

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THORNLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Thornley, Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114146

Headteacher: Mrs D Edwards

Lead inspector: Mrs J Randall

Dates of inspection: 28 – 30 June 2004

Inspection number: 258192

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:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	175
School address:	Cooper's Terrace Thornley Durham County Durham
Postcode:	DH6 3DZ
Telephone number:	01429 820280
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Howe

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small primary school, supported by the Single Regeneration Budget, and serving a village that was once a mining community and now suffering some social and economic deprivation. The school has 175 boys and girls aged three to 11-years-old, including 28 part-time Nursery pupils. Only a very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and these are of British Asian heritage. No pupils speak English an additional language or are Travellers or refugee/asylum seekers. The percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals (39.3 per cent) is above average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (21.7 per cent) is above average and two pupils have statements of special educational need for learning difficulties. Pupil mobility is not an issue for this school. Attainment on entry is well below average. Skills are particularly low in communication, language and literacy.

The school received the Activemark in 2002 for its work in physical education, the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 for its work in literacy and numeracy and the Schools' Achievement Award in 2000 for improving standards. The school has a new headteacher since the previous inspection. At the time of the inspection one teacher was on a temporary contract.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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11370 6	G Marsland	Lay inspector	
31175	A Allison	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs
1744	J Thomas	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many very good features and giving very good value for money. The leadership and management by the head and deputy headteacher are very good and, together with the good quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning, give rise to the very good achievement of all pupils. Despite attainment on entry being well below average, by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards are well above average by the end of Year 6;
- the very clear vision, very high aspirations and determination of the headteacher, with the very strong support of the deputy headteacher, enable all pupils to achieve very well;
- pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well because of the very high expectations;
- pupils' confidence and self-esteem is very good because the school's ethos makes very good efforts to include, and meet the needs of all pupils;
- the provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is not as good as in Years 1 to 6;
- the field and parts of the school are not accessible for pupils with mobility difficulties.

The improvement since the previous inspection is very good. All the issues for improvement have been very well addressed. The leadership and management are now strengths of the school and the key to its success in raising achievement and attainment and in supporting staff development. Standards have improved and continue to rise steadily.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

**Overall achievement is very good.** On entry to the school the overall level of prior attainment is well below average overall particularly in communication, language and literacy. The school works very hard to gain the well above average standards by the end of Year 6. The very high quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is a significant feature of this success. Standards in the goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year are below average in communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development. Standards in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development are similar to those expected nationally. Gains in attainment are faster in the Nursery than in the Reception class although children do well in writing in this class. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is similar to that expected nationally in reading, writing and information and communication technology. In mathematics attainment is above that expected nationally. In the national tests at the end of

2003 standards were below average in reading, above average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared with schools with similar percentages of pupils claiming free school meals, standards were above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Attainment is well above average at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education despite this year group having significantly more lower-attaining pupils than in 2003 when standards were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science in the national tests at the end of Year 6. When compared with schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 2, standards were in the highest five per cent nationally in English, well above average in mathematics and below average in science. **Pupils' personal development is good**; they have good attitudes to school and behave well. Attendance is below average, mainly due to holidays during school time although the school does all it can to improve attendance.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.** It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 to 6. The higher quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is a significant strength of the school and a key factor in the very high achievement and attainment at the end of Year 6. In these classes the pace and challenge of lessons is very high and teachers have very high expectations of effort and behaviour and use a wide range of teaching strategies to make lessons interesting and exciting. The overall quality of the curriculum is good. The very good provision for religious education is a strength of the school and contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. Opportunities for participation in sport are very good. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but the outdoor area for the Nursery and Reception classes is very small and under-used by the Reception class who do not have direct access. The access to different parts of school and to the field is by way of many steps and pupils with mobility difficulties cannot reach these independently. Resources are satisfactory overall but in the Nursery and Reception classes are dated and worn. The school cares for its pupils well and the links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good. Governance is satisfactory.** The governing body meets all legal responsibilities. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The very high aspirations, commitment and very hard work of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are very good examples for all staff and pupils to follow. The school's very strong commitment to help and provide for all enables all pupils to achieve very well. Management is very good. The actions taken are very effective in helping the school to raise standards.

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

Parents think well of the school. They particularly value the systems for promoting good behaviour and personal development and the extra support provided for those who need it. Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and well supported. Year 6 pupils commented on the interesting lessons, particularly religious education, music, and information and communication technology.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve provision in the Foundation Stage;
- make all efforts possible to improve independent access around the school and to the field for pupils with mobility difficulties.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Achievement is very high** and standards are very good at the end of Year 6 and all groups of pupils make considerable gains in their learning, particularly in Years 4 to 6. This is because of the very good leadership and management, the good quality of teaching and learning, the enriched curriculum and the very good use of the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in all subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because of the good quality of teaching, learning, curriculum and the care and concern for all.
- Attainment is well above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education at the end of Year 6.
- Attainment is above average in mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are used very well as tools for learning in all subjects.
- There has been a steady improvement in results in the national tests over the last four years.
- Standards in the goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year are below average in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development and some aspects of physical development.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.1 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (27.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.2 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.4 (28.9)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Achievement is very high. On entry to the school the overall level of prior attainment is well below average. Skills are particularly low in communication, language and literacy and the school works very hard to gain well above average standards by the end of Year 6. The very high quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is a significant feature

of this success. There is no significant difference in the achievement and attainment of boys and girls and all groups of pupils achieve in line with their peers. The skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are used very well as tools for learning in all subjects and this use contributes very significantly to very high achievement and standards.

2. Standards in the goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year are below average in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development and some aspects of physical development. Just over half the children are attaining the nationally expected levels in these areas of learning. Standards in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are similar to those expected nationally. Gains in attainment are faster in the Nursery than in the Reception class because Nursery staff are more adept at challenging children through their questions and discussions.
3. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is similar to that expected nationally in reading, writing and information and communication technology. In mathematics attainment is above that expected nationally. In the national tests at the end of 2003 standards were below average in reading, above average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Standards have improved significantly in mathematics. Compared with schools with similar percentages of pupils claiming free school meals, standards were above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils gaining the average Level 2 was very close to average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well below average in mathematics, below average in reading and above average in writing. This year group contained several pupils with lower attainment who did well to reach the lowest band of Level 2 and one pupil with very low attainment joined the school in Year 2.
4. Attainment is well above average at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. In the national tests in 2003 standards were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. When compared with schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 2 standards were in the highest five per cent in English, well above average in mathematics and below average in science. One hundred per cent of pupils gained the average Level 4 in all three subjects. There is a steady improvement in results over the last four years in all three subjects although results in science were marginally lower in 2003. In English and mathematics the rise has been dramatic and pupils have made very good progress since they were in Year 2 because of the high quality of teaching in Years 4-6.
5. In 2003 the school reached its target for the percentage of pupils to reach Level 4 in English and exceeded it in mathematics. Targets in English and mathematics are lower for 2004, reflecting the difference in the year group, although the targets for the percentage of pupils to reach Level 5 are slightly higher and the school is likely to reach them. Scores in national tests compare favourably with local averages and benchmarking groups.
6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with the highest level of special educational need, achieve very well because the school wants the very best for all pupils and

so these pupils receive good teaching and other support. The satellite class for English and mathematics in Years 4-6 is very effective in boosting attainment for pupils with lower attainment and those pupils with special educational needs, as is all the other extra support throughout the school. The smaller teaching groups allow well for extra challenge and provision for higher-attaining pupils and the progress of pupils identified as gifted and talented is carefully tracked. The school records and analyses the progress of all pupils very well and quickly picks up on any pupil not making the expected progress.

