

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KELLS LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 131106

Headteacher: Mrs D R Hewitson

Lead inspector: Chris Warn

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 256584

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	399
School address:	Kells Lane Low Fell Gateshead Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE9 5HX
Telephone number:	0191 487 8226
Fax number:	0191 420 0509
Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor F Hindle
Date of previous inspection:	06/07/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kells Lane is a mixed primary school pupils with 399 pupils aged between four and eleven years (176 boys, 223 girls). This is a popular school which has all its places filled in most year groups. About two thirds of the pupils live in Low Fell, which is an area that is moderately advantaged by national standards. Most of the remaining one third of the pupils live in wards which have significant levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average (5.7 per cent). Almost all pupils (97 per cent) are of British white ethnicity. The remaining 3 per cent are from other white groups, or are of mixed white and Asian ethnicity or of Pakistani or other Asian ethnicity. All pupils speak English as their main language. A quarter of pupils leave and are replaced by others between Years 2 and 6. There are no children of refugees or asylum seekers or Travellers. There are 26 pupils with identified special educational needs (17 School Action, five School Action Plus and four with Statements). There is a mainstream support base (MSB) for pupils with dyslexia, with 12 places, though at the time of the inspection it was catering for four pupils. The pupils who are educated in this provision come from all parts of the Borough of Gateshead and mostly arrive in Years 5 and 6.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4293	C Warn	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Geography History Religious education Citizenship
9652	C Herbert	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23549	H Eadington	<i>Team inspector</i>	English Special educational needs
31319	D Hunter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science Information and communication technology Foundation Stage
27477	J Mitchell	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Kells Lane is a successful and improving school** with many important strengths. It provides a good quality of education for its 400 pupils. Teaching is good, with the result that pupils make good progress from the Reception Year to Year 6. They achieve to just above average standards at the end of Year 6 and develop into well-behaved, considerate and responsible individuals who are well prepared for secondary education. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher is central to the school's success. Governors and other staff lead and manage the school well. Good value for money is provided.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make good overall progress throughout the school, especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are especially well supported and so progress well.
- Pupils' attendance and behaviour are very good.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good and pupils are very well cared for.
- A well-balanced curriculum is provided, with good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills within and outside lessons.
- Pupils' progress is tracked very well in English, mathematics and science; there is now a need for similar methods to be applied to the other subjects the pupils study.
- The school is well led and managed, with the headteacher providing very good leadership.
- More pupils have the capability to reach Level 3 in tests by the end of Year 2 and Level 5 by the end of Year 6, and some could make better progress in mathematics.
- Better outdoor play and sports facilities are needed.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. All the key issues identified have been tackled effectively. Test results have risen, especially in the Year 2 tests. The quality of teaching has greatly improved. There is now a good provision for children aged under five. The staff and governors have the insight, ability and determination to ensure that the school keeps on improving.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils of all ages achieve well.** They enter school with broadly average ability. Almost all pupils achieve the required Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve above average results in the national tests. Most pupils continue to progress well from Years 3 to 6. This is especially the case for middle and lower ability pupils, who are very well supported. Some more able pupils are capable of being extended still further. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 6, in terms of point scores, were average, mainly because some pupils whose work in class indicated Level 5 achieved only Level 4 in the tests. Even so, 'value added' indicators show that most pupils made better than expected progress from 1999 to 2003, based on their Year 2 test scores. Pupils in the mainstream support base (MSB) make good progress and overcome many of their language and numeracy related learning problems, thanks to intensive help. However, their relatively low test results reduce the school's overall point scores by one grade.

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.  
Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

The right hand column suggests that the school's results compare less favourably with those of similar schools. However, even though the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is relatively low, there are some disadvantaged areas that the school serves and there is an above average number of pupils with statements of special educational need. A considerable number of pupils leave or arrive between Years 3 and 6 and 'value added' scores are above average.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Their attitudes towards school and their learning are good. They behave very well and form very good relationships with other pupils and adults in the school. They develop into mature young people who are well prepared for secondary education. Their attendance is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good.** Lessons are carefully planned and organised, often with good supportive resources. In many lessons pupils show great interest in what they are learning. All pupils are enabled to reach the essential aims of a lesson, but there are some occasions where more able pupils could use their thinking and reasoning skills more fully to explore issues more deeply. The curriculum is also good. It covers all major aspects of the National Curriculum and is creatively planned. There are many good enrichment activities such as visits, clubs, residential courses and performances.

Pupils receive good support and satisfactory guidance. Pupils' views are actively sought and acted upon. Advice on how to improve is good in English and science and satisfactory elsewhere. Procedures to ensure the health, welfare and safety of pupils are very good. Relationships with parents are satisfactory. The links between the school and the local community are good, as are the links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall leadership of the school is good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, whilst that of the governors and members of staff with key responsibilities is good.** The school is managed well. Good use is made of the resources available to support pupils' learning.

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

Most parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and are pleased that their children attend it. About a third of parents said they would like more precise information about the curriculum to help with learning at home. Pupils strongly approve of the ways in which the school operates. All of these views are justified.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

This is an effective school with no aspects of its work that are unsatisfactory.

**To improve further, the most important things the school should do are:**

- To extend able pupils further so that more reach Level 3 by the end of Year 2 and Level 5 by the end of Year 6.
- To continue to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- To apply the ways in which pupils' progress is assessed in English, mathematics and science to the other subjects.
- To provide parents with additional guidance about what their children will be learning, and more advice about how they could help with this at home.
- To have better facilities for outdoor play and sport.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' overall achievement is good. The standard of work seen during the inspection was just above the national average. Pupils make good progress from the Reception Year to the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards of achievement have risen at the end of Year 2 since the previous inspection, and at the end of Year 6 have remained at a similar standard in comparison with the national picture.
- Pupils achieve high standards in English and in many aspects of science.
- Achievement is rising in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology, and is good in history and religious education.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress.
- The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory.

There are no aspects of achievement that are unsatisfactory. The following areas need to be addressed to enable aspects of pupils' achievement that are currently satisfactory to become good or very good.

- More pupils should be enabled to reach Level 3 at the end of Year 2, and Level 5 at the end of Year 6. This involves providing them with consistently high levels of challenge and preparing them well for tests.
- There are pockets of underachievement in mathematics, especially in Years 4 to 6, and these are being tackled vigorously by the school.
- Some boys are not performing as well in English tests at the end of Year 6 as they do in class.
- Pupils' opportunities in physical education are restricted by the inadequate indoor and outdoor accommodation.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.6 (16.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (27.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.2 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.5 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Pupils enter the Reception Year with broadly average levels of ability, though some have above average literacy skills for their age. By the end of the Reception Year almost all pupils reach the Early Learning Goals in mathematical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. Many children go beyond the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy.

2. Since the last inspection the overall results in the Year 2 tests have increased more rapidly than in most schools in England. Pupils make good progress in all subject areas in Years 1 and 2. The overall results in the Year 6 tests have increased at a similar rate to those nationally. In 2003, the pupils who left Year 6 made greater than expected progress from the end of Year 2 in relation to their individual test scores. Between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 approximately a quarter of the school's pupils leave to be educated elsewhere, often in the private sector. Their places are filled by generally lower attaining pupils from other local primary schools. Additionally, the pupils in the mainstream support base, all of whom have specific learning difficulties, arrive during Years 3 to 6 from across the Borough of Gateshead. These pupils make a measurable reduction to the overall test results in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

3. Whilst the overall performance of both genders has improved since the previous inspection, the rise has been particularly noticeable for boys at the end of Year 2. This follows an intensive drive to improve boys' writing and reading. By the end of Year 6 girls do relatively better than boys, but when allowance is made for the outcomes for pupils with specific learning difficulties - almost always boys - the differences in the performance of the two gender groups is much less marked. The school has introduced a range of strategies to enable more pupils to reach higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6, including targeted support in English and mathematics and a more focused marking system. These approaches are beginning to raise pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 5 and 6, but there is a need to give this work even greater emphasis.

