

INSPECTION REPORT

LEADGATE COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Leadgate, Consett

LEA area: County Durham

Unique reference number: 114039

Headteacher: Mrs J Cain

Lead inspector: Joyce Taylor

Dates of inspection: 24th – 25th November 2003

Inspection number: 256713

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	101
School address:	Alder Grove Leadgate Consett Durham
Postcode:	DH8 7RH
Telephone number:	01207 502937
Fax number:	01207 581873
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Williams
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has fewer pupils than average, compared to primary schools nationally. Pupils come from well below average social, economic and academic backgrounds. A very small percentage of children are from minority ethnic families and English is used fluently alongside their first language. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is higher than average. When children started in the school this year, their standards in mathematics, reading and writing were below average for their age. Thirty three per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average. Most of these pupils are behind their peers and several have more significant difficulties, particularly linked to behaviour. One of these pupils has a statement of special educational need. No pupils are in public care. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is generally average. Recently, the school concluded a period as a Beacon school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4275	Joyce Taylor	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education English as an additional language
9843	Sarah Drake	Lay inspector	
4295	David Dodds	Team inspector	Science Religious education Information and communication technology Design and technology
27337	Sylvia Oultram	Team inspector	English Music History Geography Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked successfully to maintain average standards in the light of high special educational needs. Good teaching ensures the children achieve well. Very good leadership and management ensure a very clear focus for moving forward and effective strategies enable all staff to take on developments successfully. In view of its significant strengths the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children's achievement is good and standards are average overall. In religious education the standards are above average. Children with special educational needs also learn well;
- Many children do not have enough self-assurance to make decisions about their work without teacher support;
- The teaching is good and often very good and the children learn well overall. There are some inconsistencies in teaching between subjects;
- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher and deputy. Other staff and the governors contribute strongly to the success of the school;
- New initiatives are well thought out and are proving effective;
- Parents and children are pleased with the school.

The school has made satisfactory progress from the very high point achieved at the time of the last inspection. The standards are not as high as at that time because there are many more children with special educational needs. Overall, pupils are achieving well and maintaining the good pace of learning started in the infant school. The previous issues for improvement have received good attention. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now satisfactory and lessons provide a good balance of activities to ensure children contribute well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children achieve well and in all subjects they are reaching average standards with above average standards in religious education. Although children achieve well overall, their progress is uneven and it varies a little more than it should from class to class and subject to subject. Teachers and children work hard to ensure that they reach high enough standards. The children currently in Year 3 entered the school with lower than average standards but usually the standards are average or above on entry to the school. Lack of confidence inhibits the learning of many children. Pupils do not do themselves justice in tests; results are disappointing and mask the standards that inspection shows them to be reaching in lessons.

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

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

The current Year 6 pupils are reaching average standards in all subjects with above average standards in religious education.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The children have very good attitudes to most aspects of school life. They are happy and

enjoy their lessons although many of them lack confidence when handling new or difficult situations. They behave well overall although a higher than average proportion of them find concentrating difficult and some need considerable help to behave properly. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education with considerable strengths in the way the curriculum is newly designed to suit the children's interests and needs. **In all classes teaching is good and in many lessons it is very good**; this enables pupils to learn well. Information about their progress is used well, particularly in mathematics in Year 6, to ensure they move forward rapidly. Learning is sometimes uneven within and across classes. Almost all teachers have moved to new year groups after working for several years with the same age group and are adjusting to new ways of planning lessons. This leads, on occasion, to some very good opportunities for children to follow their own initiative in one lesson and restricts them to following over-narrow teacher instructions in another. Although consideration has been given to improving the children's confidence there are still concerns. Opportunities to enable the children to work with independence and self-assurance are not part of a consistent plan.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher and deputy have been in post for less than five terms and have a very clear view of how they see the school in the future. They have begun to make bold moves for improvement. These include moving almost all teachers to different year groups in order to take best advantage of their skills. The whole curriculum has been redesigned to more accurately meet the needs of the children. Staff and governors share a very strong commitment to improvement and ensuring that the children enjoy school and benefit from what it offers. Co-ordinators are very effective in several subjects and are good overall, at supporting the work of their colleagues.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and have no significant concerns. They feel particularly comfortable about approaching the school if they have any questions or worries. Opinions were sought from all pupils, who feel that their school is good and learning is enjoyable. They reported a sense of security through knowing their teachers were there to help them if they became upset.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the focus on calculating skills in mathematics and ensure the children use them confidently;
- Improve children's self-assurance and independence as learners in all subjects and their ability to manage new and different situations.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Standards are average across the school in all subjects, apart from religious education where they are above average. Children achieve well in all subjects.