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

Pupils have **good** attitudes to school. They are very confident and behave **well**. Personal development is **well cultivated**. The school has **very good** procedures to promote good attendance but this remains below average.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very confident and have high self-esteem.
- Pupils respond very well to the very high expectations set for them and develop good attitudes to school and good behaviour.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and so pupils' personal development is good.
- The freedom from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment contributes to the very good, harmonious relationships in the school.
- The school works very hard to improve the levels of attendance but this remains below average.

## Commentary

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	0.3
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.

7. Although attendance is below the national median the school has very good procedures to promote good attendance. The main cause of the below average authorised absence is the holidays taken in term time. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national figure. A few families are not co-operative over ensuring that their children come to school. Punctuality is good.

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
171	0	1
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

8. There has been one, appropriate, permanent exclusion in the months prior to the inspection after thorough strategies of support have been provided. Pupils behave well as the very high expectations for behaviour are clearly communicated to all. Pupils know the school rules and have the opportunity to agree rules for their classroom. Pupils understand well the hierarchy of rewards and sanctions, are courteous and speak well to all adults. There are very good systems to ensure pupils are free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. Racist incidents are formally recorded and there has been only one in recent years. Pupils have a mature attitude and can talk about the different forms of bullying with knowledge and understanding. They do not believe that bullying is a problem in this school.
9. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to school life, find their lessons interesting and develop an enthusiasm for learning. As a result, they listen attentively and

engage in thoughtful discussions with confidence. They relate well to each other and enjoy helping each other in lessons and talking about the learning challenge. They do this in a focused way whether working in pairs, ability or mixed ability groups and maintain concentration well. Pupils' high confidence and self-esteem results in them working hard by themselves and they try to solve problems on their own before asking for help. They have good relationships with staff and each other and all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, feel valued, supported and encouraged to do their best. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy school. Their confidence and self-esteem is similar to that of other pupils. This is because the school values the contributions they make in whole class and group sessions.

10. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It enhances pupils' personal development well. The school's values are reinforced by the displays prominently placed around the school. Religious education provides a very strong influence on pupils' good personal development. The teaching styles observed encourage and value pupils' questions and encourage their own thoughts, ideas and concerns. Pupils have very good opportunities to explore their own set of values and beliefs and those of others and older pupils develop insight as well as knowledge and reason. During the week of the inspection pupils from all classes in the school were enthralled at the hatching of newborn chicks in an incubator showing care and concern for the natural world.
11. The school has a very positive ethos that develops pupils' good morality. They understand and talk about issues, for example, right from wrong and racism, and believe that teachers help them to have good moral attitudes. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore the responsibilities of living in a community and given opportunities to develop these in practice, for example, through the school council and the buddy system where older pupils act as playground friends. Pupils mature well as they are given respect and trusted to undertake a progressive range of responsibilities as they move through the school. They take a pride in this, for example, in manning the office telephone at lunchtime.
12. Social development is promoted well. Pupils' work and play together harmoniously, listening to instruction and contributing to debate. By Year 6 they are enterprising and take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. The school provides good opportunity for them to consider the views of others. They are encouraged to think and talk. They are interested in other people and seek information. For example, the Year 6 pupils e-mail Hungarian children and are looking forward to meeting them shortly. Pupils' enjoy the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities that provide valuable links to the wider community. Children in the Reception class meet the nationally expected targets for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception year.
13. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have knowledge of other cultures and understanding develops very well as they mature. The religious education curriculum provides sensitive opportunities for assumptions and values to be challenged. Pupils have good opportunities to develop language so they can learn to understand the significance of images and items of religious significance of others as well as the traditions to which they belong. They learn about different cultures in history, about different artists and their work and listen to music from different cultures. Pupils in Year 6 spoke well about the music of the 1960s and told of their enjoyment of the works of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **good**. The curriculum is broad and enriched by visits and visitors, and this, combined with the overall good teaching and learning, contributes well to pupils' very high achievement. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 to 6. The higher quality of teaching in the two classes for pupils in Years 4 to 6 is a significant feature of the very high attainment at the end of Year 6.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 to 6 teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of subjects.
- Teaching is strongest in Years 4 to 6.
- The opportunities for pupils to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are a key feature of the very high achievement and attainment.
- There is a good focus on investigation and problem solving in mathematics and science.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and participation and good management strategies for behaviour and engage pupils' interest well.
- Assessment procedures are good.
- In the Reception class the teacher does not interact well enough with children when working on group activities to extend learning or vocabulary and children often wait too long for turns to do things.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	21 (52.5%)	10 (25.0%)	3 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.*

14. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the Foundation Stage it is satisfactory. Some good lessons were observed in the Nursery and three lessons in the Reception class were unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactory teaching is particularly characterised by unsuitable whole class activities where children waited too long for a turn and lost interest in the lesson. Classroom management strategies are not strong enough to ensure full attention. The teacher does not interact well enough with children when working on group activities to extend learning or vocabulary. The teaching assistant is not always used well enough to create smaller groups for teaching and she is not always fully briefed about what she is expected to do, although she is effective when given the opportunity. In the Nursery all adults take every opportunity to develop language and communication skills and to extend children's learning with appropriate questions and involvement in imaginative activities.
15. In Years 1 to 6 teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this is very good in religious education because of the quality of support provided by the subject leader. In mathematics and science there is a good focus on investigating and problem solving and this ensures that understanding is good and the knowledge and skills learned are used and remembered. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies are used effectively to teach basic skills. Teachers plan very good opportunities for pupils to use and consolidate these skills well in other subjects, where they research and write independently and for a variety of purposes and extend their skills in interesting ways. These opportunities are a significant reason for the very high attainment at the end of Year 6. Teachers use information and communication technology, particularly the interactive whiteboards and the Internet, very well in lessons to add interest and enjoyment. They plan many opportunities for pupils to use and consolidate the skills learned in whole class lessons in the computer suite, adding well

to pupils' confidence, interest and excitement in learning, contributing very well to the very high achievement and attainment.

16. All groups of pupils are included well in learning. Lessons are carefully planned to take account of the differing learning needs of groups and individuals, based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of pupils' prior attainment through the overall good assessment procedures. The match and challenge of tasks and the level of support ensure that good learning takes place. Lessons have clear aims that are shared with pupils. Marking is thorough and up-to-date. In English it gives feedback about improvement as well as praise. In mathematics and science there are some instances where there is good feedback but these instances are infrequent. There are a few instances of inaccurate marking and also occasional lapses in the use of correct terminology in mathematics.
17. Teachers' planning for pupils with special educational needs stems from pupils' targets in their individual education plans and tasks are matched well to prior learning. Teachers and learning support assistants provide good help for all pupils with special educational needs, improving attainment. Where the school has decided that pupils should be taught separately from their class, for example in mathematics in Year 3 and in the satellite group in Years 4 to 6, help and progress for these pupils is very good.
18. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and participation. They have good classroom management strategies for behaviour and some very difficult pupils are managed very well, particularly in Year 6. Pupils work hard because the lessons are interesting, challenging and the pace is good. The pace, challenge and expectations are very high in Years 4 to 6 and this particularly good teaching is a strong reason why attainment is well above average at the end of Year 6. Skilled questioning and the requirement for pupils to explain their answers feature in all good lessons and this makes pupils think and reason for themselves and gives teachers opportunities to assess understanding. They use this knowledge to adjust their plans for the next lesson. In satisfactory lessons, shortcomings relate to missed opportunities to check on reasons for error, the pace is slower and classroom management is not as good in good and very good lessons. Homework, particularly reading and research, makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' learning.