4. Many pupils achieve well in English because of good (and frequently very good) teaching of reading and writing. This justifies the high priority which is given to literacy throughout the school. However, in the 2003 tests a significant number of Year 6 boys failed to reach Level 5 in the national tests, even though much of the written work they had completed in lessons was undoubtedly up to Level 5 standard. The school is considering ways in which pupils such as these can demonstrate their full potential in future Year 6 national tests for English.

5. Pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Years 1 and 2. In 2003, results were just above the national average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. The fact that these do not compare well with those of similar schools has been of great concern to the staff and governors. As a consequence, they have carried out a very thorough analysis of results to identify and deal with aspects of the curriculum where pupils have shown specific weaknesses. For example, in the tests pupils showed relatively weak skills of mental calculation and of problem solving. Decisive action has been taken to overcome these shortcomings, as was evident in lessons seen during the inspection.

6. Achievement in science is good. This is because teaching is good and pupils are very keen to learn. In the national tests in 2003, pupils' attainment in science at the end of Year 2 was in line with standards seen nationally, with boys outperforming girls at Level 3. The percentage of pupils who achieved to Level 3 was far above that seen nationally. This represents an improvement from the time of the last inspection. In the Year 6 national tests there has been good improvement since the last inspection, with both girls and boys achieving well in comparison with national expectations. In the 2003 tests, all pupils, including those with SEN, achieved the average standard for their age (Level 4) but fewer pupils than in previous years reached Level 5. Inspectors saw evidence that all pupils in the current Year 6 are now being suitably challenged intellectually.

7. A strong commitment by teachers to raising standards in ICT has paid dividends. As teaching and facilities have improved so have pupils' skills and competence. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had a good grounding in using computers and understand clearly their importance in everyday life. Standards are prevented from being higher than average by the end of Year 6 because older pupils have had a lot of catching up to do, having had insufficient access to modern computers in previous years. Standards have also risen in design and technology. From being below those expected at the time of the previous inspection, they have risen steadily as a result of good teaching and are now at the expected standards by the end of both Years 2 and 6.

8. Pupils reach the expected standard for their age at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 in geography. They have good mapwork and fieldwork skills and many have a strong understanding of environmental issues. Pupils achieve well in history throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2 they develop a good initial understanding of life in the past from aspects of family history and traditional stories. By the end of Year 6 most pupils reach a standard in history that is above the average for pupils of this age. They also gain a genuine sense of enjoyment of the subject and a real interest in the past. Pupils achieve well in religious education, a strong subject in the school and one which plays a vital part in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

9. Standards in physical education are satisfactory. Teachers work very hard to help all pupils to progress, but their efforts are restricted by the limitations of the indoor and outdoor accommodation. The indoor space in the halls is used for many activities, and physical education lessons are subject to frequent interruptions from people passing through. The outdoor facilities are very limited in terms of provision for team games and athletics. The standard required for swimming is met by transporting Year 3 pupils to public baths for an afternoon each week.

10. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) achieve well throughout the school. Many reach ambitious personal learning goals. This is the consequence of the use of clearly focused targets, plenty of help from teachers and child care assistants, and work which is pitched at the right level. The pupils with specific learning difficulties who are attached to the mainstream support base (MSB) respond especially well to the capable and intensive help they receive. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress. In many lessons they are well taught and are given work which challenges and interests them. However, in approximately 20 per cent of lessons they could handle activities that demand higher level thinking skills.

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

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to their learning, and they are very well behaved. Attendance is very good, and well above the national average. Punctuality is good. The overall provision for promoting pupils, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with many aspects that are very good.

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

- Relationships between pupils and all adults in the school community are very good, as are relationships between pupils.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is very good, and no pupils have been excluded from school, even for a short period, in recent years.
- Attendance rates are very high and punctuality is good.
- The provision for moral and social development is very good, and it is good in the case of spiritual and cultural development. This is a notable improvement from the position at the time of the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

11. The many strong points related to pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance that were present at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, and in some cases have been improved upon even further. From the moment they arrive in the Reception Year, pupils are enthusiastic about school. In the playground each morning, or on coming into school, pupils have a smile on their faces and say they are looking forward to their lessons. This enthusiasm extends into the classroom. Pupils are very polite and well mannered towards visitors. Their behaviour is very good in lessons, in the playground and in the dining hall. There was no indication of any unsociable or racist behaviour during the inspection. There are no exclusions of any kind.

12. Relationships within the school community are very good and all pupils respond very well to the guidance that adults give them. This means that all pupils are fully included in all school activities. Lessons are able to proceed without tension and pupils have the confidence to offer opinions and suggest answers even if they are not sure whether they are right. Pupils appreciate the ways in which teachers value their different contributions to school life, including celebrating all kinds of achievement in a 'Golden Book'.

13. The provision to promote pupils' moral and social development is very good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. All pupils have a very clear idea of what is right and wrong within the school community and their daily lives. Many quickly develop the ability to discuss wider moral and ethical issues and can weigh up the conflicting views of different groups of people. They are strongly encouraged to become mature and responsible members of the school community and to play a genuinely active part in shaping it. They are offered very good opportunities for social development through such activities as the school council, where pupils gain a first-hand understanding of democratic decision-making.

14. The provision to support pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. This represents a considerable improvement from the position at the time of the previous inspection, especially for the promotion of spiritual development. All pupils attend a daily act of collective worship where they are able to encounter many important issues related to beliefs, values and personal choices. In most classes, teachers create times for reflection and discussion. Pupils frequently consider their own beliefs and values when responding to stories or events. Many older pupils have high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, pupils are given opportunities to understand and appreciate their own culture and that of others, through visits into the community and the many visitors who contribute to the overall work of the school. Although there are very few pupils in the school from minority ethnic groups, their cultural traditions are genuinely recognised and appreciated. Pupils have a high degree of respect for cultural traditions other than their own and are well prepared for life in a multicultural Britain.

### Attendance

15. The attendance rate is consistently very good and is well above the national average. There was no unauthorised absence during the last reporting period. The school works very hard to maintain this high level of attendance, which is higher than that of many similar local schools. Punctuality to school is good.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0

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

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good, with the result that pupils learn well. The overall quality of the assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, but with some good features.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have a good command of the content of the curriculum they are teaching and make good use of national and local guidance to design their lessons.
- Pupils are frequently encouraged to take an active part in lessons and are stimulated by frequent praise.
- Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace and are supported by well-designed learning resources.
- Classroom assistants provide valuable help to pupils during practical activities, but sometimes could contribute more in whole-class learning sessions.
- Teaching always encourages pupils with SEN or those from minority ethnic groups to be fully involved in all aspects of their lessons and to be properly appreciated.
- In about 20 per cent of lessons, more able and enterprising pupils could be given more scope to develop their reasoning and thinking skills to a higher standard.
- Work to be done at home is organised differently by each teacher and this can lead to inconsistencies or variable expectations between classes.
- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, with constructive comments on attitudes and effort. There are examples of good practice where reference is made to personal targets and ways of improving further, but this good practice needs to be applied more widely.

