

INSPECTION REPORT

REID STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114178

Headteacher: Mr P Rhatigan

Lead inspector: Mrs J Morley

Dates of inspection: 29 June – 1 July 2004

Inspection number: 257301

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	474
School address:	Reid Street Darlington
Postcode:	DL6 6EX
Telephone number:	01325 251006
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Saunders
Date of previous inspection:	14 – 18 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- There are 474 pupils (252 boys and 222 girls) on roll in this 15-class school for pupils aged four to eleven.
- There are no travellers, refugees, asylum seekers or pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Almost all pupils are white, British, but a small proportion are from a wide variety of other ethnic backgrounds.
- Of the 70 pupils who have special educational needs, 35 have difficulties that are more significant. These relate to dyslexia, autism, moderate or global learning difficulties and difficulty with speech, communication or hearing or with social, emotional or behavioural development.
- Pupil mobility is above average.
- Social and economic factors are broadly average, as is attainment on entry to the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25470	J Morley	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology
9388	A Mundy	Lay inspector	
26292	H Mundy	Team inspector	Personal, social and health education Citizenship Physical education Religious education Foundation Stage
20038	G Watson	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music
27477	J Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory and improving school. During his ten months in post the headteacher has established himself as a good and purposeful leader with a clear vision for its development. He has prioritised sensibly, and has secured both the backing of his staff and the much needed improvements in pupils' behaviour. Teaching is satisfactory overall: often good or better but very variable. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall; they make sound progress throughout the school and transfer at age eleven with average levels of competence in literacy and numeracy. Value for money is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher leads the school well and is effectively supported by key staff.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good or better in close to half of all lessons but the proportion that is satisfactory or weak is too large.
- By Year 6, standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are above those expected nationally.
- Across the full curriculum there is excessive use of worksheets and copied text, and too few opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length.
- The use of assessment to raise standards is insufficiently developed.
- Pupils' personal skills are fostered well overall, and very well in Reception.
- The curriculum is innovative and offers good opportunities outside the school day.

The school has dealt comprehensively with all of the key issues from its last inspection (1998). However, not all other changes subsequent to that inspection have been positive. For example, there is very convincing evidence that by 2003 there had been a marked decline in pupils' behaviour. In line with this deterioration, standards fell at Year 6. They were well above the national averages for English and mathematics in 1998, but were average in 2002 and 2003 – and are similar again this year. However, standards in science and ICT have improved and the consistently good behaviour now evident in almost every classroom bodes well for learning in the future. In addition, the headteacher's plans for further development are sensibly prioritised and convincing and leadership and management are better than reported in 1998. Although improvement since the last inspection has been variable, that in this last school year had been rapid and designed to last. Overall, it is sound.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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	C
Mathematics	A	B	C	C
Science	A	C	B	B

*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.*

Overall, **achievement is satisfactory.** Children's attainment on entry to the school meets the national expectations. They achieve soundly overall through their Reception Year with the result that most reach the goals expected of children aged five. However, achievement in their personal, social, and emotional development is good. This broadly satisfactory progress continues through Years 1

to 6, although there are variations between classes, depending on teaching quality. National tests and inspection findings both indicate that standards at the end of Year 6 are average overall, matching those with which the pupils entered school. National test results show standards at the end of Year 2 to be well above average. However, this is not borne out by inspection findings: these indicate the same broadly average standards that are evident elsewhere in the school.

On most occasions pupils behave well and have equally good attitudes to work. In a small minority of instances this is not the case: some pupils do not routinely show their teachers the respect they deserve. Overall, however, pupils are polite, sociable and confident. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal development – including the **spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements - is good**, as it was at the time of the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory, as is the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Classroom discipline is largely good. Most lessons are taught at a good pace and activities present pupils with interesting and challenging tasks. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate work and they make sound progress, in line with their peers. In a small minority of lessons pupils' behaviour is not good enough. Where this applies, teachers are wrong to tolerate pupils' restlessness or inattention because it limits the learning that takes place for all. The school's assessment systems are in their infancy: there is a wealth of data, some of which is being used to raise standards. However, this is not consistent practice. The curriculum is broad, enriched by a good range of out of school activities, and offers all pupils an equal opportunity to learn and make progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school well and has a clear view of what needs to be done. He is well supported by his senior management team of three: all four work successfully together to ensure that the initiatives they recommend to the staff have a high chance of success. The quality of their work is not yet reflected in improved standards, as time for this to happen has been too short. There is good leadership in key areas of the curriculum. Governance is good. Key governors are sufficiently well informed and influential to offer regular dialogue and meaningful challenge. They fulfil their statutory duties.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Almost all parents think highly of the school. However, the very small minority who do not expressed their concerns forcefully to the inspection team. Inspectors find leadership and management by the headteacher is good. However, he has introduced systems – particularly in relation to communication with parents and access to the school building - that differ significantly from those to which most parents were accustomed. He has not communicated these changed systems clearly to parents but recognises a need to do so in the future. Pupils like school and enjoy good relationships with their teachers and with other adults.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Significantly reduce the proportion of teaching that is less than good.
- Use assessment to raise attainment across the full curriculum.
- In all subjects, significantly reduce the use of worksheets and the practice of copying text, and increase pupils' opportunities to write independently and at length.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. By Year 6 they attain average standards in literacy and numeracy: less good than at the last inspection. Standards in science and ICT, however, have improved since 1998.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science and ICT are above expectations by Year 6.
- There is some evidence of better than expected progress in English and mathematics in Years 4 to 6 but this is not yet reflected in overall standards in Year 6.
- Inspectors find that standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are less favourable than test results indicate.