## **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum overall is **good** and contributes effectively to pupils' very good achievement. All pupils experience a broad and rich curriculum enhanced well by visits, visitors and provision for sport and the arts. The emphasis on the personal and social development of all pupils, building up confidence and self-esteem, is a significant factor in their very good achievement. Overall the accommodation and resources are satisfactory but independent access to all parts of the school and the field for pupils with mobility difficulties is unsatisfactory. Resources in the Nursery and Reception classes are dated and worn and the outside area small.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The breadth of curricular opportunities enriched well by visits and visitors, including the emphasis on the teaching of skills in mathematics and science, supports the very good achievement.
- The commitment to include and provide for all, including provision for pupils with special educational needs and the higher-attaining pupils, is a very strong feature of the provision.
- Provision for sport is very good and for the arts is good.



- The preparation of all pupils for the next stage of their education is good.
- Resources in the Nursery and Reception classes are dated and worn and the provision for working outside is unsatisfactory.
- Independent access for pupils with mobility difficulties is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

19. The school has successfully tackled the weaknesses in the curriculum identified in the previous report. Shortcomings in science and medium-term planning in particular have been addressed effectively. All requirements of the National Curriculum, religious education and collective worship are met and are enhanced by a number of visits and visitors. The outcome is a curriculum that has good breadth and balance and is enriched well.
20. The arrangements for promoting pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education through a carefully planned programme of lessons are supported by teaching in religious education, physical education and science. Additionally, the school nurse contributes to the provision for sex education and the police, as part of their 'Safety Carousel' programme, complement well the school's teaching about the use and misuse of drugs. Personal, social and health education is a thread that runs through all aspects of school life and is promoted effectively by all staff with the headteacher and deputy headteacher leading by example.
21. The confidence and self-esteem that the school promotes effectively through personal and social education enables all pupils to achieve very well. This was shown in discussions with pupils in Year 6 and in the confident way in which members of the school council gave a presentation using information and communication technology to illustrate their contribution to the life of the school. In addition there is a special curriculum programme, in conjunction with the local secondary school, for pupils towards the end of Year 6. As a result all pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
22. The school provides a good range of visits and visitors that adds significantly to the quality of the curriculum, as shown by the partnership with Beamish Museum and the residential weekend for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the arts, for example a sculptor was an artist-in-residence, working on a project with pupils. Pupils have opportunities to learn a woodwind instrument. The performances of musicals, such as the present one based on Kipling's *Jungle Book*, for their peers, parents and others in the community, give pupils good opportunities to consolidate and extend their drama, dance, instrumental and singing skills. The school also makes very good provision for pupils to participate in different sports including sports festivals with other schools. Activities such as these raise confidence and self-esteem and contribute well to achievement.
23. The school is very strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils have the chance to benefit from the learning opportunities provided. The school identifies those pupils who may have special educational needs or are higher-attaining pupils and makes good provision for them. In lessons, tasks are planned to match pupils' prior attainment and to meet the needs of all pupils. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are put together well. They enable teachers and learning support assistants to provide good help for these pupils. For example, the arrangements to support literacy and numeracy skills for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 (the satellite group) are effective and very effective for the two pupils with the highest level of special educational needs.
24. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. There is a generous number of teachers, supported by good learning support assistants. Resources are satisfactory overall. These contribute well to the provision for pupils. However, the accommodation within the school and access to the field for pupils with mobility difficulties are unsatisfactory. The school has to supplement the funding for pupils with special educational needs to provide additional support

throughout the day for pupils with mobility difficulties because of this weakness in the accommodation. The outdoor area for Nursery and Reception children is very small and the Reception class do not have direct access although it is very close. Resources for these two classes are dated and worn, particularly for outdoor activity, and the outdoor area is under-used by the Reception class and planning for this aspect of learning has some shortcomings.

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

The arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. Involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know the pupils and their families well, enabling them to support the pupils' academic and personal development successfully.
- Induction procedures are well planned and pupils settle swiftly into school.
- The class and school councils ensure that the pupils have an opportunity to offer suggestions and voice their opinions.

## Commentary

25. The school provides a safe and caring environment in which the pupils feel secure. Pupils are supervised well around the school building at breaks and lunchtimes and routines are well established. Hazards are identified and resolved swiftly and the school provides the pupils with lessons covering road safety and cycling proficiency. Arrangements for child protection are good and meet the requirements of the local Area Child Protection Committee. Teaching staff receive regular training in child protection procedures and lunchtime assistants are vigilant and the headteacher informs them immediately of any concerns.
26. Staff have a high level of concern for the pupils' well being. Although the monitoring of the pupils' personal development is informal, the quality of the relationships within the school ensures that it is nevertheless effective. The most vulnerable pupils are given additional support and written records are kept and shared with staff. Personal and social education is timetabled as a lesson but is also taught within assemblies and lessons such as religious education and science. This is also supported by a discussion period called 'circle time' where the pupils can talk openly about issues such as behaviour and friendship. The class and school councils also provide further opportunities for discussion.
27. Older pupils negotiate their targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy with their class teachers to enable them to assess the progress that they have made and identify areas for improvement. The progress of all is carefully monitored and supported. The school reviews the progress that pupils with special educational needs make in relation to their targets very carefully. Individual education plans identify key areas for improvement for pupils with concise targets with clear criteria by which to measure success. The requirements of the statement of special educational needs for the pupils with the highest level of special educational needs are fully met.
28. Well-planned induction procedures in the Nursery enable children to settle swiftly into school life. During the induction visit parents are given a 'welcome pack' explaining school procedures and policies. Children are slowly introduced into regular sessions to increase their confidence and allow the staff to identify their individual needs. Entry into the Reception class for new pupils is also staggered and parents are welcome to stay in the classroom until their child has settled.
29. The class and school councils meet regularly to discuss ideas of interest to pupils. This provides a good forum for the pupils to express their views and make a difference to their life in school. They know that their views are taken seriously and when possible acted upon. They have discussed pupils' behaviour with staff and, in response to their request, new play equipment has been provided and changes made to the lunchtime arrangements and toilet facilities.

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

The school has **good** links with parents. Links with the community and other schools are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality information is provided to keep parents informed of their child's progress and life in school.
- There is a good degree of support from parents and regular consultation takes place.
- Good links with the community and local schools and colleges enrich pupils' learning.
- Very good links with the local secondary school ensure the smooth transition into the next phase of education.