#### Commentary

16. The good quality of teaching is an important strength of the school and is the driving force that enables pupils to make good progress. Teaching is much stronger now than at the time of the last inspection, when there was little that was very good and where there were particular weaknesses in the teaching in one year group. The quality of lesson planning was then judged to be inadequate, whilst it is now good. The improvements in the teaching are the result of several factors. The weakest teachers have now left. Staff training is very well organised, assisted by clear objectives derived from the skilful application of the principles of 'performance management'. Teachers are open to new ideas and to advice, and they often seek to adopt best local and national practice. The headteacher and governors undertake a great deal of monitoring work to identify good practice and to see where additional support and training is needed. Marking and assessment is improving, though there is more to be done.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.1%)	13 (27.6%)	24 (51.0%)	9 (19.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed where the quality of teaching was graded in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.*

17. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well trained. They take great pride in preparing their lessons carefully, with plentiful displays and resources to support them. They work closely as a team to share ideas and resources. Teachers are eager to ensure that all pupils understand key concepts and can use important skills. They emphasise the aims of each lesson

very clearly and keep checking to see that no pupils are being left behind. All pupils therefore make secure progress, although there are occasions when some pupils could move ahead faster. This is particularly the case when the teacher is working with the whole class. However, teachers are becoming more adept at meeting the needs of these pupils.

### Example of outstanding practice

Excellent teaching was seen in a Year 3 history lesson following on from a highly successful visit to a Roman fort and museum in South Shields.

During the visit pupils had been able to take part in a simulated archaeological dig. They used sophisticated skills of enquiry and deduction to identify fragments they had collected. Back at school in a follow-up lesson they continued this work, using artefacts loaned by the museum. To help them, they referred to information from the Internet, books, and displays around the room. The teacher gave enough clues to keep pupils thinking without telling them the answers. Many pupils were able to gain an extremely impressive insight into life in Roman times and were encouraged to do a lot of extra research, using their own initiative. Most pupils fully understood the nature of historical evidence and its limitations. A great deal of creative writing was generated, together with the active development of ICT skills.

18. Inspectors saw a rich and wide variety of lessons where the teaching was very good. Here are a few examples. In Year 6, a visiting actor helped to give pupils a dynamic insight into some of the characters created by Charles Dickens. Year 1 pupils were given the opportunity to use stimulating and advanced phrases to write poetry. Year 4 pupils were enabled to appreciate different units of time in a very practical way. Year 6 pupils in a science lesson tested their own hypotheses about electrical conductivity, using imaginatively prepared resources. Year 4 pupils were using their numeracy and design skills, together with their historical knowledge, to make model *shaduf* devices to lift water, as used in Egypt. All these cases exemplify lessons where fine teaching stimulated additional thinking and reasoning and where expectations were high.

19. The proportion of lessons where the quality of teaching was judged to be good or better was high, and there were no instances of unsatisfactory teaching. In just under a fifth of lessons, the teaching, whilst being satisfactory, lacked some of the flair and sparkle found in the better lessons. This was mostly because pupils did not have enough scope to extend their learning through such activities as designing, evaluating, or interpreting information.

20. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and often write encouraging comments. In the best cases, they give a clear picture of the progress that is being made and of the next steps to be taken to improve further. There is more to be done to extend this work across all subjects and year groups. Good preparatory work for this to happen has already taken place under the leadership of a capable assessment co-ordinator. In English, mathematics and science, teachers have assembled some detailed diagnostic evidence to show the level that each pupil is currently working at and the extent of his or her progress over time. This valuable information could be shared more fully with pupils and their parents.

21. Pupils who have SEN are taught well and consequently make good progress. Teachers are good at ensuring that pupils who have specific barriers to learning are given the means to overcome them whenever possible. This is particularly noticeable in the way that questions and explanations are repeated and modified to make sure that everyone understands. Pupils' difficulties are identified carefully, and those who need help with reading, writing and number are given support in small groups or individually. This is planned carefully and each pupil with SEN has an individual programme of learning. Teachers make good use of the time and skills of child care assistants who often work with small groups of children with SEN or others needing additional help. These assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress made by these pupils.

## The curriculum

Curricular opportunities are good for all pupils, including those attached to the Main Stream Base (MSB). Good enrichment opportunities are provided. Overall, the quality and quantity of the accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The governors' intention to offer a curriculum that provides pupils with a 'well rounded' education is successfully achieved.
- There are considerable strengths in the provision for literacy development and science.
- A great deal of work has been undertaken to improve the provision for numeracy development, and this is beginning to have an impact on raising standards further.
- The provision for ICT and design and technology has been greatly improved since the last inspection.
- The personal, social and health education curriculum is very good, and there are very impressive activities to promote citizenship education.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum has been fully revised and brought up to current national requirements in most areas, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- A valuable range of educational visits and residential courses enriches the curriculum.
- The curriculum provision for physical education is restricted by the lack of outdoor facilities and inadequate indoor spaces.

### Commentary

22. A very rich and broad curriculum is provided for all pupils. All the statutory requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum, the National Curriculum and the Gateshead Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when there were significant deficiencies in the curriculum offered to children under five and in the provision for design and technology and ICT across the whole school. The curriculum meets best national standards for personal, social and health education, which includes health and sex education. Outdoor physical education is not emphasised fully enough, mainly because of a lack of suitable space and resources. Teaching time is close to the recommended amount for primary age pupils.

23. There are plenty of visits, fieldwork activities, outdoor activities, productions and other extra-curricular activities that considerably improve the curriculum provision and hence achievement. There are many opportunities for pupils to attend breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs. Some homework tasks are imaginatively designed and involve members of pupils' families in completing them. However, homework is not organised in a systematic way across the school and parents are sometimes confused about what is expected.

24. The accommodation for ICT and design and technology has been upgraded since the last inspection. Each teaching room has a good display of learning resources and pupils' work. The library is very well stocked and is intensively used, so making an important contribution to the high standards of reading. There are two large halls which are very suitable for assemblies, music and drama, but they have drawbacks as places for indoor physical education. The school does not possess a field, and the small, sloping playground is unsuitable for team games.

25. The school's provision for pupils with SEN is good. These pupils have equal access to the full curriculum and the same opportunities to make progress as everyone else. Pupils each have an individual programme of work with manageable targets. Their progress towards these targets is carefully monitored.

26. Pupils who are gifted and talented have extension activities set for them in many lessons. Often this work requires more advanced thinking skills. However, in about a fifth of lessons, more attention needs to be given to ways of accelerating the progress of these pupils further, particularly when the whole class is learning together.

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

Pupils receive good support and satisfactory guidance. The provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is very good. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is very good.

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

- The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils.
- Very effective procedures are in place for health, safety and child protection.
- There are very good procedures to ensure that the pupils have the opportunity to express their views about matters that are important to them.
- The good quality of advice given to pupils about how they could improve in some lessons needs to be more systematically applied.

### **Commentary**

27. All of the strengths of the school that were identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and have often been improved upon still further. All adults provide a very high quality of care for the pupils. They know them well and can act quickly if they see a child in any form of distress. Increasingly, teachers are defining individual learning targets for pupils and explaining how to reach them, though there is still more to be done. Mutual courtesy and kindness helps to create superb relationships between adults and pupils.

