

INSPECTION REPORT

PRUDHOE CASTLE FIRST SCHOOL

Prudhoe

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122218

Headteacher: Mrs P Hornsby

Lead inspector: Mrs Rajinder Harrison

Dates of inspection: 10th - 12th November 2003

Inspection number: 261625

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	113
School address:	Castle Road Prudhoe
Postcode:	NE42 6PH
Telephone number:	(01661) 833 122
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Elwell
Date of previous inspection:	5 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Prudhoe Castle First School is small compared with other primary schools. It is situated in an area where socio-economic circumstances are diverse but generally average, although an increasing number of pupils attend from slightly further afield than the immediate locality. The proportion of pupils registered for free school meals (8.1 per cent) is below the national average. The number of pupils moving in and out of the area is low, with only two pupils joining and two leaving other than at the start and end of the last school year. The school has 113 pupils aged from four to nine years. There are three pupils of ethnic minority or mixed race origin. The school has below average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, at 11.8 per cent, and there are two pupils with statements of special educational need. As a result of its success, the school gained a Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 and School Achievement Awards in 2002 and 2003.

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below that expected for children aged four, with their communication and language skills and personal development being the weaker elements.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18059	Rajinder Harrison	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Music
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5531	Janet Croft	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics Geography History Religious education
31175	Arthur Allison	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. The governors and staff work hard to provide the best for all pupils. The very sensitive and supportive leadership of the headteacher has inspired the staff to work together to raise standards. Good teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well. Pupils are happy and feel valued. Their personal development is well provided for and they form very good relationships. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and assessment procedures are very good.
- Standards in English are above average across the school.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Leadership and management are good overall.
- Pupils are happy at school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because provision is very good.
- Procedures for checking and evaluating how well the school is doing are very good.
- Very good links with the community and other schools enrich learning.
- Provision for the Foundation Stage needs to improve to match practice found elsewhere in school.
- There is no secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of the targets they are set to achieve.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils see how to improve their work.

The school has made **good** progress since its last inspection in 1998. Standards in mathematics have risen and are now average at the end of Year 2. Standards have also risen to above average in English and information and communication technology (ICT). Assessment procedures are very good and inform planning effectively. Teaching is now good overall and it is very good in Years 3 and 4. Provision for multicultural education is satisfactory and improving. Behaviour is good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	B	B	A
writing	A	C	C	C
mathematics	C	C	C	C

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those where pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Care is need in analysing these results as the number of pupils in each year group is relatively small.

As a result of overall good teaching, pupils achieve well. There is a wide spread of ability in each year group, with a high proportion of lower-attaining pupils in most classes. Because some pupils have very limited pre-school experience, the social development and communication skills of children entering the Reception class have been below those normally expected for children at this age in the recent past. This year, some young children in the Foundation Stage have been slow to settle into school routines. However, most are in line to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. Pupils currently in Year 1 did not all meet the goals in their communication, language and literacy development, in spite of good progress through their

Reception year. Standards in Year 2 are average in mathematics, science and most other subjects. They are above average in reading and writing because of the high emphasis the school has given to literacy over the last few years. In Year 4, standards are above average in English and ICT, and average in mathematics, science and most other subjects. Standards in religious education are above expected levels. There is no significant difference in attainment of boys and girls. Because of the good teaching, pupils are doing slightly better than their peers in similar schools.

Pupils' personal development is good and is supported well by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are happy at school form **very good relationships** and have positive attitudes towards learning. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes. They are very caring towards each other and enjoy taking on responsibilities. Attendance is generally good, because children like coming to school. However it fell last year because of a serious infection that affected a significant number of pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress because teachers provide interesting activities and pay good attention to the pupils' individual needs. **Assessment** procedures are very **good** and information about pupils' progress is used very effectively to match work to their needs in most lessons. Opportunities are missed for teachers to share the targets for learning with their pupils and their marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Additional staff are used well to support pupils' learning, especially helping those with special educational needs. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided for satisfactorily, but the lack of a secure outside area limits the opportunities to develop their social and physical skills appropriately. The curriculum and enrichment activities, including visits and visitors to the school, are **good**. A range of very good initiatives, including the Healthy Schools Initiative and the physical education programme, enhance significantly the work planned in lessons.

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is **good**. Partnerships with parents, links with the community and with other schools are **very good**.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and the work of the governing body are good. Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good. She encourages and supports staff well and leads the staff team successfully. Governors monitor the school's performance well in order to set priorities for improvement. They work closely with the headteacher and her staff to ensure the school continues to improve and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and have no significant concerns. Pupils feel that the school is very good and are particularly positive about the staff. They feel safe and well looked after.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage to match that seen elsewhere in the school.
- Provide an enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Share targets set with pupils and monitor their work with more consistent and helpful marking.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' overall achievement is good and standards are above average in English, and average in mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils from Years 1 to 4 achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well provided for.
- Based on the figures from the last five years, improvement has been above the national trend and standards are rising.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception.