## Commentary

30. The overall quality of information for parents is good. The school brochure, governing body's annual report to parents and monthly newsletter provide a wide range of information and news. Curriculum information is provided in the school brochure and workshops have been held to explain the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Opportunities have also been provided for the pupils and parents to work together during information and communication technology and numeracy sessions. Pupils' progress reports are good and include an acknowledgement slip where parents can add their comments. Targets for improvement in most subjects are given to inform parents how their children can improve their work. The school ensures that parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and they are invited to discussions when needs are identified by the school. Parents are also invited to meetings when the individual education plans and statements are reviewed so that they know what progress has been made, discuss what the next targets are and how they may help pupils at home. To help this, parents have their own copy of the individual education plans. Parents value the support provided by the school.
31. The school is actively involved in seeking parents' views. Questionnaires are sent home to ascertain their opinion on school issues such as the Home/School Agreement. A number of parent volunteers regularly help in school and the Friends Association raises a considerable amount of additional funds for the school and local charities. This has benefited the pupils by providing additional resources such as computers and play equipment.
32. The school's good links with the local community and good use of community resources make a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of the wider context of their learning. For example, visits to museums and National Trust sites enhance the curriculum. The school is also involved in community sporting activities and has hosted art workshops. The emergency services are frequent visitors to the school to promote pupils' safety. Links with local primary schools are good and sporting events are arranged. The school provides work placements for the local college.
33. Strong links with the local secondary school ensure a smooth transition into the next phase of the pupils' education. Induction visits take place over a two-day period and 'taster' lessons are given. Good links with secondary staff, such as the Year 7 tutor and special educational needs co-ordinator, are established and links with the music and modern foreign language departments are established as early as Years 4/5. Year 6 pupils have used the secondary school facilities for subjects such as design and technology and curriculum links are also in place for English, mathematics and religious education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good. Governance is satisfactory.** The governing body meets all legal responsibilities. The leadership by the headteacher is very good. The very high aspirations, commitment and very hard work of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher set very good examples for all staff and pupils to follow. The school's very strong commitment to help and provide for all enables all pupils to achieve very well. Management is very good. The actions taken are very effective in helping the school to raise standards.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very clear vision, very high aspirations and determination of the headteacher, with the very strong support of the deputy headteacher, enables all pupils to achieve very well and standards have risen.
- The very good analysis of national and other tests, combined with a thorough self-evaluation and review of most aspects of school life and performance, is helping to raise achievement and standards.
- The school's very strong commitment to the care and provision for all individuals and groups enables all pupils to achieve very well.
- The headteacher and other staff set very good examples and motivate pupils very well.
- Very good strategic planning is reflected in financial management that helps the school to achieve its identified priorities with the full support of the governing body.

## **Particular aids or barriers to raising achievement.**

- Generous staffing levels, combined with training for all staff, have improved the learning opportunities for all pupils to very good effect.
- A small number of pupils are erratic attenders and the low level of interest and the attitudes to school of a few parents to supporting learning restricts the progress of some pupils.

## **Commentary**

34. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear vision, very high aspirations and a determination to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity and is encouraged to achieve as well as possible. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example and are creating a team with similar high aspirations. The strategies to promote the confidence and self-esteem of all pupils and the continuing improvement in teaching have led to higher standards and very good achievement by all pupils.
35. Staff set a very good example for pupils, especially in promoting good relationships and in doing their best. These good relationships make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their very good achievement. The school's policies, planning and teaching reflect a very high level of commitment to providing for all pupils and groups. This is shown in the classrooms by teachers, particularly by those who teach the oldest pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. The good planning, with imaginative, interesting tasks that demand a high level of application by pupils, including those with special educational needs and those pupils with higher attainment, fosters achievement very effectively.
36. The school has successfully tackled the main points for action from the previous inspection. The school has remedied the weaknesses, particularly in science, with a consequent improvement in teaching and in the standards attained by all pupils. The subject leaders have a more effective role since the previous inspection in leading and managing their subject, including planned opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning and take action as a result of this. This, too, is driving standards upwards. Improved assessment procedures have also made a good contribution to raising standards in English, mathematics and science.
37. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and realistic. It is very closely linked to the standards attained by pupils. The school analyses thoroughly the results of national and other tests and uses the information gained very well to take action to improve standards. Also the school checks carefully on the learning of all pupils to see whether they are making the progress predicted on the basis of assessments. This information enables the school to identify areas for the school improvement plan very effectively and to plan accordingly. The strategies to improve standards in science and mathematics, by focusing on investigations and problem

solving, exemplify this. The school's self-evaluation is also tied to a detailed review of the performance of teachers and target setting that improves pupils' performance by focusing on improving teaching and learning by planned professional development. This is exemplified by the identification of a need to improve provision in physical education that has led to participation in the School Sports Co-ordinator programme. Professional development for staff, for example in science, has been effective in raising attainment. Very good financial management has enabled the school to maintain a high level of staffing that has made a significant contribution to the achievement of all pupils.

38. The governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily by the way it both challenges and supports the school. The visits by link governors and the headteacher's detailed reports ensure that the governing body is kept well informed about the strengths and areas for development. This knowledge enables the governing body to make a sound contribution to the school improvement plan. The governing body is well informed about standards in the school compared with other schools. There are several new members of the governing body who are developing their expertise with good help from longer serving members. The special educational needs governor is new to the role. She is gaining in awareness as the school employs her at lunchtimes. The headteacher, as the special educational needs co-ordinator, keeps the governing body well informed of the provision made.
39. Funding from the Single Regeneration Budget and other sources has been used well to provide interactive whiteboards that foster teaching and learning very well. When taking decisions close attention is paid to 'Best Value' principles. The school budget is lower than the national average for schools of this type. This means that when spending, attainment on entry and the very high achievement of pupils is considered, the school gives very good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	473,847	Balance from previous year	34,207
Total expenditure	478,647	Balance carried forward to the next	29,405
Expenditure per pupil	2,532		

*At the time of the inspection the school did not have the final figures for the year April 2003 to March 2004.*



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

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

The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory overall except in physical development and mathematical development where it is unsatisfactory. Some lessons in the Nursery were good and three lessons in the Reception class were unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning was particularly characterised by unsuitable whole class activities, where pupils waited far too long for a turn and consequently lost interest. The teacher does not interact well enough with children in activities to extend and develop learning and vocabulary and some activities are unstructured experiences with too little attention paid to the ongoing development of skills and concepts. The teaching assistant is not always used well enough to enable children to work in small groups and be completely involved in learning although when this does take place she is effective. In the Nursery there is a sound balance between adult-directed group activity and opportunities for children to initiate their own learning and to experiment and imagine. This learning is well supported by good interaction from all adults in the Nursery who question to make children think and constantly enrich vocabulary. The Nursery classroom is cramped and the furniture is not fully suitable for Nursery use although best use is made of it. Resources in both classes are dated and worn and the school lacks some of the resources normally found such as large blocks for creating structures and large construction kits for outdoor use. The outside area is very small and not all resources have real learning potential. The area is not directly accessible for Reception class pupils. This class does not make sufficiently good use of it and generally the work is not planned for the development of skills that are more advanced than those developed in the Nursery. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. The satisfactory assessment procedures are not always used to plan opportunities to develop learning for groups with different levels of prior attainment.