Commentary

1. For a number of years the school has used a baseline assessment to provide it with reliable information about children's skills and aptitudes when they enter. This information is fairly consistent, year on year, and shows average levels of competence. It is worthy of note, however, that the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen significantly over recent years.
2. Through the Reception classes children achieve satisfactorily. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the majority of them have met the goals expected in communication, language and literacy; in mathematics; in their knowledge and understanding of the world; and in their physical and creative development. A few have exceeded these goals and a few have fallen short. However, achievement in personal, social and emotional development is good, enabling almost all children to reach the national goals and a large minority to exceed them.
3. In the table below, the Year 2 test results from 2003 – and in brackets for 2002 - show pupils attaining standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average. The 2004 test data (although as yet unvalidated) show the same level of attainment. Inspection evidence does not support this overall view of standards. All inspection evidence – including analysis of data, extensive scrutiny of pupils' work over the school year, listening to children read, talking with pupils and the quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons – points clearly to standards in all three areas that meet national expectations.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.1 (17.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (15.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.4 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Furthermore, analysis of the reading, writing and mathematics attainment of the current Year 3 and Year 4 cohorts – both of whom secured well above average standards in their Year 2 tests – also shows standards that are broadly average. So does the work completed by the current

Year 3 cohort right at the beginning of this school year (September 2003). The overall quality of teaching and learning observed in Years 3 and 4, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work over the full school year, shows the same 'big picture': pupils achieve satisfactorily and maintain the average standards with which they joined the school.

- Achievement improves somewhat in Years 4 to 6, particularly in literacy and numeracy, but this appears to be borne of the school's concentration on putting behaviour in order during the current school year. Hence, this good work is not yet reflected in standards at the end of Year 6, but does bode well for the future. The table below shows that the 2003 standards in English and mathematics were in line with national averages while, in science, they were above average. The unvalidated test data for 2004 show identical standards and these are fully reflected in inspection evidence.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.6 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection: they were sound in Year 6 and are now above average. Standards in religious education met expectations in 1998 and still do. No judgement was made on attainment in other subjects but pupils were judged to achieve satisfactorily in all of them. This is still the case. Average science attainment has improved to being good but English and mathematics attainment has fallen from very good to satisfactory. However, as the 2004 results show, the school has successfully halted the decline.
- Overall, therefore, the 'big picture' on standards and progress is a very straightforward one. Children join school at age four with skills and aptitudes that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. From Reception to Year 6 they make steady progress overall. The good progress often evident in Years 4, 5 and 6 in particular has not yet fed through to higher standards but has the potential to do so in the future, now that behaviour is improving. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is good. Their personal development is good because the school provides good spiritual, moral, and social education. Each of these aspects maintains the standards noted during the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy lessons and a variety of informal activities and clubs.
- Relationships are good amongst pupils, and between pupils and staff.
- Pupils have very good multicultural and multi-ethnic awareness.
- In several classes, pupils' behaviour is often unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite and cheerful, and have no concerns about rough play or bullying in the playground. In lessons, their behaviour is generally good and, when work is interesting, they concentrate for extended periods. Attitudes and behaviour are often unsatisfactory in a small number of classes where teachers are not consistent in their

management of distractions and interruptions. In these classes, the quality of pupils' learning is affected by their behaviour. In the last full school year (2002-3), one pupil was temporarily excluded on two occasions. Attendance is satisfactory.

Exclusions

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	376	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	86	0	0

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.2
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.

9. Children in the Reception classes generally listen carefully to adults, and confidently respond to questions and instructions. When working with older pupils, however, they sometimes copy unsatisfactory behaviour. On these occasions they tend to call out and interrupt, without correction from the teacher or the other adults permanently attached to the class.
10. The school successfully develops pupils' personal qualities. In assemblies, pupils follow the staff's examples when praying and singing. Most pupils have a good understanding of spiritual values. For example, in conversation with an inspector, a pupil in Year 6 commented on the beauty of a *guduwara* visited as part a religious education lesson: 'It was beautiful... like Christmas,' she said. Pupils in all year groups enthusiastically support local and national charities. This year, their *pirates and sea-myth* float successfully navigated the town carnival. They have a good understanding of western and eastern cultures, and enjoy a variety of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic experiences. A very good relationship is established with a local church, and the minister is a frequent and welcome visitor.
11. In lessons, teachers sometimes lead pupils in successful discussions of moral values within themes of friendship and difference. These values are applied in the playground, where Year 6 pupils appointed as *Buddies*, mediate alone, or in pairs, to resolve disagreements within groups of pupils of all ages, usually without reference to an adult. Staff are good role models, and good relationships between staff and pupils promote strong moral values. Foundation

Stage children carefully ensure that their pet snails receive a sensible diet of leaves and flowers! Pupils accept a variety of responsibilities in their classrooms, throughout the school, and as elected members of the greatly influential and respected School Council.

12. A good programme for personal, social and health education guides pupils in understanding and applying concepts of right and wrong, although in some classes, they frequently forget the school's brief rules for behaviour. They are co-operative, friendly and respectful to their peers and teachers, and are relaxed and very adept with visitors. In all year groups, boys' and girls' interest in sport and other activities enables them to work amicably together, without tension or embarrassment.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory: proportions of good or better, of satisfactory and of less than satisfactory teaching are much as they were at the last inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory because there is no meaningful assessment in a range of subjects and because in English and mathematics, where it is most developed, there is still work to do.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too little teaching is of good or better quality.
- Teaching is best in Years 5 and 6 and often good in Year 4 and in classes where there are Year 2 pupils.
- Inadequate discipline strategies and insufficient challenge typify weaker teaching.
- Pace, challenge and evidence of rapid learning typify the best lessons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	11 (24%)	10 (22%)	20 (43%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory, a significantly larger proportion will need to be good or better if the current average standards are to improve significantly. Teaching quality is sound overall in Reception, in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). This, however, disguises important differences between year groups. The best teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6, where almost all lessons were of good or better quality. Teaching in Year 4, Year 2 and in the Year 1/2 class was often good but inspectors saw no teaching of good quality in the remaining classes.
14. Discussions with teachers indicate that a minority clearly lack an adequate understanding of what characterises good teaching: precisely what, for example, distinguishes teaching of satisfactory quality from that which is good or from that which is unsatisfactory; or of what might make good teaching even better.
15. When teaching was satisfactory, unsatisfactory or poor it was invariably because of one of the following two reasons:

- In some lessons pupils were not ready to learn. Their teachers may well have prepared entirely appropriate tasks for them but the inattention and general restlessness of a significant proportion of the class prevented the perpetrators from learning and reduced the chances of the rest of the class from doing so.
 - In other lessons teachers confused activity with learning. They provided pupils with tasks linked to the focus of the lesson but without due regard to the level of challenge that these tasks offered. Hence, pupils were occupied rather than challenged. These teachers had not asked themselves the key question when planning: 'What should the least able / the average / the most able pupils know, understand or be able to do at the end of this lesson that they could not do at the beginning?' End of lesson sessions were in place but not used productively to check on this 'beginning and end' situation.
16. Scrutiny of pupils' work over the last school year raised more issues that contribute to the overall sound quality of teaching and learning:
- There is excessive use of worksheets in most classes and, in some, excessive requirements for pupils to copy text. Both of these practices reduce the opportunity for pupils to write independently and, therefore, deprive them of the opportunity to practise and consolidate the skills they learn in literacy lessons, to experiment with vocabulary and to develop a maturity of style.
 - Teachers' marking does too little to help pupils to move on. Scrutiny of some teachers' comments over the last few months showed that there was scant evidence of anything to help them do better next time – and no evidence of advice being followed up at a later date. Marking was better in English than in other subjects, but was not better than satisfactory overall.
17. Where teaching was good or better, the following features shone through:
- Teachers managed the potential for disruption and for inattention through maintaining a fast pace to their lesson. This was the case in a number of lessons but was particularly well demonstrated in a Year 6 literacy lesson based on Kensuke's Kingdom.
 - Teachers appeared pleased to be in the classroom and really happy to be working with their class. This was most evident in the two Year 5 classes. In an art lesson, for example, pupils were engrossed in learning about a range of printing techniques through watching a very well resourced and executed demonstration by their teacher.
 - Activities were selected on the basis of ensuring that pupils would know / understand much more at the end of a lesson than at the beginning. This was most clearly seen in a Year 4 history lesson where pupils interviewed grandparents about their life in Darlington, using very well prepared questions.
18. Overall, therefore, teaching and learning are unlikely to improve unless discipline and challenge are tackled in those classrooms where they are weak; and unless marking is improved and opportunities for independent writing are increased.
19. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers have sound expectations of their achievement. The support they receive is often good, whether this is additional help from a teaching assistant, from the teacher or from their own peers. Tasks are suitably adapted for them. They either work on similar tasks to those set for the rest of the class with the support of a teaching assistant or teacher or, if working independently on tasks that have been simplified.
20. The deputy headteacher has worked hard to establish assessment systems that will provide the school with what it needs to know. This is a data rich school in relation to reading, writing and mathematics. These data are beginning to be used effectively to raise standards. For example, they are used to set sharp, measurable objectives for teachers as part of their performance management cycle. The school is trialling target setting with some pupils in mathematics. Data are used to trigger support for pupils, particularly in reading, where opportunities for them to read are significantly increased when attainment is low or progress

lagging. However, the school is some way from an effective overall assessment system because:

- Pupils are insufficiently well informed about what they next need to learn. Few have individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics and those to whom inspectors spoke could not articulate what they should do to improve. Parents cannot be actively involved in helping their child to learn because they have insufficient 'small step' information about what their child can do now and to what they need to progress.
- There is no adequate assessment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education or religious education. Co-ordinators do not have access to reliable and regular information about standards in their subjects and are therefore restricted in what they can do to improve them. Similarly, class teachers have a general rather than a precise knowledge of attainment in their class.
- Teachers are not used to working with data as a means of reviewing the quality of their teaching. For example, they do not refer to National Curriculum sub-levels or point scores to ask questions of their practice such as, *'Is the progress my pupils make at least in line with national expectations and, if not, what is the impact of this on the overall standards in the school and on the workload of my colleagues?'*
- There is no legacy of whole-school analysis to compare, for example, progress between key stages, year groups, classes, genders or ability groups, and of the outcomes being passed on to the teachers in order to secure improvement.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good overall and provides adequately for all its pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The opportunities for enrichment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved.
- Provision for ICT has improved.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- The playground surface is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

Commentary

21. The school has recently developed one of the internal courtyards into a delightful outdoor area for children in the Reception classes. A variety of ground surfaces together with imaginative permanent structures of 'bridge', stage, play house, open roofed area, large sand pit with a substantial chain pulley system and giant percussion instruments forms the basis of this new area. A good range of resources is being added so this area is developing into a rich outdoor learning environment.
22. The purchase of new hardware and software together with some staff training now means that the teachers are more confident in teaching ICT. The two interactive whiteboards are used well and the set of lap top computers provides teachers with greater access to the technology to use across the curriculum within the classroom.
23. The provision for personal, social and health education is good with timetabled lessons as well as other opportunities. The playground *buddies* scheme works well by giving pupils in Year 6 the responsibility of ensuring the well-being of pupils at playtime. Members of the School Council take the responsibility to advertise for pupils wishing to become buddies. They interview potential candidates and all parties concerned take their roles seriously.

24. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support during lessons from well-informed support staff. Work is suitably adapted for them so that their achievement is in line with that of other pupils. Overall, however, standards of inclusion are satisfactory. This is because there is too much variation in provision between classes, leading to some inequality of opportunity.
25. A good range of clubs, visits, and visitors enriches the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity of a residential visit, either for a week or a weekend. The school compensates well for the lack of a field by using a range of facilities outside school. The planning of a 'Multicultural Arts' week promises to combine music, art and drama, with an African culture theme. Pupils will be given the opportunity to work with artists, musicians, writers, storytellers and cooks through a series of workshops.
26. While accommodation is just satisfactory, the classrooms remain cramped as they were at the last inspection. However, the school is reducing its intake from September, so that this situation will gradually ease. The surface and levels in the playground are unsatisfactory, which results in large puddles whenever it rains. Plans for improvement are already in place.