28. Staff take very seriously their responsibility for all health and safety and child protection matters. Appropriate records are maintained for risk assessment, first aid, fire drills and accident recording. Staff are very aware of the potential hazards associated with the age and size of the building and minimise the risks. The procedures for child protection are very effective. Pupils are given good personal support and know that their concerns will be listened to. Parents say that the school is very caring towards their children and that all pupils are fully included in all activities.

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

The links with parents are satisfactory. The links with the local community and other schools are good.

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

- The school has a high reputation within the local community and amongst parents.
- Parents receive a high quality prospectus and frequent newsletters.
- Some parents offer their help as volunteer classroom assistants, which is a real asset.
- Suggestions and comments from parents are welcomed and responded to.
- Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to local secondary schools have improved since the last inspection and are cited by the local education authority (LEA) as an example of good practice.
- Some parents would welcome more information and advice on the level that their children are currently working at in each subject, and what they can do to help them reach the next level.
- More support is needed to help pupils continue their learning at home with the assistance of their family.



## Commentary

29. Parents receive very clear information about the school from the prospectus, governors' annual report, and newsletters. This information meets all statutory requirements. Parents are encouraged to help in school and are given detailed guidance when they volunteer. During the inspection, parents were seen providing valuable additional help in several lessons. Teachers often communicate with parents through reading diaries and homework books. Parents are able to visit the school to meet their child's class teacher for two progress check meetings during the academic year, and as a follow-up to a detailed report at the end of the year.

30. Parents appreciate this service. Even so, about a third suggest that there is scope for involving them even more in the learning process by:

- telling them more about what their children will be learning, so that they can assemble books from the library, call up Internet items or take their children on family visits to relevant places;
- helping them to get a sharper picture of what their child's learning targets are and how they could be reached;
- giving them more feedback on how well their child is progressing.

Some parents said that they would welcome the opportunity to view lesson plans, curriculum details and level descriptions on line from the school's website.

31. The school is highly regarded in the local community. Productive curricular links are made with many organisations, such as local sports clubs and religious communities. There are several very valuable links with other primary schools, and these have had a measurable impact on pupils' achievement. There are also good induction arrangements for Year 6 pupils who intend to transfer to two local secondary schools.

32. The school has gained greatly from its links with the local education authority (LEA). Staff and governors have received good advice and training which has helped them move forward and see new ways of doing things. The school's attached adviser evaluates strengths and weaknesses, often with a thematic agenda which is supported by publications. These exemplify good practice, provide practical suggestions and define self-review criteria. The adviser's visits have helped with such things as raising the achievement of boys and improving the continuity of learning from Years 6 to 7.

33. Parents of pupils with SEN are properly involved from the time of the first identification of any issues, and they are kept well informed of their children's targets and progress and of all subsequent developments.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is good. The quality of leadership of the headteacher is very good. The quality of leadership of senior staff and other staff with specific responsibilities is good. Overall, the effectiveness of management is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision and provides inspirational leadership.
- The deputy headteacher (on exchange from another school) demonstrates very high quality leadership and teaching skills.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play an active role in development planning.
- There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff.
- Subject leaders are receiving good training, which is improving their effectiveness.
- The school is well regarded by parents, who consider that it is well led by the headteacher and governors.

## Commentary

34. The committed headteacher has been a key figure in the success story of the school, which has improved considerably under her stewardship. Her clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirations for the future are inspiring others to drive the school forward. She has set up a successful extended senior management team of seven. This team has developed and is now applying improved procedures for self-evaluation, data analysis, performance management, continuing professional development and assessment. Middle managers are receiving valuable additional training. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was gaining new skills through an exchange with a colleague from another school.

35. The governing body plays an active part in school life. It is well organised and effective and it ensures that all the necessary statutory requirements are met. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and this knowledge stems from the systematic visits to lessons and meetings that many of them are able to make. This understanding allows them to formulate clear priorities for educating the whole child and providing a well-rounded and inclusive education.

36. The professional development arrangements for all members of staff are given a high priority, reflecting the individual needs of teachers and the aims of the school improvement plan. Performance management procedures are well structured and fully embedded into school life. They give all members of staff the confidence to contribute to school improvement activities in an open, constructive way. There are also good procedures in place for the induction into school of new teachers.

37. All the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting strongly approved of the way in which the school was led and had full confidence in the headteacher and governors. Similarly, almost all those who completed the questionnaire thought that the school was well led.

38. Some subject co-ordinators are very capable and experienced, whilst others are relatively new to their post and are still gaining experience. The quality of subject leadership therefore ranges from satisfactory to very good. There are particular strengths in the leadership of learning in English, science, design and technology, ICT and physical education. Subject co-ordinators are particularly good at drawing up schemes of work and assembling learning resources. Increasingly, they are monitoring the lessons of colleagues and are offering specialist advice. Effective arrangements for assessment have been embedded in English and mathematics and are actively being introduced into other subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and the assessment co-ordinator have made notable contributions to the overall improvement of the school.

39. There is a high standard of financial management. Leaders have a clear understanding of the principles of 'best value' and apply them to purchasing and policy-making decisions. The overall income of the school is in line with the average amount for primary schools nationally, but staffing and accommodation costs are high. This means that difficult decisions have to be made about what can be afforded as priority items. Despite financial pressures, the budget has remained in credit. The school has achieved a great deal with the resources at its disposal, thanks especially to the commitment, vision and hard work of the headteacher, governors and staff.

40. The provision for pupils who have SEN is very well led and managed. The SENCo, who is also the teacher in the mainstream support base, is experienced and well qualified. She cooperates closely with class teachers in identifying targets for pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) and provides very effective support for colleagues. Reviews of pupils' progress are well organised, and information about their learning targets is passed on at the end of each year to their next teacher or to the secondary school. The child care assistants are led and managed well, which enables them to make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

41. The leadership of the provision for gifted and talented pupils is improving. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the needs of this group of pupils and how their specific needs can be met within the daily work of the school. The headteacher, staff and parents work closely together to identify pupils with particular talents and to offer opportunities for promoting their achievement. Pupils are given challenging tasks in many lessons, including reading books with more difficult language and ideas. The school is aware of the need to provide work that demands higher levels of reasoning and personal enquiry in all curriculum areas, but the resultant action needs to be accelerated.

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

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	800,930.00
Total expenditure	789,562.00
Expenditure per pupil	1973.00

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	59,496.00
Balance carried forward to the next	11,367.00

42. The expenditure per pupil is slightly lower than the average for all primary schools in England. Some difficult decisions have been wisely made about what to spend money on and what savings to make. The running costs of a large, old building are high, and staffing costs have risen significantly in the last year. This has restricted the amount of money available to be spent on learning resources. Senior leaders and governors have exercised skilful judgements in using the limited amount of money for resources wisely. They have used the principles of 'best value' to particularly good effect.

## MAINSTREAM SUPPORT BASE

The provision for pupils in the MSB is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils attached to the MSB make good progress and achieve well.
- Lessons are very well planned and structured.
- The teacher in the base is very experienced and well qualified.
- Parents are involved in all aspects of planning for their child's development and are kept fully informed about progress.
- Many pupils are not admitted to the base until Year 5, even though their learning needs are apparent before then.

43. All the pupils in the base have statements of special educational need on the ground of specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). Although they seldom reach Level 4 in English and mathematics, they do so in science. They progress well, thanks to very good teaching during their morning sessions in the base and very effective support in mainstream classes in the afternoons. The provision is greatly enhanced by the LEA's educational psychology service and the speech therapy department.