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

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

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

- There is good learning about other cultures.
- Behaviour in the Reception class is not as good as that in the Nursery.
- Children generally co-operate well and speak freely in discussions.

#### **Commentary**

40. Children in both classes respond well to adults. They settle well into the routines of the Nursery and learn to take turns, co-operate well and to speak freely in discussions. They listen to stories and tidy away at the end of sessions. They are proud of their 'smiley faces', given for clearing up and other social learning. In the Reception class the teacher does not have secure strategies for encouraging good behaviour and children take too long to respond to instructions. Children generally manage their own clothing when changing for physical activity. They enjoy eating snacks together and say 'please' and 'thank you' without prompting. Children learn well about other cultures, for example when Nursery children made Diva lamps and rangoli patterns and Reception children

heard stories from the Buddhist faith. Nursery children very much enjoyed making fruit kebabs and exploring different fruits when hearing the story *Handra's Surprise*, set in Africa. By the end of the Reception year most children meet the nationally required targets.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery this aspect of learning permeates every activity.
- There are too many undemanding work sheets in the Reception class at the expense of opportunities for writing for their own purpose and interest.

## Commentary

41. In the Nursery all adults interact well with children to develop speaking and listening skills. Children come into the Nursery with particularly low skills and the staff develop language and vocabulary well. Children listen to stories and extend their skills well in discussion. The nursery nurse effectively drew attention to the author and illustrator of the book and sensitively improved children's language in discussion. Real fruit was used to illustrate and to generate interest in the story. Children begin to learn the sounds of letters through incidental discussion, for example, of the days of the week and learn to write well-formed letters for their age. The writing area has plenty of different papers and writing materials but is uninspiring. Various initiatives contribute well to the development of literacy skills. Children visit the library each week for a 'story sack' session and the 'Dads and Lads' training session helped parents to support learning with stories and rhymes and games. In the Reception class children write well for their age when writing freely, as shown in the work on pushing and pulling. This writing is a strength of their learning. However, the work scrutinised showed too many printed worksheets where the work was undemanding and required filling in missing letters and copying single words only and all children, regardless of prior attainment, complete the same sheets. About half the children can join in with the teacher in reading a large class book and one or two knew that there were rhyming words. All children know that print is read from left to right and higher-attainers construct and write a sentence with correctly formed letters and spaces between words. Children with average attainment use their knowledge of sounds to write words and record simple sentences with help. There is no area to encourage children to write for themselves as part of their exploration and imaginary work. Interaction from the teacher is not always good enough to develop children's speaking and listening skills as fully as possible and helpers and teaching assistants are not sufficiently well briefed to do this to best possible advantage. About half the children meet the nationally expected learning goals for this area of learning at the end of the Reception year.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Reception class is unsatisfactory.
- There are many opportunities in the Nursery for children to gain mathematical understanding.

## Commentary

42. In the Nursery children count together the number present, for example, and most of the older Nursery children can count to ten. In a music session, the youngest children counted the sides of the triangle and about half knew the name of the shape. In the

Reception class both lessons were unsatisfactory. The pace of learning in whole class sessions was far too slow because it took too long for children to have their turn at placing a car in various positions on a number line to learn ordinal numbers. The lack of challenge in these lessons also related to the lack of match of tasks to children's different learning needs. Most children can count to ten and order numbers. Average and above average attaining children draw objects to match numerals and mostly write these correctly. Children with higher attainment add up to ten, count and order to 20, know simple shapes and measure by counting non-standard measures. About half the children are attaining the expected learning goals in this area of learning.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of visits and visitors.
- Work on the natural world is a strength of this area of learning.
- The level of interaction by the teacher with the groups in the Reception class is not sufficient to challenge children to their full potential.

### **Commentary**

43. In the Nursery children have many opportunities to explore the world of technology through working with construction kits, although there are no opportunities for using tools with wood for example, and not all equipment is readily accessible because of limitations in the storage furniture. They have learned much about dinosaurs and enjoyed investigating exotic fruits. Outside, an on-going activity with the nursery nurse involved driving the bikes around a marked road and coming to the service area to 'mend' them. This generated much language work. The display of the life cycle of the butterfly included children's work of good quality. The role-play area in the Reception class includes construction activities based around space and rockets. The class book and display on mini beasts shows a good development of knowledge and understanding. The lesson based around 'how things move' provided a number of opportunities to experiment and children at the water tray 'discovered' that the greater the volume of water poured into the water mill the faster the wheels turned. However, the level of interaction by the teacher with the groups was not sufficient to challenge children to their full potential. Children in both classes use computers competently for their age although children in the Reception class spent an undemanding session in the computer suite playing with two programs and printing off pictures to colour-in and children using a programmable toy spent too long waiting for a turn. Both classes have a good range of visits and visitors including visits to a farm and a nature park and visits from the police and a mother with a new baby. Children were enthralled at the hatching of baby chicks. Most children will attain the nationally expected learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outside area is very small and the equipment is largely dated and worn and children in the Reception class do not use the area as much as they should.
- Too little learning takes place in the Reception class because too little attention is paid to the progressive development of skills.

### **Commentary**

44. The outside area is very small and the equipment is largely dated and worn. There is a track around which children ride bikes but it provides little challenge for Reception children. The school lacks large construction equipment for children to build structures for themselves on which to climb and explore. Some equipment has too little learning potential but takes up space. The children in the Reception class do not use the area as much as they should and when they do there is no planning for the progressive development of skills, as they get older and more agile. Nursery children satisfactorily used the field for singing games and enjoyed watching where their shadows were. The formal physical education lesson in the Reception class was unsatisfactory as time was wasted choosing teams and waiting for turns in relay races. Too little learning took place as no attention was paid to the development of skills and there was no opportunity for children to explore what they could do or use apparatus in a creative way. Children are unlikely to reach all the required goals in this area of learning because of the weaknesses in the outside provision but most achieve the targets in relation to using small apparatus in the classroom, for example, in controlling the mouse on the computer and using pencils and paint brushes and fitting together pieces of construction equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are satisfactory opportunities for children to paint, print and model.
- The outdoor area is not used well enough for Reception children to imagine or be creative.

### **Commentary**

45. In the Nursery children have many opportunities for creative development. They paint, make collages, print with sponges and model with clay. Older children know the names of colours that they have used. Creativity is more limited when shapes are pre-cut for children to stick or when they colour-in pre-drawn pictures. They use their imagination well in role-play, for example, in the 'garage' and the 'ice cream shop'. They enjoyed 'planting' in the grow bags. They know a range of songs and rhymes from memory and use musical instruments to accompany their singing. The youngest Nursery children thoroughly enjoyed this session but as yet have very little sense of rhythm or tune. The teacher encouraged them to listen to different sounds of the instruments and a few know the names of these. In the Reception class children imagine when they work in the role-play area based on a space theme. They have too few opportunities to be creative in using the outdoor area that are appropriate to their level of development. They made lotus flowers in connection with a study of Buddhism with good examples of 'kind thoughts'. They have explored patterns by rolling various implements in paint and

investigated patterns made when blowing paint. They make puppets using split pins to make moving parts and flowers from egg cartons. The listen and play area contains African instruments, adding well to children's cultural development. Most children will be expected to reach the nationally expected learning goals by the end of the Reception year.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 and continuing to rise.
- Skills are used very well in other subjects.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and inspire pupils to achieve their best.
- The very good leadership and management is a key factor in the good provision.
- Good attitudes to the subject have a positive affect on their learning and progress.

