has an adequate range and number of computers. The ambitious project due to start immediately after the next half term is planned to address the shortfall in inflexible hardware such as electronic whiteboards and laptop computers identified by the senior managers of the school. It will also provide a purpose-built computer room. This has the potential to improve the provision for learning basic skills and to provide the resources to use ICT more regularly to support learning throughout the curriculum

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Although there are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills in Year 3 to 6 in music, science, history and geography, opportunities in Years 1 and 2 are insufficient.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good and helps pupils to learn very well.
- Educational visits support pupils' learning well.

Commentary

61. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve very well. In Year 2, pupils have a good grasp of some important events from the past, for example they write with very good understanding about the Great Fire of London and the sequence of events in the Gunpowder Plot. In Year 6, pupils show a very good understanding of life in Egyptian times. The teacher links this work very well to literacy lessons and gives pupils very good background information on the lifestyles of different Egyptian people. Pupils use the Internet very confidently to question different sources of evidence and to extend their knowledge. Visits provide very interesting learning opportunities in units of work on the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and World War II. A visit to Arbeia in South Shields enabled Year 3 pupils to explore aspects of Roman life. The teacher used the experience very imaginatively back in the classroom when the pupils acted as archaeologists and handled and examined a range of Roman artefacts she had provided. This enabled them to gain a clear understanding of the differences between life now and life at the time of the Romans.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lively, enthusiastic teaching motivates the pupils and they work very productively. Direct teaching supports pupils with special educational needs very well and they make good progress in their learning. Very clear explanations by the teacher ensure they know what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Questioning engages all pupils very effectively, resulting in them participating confidently in class discussions. Very good systems are in place to enable pupils to work both independently and as part of a group. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson on life at the time of the Egyptians, pupils were able to sort artefacts into categories and work collaboratively to compile fact files about them, referring to a range of resources. By the end of the lesson group leaders were able to provide an overview of key features of the artefacts and discuss their use in Egyptian society.

63. Teachers use assessment very well to check on pupils' knowledge and to monitor the development of their historical enquiry skills. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and the co-ordinator provides, and continuously seeks to improve the quality of, the resources that are available for each unit of work. This supports pupils' learning very well; for example in Year 1 pupils are able to describe artefacts such as chamber pot, flat iron and poss stick and compare them with modern equipment because they have the opportunity to see and handle the resources. Very good links are made with other subject areas including art and design, design and technology and ICT. For example, in Year 5, pupils worked through the design process to produce very good quality textile collages of the Viking invasion.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Links with literacy are very well made.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

64. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve very well. In Year 2, pupils have a very good understanding of the main features of their local area and compare this with the Isle of Struay. Good teaching helps them to use the skills they learn in English lessons to discuss similarities and differences and to identify main human and physical features, including seas, rivers, mountains and lochs. Teachers help them to visualise the features of the island by means of a very effective activity in which they all play a part in planning and constructing a three-dimensional model of the island with all its features and buildings. The pupils are very keen to talk about which parts they made and they are aware of the importance of good collaboration. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to use their imagination, to reflect on, share and develop their ideas in geography work.
65. By Year 6, pupils have made very good progress in their ability to interpret maps and other geographical data. They are able to identify main oceans, rivers and mountain ranges in the world. The curriculum is well planned to give them good opportunities to build on the skills they acquired in Years 1 and 2. They compare widely different locations and use a broader range of maps and other resources to identify similarities and difference between Askrigg in the Yorkshire Dales and Washington. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to provide pupils with interesting and demanding activities that help pupils to learn very well. They encourage them to use a range of resources, including the Internet, and they effectively help pupils to be aware of the impact of human activity on the environment.
66. Teaching in geography develops pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills very effectively. They sometimes use a matrix to record choices and display their findings using graphs. They use their literacy skills to write letters of complaint about changes to the environment. In Year 1, pupils use their knowledge of the Katie Morag stories to write their own detailed descriptions of a journey around an imaginary island. Teachers effectively encourage the pupils to use the role-play area, which this term is a giant's castle, to develop their use of geographical-related vocabulary such as 'mountainous', 'towering' and 'gigantic'. Teachers plan activities that help pupils to use the computer confidently in activities that involve collecting data and creating graphs to show their findings and draw conclusions.
67. Teachers use their assessment of pupils' work very well to track progress and to plan new work. They mark work carefully, providing pupils with comments that help them judge the success of their work. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and the

co-ordinator ensures that teachers have the advice and resources they need to provide a very good quality experience for their pupils.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils enjoy religious education and attitudes towards the subject are very good.
- Leadership and management are very effective.

Commentary

68. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are well above those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because teaching is very good and pupils are highly motivated. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that is very effectively communicated to pupils. The very effective use of challenging questioning and the well-judged use of interesting resources promote good discussion and give pupils a very good understanding of different religions. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and pupils have the confidence to share their thoughts and beliefs freely. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson when pupils compared Holley Park's school rules with those promoted in the Torah. In Year 6, teachers encourage pupils to be creative and imaginative when they try to describe and to draw their images of God and Allah.
69. Throughout the school, pupils develop a very good knowledge of different spiritual and religious beliefs. For example, in Years 3 to 6 pupils explore the main principles of Christianity and the Islamic faith and compare the lives of John the Baptist and Muhammad. There is a very strong focus in the teaching on evaluating what pupils can learn from religion and helping them to make connections between different religious beliefs and practices. For example, in Year 2, pupils competently explain the differences between the Bible and the Torah. They prepare their own 'special book' with reference to the Torah, an excellent example being one beautifully illustrated book about 'My Singing Fish'. The teaching helps pupils to value and care for one another. They show great respect for other people's values and beliefs as a result.
70. Very good links are made with literacy and other subjects such as art and design, design and technology, and history. Year 2 pupils compare their own favourite stories with those told by Jesus the storyteller, using the skills learned in English very well. Year 6 pupils work collaboratively to investigate Islamic patterns and use a good range of materials to design interesting prayer mats. Teachers use visits very well to bring the subject alive for their pupils. They use experiences, such as a visit to Beamish Parish Church, imaginatively in lessons to encourage very high quality written work in which the children show a very good understanding of the parts of the church.
71. The leadership and management are very good because the co-ordinator evaluates the quality of pupils' work thoroughly and identifies areas for future development. The curriculum is very well planned and builds effectively on what pupils have learned previously.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in each of physical education and music, two in art and design and none in design and technology. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to the subject co-ordinators about their work, looked