Care, guidance and support

Good procedures ensure high quality child protection, health and safety. The caring environment has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. The school provides good support, advice and guidance for pupils, and informally monitors their personal development. These standards maintain the quality noted during the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and respond quickly to their needs.
- The school greatly values pupils' views, and often acts upon their suggestions.

Commentary

27. Good procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. Care is good in Foundation Stage classes, where staff are very attentive to children's needs. The school's health and safety policy is adapted from the local authority's recommended policy, including procedures for risk assessments and ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out-of-school visits. However, governors and staff have not yet agreed a policy for the physical restraint of pupils. The school building and playground are commendably clean and are adequately maintained, although some major and minor works are outstanding. The site presents no apparent risk to health and safety.
28. A good induction system quickly settles children into the Foundation Stage. Pupils joining other year groups soon make friends in the relaxed and happy school community. All pupils receive good individual care and, when necessary, are offered sessions of discreet counselling to discuss personal or family difficulties. Pupils know that adults listen carefully to them, value their comments and opinions, and respond quickly to specific suggestions. Consequently, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the personal development of individuals, although little information is formally recorded. School councillors are elected in Years 3 to 6, and the council is led decisively by a pupil chair and secretary. The council is very influential: decisions are promptly assessed by the school's senior managers, and are frequently implemented.
29. Assessment in the school is unsatisfactory because information is minimal in a number of subjects and is not adequately analysed / used in others. Consequently, it has little effect upon teachers' planning and pupils' progress.
30. Pupils in all year groups enthusiastically collect a variety of merit awards for effort and good behaviour. In Years 3 to 6, sustained good work and personal qualities are rewarded with

certificates at informal house team assemblies. These joyous events culminate in the carefully staged announcement of a pupil Star of the Week: a coveted honour awarded by a committee of teachers, often recognising outstanding personal qualities in pupils of modest demeanour.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents, and good links with the local community and other schools. These aspects generally maintain the quality noted during the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents of children in all year groups receive useful information about the curriculum.
- Much detailed information is included in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report.
- The headteacher's plans for the school, and his reasons for making changes, are rarely explained fully to parents.

Commentary

31. At the pre-inspection meeting, a very small number of parents were particularly critical of some of the headteacher's decisions and actions. Similar views were expressed in an equally small number of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, although the overwhelming majority of responses were favourable to the headteacher and the school. Inspectors looked closely at parents' concerns, and found most to be unfounded. However, parents justifiably complain of inadequate information about recent changes to daily routines. Although the changes have improved the working conditions and personal safety of staff and pupils, parents have not been adequately informed of the reasons for changed procedures.
32. Most pupils benefit from good relationships between their parents and teachers. Some mature and thoughtful pupils in Year 6 confirm their parents' keen support for the school. Parents and friends provide consistent, valuable help with reading in Years 1 and 2, but the school has not recently enquired if parents have skills or interests to broaden the curriculum. The friends' association is in transition, but a modest programme of annual events raises useful funds for the school. Recent purchases have included a photocopier, uniforms for Buddies, and numerous prizes and classroom sundries. A good relationship is established between the parents' group and the governing body, and some families are active on both committees.
33. Parents receive satisfactory information about the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the Reception class, or join other year groups. Each year, teachers provide details of the curriculum to help parents monitor and support their children's learning at home. However, the overall potential for them to help their child is limited because there is no established system of regularly updated 'target setting' (what the next 'small step' in learning should be). Hence, parents do not know enough to help as much as they could. Teachers' annual written reports are of satisfactory quality, showing in some detail what pupils know, understand and can do. However, report targets for pupils are sometimes written in unnecessarily complex language. At consultation evenings in October, parents are invited to discuss their children's progress in the early weeks of the school year. Further consultation evenings are offered in June, following teachers' annual written reports to parents.
34. Brief newsletters list school events and important dates, and include messages from the headteacher. The school prospectus and the 2003 governors' annual report conform fully to legal requirements, and include much useful additional information.
35. Occasional visitors to the school include artists and amateur historians. Regular visitors include ministers of religion, and representatives of the police and fire services. Pupils regularly visit local and regional places of interest and, in Year 6, enjoy a choice of residential visits. The school fulfils its allotted role in a local primary consortium, and maintains good links with secondary schools to broaden the curriculum and to ensure that pupils transfer without stress at the end of Year 6. Student teachers and secondary school students benefit from effective mentoring at St John's, and make valuable contributions to school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The governance of the school is good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors are involved and supportive.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has appropriate priorities for this early stage in his tenure.
- The school development is strategically planned.
- Support for newly qualified teachers is good.
- There has been too little monitoring of performance data.

Commentary

36. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, gained through regular and meaningful contact. They have received support and guidance from the headteacher in analysing Ofsted's annual, very detailed statistics that present their school's performance in several comparisons. They have a clear understanding of the benefits to the school's ethos and staff morale that the priority for improved behaviour has brought about. Their sub-committee structure takes good account of individuals' strengths and interests and they have a clear understanding of the school's financial position. Spending is prudent and is clearly linked to the school's priorities for improvement. The governance of the school has improved since the last inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,157,589
Total expenditure	1,121,548
Expenditure per pupil	2,397

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	17,173
Balance carried forward to the next	53,214

37. Since taking up this post ten months ago, the headteacher has made good progress in implementing his initial, appropriate priorities. Key among these has been improved behaviour throughout the school, which has - to quote a member of the senior management team - enabled the school to 'turn a corner'. The headteacher substantially decreased the size of the senior management team in order to achieve a leaner, more effective structure and one that is more focused and able to work strategically with him. He works in an inclusive way with governors and all staff in preparing the school development plan. This clearly sets out the priorities for the forthcoming year in all areas of school and curriculum management. Because of the detailed information supporting each priority, staff and governors can be confident that they are achievable. One such very early priority was the creation of a high quality outdoor area for the children in the Reception classes. The headteacher has worked hard to secure funding from a range of external sources and to ensure that the outcome truly matched the school's requirements. The senior management team members work closely with the headteacher, and their opinions are valued in open, professional debate. They each lead a team of colleagues, meeting regularly with them and giving good levels of support.
38. When newly qualified teachers (NQTs) join the staff, they benefit from a well-structured support team that includes a tutor who monitors their professional development and a mentor who works in the same year group, giving more 'local' guidance. The headteacher is also

active in their support: at the very start of the current year, for example, he effectively managed a behavioural issue. It was quickly resolved and enabled the NQT to go on to have a very successful first year.