Commentary

1. When children start school in the Reception class, assessment information shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide-ranging. For the last two years, the overall profile has declined and is now below average, with children having particular difficulties in the area of communication, language and literacy and their personal development. Last year, the Foundation Stage children made good progress and most reached the early learning goals in all areas of learning. This year, the group is working at expected levels and most children are likely to attain most of the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. However, there is a higher than average number of children who have summer birthdays and a few who have limited pre-school experience, and their progress at present is slow.
2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is especially the case in literacy and numeracy lessons when they are given extra support from the special educational needs co-ordinator and well-qualified teaching assistants. For example, one pupil made more than one year's progress in reading in only five months. Additional support is also provided in many other areas of learning, and pupils' progress is monitored very carefully to ensure they remain on track throughout their time in the school.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.1 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. In the Year 2 National tests and assessments in 2003, standards were above the national average in reading and average in writing. Standards in reading were also well above those of pupils in similar schools, whilst standards in writing were average. Overall standards in English at the end of Years 2 and 4 have improved since the previous inspection and are now above average throughout the school. This is largely as a result of the good and often very

good teaching, especially at the upper end of the school, the very detailed monitoring and tracking of every child's progress and the provision of additional support where necessary.

4. Standards in reading are currently above average throughout and the school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' reading skills. Provision is very good and pupils are well supported in their learning at home. Pupils' speaking skills are above average because they have many opportunities to acquire new vocabulary. Lower-attaining pupils are given numerous opportunities to explore new vocabulary when they work in small groups led by the headteacher. Opportunities to discuss and share ideas are frequent in English lessons and all pupils join in confidently. In other subjects, some teachers give limited time to help extend pupils' ability to explore their thoughts and ideas sufficiently.
5. Standards in writing are above the national average for the current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils, and their overall progress is good. The school has placed great emphasis on developing pupils' skills in writing and especially engaging boys more actively. As a consequence, the standards in writing have risen and boys are performing as well as girls at the end of Year 4. Strategies such as the regular 'writing weeks' have helped capture pupils' interest and because the school fosters a real love of books and literature through many areas of the curriculum, pupils are keen to produce written material to share with others. Good attention is placed on encouraging pupils to apply their literacy skills in other subjects and pupils are confident in carrying out independent research using material from books and from the Internet. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' ability accurately and this also helps in the raising of standards across the school.
6. In mathematics, the national tests and assessments in 2003 show standards to be average for pupils at the end of Year 2 and standards are also average compared to similar schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average. The school has worked hard to ensure numeracy skills are developed step by step, and pupils' achievements are very carefully monitored to check they progress well. At the end of Year 4, pupils attain standards in line with similar schools. As with English, the same factors impact on pupils' progress which is at least satisfactory and for lower- and higher-attaining pupils, progress is often good. The current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are operating at average levels. Basic numeracy skills are developed well and the subject is a priority for improvement, especially with regard to practical tasks and problem-solving, which most pupils enjoy doing and in which they make good progress. Assessment information is used very carefully to ensure pupils build effectively on prior learning. For lower-attaining pupils, their limited literacy skills and their lack of confidence in using the correct mathematical vocabulary hamper progress in problem solving. However, teachers are mindful of this and ensure that step-by-step guidance is given to help them achieve well.
7. In the national assessments in science in 2003, standards were average compared with national and similar schools at the end of Year 2. Although the school was placed in the top five per cent because all pupils gained at least Level 2, the overall standards are average because few pupils gained the higher level 3. Standards in science are currently average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, but there is evidence that standards are improving. The school has placed very good emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills through some well-planned investigations where pupils are encouraged to explore and explain what they discover. A number continue to work at the activities in their own time in order to find out more, and research topics using ICT. The school makes good use of the outside environment to enrich pupils' learning and develop their skills of observation. This was seen as a weakness in the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is good because the teaching is interesting and challenging and pupils enjoy science. As a consequence, they make good progress. In Years 3 and 4, teachers place good emphasis on developing pupils' ability to think and reason and test their thoughts and ideas effectively. Pupils' achievements are recorded meticulously and in this way, teachers plan work that ensures pupils work to their capability at all times.

8. Standards in ICT have improved and are now at least in line with expected levels at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 4. The ICT suite has been of huge benefit in providing pupils with very good opportunities to learn and apply computing skills across many subjects. Teachers ensure pupils practise their skills regularly and the provision has improved. All pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, achieve well because they have access to appropriate basic skills programs to support their learning in literacy and numeracy. Access to material on CD-Roms and the Internet is also helping to raise standards in literacy as pupils learn to research and select information, for example, in history.
9. From the work sampled, standards in all other subjects are at least in line with expectations and in some aspects, for example, swimming and gymnastics, are above what is normally expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils enjoy singing and standards in singing are good. The quality of pupils' work in art and design displayed around the school is good. From the limited work seen in religious education, standards are above those expected across the school and the subject is taught well. Overall achievement is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their personal development is also good, supported well by good provision for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Their attendance and punctuality are generally good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers stimulate pupils' interest in learning.
- High expectations and consistent implementation of policy result in good behaviour.
- Pupils gain self-knowledge and respect for others.
- Understanding of various cultural beliefs and traditions is fostered well.
- Good development of community responsibilities.
- The attitudes of some of the younger children are sometimes adversely affected either by having to sit and listen for long periods, or to work at over-directed activities not best matched to their needs.