Insufficient work was seen to form overall judgements about standards in design and technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising steadily in English and science but in mathematics they are not picking up as fast as they could;
- There are considerable barriers to learning that are overcome well in lessons and the children achieve well. Children reach standards that are average or above but this is not reflected in test results.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (25.0)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	25.4 (25.9)	27.0 (26.7)
science	28.3 (26.1)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. The standards reached in national tests improved in 2003 in English and science but are still below average when compared with similar schools. Results in mathematics are not as high as they could be. Analysis reveals that the weakness lies in children's performance in the calculation part of the mathematics test. This weakness in their work is confirmed by inspection findings. The school is working to boost confidence in calculating by asking children to talk about the strategies they use, but this is not entirely consistent in all classes. In tests several children worked more slowly than was usual for them or made inappropriate decisions because they were unused to managing their tasks with confident independence; this affected results in all subjects. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 are reaching average standards overall.
2. In lessons, many children demonstrate their skills and understanding well when given frequent reassurance and prompting. There are considerable barriers to learning. These include children's insecurities, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a tendency, demonstrated by a small but highly demanding group, to become unco-operative. Across the school all the children generally work hard and calmly and are learning as well as they can in a climate of security and good support. There is insufficient evidence to judge the learning of children with English as an additional language because of extended absence overseas and absence during Eid. In the lessons seen very good support resulted in good achievement. The higher attaining children are challenged well in almost all cases. In a minority of instances they receive the same tasks as others, which slows their progress. In some lessons where all the children have been taught skills to a very high level, they make decisions for themselves, achieve very well and reach well above average standards. This was seen for example, in art in Year 4 and in ICT in Year 3. In these cases children's self-esteem is high. The methods teachers use to achieve this have not been clearly analysed and applied across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and they behave well. They respond very well to the school's promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attendance is now satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's encouragement of good attendance is having a very positive impact;
- The very good quality of relationships enhances the quality of pupils' education;
- Pupils' good behaviour creates a happy, harmonious atmosphere in school;
- Although happy to talk with adults, many of the children lack confidence as independent learners and this is a major concern of the school.

Commentary

3. Pupils enjoy coming to school, arriving regularly and punctually in the morning with a smile on their face. Due to careful monitoring, the use of rewards and involvement of parents and the educational welfare officer, the school has succeeded in raising levels of pupils' attendance over recent years and the improvement continues this term. Pupils are as keen as teachers to reach the 'magic' 94 per cent target each week.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.7	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

4. Once in school, most pupils settle well, listen carefully both to what they have to do and what others have to say, and they follow instructions well. They are eager to volunteer their own ideas sometimes, as in a religious education lesson following a visit to a synagogue, even anticipating the questions because they are so full of enthusiasm and newly acquired knowledge. They generally work quietly and carefully, concentrating on the work in hand, and they are able to explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. They can rise to the challenge when given the opportunity to work independently or take on responsibility but too often, particularly when it comes to recording their work, they constantly seek affirmation rather than having the courage of their convictions. Some children have difficulty settling down and distract themselves and others. Many of the children lack confidence as independent learners and this is a major concern of the school.
5. Pupils get on very well together and with staff members. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, which means that pupils collaborate well in discussions or group work, sharing knowledge and ideas to deepen their understanding or strengthen their performance. They appreciate others' skills and also the different activities that staff prepare for them so that, for instance, there is good participation in extra activities such as music and sports. They are polite, helpful and treat others well, whatever their age, ability or ethnicity. They are generous in raising funds for charity. In their written responses to the questionnaire, not one pupil suggested that bullying or other people's behaviour was a problem in school. The great majority behave well both inside the classroom and out, but there are a small number of pupils who find self-discipline difficult to sustain consistently and the school occasionally has to resort to imposing short, fixed period exclusions. On most occasions, staff members' high expectations and consistent behaviour management, combined with the good relationships, ensure that pupils behave sensibly without even being asked to do so.

6. The children's very good personal development is underpinned by the many opportunities provided for them to explore their feelings and those of others. They develop curiosity about themselves and the world in which they live. They build well on first-hand experiences by meeting interesting people and visiting unusual places. They learn the values of honesty and fairness, and an awareness of acceptable behaviour through the trusting relationships they develop with the staff. They recognise and value the school's clear codes of behaviour and the acknowledgement of what is 'good'. They develop well socially through the many links with the community, opportunities to think of others, and to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They have a very good understanding of their cultural heritage and the growing awareness of the cultures of others, through the school's links with European schools and visits to places, such as a synagogue. The school's policy for racial equality is applied well. The only weakness in this very good provision is that some pupils are reluctant to take on responsibilities for their own learning.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	100	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	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 school provides a good quality of education. The quality of the curriculum is very good and this is strongly linked to recent improvements that build on the existing effective provision.