39. There is too little monitoring of the results of all forms of assessment of pupils' work. This does not give a clear and accurate view of progress and standards through, and between, year groups that can be shared by all staff.
40. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual education plans are regularly reviewed and precise targets set. Parents are kept fully informed and are invited to all review meetings. Pupils and parents sign plans. Pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs are monitored on a daily basis by the support staff who work with them.
41. Leadership and management are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Thoughtful deployment of adults, and good use of the new outdoor area, provides good access to the curriculum for all children, including the ten oldest Reception children in the Reception/Year 1 class.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **satisfactory**, and children's achievement is **satisfactory**. Standards overall have been maintained since the previous inspection. In response to a key issue from the previous inspection, a stimulating outdoor play area is now available to Reception children.

Children enter the Reception classes at the start of the school term following their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection, seventy children were divided into three classes: two Reception classes, and a mixed Reception/Year 1 class for the ten oldest Reception children and some of the youngest Year 1 pupils. However, in all morning sessions, these Reception children joined the two Reception classes for common activities.

When children enter the Reception classes, their attainment is average. They make satisfactory progress and, at the end of the Reception Year, most achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs are identified when they start in the Reception class, and provision for them is satisfactory.

Teaching in the two Reception classes is always at least satisfactory, and is good in personal, social and emotional development. In the Reception / Year 1 class, teaching for Reception children is sometimes unsatisfactory. In all classes, teachers gather assessment information, but do not use it to improve teaching and learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision is **good**: most children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and a significant minority exceed them.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are always very good.
- All relationships are excellent.

Commentary

42. Teaching is good overall, and teaching assistants contribute significantly to children's learning. Children enjoy coming to school. They receive good individual care and support from all adults, and they are happy, friendly and very well behaved. During the inspection, in a whole-school assembly, their behaviour was exemplary, although the theme was suited to much older children. Although children's concentration is good, some tasks set for them are mundane, or without purpose. For example, in a lesson where they had a choice of activities, their drawing was unguided and outcomes were far below expectation for their age. Relationships are excellent because children learn from staff the importance of speaking calmly and quietly.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision is **satisfactory**, and most children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children are taught many technical words to broaden their vocabulary.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Children's spoken vocabulary is good because it includes technical terms linked to all areas of learning. For example, they can explain how a cocoon changes into a butterfly, and why bees collect pollen. They listen carefully to adults, and to each other, and retain much of their learning. All children recognise their own names. A few can recognise their friends' names, and some familiar words in their reading books. Their writing skills are satisfactory, and many are beginning to use phonic knowledge to construct words. High-attaining children can write a few sentences about a single topic. However, teachers often require children to cut and stick pre-printed words, rather than write their own words. Children sometimes form their letters incorrectly, and write in an uncorrected mixture of capital and lower case letters. Although teachers conscientiously complete Foundation Stage profiles, some aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory. During the inspection, some records were unavailable to inspectors. Analysis of children's written work showed that much was not annotated, and teachers' marking objectives were unclear. Generally, work is over-praised by adults, and first attempts are often accepted without suggestions for improvement.

Mathematical development

Provision is **satisfactory**, and most children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes.
- Excessive use of worksheets limits children's understanding of some mathematical concepts.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children of average attainment count objects accurately to twenty, and understand the meanings of *more than* and *less than*. High-attaining children successfully complete mental calculations to twenty. Most children identify two- and three-dimensional shapes from brief verbal descriptions. For example, they know that 'No corners... good roller...' is likely to be a sphere. Children of average attainment understand positional language, including *in front of* and *in between*. During the inspection, in a good session led by a parent helper, children made biscuits in the shape of snails. When weighing ingredients, they knew the meanings of *heavier* and *lighter*, and they recognised the *halves* of a block of butter cut accurately into two. The Reception mathematics scheme of work is based upon commercial worksheets. Many repetitious tasks on the worksheets allow children to arrive at correct answers while not fully understanding simple concepts. As the scheme is designed to replace mathematics workbooks, meticulous annotation is required to confirm children's progress and attainment. During the inspection, some records were unavailable to inspectors. Analysis of worksheets revealed that most work is undated, and is not filed sequentially.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision is satisfactory, and most children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This area of learning has no significant strengths or weaknesses.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Children of average attainment differentiate between moths and butterflies. They identify numerous mini-beasts, including ants, bees, ladybirds and worms. Children have begun to cultivate their new outside garden, and they know that water is needed to make flowers grow. In an unsatisfactory science session in the Reception/Year 1 class, learning objectives were unclear to the children, and resources provided for them were unsuited to the activity. Children's information and communication technology skills are satisfactory. Children of average attainment have good mouse control. During the inspection, using a painting program, they accurately coloured pictures. However, some programs in use in the Reception classes were unsuitable for young children. For example, a phonics program confused a child because the names and sounds of letters were used interchangeably. Children working with construction sets successfully built models based upon illustrations of vehicles. Children of average attainment understand that equipment in their new play area can be shown as a symbol on a diagram.

Creative development

Provision is **satisfactory**, and most children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This area of learning has no significant strengths or weaknesses.

Commentary

46. In the new area for outdoor activities, children especially enjoy dressing up and performing on the stage. However, imaginative play is restricted by a limited selection of small equipment. Indoor imaginative play is satisfactory. For example, in their animal surgery, children work industriously to improve the health of their toy pets, but they do not know that an animal doctor is a vet. All children enjoy painting, although much of their artwork is confined to applying colours to photocopied black and white outlines. They rarely make observational drawings of familiar objects. When given opportunities for original work, their paintings are good. During the inspection, a child painted a detailed steam locomotive, and identified components including the coupling rods.