## Commentary

46. Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing are in line with those found nationally. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average. Standards have been rising consistently over the last few years and the attainment of higher-attaining pupils has risen significantly since the previous inspection. This is because the school has focused on the development of teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants receive on-going training and the subject leader models lessons. Reading has been taken out of literacy time so that pupils have sustained time to develop a range of writing skills. Opportunities to read and write are developed very well in all subjects and word processing is used very well to enable pupils to refine and edit their work. As a result, the provision has become more vibrant and consequently pupils have very positive attitudes and are enthusiastic about their work. Pupils with special educational needs have had their learning requirements carefully scrutinised. This has given rise to a satellite class of Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils who require similar concentrated support receiving additional lessons together and this is successful in raising attainment of the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and in providing more opportunity for challenge for the remainder of pupils in smaller classes. The extra class has the added flexibility of pupils joining or leaving the group as necessary. This close attention enables overall achievement to be very good. Pupils make particularly good progress in Years 4 to 6 where teaching is at its best. There is no variation in the achievement of pupils with different learning, social or cultural needs, or between girls and boys.
47. The school provides many interesting opportunities to encourage pupils to listen, speak, read and write. There are regular opportunities to take part in performance, attend day and residential visits and receive expert visitors. Pupils listen and speak very well because teachers give good explanations and use questioning skills that actively encourage pupils to think, develop appropriate subject vocabulary and answer appropriately. They are given many opportunities to collaborate with each other and engage in very focused discussion. Pupils are challenged well, shown in a lesson for Year 4 and 5 pupils when pairs of pupils challenged each other to think of appropriate rhyming words for their poetry.
48. Basic skills are thoroughly taught. Pupils use an appropriate range of reading strategies as their fluency improves. Pupils in Year 2 decode words by sounding out sounds and, as they progress, also use clues from the text and re-read the section to gain meaning. Year 6 pupils read with fluency and accuracy, using very good strategies to decode unfamiliar words. The use of information and communication technology has broadened pupils' access to reference texts and the older pupils have good research skills. The research on rivers in Years 4 and 5 extended the reading and use of language. The school gives pupils a love for reading as teachers give them the opportunity to listen to and read a range of fiction stories and poems. Pupils make good use of the library that has an adequate supply of fiction and non-fiction books and are encouraged to take books home.
49. Pupils' write for a wide range of purposes in many other subjects. Teachers use very good examples of poetry on which to model style and technique. This stimulus enabled Year 6 to produce very good work in the style of Tennyson. They clearly enjoyed the challenge and were able to identify and reproduce figurative language, for example, metaphor and rhyming couplets. Teachers support writing well in class by displaying grammar rules and common words. Pupils in Year 1 showed good capability in ordering a science text sequence by confidently using appropriate words and independently using the classroom spelling prompts. Standards in handwriting are good; pupils take pride in their work and present it well.
50. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan imaginative lessons to teach specific learning aims that are shared with pupils. The best teaching incorporates all the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy whilst developing a specific aim and challenge for pupils' learning. In satisfactory lessons the pace of learning was not as great as there were missed opportunities to develop vocabulary.

Lessons are well pitched to the learning needs of all pupils as they take account of pupils' prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from the teaching assistants and in the satellite group for Years 4 to 6. Marking is very good; it gives very good feedback to pupils by praising what they have done well and informing them about required improvements. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to learning.

51. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader has a high level of knowledge and expertise that, together with her own very good teaching, enables her to be a very strong role model and leader. She uses very good management systems to evaluate the quality of teaching. This, combined with very good pupil tracking systems and analysis of test data, supports rising standards and improvements in teaching. This information is also effectively used to ensure that additional support is well organised for pupils with special educational needs, to challenge pupils with higher attainment and to inform school improvement plans.

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

52. The school makes very good use of literacy skills in other subjects. This helps to extend literacy skills and deepen understanding in other subjects. The Year 3 celebration tree displays writing about relationships and friends that develops personal and social understanding well. Pupils used their speaking and listening skills well in a religious education lesson in Years 4 and 5 when discussing miracles. Research work fosters reading skills well.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Standards are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and well above at the end of Year 6.
- All pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- The analysis of national and other tests, tracking the progress of pupils and checking on learning in lessons is used effectively to match work well to their prior attainment.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject that contribute well to their success.
- The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development that helps to identify strategies that will help to raise standards further.
- Marking, though satisfactory overall, is occasionally inaccurate and does not always contain enough guidance for pupils on how to improve.

#### **Commentary**

53. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection. The school's results in national tests, compared with national results, vary because of the difference between the groups of pupils. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above the nationally expected level because almost a quarter of the pupils are attaining the higher Level 3 and over half have attained the nationally expected Level 2 and are working within Level 3. Standards of work seen in Year 6 are well above the nationally expected levels because almost all pupils are attaining the nationally expected Level 4 and about half of the pupils the higher Level 5. This is indicative of the school's commitment to care for all and provides for higher-attaining pupils as well as those who have special educational needs. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils achieve very well



because of the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly the strong emphasis on using and applying mathematics and the thorough, good teaching, allied to effective checking on gains made in pupils' learning.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. All pupils make very good gains in their learning and achieve very well because of the good teaching. The key features of the good teaching are the planning with a strong emphasis on problem solving, the pace of lessons, the high expectations of work and behaviour, the role of the learning support assistant when present and the match of tasks to pupil's prior learning. In all lessons, the interest in, and enjoyment of, mathematics is exemplified by the way pupils apply themselves well to tasks and are keen to answer questions. This was shown clearly in a good lesson in Year 6 where the teacher had made very good use of her assessment of pupils' learning the day before. She modified her planning to ensure that difficulties encountered by the pupils were explained so that pupils better understood how to complete the tasks successfully. The homework set that day was chosen because the task would further consolidate their learning. The good teaching is also underpinned by questioning that extends learning by challenging pupils to explain their answers, as shown in a lesson in Year 1 when pupils solved a problem by sorting, classifying and listing information and discussing the results. Questioning is also an effective tool by which teachers check on learning. The good arrangements for teaching pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 enables these pupils to make similar gains in their learning as other pupils.
55. Marking of work is satisfactory overall with some examples of good marking that helps pupils to know what they have achieved and indicates what they have to do to improve. However, such comments are too infrequent so that pupils do not often enough know what they have to do to improve. Very occasionally marking is inaccurate when several calculations were ticked as correct.
56. The subject is led and managed well. The thorough analysis test results, tracking pupils' progress and sharing individual targets with pupils, an annual audit of the subject and opportunities to check on teaching and learning through lesson observations all help to identify what the school is doing well and the areas for improvement. Assessment and resources have also improved since the previous inspection and these make a good contribution to pupils' achievement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. All pupils have good opportunities to consolidate and use what they have learned in mathematics lessons in other subjects. For example, pupils use measuring skills well in science and design and technology. Pupils in Year 1 explore symmetry using different art media and an information and communication technology program. The work with spreadsheets and the interrogation of databases shows the increasing links between learning in mathematics and information and communication technology and subjects such as history.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils achieve very well and standards are above those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6.