Teaching and learning

The teaching is good, with many instances that are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are skilled and effective but marking in books is not always helpful enough;
- When children are taught to take responsibility for their learning they reach very high standards;
- Children are very reluctant to act as independent learners in some situations;
- Assessment procedures are good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	8	7	6	0	0	0

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

Commentary

7. The teaching in the school is good and in the lessons seen much was very good. Lessons have a fast pace in order to keep pupils focused and challenge them. In Year 6, for example, children are encouraged to debate and support their arguments with evidence drawn from what they have learned. This is very effective and causes pupils to listen to each other and give focused attention to what other children mean. Teachers work very hard to ensure the

children complete tasks and produce a good quantity and variety of work. This enables teachers and children to look back and see how much progress has been made. Lessons build very successfully on earlier learning and children are reminded about previous work and how it can be used to support new levels of understanding. Standards of presentation are good and teachers expect children to take note of spoken advice they are given and improve their work. Written marking in the books is not detailed enough. In several subjects there are too few comments about how well the pupils have done and how to improve.

8. Almost all of the teachers have taken different aged classes this year after working for several years with the same age group. This meant that new standards for the children to reach had to be identified by teachers. As a result, some work is still not matched accurately enough to different groups of pupils. Standards vary from one subject to another within the same class. In some lessons seen the children were provided with ideal situations to extend their skills and understanding and develop a high level of independence through systematic and very thoughtful teaching. In Year 3, for example, ICT is planned very well to extend children according to their different capabilities. Similarly, in art in Year 4, children designed individual abstract patterns that symbolically told their own life story. In both these classes the children worked much less effectively in mathematics, for example. Here the tasks were less exciting and they were all expected to work at the same level for much of the lesson. These inconsistencies have been noted by the school and are already the focus of development.
9. There are considerable barriers to learning because the children are unsure and often fretful. Many have difficulties to overcome that are linked to their home lives and these lower their confidence and ability to learn. The pupils frequently seek reassurance that they are working on their tasks as requested and find it hard to settle without regular contact with their teacher. Despite this, the children learn well overall and maintain their standards as they move through the school. In Year 5, the teaching in science was particularly effective and the children relied on their own judgements to devise an experiment and carry it out. Similarly in Year 6, in mathematics, the pupils listened carefully and used new information well. When they began to work independently, however, they frequently sought encouragement. The children with special educational needs receive very good support. They work with well trained classroom assistants or specialist teachers who help them move forward rapidly.
10. Assessment procedures are good. In English, mathematics and science they are thorough and detailed. They show clearly what has been learned and how fast the children are progressing. Further developments in mathematics to target in detail what the children need to learn next ensure they are challenged well. This approach works very successfully in some classes, Year 6 for example, but does not yet influence the teaching and learning as effectively in all classes. Targets in English have been introduced but, as yet, are too general to help teachers pinpoint the next step children need. Assessments that identify the National Curriculum levels children reach in all the other subjects are in place. The information enables staff to monitor the children's progress as they move through the school and leads to reviews of planning to make sure children understand their work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good and is supported very well by additional activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been reorganised very well;
- Visits, visitors and outside activities extend the learning very effectively;
- Special educational needs provision is very good and there are excellent systems to evaluate, review and monitor progress.

Commentary

11. The curriculum is very good. All subjects have been reviewed as the school moves from mixed age to single age classes. The school already had a comprehensive and self-devised curriculum that is now being combined with the nationally recommended schemes. The teachers are finding strengths and weaknesses in both. To ensure the best quality is provided they are selecting appropriate sections from each to ensure the National Curriculum is covered in a way that meets the particular needs of their pupils and uses their own strengths and expertise. Units of work from different subjects are linked to help the children make sense of their tasks. This ensures the children, in Year 5, for example, used recently acquired design and technology skills of attaching card in three dimensions while creatively constructing and arranging objects for models of a familiar room in art.
12. The new curriculum is under termly review to ensure sections fit together to the children's best interest. The teachers have made an impressive attempt to adapt the new curriculum to the different year groups of children they have this term. Although there are minor problems, for the most part all lessons strongly challenge the children and move them forward at a fast pace. Children of different abilities usually have tasks planned to meet their individual needs. Those pupils with special educational needs sometimes work with support teachers in a different location from the rest of the class. The general tasks are the same but the levels vary according to understanding. This works well and children are challenged in these smaller groups. Teachers have identified the children of higher attainment and, in almost all cases their curriculum is more advanced in all subjects.
13. There are very good opportunities for the children to learn, through a wide range of visits and visitors coming to their classes. Governors and the caretaker, for example, bring artefacts for the children to examine and share their own expertise. The discussions help the children understand a range of issues such as the recent history of their area and the impact of industry on peoples' lives. Very good involvement in musical and sporting tuition enables children to improve their skills and provides good opportunities for the more talented pupils to excel.
14. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early and receive the help which makes them successful learners. Meticulous records are kept and parents are fully involved. Weekly review meetings between relevant staff ensure that progress towards the targets in the children's individual learning plans is noted very regularly. Detailed notes of observations on behaviour, attainment and achievement are discussed at these meetings.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its pupils very well. It provides them with good quality support and involves them well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use their very good knowledge of pupils to provide them with well-tailored support;
- Activities related to the healthy schools award support pupils well;
- Pupils are involved well in the life of the school;
- All staff have been trained in child protection and first aid procedures.