Physical development

Provision is **satisfactory**, and most children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This area of learning has no significant strengths or weaknesses.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, there is little to improve the gross motor skills of Foundation Stage children because the very new outdoor activity area does not yet include equipment for climbing and balancing and the school playgrounds are similarly deficient. In a satisfactory lesson seen in a Reception class, children's spatial awareness and ball control were good. In relay practice for team sports day, they accurately rolled a small ball around a series of quoits. Some children were very slow to change their clothes and footwear, and the lesson started without them. None of the supervising adults intervened to help or to hurry them. Children's fine motor skills are good. For example, during the inspection, they meticulously decorated their biscuit snails with icing sugar. All children have some knowledge of foods related to healthy lifestyles, and they know the benefits of eating fruit. However, fruit and vegetables provided for children in the Foundation Stage are not always washed before consumption.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English skills are adequately taught in the majority of classes but, in a small minority, pupils' behaviour militates against learning.
- The use of worksheets across the curriculum is excessive and this limits the development of writing skills.
- Assessment data is beginning to be used well to raise standards.
- The subject is well led.

Commentary

48. Attainment is in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This finding is mirrored by the 2004 test data for Year 6, but not by that for Year 2, which indicates that standards are well above average. Standards have declined since the last inspection when they were above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6.
49. Listening standards are satisfactory overall but variable because they depend on the ability of the teacher to engage and motivate pupils. In some classes, therefore, pupils listen attentively, while in a small minority they show their teachers too little respect. Listening skills are at their best amongst the older pupils in the school and weakest in Year 3. Pupils speak audibly to an audience and develop a sound vocabulary as they move through the school.
50. Reading standards meet expectations in Years 2 and 6. Most parents make a useful contribution to pupils' progress when they listen to their child read on a regular basis. This year the school has invested heavily in new, attractive reading books and has used assessment information well to identify pupils whose progress is lower than average. It has put in additional support to help those identified, although as yet there is no evaluation of their progress.
51. Writing standards are average overall, although in some year groups they barely meet these standards. They are at their weakest in Year 3. Writing skills are soundly taught in all classes and well taught in some – particularly in Year 2 and Years 4 to 6. However, there is no clear evidence that teachers are skilled at modelling writing for pupils. This is one feature that limits progress. In one Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher was unable to sit with a group for any length of time as she had to 'police' the behaviour of the rest of the class.
52. The teaching seen ranged from very good to unsatisfactory but was sound overall. Very good teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6 and was typified by fast pace, enthusiasm by the teacher and a good level of challenge in the work set for pupils. Unsatisfactory teaching was the result of an inability to control the general restlessness in the class. This slowed learning to an unsatisfactory level, despite the fact that the teacher had prepared some exciting and entirely appropriate activities.
53. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has clear ideas for its development and has made a good start. She is aware of the need to review writing opportunities across the curriculum (see below) and to use assessment data to provide answers to such questions as: 'Do pupils in all year groups progress equally well?' and then to take the necessary action and use assessment data again to evaluate the impact of that action.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Throughout the school there is excessive use of worksheets and/or of copying text provided by the teacher. This severely limits other, more productive writing opportunities and means that subjects such as science, geography, history, religious education and design and technology do not provide the opportunities they should for pupils to write independently and at length. There is, therefore, a significant imbalance between heavily supported and wholly independent writing opportunities and this needs addressing. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall but could do more to point the way forwards for pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weakness

- The leadership of the subject is good.
- Standards are average.
- Some teaching is good.
- Some teaching lacks pace and does not inspire pupils.
- The use of assessment to raise standards is at an early stage of development.

Commentary

55. Standards of work seen in lessons and in books are in line with those found nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. For pupils in Year 2 this indicates that standards are as they were at the last inspection. However, findings at the last inspection judged standards to be well above national averages when pupils left the school.
56. Leadership of the subject is good. The relatively newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject. She has realistic plans to improve the overall standard of teaching and to develop assessment systems that will raise standards. In her quest to make mathematics more meaningful and fun she has developed a games library for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. This is proving popular with both pupils and parents. Games support social skills and traditional games are being revived, with pupils requesting dominoes and dice for Christmas presents!
57. Systems for assessment are yet to be developed. Although annual testing takes place, the results of these tests are not yet analysed. Shorter-term assessment and target setting is just starting with teachers just involving one group within their class before extending the system to cover all groups of pupils and then individuals.
58. Teachers plan their work well and in the best lessons they ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn. At the end of these lessons pupils are supported in evaluating what they have learnt and learning is reinforced. Often no reinforcement takes place or it is rushed due to 'time running out'. Effective use of the interactive whiteboard in Year 5 resulted in a lesson that stimulated pupils to find out rules for grids of numbers on a 100 square. The pace was good and pupils successfully investigated patterns and came up with general statements that were applicable for different sized grids. In some lessons the mental sessions lack pace and excitement and are more akin to a test rather than a quick warm-up involving elements of excitement and fun. Without stimulation there is a tendency to work sluggishly on tasks with the result that the whole lesson becomes boring.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily in ICT. Year 5 pupils analysed data collected during a traffic survey and then used a computer program to produce graphs and pie charts. Results in science are recorded on line graphs and measuring skills used in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The recently appointed coordinator has good levels of personal expertise in science.
- There is too much use of worksheets in some year groups and marking is generally unsatisfactory.