- Consistently good teaching enables all pupils, including higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, to make good gains in their learning and achieve very well.
- The good behaviour and positive attitudes of pupils to science foster learning well.
- The subject is led and managed well and this has resulted in the rise in standards.
- Good assessment procedures inform planning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations.
- Marking is satisfactory but does not often enough help pupils to know what they have achieved or take their learning forward.

## Commentary

58. Standards in science have improved since the previous inspection. The school has successfully addressed the issue identified in the previous report. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are above those expected nationally because only three pupils in Year 6, two of whom have the highest level of special educational needs, are unlikely to attain the nationally expected Level 4 and almost one third are likely to attain the higher Level 5. Similarly, most pupils in Year 2 have attained the standards expected nationally with a small group of three pupils below this and about one third attaining the higher Level 3. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils achieve very well. The difference between the standards of work seen in the present Year 6 and the results of the national tests in 2003 reflects the difference between the groups of pupils. The school has identified a need to focus on helping pupils to attain the higher Level 5 and this has been successful.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and makes a good contribution to the improved standards. Another very important factor is the focus on teaching the skills of scientific enquiry that was a weakness identified in the previous report. This was exemplified well in lessons with pupils in a Year 6 class where pupils were creating a fair test to identify the most effective washing up liquid to disperse oil. Although the pupils in Year 6 had been closely involved in planning their investigation, the work seen in the books of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 indicates that such opportunities for involvement are not provided often enough. Other features of the good teaching are the good planning, the match of tasks to prior learning and the way pupils are challenged to explain their thinking, reflecting the high expectations that teachers have. The use of questions to review previous learning and to check on learning in the lessons and the help given to lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs by teachers and learning support assistants are also significant features that support good learning. The interesting and challenging investigation activities, often involving working in small groups, are effective in fostering the interest and enthusiasm of pupils for the science and pupils behave well. Collaborating with others in groups also fosters personal and social development well as shown when pupils in a Year 4 / 5 class were challenged to discuss whether there was water vapour in the air in the classroom and, if so, how they know this. All work is marked, but the best marking helps pupils to know what they have achieved and includes comments that will take learning forward. This boosts the confidence of pupils and ensures they know what they need to do to improve. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to learning.
60. The subject is led and managed well. The acting subject leader has high aspirations and is keen to help all pupils achieve as highly as possible. The role of the subject leader has been extended since the previous inspection and there is now provision for

checking the quality of teaching and learning and taking action as a result of this. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection. The very careful analysis of national test results and the on-going assessment of learning in lessons are used well to inform planning. The school plans to improve assessment further so that teachers have better information about pupils' enquiry and investigation skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment is well above that expected nationally at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Leadership and management are very good and a significant feature of the ongoing improvements.
- Pupils have an enthusiastic attitude to the subject.
- The very good use of information and communication technology in all subjects is significant feature of the very high attainment.

## **Commentary**

61. The subject has made very good improvement since the previous inspection and the school now has a dedicated computer suite that enables a whole class to be taught skills together. All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve very well and show very good enthusiasm for the subject. Attainment is similar to that expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and well above that expected nationally at the end of Year 6. In Years 1 to 2 pupils in Year 1 confidently program a programmable toy to respond to their instructions and in Year 2 extend this by planning routes requiring an increasing number of instructions. They use word processing skills confidently to write letters to *Goldilocks*, a painting program in art and design and represent data as a pictogram. They find information by using a CD-ROM. In Year 6 pupils use a control program to switch a light on and off and write a procedure to do this. They give computerised presentations, inserting pictures into their work and use digital cameras. They enter data into spreadsheets and use word processing skills to present their poems and writing. They have a website about their own class and use e-mail to talk to friends in Hungary.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and support staff have received good training so they can use all resources effectively. The best teaching took place in the Year 4/5 lesson and was marked by direct teaching, explanation and demonstration that excited and challenged pupils very effectively when they analysed a data base relating to monarchs. They demonstrated good understanding of the use of various symbols required for the search. They were independent in their approach to the task and eager to learn more. Pupils were expected to work hard and remain on task and in this lesson the pace of learning was higher than in the other lessons. Pupils in Year 6 confidently explained their work, using passwords to access their own work. Teachers very effectively use the new interactive whiteboards in all subjects and this skill adds much to pupils' learning. Pupils use calculators, digital cameras and tape recorders when appropriate. The use of calculators was particularly effective in a mathematics lesson in Year 6 when dealing with square roots.
63. The subject is very well led and managed. There is a clear focus on developing resources and staff expertise that is continuing to improve standards. The subject leader has a good view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. This year has seen a new system for assessment in place that records more clearly pupils' understanding.

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

64. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is transforming teaching and learning. The confident use of this by both teachers and pupils as a tool for learning is the key reason for the well above average standards. Information and communication technology has been used creatively to enrich the provision in English and mathematics. It is used extensively as a research tool in history, geography and religious education. The use of the Internet and the interactive whiteboard enabled pupils in a religious education lesson to 'visit' the site at Lourdes.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is well above average at the end of Year 6 and achievement is very high.
- The subject makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils relate their learning very well to daily life, particularly in respect for others.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The subject leader is very knowledgeable, leads and manages very well and has a very significant effect on staff development.

#### Commentary

65. The subject meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus very well. The subject has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above that normally found. At the end of Year 2 attainment is above that normally expected. Achievement is very high and the subject makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A particular strength of pupils' learning is their ability to relate what they have learned to life today and to discuss this and to give ideas. Pupils in Year 6 wrote well about the Crucifixion of Jesus from the point of view of different people involved. They composed 'Agony Aunt' responses to their problems using guidance from their understanding of the how the Christian faith influences actions and gave very thoughtful answers on 'forgiveness' when retelling the Christian story of *The Unforgiving Servant*. They used the Internet to research the different countries and projects supported by Christian Aid as an example of action based on belief.
66. They use the Gospels to find out about the birth of Jesus, making good comparisons between the two different versions of the story. They are impressive in their detailed knowledge of different world faiths and ably compare and contrast key features. In discussion, a pupil in Year 6 stated that learning religious education had helped him not to be racist and others commented on how they had gained an understanding of the value and worth of all. Pupils at the end of Year 2 have a good level of attainment. They know much about the Jewish and Buddhist faiths. Their work, including that of the lower-attaining pupils, clearly shows their own interpretations and ideas relating to what they have learned, for example, in their rewriting of the Christian *Ten Commandments*.
67. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. In Year 2 a very good lesson where pupils were learning about the Buddhist faith provided many high quality opportunities for pupils to experience for themselves. The role-play activity of the procession to a 'shrine' and the atmosphere created with flowers and candles enabled pupils to discuss feelings and emotions in relation to helping others and they gave key words such as 'peaceful', 'gentle', 'listening' and 'good thoughts' in response. This quiet activity was very challenging for some pupils in this class. Tasting the rice and other vegetarian food that some helped to prepare made the learning memorable. In Year 6 an excellent lesson was very challenging indeed. The pace of the lesson was relentless and the teacher constantly reinforced the key ideas and words from the aims of the lesson.