44. Teaching is very good. Literacy and numeracy lessons in the base are very well planned. Individual learning targets are carefully shared with pupils so they know just what is expected of them. This boosts their confidence and encourages them to tackle work independently. There is an appropriate emphasis on learning and practising the basic skills of handwriting, spelling, phonology work, number bonds and tables. Homework is used well to reinforce reading and spelling skills. When new processes are introduced, the teacher uses multi-sensory methods and individualised small step learning plans to help pupils progress quickly.

45. Throughout the day, pupils receive high quality support from a teaching assistant who fully understands their needs. The base teacher, class teachers and teaching assistant co-operate to ensure that pupils are given work which is challenging but achievable and which focuses on their individual targets. All pupils in the base take all subjects in the National Curriculum and have full access to everything that is offered by the school.

46. Assessment procedures, review meetings and record keeping are very well organised and meet all the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with SEN. Parents contribute to review meetings and are kept fully informed about their children's progress. They attend parents' meetings and know they can contact the teacher at any time if they have a concern.

47. Because the process leading to a statement of special educational needs is very lengthy, most pupils are not admitted to the base until fairly late in their primary school career. Consequently, much specialist learning time is lost. Many pupils enter the MSB with weak literacy and numeracy skills and poor self-esteem. These factors can affect these pupils' behaviour within the school, although this was not the case with any of the four pupils who were attached to the base at the time of the inspection. Two more pupils are to be admitted to the base in the near future, bringing it up to half the total capacity but reaching the planned number for this year.

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

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

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved greatly since the last inspection.

Judgements are based on the observation of seven lessons. They are also based on teachers' planning and assessment documents, work produced by children, and discussions with staff.

#### **Overview**

48. Children join one of two Reception classes in the September before they are five years old and quickly settle in. Parents frequently come into school to learn about their children's targets, and maintain regular contact with teachers about their child's progress by writing in a home-school diary. Children's overall standard of attainment when they begin school is in line with the average for children of this age, though there is a wide range of individual ability. Children make steady progress throughout the Reception year and are well prepared for transfer into Year 1. Teaching is good, with clear assessment procedures to ensure that what is taught matches the learning needs of individuals. Teachers and support staff work closely together to plan activities that suitably stretch all children, so accelerating their progress. All adults set good role models, and children respond with good behaviour and good attitudes towards school.

49. The indoor accommodation is satisfactory, with good use made of a shared sand and water area between the classrooms and of a play area in the school hall. A secure outside area with an attractively decorated soft surface has been developed for the children, but free access is difficult and access to climbing and wheeled equipment is inadequate. The newly appointed Foundation Stage leader is enthusiastic and is keen to continue to improve the whole Foundation curriculum, which has already been greatly improved since the last inspection. She is very well supported by the experienced Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, who also monitors the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage.

50. Almost all children in the Reception Year reached the Early Learning Goals in mathematical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development by July 2003. They achieved especially well in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy, with many going beyond the Early Learning Goals. Inspectors judge that the children in the current Reception Year are on track to achieve similarly by July 2004, on the evidence of the current progress being made after three months.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well, thanks to high expectations of staff and careful monitoring of progress.
- Pupils' self-esteem is quickly strengthened, making them confident and happy.
- Adults take every opportunity to promote children's personal development.

## Commentary

51. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They respond well to the high expectations of adults in this area of learning, which is particularly well taught. By the end of the Reception Year the majority of children are likely to have exceeded the Early Learning Goals. Even after only three months in school, the children know what is expected of them. They understand the routines, behave sensibly, and settle to tasks quickly, so that the learning atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Adults provide fine role models in tolerance, respect and care for others. Behaviour is very good and there is a clear understanding of the ground rules. Children put up their hands and wait their turn; they listen to each other and can play together well. They are interested and eager in their learning, can stay on task for long periods of time, and are motivated to succeed even when working alone. The adults constantly encourage the children and praise their efforts. They aim to recognise and celebrate all kinds of success. Children are given the confidence to express their views, and to develop their thinking on topics such as friendship and caring for one another.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop pupils' language skills.
- Activities are varied and motivate the pupils to achieve well.
- Most pupils are supported well, both at school and at home, in their reading development.

## Commentary

52. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good. Consequently, children make good progress and most exceed the learning goals in this area by the time they enter Year 1. The children listen well and respond to constant questioning, explanation and activity designed to widen their vocabulary. Adults continually talk to children and help them to select appropriate words to describe what they are doing. They take time to listen to what the children say and value their responses, so giving them confidence to talk. Children understand how to use books and enjoy reading them. When teachers read stories, the children listen avidly and are drawn into the imaginative world. Well-chosen books are readily available and most children take them home frequently. At home, family members often offer valuable support for reading, speaking and listening and enter a useful dialogue with teachers about their child's progress with these skills.

53. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of sounds matched to letters, with the result that children make good progress in sound recognition, learning through rhymes and games. Many children can build simple words such as 'Sam, got, cat', and some more able pupils can build words such as 'moon, tent and ship'. They have plenty of opportunities to use colour. The more able children sometimes write independently, either by copying words from a purpose-made dictionary and building simple phrases themselves, or by copying from a card, scribed by an adult. They are aware of how to use full stops. They can work independently in a purposeful way, often showing great concentration. Staff ensure that pencils and crayons are held correctly and that letter formation is accurate.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Teachers take every opportunity to promote mathematical development in all activities.
- Middle ability children are not always challenged sufficiently.

### **Commentary**

54. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Children make steady progress, but from a relatively low starting point. The majority are likely to reach the expected learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

55. Most children are able to count to twenty and about half of them can count beyond that, enjoying reciting numbers to adults. They have ample opportunities to write numbers and some can match objects to numbers. Adults question children well and constantly use a variety of mathematical words to help develop vocabulary. The children know shapes and can match triangles, squares, circles and rectangles, but many are unable to construct repeating patterns which require more than two shapes or colours. Many children can compare lengths of everyday objects and, with help, are able to produce simple bar charts. The most able children can interpret measurements, for example by identifying the tallest or shortest in the class.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

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

- Children are motivated to follow up activities and bring in pictures and artefacts from home.
- There is not enough opportunity to use computers or robotic toys.

### **Commentary**

56. Children enter school with a basic general knowledge and build on this to help identify their place in their families and in the community. They celebrate family life and occasions such as christenings, weddings and birthdays, and in doing so are able to develop a sense of time and an interest in events in their own lives and those of their family. They begin to gain a sense of place and belonging by exploring the school buildings and grounds. There is a need to encourage children to explore and investigate life and living things more fully. The children use 'junk modelling' to build, construct and join materials together. They have access to one computer in their classroom, but not to the facilities in the ICT suite during their first term because the suite too far away from suitable toilets and is hard to reach. The result is that many children do not develop their skills in using new technology to a sufficient extent at the start of the year. The Christmas theme, much in evidence during the inspection, provided a valuable opportunity for children to begin to develop an understanding of their own culture and beliefs.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- All children benefit from structured physical education activities in the hall.
- Children do not have enough opportunity to use the outside play area.
- There is no large equipment in the outside play area.