Commentary

15. Pupils are confident that if they go to a staff member with a problem, she or he will do their best to help them solve it. Staff have a very good knowledge of pupils' individual circumstances and they listen to them, so that pupils feel that any worries will be taken seriously. As in many primary schools, staff essentially hold and share their knowledge of pupils on an informal basis which works effectively with small numbers but makes little

allowance for transfer of information to new staff members. They make suitable use of information received from the infant school to help Year 3 pupils settle and allow Year 6 to go on a number of visits to their secondary schools to alleviate any fears prior to transfer. The children's progress in their work is monitored well and good use is made of this information to help the children move forward quickly.

16. All staff know what to do should they have concerns about a child's safety and they put this training into effective practice. The progress of those who have behavioural problems or other special needs is carefully monitored. The school uses a variety of methods, including help from outside agencies when they need help and advice. Parents are closely involved at every stage so that everyone is happy about any action being taken.
17. Pupils consider that staff treat them fairly and they appreciate being able to put forward their views and effect change, such as the introduction of non-football days in the playground, suggested through the school council. Trained pupil buddies also help to make playtime comfortable for everyone, and 'dinner nannies' keep a good eye on those who are loners, engaging them in games. Staff show good awareness of safety, and provide good care for those who are injured or feel unwell. The break time fruit bar, introduced as a means of improving pupils' dental care, is a very popular part of each day and topics covered in personal, social and health education lessons provide pupils with good guidance about how to keep themselves safe.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a good partnership with parents. Its links with other schools and the wider community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Wide-ranging partnerships with the community greatly enhance the quality of pupils' education;
- The school tries hard to work with parents in the pupils' best interests;
- Most information for parents is of good quality but pupils' written reports are not sufficiently sharply focused;
- Parents are very supportive of the school, although few become involved in its educational activities.

Commentary

18. The literature provided for parents encourages their participation and keeps them well informed about the school's expectations, procedures, activities and what their children will be learning in the coming weeks. Staff organise sessions to help parents understand how different subjects are taught and how they can enjoy working with their children, but these attract relatively few participants. However, parents do attend school performances and assemblies and they are very generous in their support of fund-raising activities. The majority visit school each term to discuss their child's progress, and the parents of children with special educational needs are particularly well involved in following and supporting their progress. Pupils' written annual reports outline their work in each subject but fail to make clear whether the individual is working at, above or below the expected level for their age or what it is specifically that they need to concentrate on in order to improve.
19. The links formed when Leadgate was part of the Beacon school initiative remain, and have had a strong influence on the good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Unusually, the school also works in partnership with schools in four different European countries via the 'Comenius Project', which helps to broaden pupils' understanding of both their own and others' communities. Closer to home, pupils have undertaken environmental work in the village and also benefit from the help offered by volunteers who, for example, support individuals through the 'Better Reading Partnership'. Local firms provide expertise to

help Year 6 'Young Enterprise' activities, and volunteers enlighten pupils about what different jobs entail through a 'Spilling the Beans' exercise. The good use of community links is one of the reasons that the curriculum is so lively and relevant to pupils' interests.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads and manages the school very effectively;
- Strong support is provided by the governors, deputy headteacher and other staff;
- Thoughtful and very effective decisions have improved the children's learning;
- Children receive insufficient support to perform confidently in national tests.