Commentary

60. In the most recent tests for Year 6 pupils, attainment was above the national average. Inspection findings agree with this outcome. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Year 2 pupils achieve standards that are in line with expectations. In some year groups, particularly Year 1, there is over-use of worksheets. When teachers mark pupils' work, it is too often restricted to a tick. Occasionally, a comment on the presentation of work is added, but teachers rarely indicate what the individual should concentrate on next. In Year 2, there is too much copied work with little evidence of work being planned for pupils of different ability. The current, statutory teacher assessments for Year 2 suggest very high attainment. The evidence from past work and lessons does not support that standard.
61. Teaching seen was never less than satisfactory. In a Year 5 class it was very good. The teacher introduced the lesson clearly, explained to pupils how it developed from their previous lessons and what they would know by the end of it. This was particularly important because the topic of relationships between the earth, moon and sun was a complex one for these pupils. As the lesson developed she was able to keep them highly focused by cleverly demonstrating relative sizes and distances. Throughout, important scientific understanding of direct and indirect evidence and its reliability was developed and experienced at first hand. Pupils' attainment was good, as was their achievement. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson secretly studied photographs of their classmates and wrote down important characteristics such as hair colour and length, eye colour and height, etc. They used this information to 'quiz' the others later in the lesson. Their work was well planned and managed by the teacher, developing their understanding of variation, similarities and uniqueness. During an ICT lesson, they had the opportunity to use a branching database that increased their understanding and skills in using keys for identification: an example of good use of ICT to extend their learning.
62. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the post and is in her second year of teaching. She has a good level of subject expertise and a good understanding of standards of work in school, gained from her use of a range of attainment data. Whilst she has re-organised resources to ensure that class teachers have what they need, there is a need to improve resources for some areas of science. The co-ordinator rightly considers visitors and visits out of school to have great potential for enhancing pupils' scientific experiences. These are among her early priorities. This co-ordinator has had no professional development in her role that, along with her subject expertise, would further her effectiveness in school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management is very good.
- The award system encourages progress, as do opportunities to extend pupils' experiences.
- There is little evidence of ICT in work in lessons of other subjects.

Commentary

63. Provision has improved since the time of the previous report. The level and range of resources are good. As a result of good teaching overall, pupils achieve well: standards meet expectations in Year 2 and exceed them in Year 6. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher skilfully introduced greater functionality in a cartoon creation application. Pupils' understanding of the successful layout and attributes of traditionally produced cartoons developed, as did their knowledge and skills in using the program to achieve high quality results. Because of their good approach to their work, they often make good progress in lessons. This was not the case, however, in a Year 3 lesson, where their poor behaviour disrupted the continuity of the lesson and limited the progress that the majority were able to make. This was rare. Pupils have a good level of competence in using a wide variety of software and its access on the network, and of using workstations and laptops.
64. There is a very effective awards scheme for excellence in the subject. Pupils' work is assessed as they progress through the requirements of each specific award in addition to their other assessment regimes. There is a wide range of skills and applications from which pupils can choose to work and gain their award: word processing; use of the Internet; spreadsheets and more. Once successful they receive an embroidered badge that can be sewn onto their school uniform. These 'Digital Experts' in each field often help classmates and teachers alike.
65. The co-ordinator has a very high level of personal ICT expertise. He has an equally high level of understanding of ways in which the subject can be used to truly enhance teaching and learning through, for instance, the high impact of interactive whiteboards. He uses resources and facilities to extend pupils' opportunities outside school. His priorities go beyond merely additional resources, to areas such as the possible inclusion of ICT in everyone's performance management, in order to secure the professional development of colleagues in an individual way.
66. There is evidence of ICT in other subjects such as mathematics, English, science and art. It was not generally seen in lessons of other subjects during inspection. There is the potential for teachers and pupils to have access to ICT as a worthwhile component in lessons of other subjects and, when interactive whiteboards are more widely available, this should improve.

HUMANITIES

Too little teaching was seen in geography and history to support a firm judgement on provision.

67. From the limited evidence available indications are that standards in **geography** are at the expected level throughout the school. No judgement on standards was made at the last inspection. The school has now adopted nationally recognised curriculum guidelines for its schemes of work to ensure that skills are progressively taught. These guidelines are suitably adapted to take account of the needs of the school and the school is continually looking at ways to link subjects. Literacy and geography are well linked in the younger classes through the use of the Morag stories on the Island of Struay. A visit to Saltburn links both history and geography by comparing the location of Saltburn with that of Darlington as well as looking at the Victorian features of the seaside town. The recording of geography in Year 2 is good, with

a balance between writing, pictures, maps, diagrams and the use of ICT. In contrast, a river study in Year 6 is poorly recorded by the over-use of worksheets and filling in gaps in a given text. A local newspaper report for a plan to convert shop premises, previously a newsagent, into a youth centre led to a lively debate. Pupils put forward arguments on other sides reflecting the view of residents of the area together with those of the organisers.

68. Work seen in **history** indicates that standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. No judgements were made on standards at the last inspection. No judgement is made on teaching or learning in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their history lessons, especially when they feel that the content is relevant and interesting. Pupils in Year 4 met grandparents to ask questions about life in the past in Darlington and more particularly about what their school was like. (Two grandparents were also past pupils.) Pupils asked pre-prepared questions politely and respectfully, busily taking notes and asking supplementary questions. The excellent contribution from these visitors contributed significantly to the success of this session. Original Second World War artefacts, loaned by older relatives of the pupils, gave poignancy to the display. In a lesson on food rationing some pupils concluded that they would have survived well during the war because they helped their grandfather on his allotment and grew a lot of vegetables!
69. Too much recording of work is limited by the over-use of work sheets so that pupils are not used to writing at length on any topic. In Year 6 writing on the life of Nelson Mandela was minimal and views on the Apartheid system brief and superficial. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Good use is made of outside visitors and original artefacts.

Religious education

Provision is **satisfactory**, and maintains the standard noted in the previous inspection report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Multicultural education is good.
- Pupils rarely attempt original written work.