### Commentary

57. Children enjoy physical activity both indoors and outside and make satisfactory progress. It is anticipated that most will meet the expected goals by the end of the year. However, they have limited access to large apparatus and this hinders their ability to develop control and confidence when moving around at different levels. The lack of ride-on toys in the outside play area also restricts the children's development in co-ordination and in imaginative play. In lessons held in the hall, children pay good attention and are responsive to teachers' expectations. They move in a variety of ways, crawling, moving sideways and balancing as they explore the apparatus. Sometimes, there is too little challenge in the task, with the result that the children do not practise a wide enough range of activities or develop their skills to a sufficiently high standard. Where they do persist they make good gains, such as learning to balance along a narrow beam. They enjoy playing ring games and take turns happily in the role play. The children have a good understanding of health and safety matters and are all dressed appropriately for specific physical activity. They have good opportunities to develop fine motor skills in a variety of activities in the classroom. They confidently use scissors, thread beads, build with construction toys and handle paint brushes, crayons and play dough

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good planning leads to many opportunities for creativity in a variety of situations.
- Teachers do not always monitor the key tasks closely enough, with the result that additional learning opportunities can be missed.

58. The activities planned in the Reception class allow pupils to develop their language and imagination well, so that by the end of the year they will have made steady progress and should have reached the expected goals in this area. When they choose a task they put their names on an activity board, which nurtures independence and choice. Role-play is encouraged so that pupils can develop their imagination. In the various creative areas in the classroom teachers often pose such questions as 'How many jugs will fill the teapot?' However, these activities are not always monitored closely enough, with the consequence that children's misconceptions are not always discussed and opportunities for additional learning are missed.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is very **good**.

Judgements are based on the observation of twelve lessons. They also take account of assessment records, test results, teachers' planning documents, work produced by pupils and discussions with staff and pupils.

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

##### **Main strengths**

- Standards of writing are good throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in reading.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Activities are well planned to challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Information communication skills are well used to support pupils' learning.

##### **Commentary**

59. Standards of speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils build effectively on the strong communication skills developed in the Foundation Stage. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to express themselves clearly and to understand words that are not familiar to them. Staff explain new vocabulary with particular care to pupils who have SEN, so ensuring that they are fully included in lessons. Gifted and talented pupils also receive additional well-focused support to help them to do as well as they are able. In discussions with pupils it was evident that they are developing a confident approach when expressing their views and opinions. Drama and role-play are used well to enable pupils to learn different ways of speaking for different purposes. The school council provides good opportunities for older pupils to speak out and share their ideas in a very responsible way.

60. Reading skills are taught very well, and consequently pupils become enthusiastic and competent readers. Those in Years 2 and 6 are on target to reach, and often exceed, standards that meet the national expectations. Teachers are especially good at introducing pupils to a wide range of authors and styles of writing. They successfully foster a love of reading and ensure that in using the well-stocked library pupils have access to books of good quality from many authors. Visiting authors and actors extend pupils' experience of writing styles and introduce them to some of the complex language and issues in the works of such authors as Dickens and Shakespeare. As a result, pupils learn to appreciate how writers use language to create interesting, exciting and atmospheric stories, poetry and drama. This is having a big impact on pupils' own writing, which frequently makes very good use of figurative and expressive language.

61. Pupils are interested and challenged by the activities they are given, and consequently much of their writing is of a very high quality. Three pupils were regional prize-winning writers. Unfortunately these strengths were not fully reflected in the Year 6 test results in 2003. Several pupils whose teacher-assessed work in writing had been moderated at Level 5 (confirmed by inspectors) performed only at Level 4 in the written tests. The school's average point score for English was depressed by this problem as well as by the results gained by pupils with dyslexia attached to the mainstream support base. These factors largely account for the below average grade for English compared to that of similar schools. Year 6 test results in previous years were good, and pupils were performing well in lessons during the inspection week.

62. Handwriting is taught consistently and most pupils develop a fluent joined style. Surprisingly, most continue to write in pencil during Year 6; this does not prepare them well for secondary education, where they will be expected to routinely use a pen. Marking is of a high standard. Pupils are given a clear picture of what they are doing well and how they can improve their work further.

63. The use of books and the Internet to develop skills in searching for information has improved since the previous inspection. The use of ICT to support learning in English is good. Pupils use word-processing skills to present their work attractively and in appropriate styles, for instance as a newspaper report. The use of the Internet to support research is a good feature of pupils' reading skills.

64. The English co-ordinator has an outstanding knowledge of the subject, a passion for literacy and a clear vision of how this area of learning can improve further. Good use is made of test data and other assessment information to identify barriers to pupils' progress. As a consequence, new learning strategies have been put in place and have been carefully evaluated to see their impact on pupils' achievement. There is a very effective programme for monitoring teaching and learning, improving lesson planning and target-setting, and responding to national literacy initiatives. Resources have been very well developed since the previous inspection, and visitors to the school and links with local theatres and drama groups now enrich the English provision for pupils of all ages and abilities.

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

65. In science, design and technology, history, geography and religious education, pupils write in a range of styles to present narrative accounts. Science reports are well written, design and technology processes and evaluations are explained clearly, and pupils explore writing from different viewpoints in history. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum has been well maintained since the previous inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Judgements are based on the observation of ten lessons. They also take account of analysis of test results, teachers' planning and assessment records, pupils' work, and discussions with staff and pupils.

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- Standards are just above the national average.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Assessment is very thorough.
- All pupils have individual targets.
- The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject.

### **Commentary**

66. Standards have risen since the last inspection, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Test results for pupils at the end of both Years 2 and 6 reached a particularly high point in 2001 and have dipped since then to be just above the national average. The fact that the 2003 results do not compare well with those of similar schools has been of great concern to the staff and governors. They have been working very hard on a thorough analysis of performance data in order to focus on the areas of the curriculum where the pupils have shown weaknesses. For example, this analysis has revealed that pupils' understanding and recording of mental problems is weak. The school is addressing this weakness by frequent written mental tests in classes from Year 3 upwards. Inspectors confirmed that this is proving to be effective in improving pupils' mental skills. The application of mathematical

skills to problems was another area of concern, and this has been addressed by organising a dedicated lesson each week where pupils work on problems and puzzles.

67. Teachers set precise targets for groups and individuals with the help of a wealth of information extracted from the analysis of results and samples of work. The value of these targets is restricted because pupils are not always aware of what their targets are and so are not striving to reach them. Where marking is good, pupils know exactly what they have achieved and what they need to learn next. However, this is true only in the minority of cases. Essentially, the school spends a great deal of time analysing results in detail and producing numerous targets, but this is not yet translated into vigorous day-to-day assessment across the school.

68. All lessons have clear learning intentions linked to a list of success criteria which are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. All pupils know what they are expected to learn and whether they have been successful. This works well when pupils are asked to say what they have learnt, with their replies then checked against the success criteria. It is far less effective when the teacher simply repeats the list and pupils passively agree with what the teacher concludes. In the best lessons teachers continually assess the progress of their pupils and adapt the lesson, and often future lessons, according to pupils' emerging levels of understanding.

69. Although the school has identified who the most able pupils are and has drawn up specific plans for working with them, this normally takes the form of an additional extension investigation. Sometimes pupils still have to work unnecessarily through all the tasks that have been set for less able pupils before tackling the more demanding work. Expectations therefore are not always high enough, especially in the younger-aged classes.

70. The relatively new co-ordinator has very good knowledge of the subject and clear ideas for its development. At the present time she is well supported in the leadership and management of the subject by the senior management team, an arrangement which is proving to be beneficial.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. The range of work that pupils are given each year fully covers the National Curriculum requirements, and teachers are good at forging links between different areas of the curriculum. The use of mathematical skills is particularly evident in design and technology. The use of co-ordinates and the application of measurement skills are developed well through mapwork in geography. There is scope for making better use of computers in some lessons so that pupils can develop, practise and apply their numeracy skills in new ways.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Judgements are based on the observation of three lessons, the analysis of test results, teachers' planning documents, pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well, as a result of generally good teaching.
- There is good emphasis on the use of technical language.
- There is a well-structured curriculum plan in place across the whole school, with good assessment procedures.
- There is a need to continue to develop the investigative area of science to raise the number of pupils achieving higher levels in the national tests.
- There is a need to develop the use of computers to support the subject.
- Pupils need to have the opportunity to understand their personal targets so they know what to do to improve.
- The subject leader offers imaginative and detailed support to other teachers.