Commentary

20. The headteacher, who has been in post four terms, leads the school very well. Already the impact of her decisions is having very beneficial effects upon the quality of the teaching and learning in the school. These decisions are driven by a clear view of how she wants the school to be. Her focus is to help the children become 'lifelong learners' rather than 'receivers of knowledge' and to learn from a curriculum that represents all subjects fairly without giving undue attention to literacy and numeracy. This has meant taking some bold decisions to overhaul the curriculum and ways of working that were already judged to be very good in the past. Such is the quality of her leadership that she has the whole-hearted backing of her staff, parents and governors to bring about these changes. The headteacher and deputy carry much of the responsibilities for co-ordinating and leading subjects.
21. The governors fulfil their roles well and ensure all statutory requirements are met. They share the views of the headteacher for the school. They are helping to shape the future by making themselves fully acquainted with the strengths and development areas through a programme of school visits, contacts with the subject leaders and by taking on specific subject and aspect responsibilities. They are proud of their school, and are critically supportive of it. They are in the process of creating a very effective partnership that both challenges and supports the senior staff of the school.
22. The staff are very supportive of the recent changes, are working hard to put the 'new' curriculum into place and adapt it to the needs of the pupils. They co-ordinate areas well and special educational needs, ICT, and English are co-ordinated very well. The headteacher, working closely with the deputy, has reorganised the deployment of the teachers to maximise their skills. These changes have gone smoothly because of the very good management of the head, deputy and other staff with management responsibilities. There is an innovative climate and drive that is directed well through good planning for the future, linked to effective self-evaluation. Much has been achieved in a short time. The school is working effectively to improve the low standards attained in the national tests. These are in part attributable to the high incidence of special educational needs and pupil anxieties, but the fluctuations of attainment between the standards reached in lessons and in tests are yet to be eliminated.
23. The management of finances is very good. Priorities are clearly identified and funding made available. Governors monitor the budget closely and encourage the headteacher to seek alternative costings to proposed developments. This has successfully saved considerable finances and contributes strongly to features that ensure the school gives good value for money. Money provided during the time of Beacon status has been used well to support teaching and learning.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	381,325
Total expenditure	356,148
Expenditure per pupil	2895

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,731
Balance carried forward to the next	25,177

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Standards in English are improving and achievement is good;
- Children are anxious when taking tests and reported standards are lower than expected;
- Teaching is good and pupils enjoy lessons;
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

24. The school has put a great deal of effort into raising standards in English. The current Year 3 children arrived with standards that were below average. When they entered Year 3, a significant proportion of them had slipped further back than their Year 2 tests indicated. Although these children have made good progress in their writing between September and November the standards in Year 3 are still below average overall. In other year groups the children's standards are average and achievement is good across the school. In each class there are high proportions of children who have special educational needs. Individual and small group work ensures that these children achieve well. Very good support is provided for them in class and when they are withdrawn. Effective use is made of national 'catch up' programmes to boost progress. Each day additional time is allocated for children to develop their literacy skills. This time is used well. The school is working hard to enrich pupils' experiences and this motivates them. Good quality assessment in English is enabling pupils' particular learning needs to be identified early.
25. Teachers plan interesting and challenging lessons. This has resulted in most children being attentive listeners and confident speakers. These opportunities are provided in all areas of the curriculum. The pupils enjoy discussing ideas and sharing opinions. Discussions in pairs or in small groups are very productive. For example, in Year 5, small groups of children argued and negotiated with each other until they came up with the correct instructions to make celery soup or to tidy up their bedroom. In Year 6, an excellent opportunity was provided for debate. A small group of pupils were desperate to prove their teacher wrong. They kept returning to the text to search for evidence, had heated discussions with each other, stood their ground confidently as they backed up their statements with evidence.
26. The children's reading work is accurately matched to their needs. The use of good resources, such as attractive books and additional well-trained adults is speeding progress. Recently the school has introduced a programme called the 'Better Reading Partnership'. This involves both members of school staff, such as the school secretary and members of the community reading with the children and listening to them read. Adults and children enjoy this approach. Older and more able children are confident readers. Most children use sounds well to help them build unknown words. The teachers pay particular attention to introducing and reinforcing new vocabulary which speeds the children's progress in reading. Pupils are able to discuss aspects of stories relating to particular characters and themes. Often this requires them to 'read between the lines'. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by carefully structured programmes, accurate targets and regular evaluation of progress. The library is attractive and well organised. However, it is not used sufficiently to allow the children to conduct their own research. Currently it is used as a base for small group work, which is an impediment to timetabling it for use by each class.