Very good use was made of the Muslim Qu'ran to illustrate the concept of respect and pupils were well able to compare this with other *Holy Books*. Pupils with higher attainment confidently discussed the idea of angels as messengers and related this to both the Muslim and the Christian faiths. In Year 5 the telling of the story of St Bernadette and Lourdes captured pupils' imagination and attention very well, developing awe and wonder and spirituality. The use of the Internet and the interactive whiteboard enabled the whole class to 'visit' the site. They were fascinated by this and the lesson very effectively developed the concept of *miracles*. In all lessons the use of the school's very good range of high quality pictures, posters and objects of religious significance increases learning and interest very well. Displays are prominent in the school, giving the subject a high profile and adding very well to learning, with key words and concepts clearly shown.

68. The subject is very well led and managed. The very enthusiastic subject leader is very knowledgeable indeed and is very successful in supporting others and in developing a very high quality curriculum throughout the school. Very good assessment and recording procedures at the end of each unit of learning ensures that work is challenging and meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. The subject leader evaluates teaching and learning in classrooms and uses the information gained for supporting teachers, for identifying areas for further work and gaps in resources. Good links with other subjects such as personal, social, health and citizenship education, literacy, speaking and listening and drama are identified in the planning to strengthen learning. Visits to places of religious interest enrich the curriculum well.

## Geography

69. Only two geography lessons were observed and so no judgements have been made about overall provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Both lessons observed were good. The lesson for pupils in Years 4/5 made very good use of information and communication technology when they interrogated a CD-Rom for information about rivers. Pupils showed good use of geographical vocabulary and good knowledge in the subject. In Year 3 pupils know the symbols for weather forecasts and again the teacher had made good use in a previous lesson of the Internet to study weather. Pupils used good geographical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6 have taken an 'African Mystery Journey' on the Internet. In discussion they talked well about their research on the mountains of the world using the Internet and how they used atlases. They know how mountains are formed. They suggested that the best learning in geography was when they researched 'Euro 2004' on the Internet and this work clearly added to their social and cultural development. National Curriculum requirements are met. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a good sense of vision and purpose from auditing the quality of teaching and learning and attainment. There is good use of the locality to further learning.

## History

70. Only one history lesson was observed so no judgement can be made on provision. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. In a Year 2 history lesson that focused on seaside holidays in the past, a parent talked expressively about her childhood visits to the seaside, passed around her memorabilia and showed photographs. Pupils were fascinated and listened attentively. They asked questions

about the physical features of the beach that provided a further valuable contribution to their speaking and listening skills. Pupils then made an observational drawing of one or more of the objects of historical interest. Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum well. For example a theatre group supported learning about Ancient Egypt and visitors came from Beamish Museum. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 spent two days working on historical enquiry skills. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and knows its strengths and areas of development by observing and working alongside teachers and producing an annual audit. There are good links with personal, social and health education when pupils study topics such as Florence Nightingale or the work of Jenner and with religious education, for example when visiting Bede's World or Durham Cathedral. Information and communication technology is used well for research, for example in researching a census and Victorian life. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 expressed interest and enjoyment in the subject. They particularly enjoyed learning about life in the 1960s. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

71. No lessons were observed so no judgement can be made on teaching, learning and attainment. There is a good range of very well displayed work that shows clear progression in skills and understanding, with a broad range of experiences, for example, faces worked in paint, observational drawings of a kingfisher and pastel studies of the seasons. It is clear that National Curriculum requirements are met. The symmetry and seaside display demonstrated that art and design is used to illustrate learning in other subjects. Pupils use a program on the computer to design and paint and the younger pupils produced work showing good purpose and control. The curriculum is enhanced by an artist-in-residence and visits. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Opportunities are provided for the subject leader to observe and work alongside teachers to improve their skills. Pupils maintain an art portfolio and use the digital camera to record their work. An annual audit of the provision is undertaken to inform the action plan. As a result, the curriculum leader has good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and areas to develop within the subject.

### **Design and technology**

72. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision as no lessons were observed. School documentation and displays of work, for example photo frames designed and made by pupils in Year 3, confirmed that the principles of teaching the subject are in place and National Curriculum requirements are met. To encourage pupils to think about designing, they analysed commercial photo frames before designing, making and then evaluating their own finished products. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class interviewed a toy maker as part of their project on moving toys. In addition to creating an interest in the topic, the interview helped to promote the literacy skills of asking relevant questions and listening carefully to the answers. In a very brief observation of pupils in Year 6, the classroom was a hive of activity as all were busily engaged, with obvious enjoyment, in making slippers they had designed. The help provided by the teacher and the learning support assistant contributed well to the development of their sewing skills.

### **Music**



73. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of the provision in this subject because it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 to 2. Therefore, no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching and learning or the standards attained by the end of Year 2. However, provision in music in Year 3 to Year 6 is good. Attainment in Year 6 is above that expected nationally and all pupils achieve very well. This is because the subject leader is very well qualified in the subject and draws on this expertise to ensure that the programme of work meets all requirements of the National Curriculum and leads in-service training as well as offering informal advice to give staff the knowledge and confidence to teach the subject well. She also helps teachers to plan their lessons so that all elements of music are taught. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall and enables pupils to achieve very well. Planning is good and provides many opportunities for pupils to listen to music and to practise and experiment. In the best lessons pupils listen to and constructively comment on the performances of other pupils and then practise to improve their performance. Teachers also provide good help and encouragement for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Good resources are used effectively, for example the use of video clips in a lesson in Year 6 and a good range of percussion instruments in the lessons in the Year 3 and Year 4/5 classes.
74. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills through extra-curricular clubs and by woodwind tuition. Pupils participate in two productions each year, such as the pantomime 'Cinders' and the current production based on Kipling's 'Jungle Book'. In these productions pupils have the opportunity to perform for their peers, their parents and the local community and this fosters their confidence and self-esteem well. There are also good opportunities to listen to music from their own and other cultures. In addition the school arranges for musicians to visit the school to perform for pupils and the whole school was taken to Newcastle to a performance by an internationally renowned trumpeter. Experiences such as these not only enrich the curriculum but also support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well.

### **Physical education**

75. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in this subject as only one lesson was observed. National Curriculum requirements are met. The school is aware of the importance of physical education and this has led to participation in the national School Sports Co-ordinator initiative. The school has achieved the Activemark award and is aiming for the gold level. There are good opportunities to consolidate and extend skills through equipment available to pupils at break times and through extra-curricular clubs. The provision is enriched very well, for example, through the involvement of sports students from Durham University. Pupils participate in local sports festivals. These opportunities support the personal and social development of pupils well. In the one lesson seen with a Year 2 class teaching and learning were satisfactory with tasks matched to the learning intentions, but there were no opportunities for pupils to observe and comment constructively on the performance of others. The school meets the requirements to provide swimming tuition and about half of the pupils in Year 6 swim at least 25 metres.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

76. No lessons were observed and so no judgement has been made about provision. However, this aspect of the curriculum pervades every aspect of school life. The maturity and positive attitudes that the school promotes, despite the challenges of the area, through personal and social education are a cornerstone of the very high achievement. Appropriate attention is given to teaching about the misuse of drugs and there is an appropriate sex education policy. The school and class councils give opportunities for pupils to learn about citizenship.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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