### Commentary

72. Pupils are achieving in science to a standard that is just above the national average. Since the last inspection, test results for Year 2 pupils have risen at a faster rate than nationally, whilst those for Year 6 pupils have risen in line with national improvements. In the tests in 2003, pupils' attainment in science at the end of Year 2 was in line with standards seen nationally, with boys outperforming girls at Level 3. The percentage of pupils who achieved Level 3 was far above that seen nationally.

73. In Years 3 to 6 there has been good improvement since the last inspection, with girls and boys both achieving well in comparison to national expectations. In 2003 every Year 6 pupil reached Level 4, but fewer than expected reached Level 5. Some able pupils performed well in class but experienced difficulties in demonstrating their Level 5 capability under test conditions. In previous years the science results have been above average. Teachers have analysed the reasons why the problems in the 2003 examination at Level 5 arose, and inspectors saw evidence that they are being suitably addressed.

74. On the evidence of lessons and examples of pupils' work, teaching varied from satisfactory to very good. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In all cases pupils responded well to their teachers and showed great interest in the subject. Teachers made good use of scientific language and insisted on the correct use of scientific terminology. In the better lessons pupils were encouraged to produce high quality work and to think hard. In the other lessons, whilst all pupils made satisfactory progress, more able pupils sometimes had to wait for others to finish before the whole class moved ahead together. This approach ensured that all pupils reached a secure level of knowledge and understanding but reduced opportunities for the exploration of topics in more depth.

75. The school has made improvement in science a priority, and staff are well aware of further areas for development. Standards have risen in all years since the last inspection, and pupils' progress is now tracked much more accurately. The introduction of an improved curriculum plan has meant that there is now a progressive coverage of all elements of science and a more consistent approach to investigative work and scientific writing. Teachers have a clear understanding of how well pupils are performing, but this information needs to be conveyed to pupils and their parents more explicitly. Teachers need to ensure that pupils are as well prepared as possible for the national tests at the end of Year 6 so that more can achieve the higher levels. More

use of new technology to support learning in the subject across both key stages would help to develop pupils' scientific skills and knowledge.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Judgements are based on the observation of five lessons where ICT skills were specifically taught in the ICT suite. They also take account of assessment records, teachers' planning documents, work produced by pupils and discussions with staff and pupils.

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

- There has been good improvement in the teaching of ICT skills.
- There has been great improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- Information and communication technology supports learning across the curriculum.
- Procedures for monitoring and assessment need to be developed.

76. Information and communication technology is a rapidly expanding part of the curriculum. Pupils' achievement is rising because they are taught well and have access to new equipment. By Year 2, pupils are able to save and retrieve information from their own files, create tables to support their work in other subjects, and interpret results. Pupils can use digital cameras to take photographs and print their own pictures. By Year 6, pupils' skills are in line with those expected nationally. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory.

77. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT lessons and develop collaborative skills as they work together. They gain from clear demonstrations by teachers (often on an interactive whiteboard) and also from the skills of other pupils. In the lessons seen there was much use of desktop publishing, word-processing and Internet access. Year 6 pupils can use digital devices such as microscopes and thermometers and import data to show their findings. Older pupils are able to use the video conferencing facilities of a local secondary school.

78. The ICT co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is working hard to raise standards. Currently, the quality of the assessment of pupils' work in ICT is satisfactory. Work is in hand to find better ways of assessing pupils' key skills and to develop their ability to use these skills to support their learning in other subjects. In Years 1 and 2 pupils use robotics, such as the Roamer, to develop skills of control and spatial awareness. At present there is not enough emphasis across the school on modelling and control. From Years 3 to 6 pupils need to develop a better understanding of the use of the computer in recording and storing music which they compose.

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

79. The use of ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is a strong feature of teaching across the school. Pupils use the Internet very well to support history topics. They make good use of electronically generated graphs and pie charts to present findings and interpret data in mathematics and science. Pupils use their word processing skills to good effect to produce pamphlets and posters, as in the display to promote candidates for election to the school council. Also on display were good examples of pupils' poetry presented with computer graphics. Pupils were also seen to be using computers well to create pictures in the style of Matisse and to design cards, using Clipart and Paintbrush.

## HUMANITIES

The provision is good for history and religious education and satisfactory for geography.

Judgements are based on the observation of two geography lessons, two history lessons and three religious education lessons. They are also based on assessment records, teachers' planning documents, work produced by pupils and discussions with staff and pupils.

### Geography

The provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils in all year groups have a good knowledge for their age of where places are locally and internationally, and have good basic map-reading skills.
- Geographical themes and information are used well as a context for applying pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils benefit from learning about urban landscapes and natural environments at first hand.

### Commentary

80. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and generally progress well in Key Stage 2. They do well in many aspects of geography, particularly in the use of maps and the interpretation of fieldwork evidence. They have a good basic knowledge of where important places are and what they are like. Older pupils are often capable of explaining which processes are causing changes in the landscape and what effect they are having. Many pupils are well briefed on environmental issues and approaches to conservation. Year 6 pupils have the capability of carrying out a geographical enquiry, such as finding out how a river channel changes shape over part of its course. Pupils with SEN progress well, thanks in part to the ways in which concepts and facts are presented visually. At the time of the last inspection, pupils achieved to levels that were in line with those expected for pupils of their age. This remains the case, mostly because of restrictions on available curriculum time, although pupils are better now at undertaking enquiry work.

81. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that all key aspects of the subject are covered in a sequential way. The work studied is often creative and enjoyable and relates well to pupils' own experiences. Local visits, together with visits to more distant places such as London and residential visits to an outdoor activities centre, greatly enrich the taught curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to read about life in different environments. There are effective links between geography and history, for example in the study of Egypt. The valuable geographical resources that are available on the Internet and in commercial programs are not yet being exploited sufficiently. Pupils' work is frequently checked by the teachers, who frequently offer comments relating to presentation, effort and spelling. As yet, these comments do not make enough reference to the standard of attainment that pupils are expected to reach or what more they have to do to improve.

## History

The provision for history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils quickly develop a sense of time and can place events on a time line accurately.
- By Year 3 they can use historical artefacts to make valid deductions about how people lived in the past.
- By Year 5 most pupils are able to offer explanations for historical events, based on evidence, and can understand the major causes of historical change.
- Historical understanding is increased through the imaginative use of information technology, local historical resources, and cross-curricular activities that involve design and technology and numeracy skills.

## Commentary

82. Pupils achieve well in history throughout the school and reach above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2 they develop a good initial understanding of life in the past from aspects of family history and, for example, from stories about the Great Fire of London. Their historical awareness is also improved by hearing teachers' explanations of religious stories and teachings. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are encouraged to make very good use of historical evidence to develop an understanding of life in Roman and Egyptian times. In Years 5 and 6 pupils expand their historical skills through studies of Tudor times, Victorian life and the Second World War. These studies often generate a great deal of creative and narrative writing of high quality. By the end of Year 6 most pupils reach a standard in history that is above the average for pupils of this age. This is a clear improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection, when pupils were achieving in line with the average. Pupils gain a genuine sense of enjoyment of history and an appetite to want to learn more.