at the work pupils have done so far this year and their work from last year, and spoke to pupils about the curriculum provided for them.

Commentary

72. Although little **music** teaching was observed, it is evident from pupils' excellent performances in assemblies that music is a strength of the school. Pupils play a range of instruments such as violins, recorders and keyboards. An accomplished recorder group perform regularly in assemblies. Pupils sing together tunefully and with vigour. In music lessons from Years 1 to 6, pupils learn how to listen to music and express their feelings about what they hear. They also sing as well as write and play their own compositions. Younger pupils learn how to record their compositions using simple signs that they remember easily. Music in lessons, and that which takes place outside the school day, is well integrated. Visitors to the school, such as Chilean harpists, provide a musical and multi-cultural dimension to the wider curriculum. Resources for music are very good. There is a wide variety of good quality instruments, sheet music and recordings which teachers help pupils to explore. Music provides an important focus and serves to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils are justly proud of the music they make and sometimes share it with the local community.
73. In **design and technology** pupils are given good opportunities to work in a range of materials. They make good progress and achieve high standards in their work in Years 1 and 2 and very high standards in Years 3 to 6. The teaching is carefully planned so that pupils are taught essential skills for working with materials at the same time as giving them the confidence to evaluate the work of others and the qualities of existing products. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a good knowledge about how to design and make models with movement created by winding mechanisms, wheels and axles.
74. In **art and design** pupils learn to appreciate the work of artists such as William Morris by studying his technique and trying out a similar style in their own work. Years 3 to 6 art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures. For example, Year 4 pupils gain a very good understanding about the role of art in Aboriginal culture. They understand that different colours represent physical features and can compare the use of line, shape and texture in their own work with examples of Aboriginal art. Teachers encourage them to be adventurous and to experiment and investigate what the materials can do. For example, Year 5 pupils use the story of Erik the Viking from their history studies as the inspiration for some beautiful textile wall hangings that they design and make using printing and appliqué.
75. In **physical education** pupils throughout the school develop good skills in controlling and making movements. These are evident both in lessons and in playground games and are the result of effective teaching and coaching by staff from both within and outside the school. Pupils enjoy games and other physical activity. They are competitive and have a well-developed sense of fair play, both of which they demonstrate energetically. Physical activity is well provided for by the school through lessons, which include swimming for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. These are enriched by a range of activities provided out of school hours, which include fencing, gymnastics, football and netball. In the course of their physical activity, pupils are encouraged to learn about and be aware of their own physiology.
76. Resources for physical education are very good. There is a wide range of small and large equipment for indoor and outdoor use, together with specialist equipment for specific sports. The hall is adequate for indoor activities and good use is made of a large hard play area and extensive well-kept fields. These facilities have a significant positive effect on the good quality of pupils' physical performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching helps pupils to learn very well.
- Time is allowed for promoting pupils' personal development and their citizenship skills.
- The school's strength in this area is recognised by the Healthy School Standard.

Commentary

77. Pupils' personal and social development is very well supported throughout the curriculum and in all aspects of the school's work. All teaching and non-teaching staff try to ensure that everything they do helps to build the self-confidence of their pupils. In order that important topics are covered, the school has carefully planned a programme of lessons throughout the school, which includes work on sex and relationships, drugs education and personal safety. The school has worked hard to meet the Healthy School Standard, which endorses the high quality of the provision it makes in this area of the curriculum. An impressive feature of development is the work on helping pupils to improve their diet. The pupils learn about the importance of good nutrition in the curriculum and this is reinforced by providing healthy snacks and water and encouraging parents to provide healthy packed lunches.
78. The school is very good at helping pupils take on roles of responsibility that help the smooth running of the school; this helps them to become confident and caring individuals. Older pupils work in the school office during the lunch break, answering the telephone very competently. All children new to the school are very well supported by an older pupil through a buddy system. Parents told the inspection team that some of these friendships last after the Year 6 pupils leave the school. Some aspects of the subject, such as health topics and citizenship, are very well taught as discrete lessons and this is helping pupils to acquire essential skills and knowledge very effectively.
79. Teachers are very well informed about the content of the subject. They use imaginative and exciting ways of helping the children to understand the concept of citizenship. For example, in a very well taught Year 5 lesson, the teacher chaired a debate in which groups of children expertly represented the views of interested groups relating to the construction of a new playground. Groups had been carefully chosen so that higher attaining pupils had the chance to represent views that were not necessarily their own such as the local council and lower attaining pupils were able to put forward the views of children who would use the facility. The children were able to evaluate their own contribution to the debate and received very good feedback from the teacher about what was good and how they could improve.
80. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to be involved in decisions about issues that affect their lives in school. The school council is an effective vehicle for them to learn about democracy and how to go about changing things.

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	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
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	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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