27. The pupils enjoy writing and they write for a good range of purposes both in their English lessons and in other subjects, such as religious education and history. The tasks are interesting and exciting and often work is displayed on the walls to confirm how well children have done. Each week new spellings are learned that are based on earlier errors. Handwriting is neat and a constant focus in lessons and the children take a pride in their work and present it well. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and imaginative teaching leads to high interest levels. Sometimes, however, despite the fact that the children know precisely what to do too often they still seek confirmation from the teacher when required to write by themselves. This slows down their own progress and that of other children as it interrupts their work. It also means that in test conditions, they work too hesitantly and undersell themselves. Marking is good and often very good. This tells children precisely how well they are doing and how to improve. Individual targets are in place for writing but overall these are too broad and imprecise.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

28. The pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects of the curriculum. They are enthusiastic speakers and good listeners. For example, in their geography lesson, Year 6 children constructed persuasive arguments for and against the development of tourism in a mountainous region. Good quality books effectively support subjects like history and religious education. There are many good examples of pupils developing writing skills. For example, detailed accounts in Year 5 in history, following a visit from a governor who had been a miner.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new curriculum is flexible and meets the needs of the children;
- In some aspects of mathematics the children reach above average standards;
- Children lack confidence when asked to work independently;
- Calculating skills are not given enough focus to ensure the children use them confidently.

Commentary

29. The school has worked hard to combine the nationally recommended curriculum with its own successful ways of working. Lessons are planned well and build rapidly on earlier learning to ensure children reach the expected standards. In each class there are more pupils than is usual who have special educational needs but several of these children are working successfully at the same level as their peers. Between 10 and 15 per cent of the pupils are working at a level lower than average and about 20 per cent are above. The school has recognised these differences and a range of activities are planned, in most instances, to take children forward at a pace that challenges them carefully but effectively. Where this is less effective, occasionally in Year 3 and Year 4, almost all the children cover the same tasks. This is at a satisfactory level for the majority of the class but those whose understanding is significantly lower or higher than the rest sometimes find the tasks inappropriate.
30. In other cases the work is closely linked to assessments and targets the children have been set. These are at different levels for children of differing ability and help to focus on what needs to be learned next. In Year 6 this works particularly well and the children have reached above average standards in some aspects of their work. Almost all the class, for example, are able to understand and use aspects of managing data that is typically seen when pupils are older. These children clearly understand their tasks but frequently seek reassurance that they are working correctly. This is a concern for the school as it indicates a lack of confidence when working independently. Independent working was seen with the average and above average children in Year 5 where they managed tasks for themselves. About a

third of this year group, however, receive specialist support for some of their mathematics lessons and these children, again, often sought reassurance from their teacher.

31. Calculating has been a weakness in the national tests for the past few years. While the children are able to demonstrate these skills in lessons they lose confidence when under pressure and fail to find correct answers. Not enough is done to help the pupils overcome these insecurities and build up a feeling of high self-esteem when handling calculations in difficult situations.
32. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. He has supported teachers in planning lessons and helped them select work that will stretch the children. He has introduced the newly combined curriculum and has ensured that all aspects of mathematics are included in ways that make learning interesting and very challenging for the children. Difficulties relating to the new curriculum and new year groups have been identified and are being overcome. Weaknesses in the children's learning are an area of sharp attention but staff have not had sufficient guidance on improving children's confidence, particularly in calculating skills. Advice has been provided on improving marking and this is evident in the comments in some books.

Mathematics across the curriculum

33. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in other subjects. The children collect and consider information through charts and graphs in geography and use measurement effectively in science.

SCIENCE

One science lesson was seen. Other evidence used included discussions with teachers and the subject leader, and scrutiny of work and displays.

Commentary

34. The pupils make sound progress in all aspects of science although this is weaker in scientific inquiry. They are taught the skills of investigation soundly but they are not given sufficient opportunity to apply the skills independently and they remain over-dependent upon their teachers when faced with a new problem. Much of the work is based on practical activities that consolidate learning well. The average and higher attaining pupils benefit from opportunities to express their knowledge in their own words and to demonstrate what they know. Their grasp of scientific vocabulary is used securely. The less able pupils often work at the same level and they find recording their work difficult and their progress suffers. Marking is not consistent enough and children would benefit from clearer indications how their work could be improved.
35. The school has recently combined the nationally recommended scheme for science with its own and is in the process of adapting the work to the pupils' needs. Topics are being reorganised to link across subjects and areas where learning is weaker are being extended. For example, in Year 5, scientific enquiry is taught very well and the pupils successfully rise to the task of carrying out independent tests. Not all teachers present tasks with this clarity, and consistency is a target for the school. On occasions, ICT is used well to support learning in science, such as the Year 6 pupils searching the Internet for information about the planetary system. Opportunities to apply their mathematical and literacy skills are provided for satisfactorily.
36. The subject is co-ordinated well. The new scheme promotes more scientific enquiry in the children's approach and attitudes. An appropriate assessment scheme is being established that tracks their progress as they move from year-to-year and this has already identified weaknesses. The co-ordinator is aware the school should link assessments more closely with national curriculum levels and precisely identify children's standards on their entry into the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory** and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some very good work based on stimulating and challenging activities;
- The co-ordinator is very effective;
- ICT is not used widely enough across the curriculum.