83. Lessons are prepared very well, often with a wide range of supportive resources that are accessible to the full ability range. More able pupils are extended, whilst those with learning difficulties are supported by plenty of visual material with different levels of commentary leading to different tasks. All of this was extremely well demonstrated in an excellent Year 3 lesson, where pupils were using Roman artefacts loaned from a local museum following a visit there. The work they were doing required high level thinking skills to complete. There is further work to be done to tease out from the scheme of work some descriptions of what is expected of pupils working at each level. Some valuable work to do this has begun.

## Religious education

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- By Year 2, pupils develop a good understanding of symbolism and the importance of religion in everyday life, especially in terms of morality and personal integrity.
- By Year 6, pupils understand and appreciate the principal features of the major world religions and many have a real insight into some of the associated beliefs.
- Religious education lessons play a vital role in developing pupils' multicultural and multifaith understanding, a very important thing in a school where the great majority of children are of white British ethnicity.
- Lessons are greatly enhanced by contributions from members of local faith communities.

## Commentary

84. Religious education is a strong subject in the school. It plays a vital part in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Acts of worship and seasonal festive celebrations add a lot more to pupils' overall experience of religious education. Pupils are encouraged to show great respect for sacred things and religious views. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were invited to handle a copy of the Qur'an after listening to a very lucid explanation about its importance to Muslims. As they did so, they listened to extracts being recited in Arabic and read English translations.

85. Teachers are successful in capturing pupils' emotional as well as intellectual involvement in religious and ethical issues. They encourage reflection, questioning and discussion well. Difficult topics are handled sensitively, and this generates mature and respectful responses from pupils. On some occasions, lessons or assemblies are enriched by talks or demonstrations by members of local faith communities. There are examples of thoughtful displays of religious themes around the school. The taught curriculum meets the requirements of the Gateshead Agreed Syllabus and furthers the aims of the school particularly well.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The provision is good in design and technology and is satisfactory in art and design, music and physical education.

Judgements are based on the observation of three lessons in design and technology and one lesson in art and design. Three music lessons were seen, but as two of these were led by a visitor no judgement has been made on the quality of teaching of music. No lessons could be observed in physical education.

### Art and design

The provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There is evidence from artwork on display that some pupils reach high standards of achievement in painting and drawing by the end of Year 6.
- Art and design has a high profile in the school, as demonstrated by the staging of an art exhibition of pupils' work where all the paintings are framed and offered for sale.
- Pupils use their skills of drawing and painting to support work in other subjects, especially in the humanities subjects.
- There is scope for developing further the use of technology to support learning and for giving more emphasis to art from different cultures.

## Commentary

86. At the time of the last inspection, pupils reached above average standards in art and design. Evidence available to inspectors suggested that the strengths identified in the previous inspection had been maintained. It was possible to observe only one lesson, which was in Year 1, and here the Pupils were achieving at an appropriate level for their age and were making satisfactory progress. Examples of pupils' drawing ability were seen in history and geography lessons. Many Year 3 pupils were able to make accurate observational drawings of Roman artefacts, whilst Year 6 pupils could produce relatively accurate field sketches of a river valley and could make good technical drawings of rock samples. The study of Ancient Egypt in Year 4 enables pupils to produce art, pottery and cartouche work in the style of the Egyptians. Large tables in a multi-use practical room make it possible for big pieces of artwork to be assembled, such as the banners that



were being produced by a Year 6 group. Leaflets produced by pupils in Years 5 and 6 to support manifestos for the school council often contained some good computer-generated graphic artwork. Work on display showed that talented pupils reached high standards. The scheme of work did not refer to art from different cultures as much as might be expected.

## **Design and technology**

The provision for design and technology is **good**.

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

- Standards have risen in design and technology since the last inspection and now meet national expectations.
- A good scheme of work supports learning in other curriculum areas.
- The creation of a dedicated design and technology room provides good accommodation.
- The new design and technology co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject.

### **Commentary**

87. Since the last inspection the school has fully upgraded the curriculum for design and technology. Consequently, pupils are achieving to a much higher standard than was the case at the time of the last inspection. Even so, the enthusiastic new co-ordinator intends to make further improvements and to train other teachers in new approaches to the subject.

88. Schemes of work connect well to other subjects in the curriculum and therefore are mutually beneficial. For example, pupils are shown how to design and build their own models of a *shaduf* so that they can understand the technology of the period more fully. The provision of a large room dedicated to design and technology means that teachers and pupils have space to work effectively, where all tools and equipment are easily to hand. As yet, the potential of new technology to enhance learning in the subject has not been tapped to any great extent. There is further work to be done to sharpen up approaches to target-setting and assessment in the subject.

## **Music**

The provision for music is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching for part of the year, with music workshops each half term.
- An impressive number of pupils are learning to play brass or string instruments in school.
- Teachers receive good support from the music specialist.
- Pupils sing well in assemblies.
- There are some pupils with notable musical talent.

### **Commentary**

89. The school has adopted a system whereby a class is taught by a music specialist for approximately half the year on alternate weeks and by the class teacher in the weeks in between, and this is effective in supporting pupils' learning of music. However, in the lessons seen during the inspection, all pupils were doing the same level of work. In one case, where pupils were learning musical notation, there were several pupils who played instruments and could already read music. These capable pupils gained little that moved them forward on this occasion, though the majority of the class gained a lot. Evidence shows that able musicians benefit greatly from individual or group tuition outside lessons.

## Physical education

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Extra-curricular activities are strong.
- The school takes full advantage of expertise and help offered from outside.
- The required standards for swimming are met by the end of Year 3.
- The indoor and outdoor accommodation and facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of the curriculum, though teachers make the best use of what is available.

### Commentary

90. Most physical education lessons take place in the two halls and are subject to frequent interruptions from people passing through to reach the classrooms and offices leading off them. There is no field or all-weather surface on which to play games. The only outdoor area is the sloping tarmac playground, which is in far from perfect condition. Teachers are vigilant about safety issues, and within the limits of this accommodation they have been successful in making some improvements to pupils' level of achievement since the last inspection. Year 3 pupils have swimming lessons for the whole year, an effective way to ensure that all pupils learn to swim. A good range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities is provided, including the use of facilities at local football and cricket clubs. Parent helpers enable a much greater range of physical activities to take place.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **very good**.

Although no lesson could be seen that was specifically designated for PSHE or citizenship, inspectors were able to observe five assemblies, a meeting of the school council, and class discussions. Evidence was also gathered from lesson plans, reports, policy documents and work on display.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is promoted extremely well through the whole culture and ethos of the school.
- There are many valuable opportunities for pupils to strengthen their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils are treated with great respect by adults, and this in turn teaches pupils to be respectful, thoughtful and responsible citizens.
- All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are members of a democratic school council.
- Pupils contribute to the drive to ensure that this is a safe and healthy school.
- Health and sex education are well taught and the provision meets the approval of parents.

### Commentary

91. The PSHE provision makes an important contribution to the high standards of behaviour within the school by teaching pupils from an early age how to act with consideration and responsibility. Pupils have plenty of opportunities in all years to discuss ethical and moral issues and to consider important aspects of human relationships such as friendship, loyalty and tolerance. In a meeting of the school council, some pupils were exercising real leadership. Pupils talked in a lucid way about the things they valued in the school and the changes they wanted.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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