Commentary

70. Four religious education lessons and three assemblies were seen during the inspection. Standards of work were satisfactory overall, although the new locally agreed syllabus is not yet fully implemented.
71. In conversations with inspectors, pupils in Year 6 clearly recalled previous learning, although they had no record of written work. They knew some parables of Jesus, and remembered many details of Christian festivals. They had a broad understanding of the lifestyles of practising Sikhs, Muslims and Jews, but were confused about specifics. All agreed with the Quaker philosophy of equality, exemplified by identical memorial stones in Quaker cemeteries. However, in Year 6, simple worksheets prepared by the class teacher were easily completed, and did not develop literacy skills or religious knowledge. Pupils' learning was limited to some facts about colours related to the Christian calendar. A very good display of work by pupils in Year 5 combined mathematics and ICT to generate national percentages of followers of the three major religions in Israel. Lessons, pupils' recorded work and conversations with pupils indicated satisfactory teaching and learning overall.
72. Pupils in most year groups do not have workbooks for religious education. In Year 2, where workbooks were available for analysis, the written content was almost entirely copied by pupils from originals provided by the class teacher. However, good written work in a wall display

indicated that pupils, when given opportunities, can write originally, and at length. Pupils in Year 2 explained to an inspector how a recent visit from a Buddhist monk had stimulated written work, and numerous clay models of Buddha.

73. Each week, pupils attend two assemblies for Years 1 and 2, two for Years 3 to 6, and one for the whole school. All assemblies conform with legal requirements. During the inspection, in a very good assembly, pupils in Years 1 and 2 paraded in a variety of national and religious costumes to demonstrate the importance of respect for difference. This assembly contributed significantly to pupils' spiritual development. In a whole-school assembly, an extended modern parable about 'seeing and understanding' was too difficult for younger pupils, although most listened respectfully.
74. Each year group makes an annual visit to one of a number of places of worship representing a variety of faiths and cultures. During the inspection, pupils remembering details from their series of visits compared similarities and differences, and had good understanding of diversity in a multicultural society.
75. The school has a good selection of artefacts, books and other resources. However, few resources were used in lessons seen during the inspection, and worksheets were overused.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Too little teaching was seen in design and technology, music and physical education to support a firm judgement on provision.

76. The **design and technology** work seen on display and in pupils' books indicated that standards meet expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6 and that, throughout the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Recorded work shows that pupils' skills at planning and evaluating their work are sound at best. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve these aspects of the pupils' work, particularly the relationship between the design and the completed artefact. The scheme of work has, rightly, been rewritten to sharpen the focus on the systematic development of skills and to move away from an emphasis on simply doing practical work.
77. As a part of the **music** curriculum, pupils from Years 3 to 6, have a short singing lesson together. They are skilfully taught with attention to the essential elements of posture and breathing. In the Year 5 and 6 singing lesson, the 'lead' teacher worked well, with others supporting him. He developed a quite complicated rhythm structure to accompany their singing and involved many of the pupils. They played, clapped and stamped with accuracy - at a sensible level that added-to the singing rather than overwhelming it. Indeed, in classes they regularly clap rhythm structures and occasionally use untuned instruments. Only one class lesson was observed, in Year 5. The teaching was very good and the structured lesson effectively supported the pupils' good levels of achievement. Their understanding of graphic notation and notes of different duration enabled them to play untuned instruments accurately and with regular pulse. They maintained their own parts in relation to the other rhythmic structures very well. Good relations in the class contributed to the positive attitudes of the pupils and their prolonged concentration.
78. Pupils' recall of their class music lessons did not include their use of a range of instruments for composing their own patterns or melodies. There is a commercial music scheme that has not been used for a long time. There is a satisfactory range of class percussion instruments.
79. At present, there is no co-ordinator of music, though someone with significant musical expertise is to take the responsibility next term. Supporting her will be a part-time teacher working with the younger age groups. Between them, they have the potential to establish an

effective team, supporting class teachers and implementing their appropriate priorities that are already established.

80. Five **physical education** lessons were seen during the inspection. However, the range of activities was too small to support an overall judgement on standards and provision in the subject. Teaching in two lessons was good, in one it was satisfactory, and in two it was unsatisfactory. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils practised elementary cricket skills, using plastic bats and soft balls. Guided by the class teacher, some girls improved their grips on the ball, and controlled the direction of their bowling. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 4, pupils combined the rules of benchball, netball and basketball to develop a new game. Rules for the new game were keenly debated, but were never fully clarified to participants and spectators. In vigorous demonstrations, boys skilfully passed the ball over long distances. Girls were less successful, and sometimes were disadvantaged by inferior catching techniques. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 1, the school hall was partially obstructed by chairs. The teacher failed to clear the area and, during warm up, and in a subsequent hockey game, she failed to control pupils' behaviour. Most pupils did not listen to her instructions, or understand the lesson objectives. Behaviour was unsatisfactory throughout, and pupils made no progress.

Art and design

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are exciting extra-curricular opportunities on offer.
- There is no assessment in the subject at the moment.

Commentary

81. At the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils attain the expected standards and throughout the school they achieve satisfactorily. Most of the work on display was of the expected standard, although there was some good work in Year 2 where pupils had painted sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh and in Year 5 related to observational drawing/watercolour painting of flowers. Work in pupils' sketchbooks was variable but did not exceed expected levels. In almost every case these books were used largely for pencil sketches and rarely to experiment with techniques or to practise a newly acquired skill.
82. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen ranged from very good to satisfactory, but was satisfactory overall. In one lesson that was barely satisfactory the teacher's 'example' detracted from pupils' ideas as too many tried to copy it. In the very good lesson pupils watched in rapt attention as their teacher demonstrated a range of printing techniques, prior to selecting one to try. The teacher's enthusiasm shone through the demonstration and helped to enthuse the class.
83. The co-ordinator has worked hard to secure Artmark Gold for the school – recognition of the curriculum time devoted to the arts as a whole. Pupils benefit from plentiful and exciting extra-curricular opportunities including an art club run by a professional artist. In addition, the school has an arts week. The co-ordinator leads the subject well by, for example, offering advice to colleagues, and organising workshops such as paper making, weaving and felt making. There is no assessment in the subject at the moment but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop one.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. The school is a caring community, offering pupils good support and guidance. Good programmes of sex and health education and drugs awareness prepare them to be

responsible teenagers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, elected as school councillors, quickly learn the disciplines of committee work. In Year 6, pupils have numerous leadership responsibilities as house captains, prefects and *Buddies*.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
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	3
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	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3

The effectiveness of management

3

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