Commentary

37. The picture of the developing strengths within the subject is a very encouraging one. The school has recently combined the nationally recommended scheme with its own original work plan. This is proving very successful and while the standards are at the expected level overall, some pupils are achieving work of a much higher than average standard. The oldest pupils, for example, are currently preparing a multi media presentation of their school and local community to share with pupils in schools as far afield as Norway, Poland and Greece as part of their European schools links. The school's hopes for the children to reach high standards in ICT are beginning to be fulfilled. The co-ordinator, although new to the post, has created a very clear and purposeful development plan. Teacher expertise is growing and resources are improving. Good assessment procedures are in place and the teachers are using these thoroughly. As a result, the school's targets are based on a clear picture of what pupils are already achieving. The pupils with special educational needs and those children without access to ICT at home are also achieving well. Pupils speak very enthusiastically about their work in ICT, and the atmosphere during the lessons in the newly created suite is that of a workshop, with children engrossed, animated, and working well in groups.

Using computers, the Year 3 children composed pieces of music

There was a real 'workshop' atmosphere. The teacher had organised the pupils in pairs within four groups based on their different standards and she had selected a range of stimulating programs. One group worked with their classroom assistant to identify and listen to musical instruments. Another used pictures to represent musical phrases. The third group recorded and played from simple forms of notation and the fourth composed and performed on an electric keyboard using standard notation. The children were engrossed. Headphones came off and on as pupils discussed their compositions with animation. The teacher's interventions were outstanding. 'Why have you chosen that phrase to finish your tune?' she said. 'Because it got quieter and faded away', children replied confidently. She directed another pair to look at the metronome number, '99'. 'Change it' she said 'and see what happens to your music'. A few moments later, when they were working independently again one child said 'Wow! It's slower, that's brill.' To a third pair she said, 'That's really beautiful. Could you put words to your tune?' Another pair of pupils suddenly realised that their apparently random musical phrases could be reordered into 'The teddy bears' picnic'. This they did. The teacher spotted the work and asked the whole class to stop and listen. 'Wasn't that wonderful' She said. It certainly was!

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

38. What is not so apparent from this energetic picture is ICT becoming a significant feature across the school's curriculum. There are some very good examples of ICT being used to support learning in the other subjects but this is not yet widespread enough. Also, the few examples of ICT being used to share information, such as the wonderful work of creating a multimedia presentation to be shared with the European schools, are not common enough across the school. Both these points have already been identified for improvement in the school development plan.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and provides the children with many opportunities to reflect upon and to apply what they have learnt to their own lives;
- Visits and visitors enrich the teaching programme;
- The teachers' response to pupils' written work is not sufficiently helpful in developing their knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

39. Teachers use many effective methods, such as drama and debate to interest the children. Visits and visitors are used frequently and very effectively. The year 5 pupils, for example, have been inspired by a recent visit to a synagogue. Their recollections are vivid and they can recall significant details of what they had seen and heard. One girl recalled the Rabbi saying that a lamp in front of the torah symbolically meant that 'the word of God enlightened our lives'. Through discussion, the teacher skilfully wove new knowledge and understanding into the previous learning pupils brought to the lesson. As a result, they were able to reach above average levels of understanding. Discussion is used very effectively to consolidate learning and understanding and to help the children apply what they have learned to the way they live their own lives. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and the other major world religions is assessed and evaluated and used as part of the teachers' long term plans. The teachers' good subject knowledge makes a significant contribution, as does the effective use of some very good quality resources. The pupils record their work with care. In some classes the work is responded to well by the teachers, but often the marking does not move them forward.
40. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory support. She has recently taken over the role and has a clear view of the good standards achieved and the very good impact of the first-hand experience and rich curricular opportunities given to the children.

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with expectations;
- The curriculum for geography is good;
- Children are knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

Commentary

41. The teaching of geography is good and builds on the children's earlier learning effectively. In some instances teaching is very good. In Year 6, for example, the children became excited and animated as they developed their understanding of the effects of humans on an environment. They held strong opinions as to whether it is good or bad to bring tourism into an isolated mountain region. By the end of the lesson the majority realised that there are advantages and disadvantages to the choices made. Achievement in the lesson was high. Younger children, through their field studies of the local area are developing a good understanding about how decisions are made regarding land use. They relate this to land use in the immediate locality of their school.

42. A range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant and as a result the children like their geography lessons. Pupils in Year 4 write interesting information about how life is different for children living in India. They are fascinated by the fact that a child living there could only watch television occasionally because the television had to be connected to a car battery. They compare this with their own lives to realise that electricity on demand is always available to them. They know basic facts like the name of the capital city, about the River Ganges and that India is a hot country affected by a period of Monsoons. They consider planning for a new settlement. The children's books show a large amount of interesting well-recorded work.
43. Recently implemented long term planning now incorporates national guidance. The co-ordinator is effective and works hard with the staff to evaluate each term's work in order to ensure that there are no gaps or duplication in the children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are being developed alongside each unit of work.

History

44. Work was sampled in history, but no lessons were seen during the inspection. Standards are broadly average. The work in pupils' books showed that teachers make lessons interesting for them. From their work on Ancient Greece Year 3 children, for example, have developed a sound knowledge of chronology and of how life differed for children in those days. Children in Year 5, showed a fascination with history. Written accounts following visits from local people showed a good understanding of how their local area has changed in the last hundred years. Pupils in Year 6 made good use of the computer for research. Their work showed very mature attitudes and indicated a very good development of writing skills. Work was extensive and well presented. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and is keen to ensure that the national guidelines, recently combined with the school's own curriculum, result in rich exciting opportunities for the children.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children apply skills from other subjects well;
- They appreciate how art interprets emotions;
- Some of their work lacks spontaneity.

Commentary

45. The children draw and paint confidently, they handle collage materials confidently and attach them precisely. This was seen in Years 4 and 5 where children used a range of materials to present their own, pleasing interpretations of the task. Design and technology skills of constructing were demonstrated well in both cases. In Year 4 the children rose to high levels of imagination. They worked on abstract patterns that represented their own journey through life. Thoughtful work, using symbolism, depicted the future as yet unknown, and key features they recalled. One said for example, 'These flowers are my mother and sister'. In an excellent discussion the children considered how to alter their work to 'draw you in' and how to 'see better if you're further away'. Building on ideas illustrated by their teachers, the children in both classes grasped and acted on new concepts very creatively and expressed themselves clearly.
46. Other work displayed in the school showed that sometimes the children follow set patterns and have less opportunity to express themselves freely. In some instances much of the work

is the same and uses common outlines. In these cases the children's interpretations are less well developed.

Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement on provision in music, design and technology and physical education. However, standards of work seen were **above average** in **music** and **average** in **physical education**.

47. Children are provided with a satisfactory range of **design and technology** activities. Work displayed in Year 5, for example, shows pupils design well with carefully drawn plans that indicate measurements, construction details, methods of fastening and details of mechanical components, such as cams that create movement in their wooden mechanical toys. The working models show that they make them with care and precision. The co-ordinator is new to the post. He brings good subject expertise to the job and a clear sense of purpose. The subject is now being led forward well. The co-ordinator has introduced planning sheets to provide for systematic development in designing, making and evaluating.
48. Children are provided with a good range of **music** activities. In assemblies the children sing sweetly with a high level of enjoyment. The recorder players accompany the singing well and show a good understanding of how to perform for an audience. There are good opportunities for children to perform at various times of the school year. Links with other subjects are made well. For example, in Year 3's lesson in ICT the children's attainment in composition was at a very high level indeed. Visiting musicians and music tutors enrich the music curriculum. Some children are learning to play brass instruments, the guitar and the violin. In their brass group children are making good progress learning to play such instruments as the cornet, trombone and horn. The tutor sets very high standards. The children enjoy his sense of humour and work hard.
49. Children are provided with a satisfactory range of **physical education** activities. The range is good for the older children who are involved in a wide range of clubs and sporting activities provided outside the school. This encourages the more talented children to extend their skills well in competition. The teachers are building the children's skills systematically using the newly combined curriculum. This means that some aspects, such as dance, are planned and resources with music, by teachers who no longer rely on outside sources, such as radio programmes. The lessons extend the children well and give good opportunity for revision and repetition when needed. In Year 3, a good variety of grouping and a wide range of tasks enabled children with particularly dramatic skills to move expressively and organise others to improve their performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Insufficient work in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) was seen to form an overall judgement on provision. Standards of work seen were good.

50. The school supports pupils effectively in their **personal development**. Lessons include sex education and education about the dangers of drug misuse. Pupils are provided with good information to help them make decisions about their own lives. Specific lessons and opportunities during assemblies to consider personal issues are regular features in the curriculum and are used effectively. Lessons are based largely on discussion and pupils are given good opportunities to listen, think, and speak for themselves as they explore a variety of relevant issues. They consider ideas about themselves, the way they conduct their lives and how to deal with difficult situations that might arise, such as attempts to persuade them into irresponsible behaviour.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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