Commentary

10. Pupils view their school as a safe, happy place. They respond well to the good range of interesting and worthwhile activities provided for them. At playtimes, where supervision is generally low-key, pupils are lively but friendly and considerate of each other and there are very few incidents of accidental or intentional clashes. No incidents of harassment in any form were observed. Opportunities for pupils to undertake responsibilities are maximised and older pupils sensibly supervise cloakrooms, look after younger children, keep the organisation of reading books efficient and undertake various other useful tasks. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with the highest level of need, have good attitudes to school. Their confidence and self-esteem are similar to other pupils, being boosted by the help they receive from teachers and learning support assistants, as shown in a literacy lesson in Year 1.
11. Relationships in the school are harmonious and adults and children get along well together. New arrivals are thoughtfully befriended and quickly become part of the school community. Adults praise children for their efforts in such things as helpfulness and consideration for others, as well as conduct, behaviour and work. Relationships between pupils with special educational needs and other pupils and adults are very kind, caring and sensitive. The school does all it can to support children with special needs and to make the few from ethnic minorities feel included. As a consequence, pupils' self-esteem and confidence grow. A clear

expectation of behaviour and conduct is well communicated to pupils and the school's behaviour policy is consistently implemented, an improvement since the previous inspection.

12. Teaching and learning take place in a context of strong principles and values of fairness and respect for all and this provides a framework for pupils to develop understanding of their own and other people's values and beliefs. Daily acts of collective worship, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' development. Various other curriculum areas such as writing, art, music and history provide further opportunities for pupils to learn about other times and cultures. At times, the pupils' own opinions and ideas are insufficiently explored.
13. The local community is well involved in the life of the school and pupils learn to be part of broader groups of people in less formal situations, for example, they join in combined local schools' sporting and leisure activities, they visit senior citizens and talk and sing to them. Projects to develop and care for the local environment such as the creation and maintenance of the school garden help pupils to understand their responsibilities as citizens. Their knowledge and experience of their own and others' cultures are enhanced through such activities as visits to museums and ancient monuments, and local artists and craftspeople visiting school.
14. There are satisfactory arrangements for children to start in the Reception class and the majority make a confident start. They show interest in the activities provided and generally learn to take turns and share with others. They gain personal independence. Some sessions of sitting and listening are too long for some of the younger children and some activities are over-directed by teachers. As a consequence, a few children lose interest, behave badly and display unsatisfactory attitudes to learning.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 90.4%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	9.5	School data:	0.0
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.

15. Pupils' attendance is generally good and they like coming to school. However, in December 2002 the school was hit by an infectious illness. High numbers of pupils missed a number of days of school, resulting in the poor attendance recorded last year. Looking at the data outside of that period, attendance was above average.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions at the school in the last two years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

This school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. The teaching is **effective** and the curriculum is broad. The pupils are cared for and supported **well**. Links with parents and the local community are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Overall teaching is **good**. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. As a result of this good teaching, pupils learn effectively and achieve well. Pupils'

progress is assessed meticulously, especially in the core subjects, and the information gathered is put to good use to ensure teachers plan work that matches the needs of pupils of all abilities well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and the pupils enjoy learning.
- Planning is generally good and teachers make good use of resources.
- The headteacher and learning support assistants provide good support across the school, especially with lower-attaining pupils.
- There is very good inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour.
- Pupils work hard and generally apply themselves well in lessons.
- Assessment information is used very effectively to match work to pupils' needs.
- Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of the targets set for them and are not always sure if they have achieved well.
- Marking does not consistently ensure pupils understand what they have done well and how to improve further.
- In some lessons, there is insufficient time given for pupils to talk about what they are doing.

Commentary

16. From the lessons observed and work seen in books, teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, good in the Infants, and very good in the Year 3 and 4 class. During the inspection it was evident, by looking at the headteacher's past monitoring of teaching, that one or two teachers who found the inspection process particularly stressful did not teach as well as they normally did. In the Foundation Stage, there are a significant number of lower-attaining children who have not yet settled down into class routines and currently display restless, inattentive behaviour. A few have had very little pre-school experience, and therefore struggle to follow instructions or sustain information for long. In addition, they are still learning how to manage themselves with others and to develop an awareness of their place within a large group. Since they have only been in class a few weeks, it is only now the school has begun to identify which children need additional support and guidance in specific areas of learning. Both parents and pupils are very positive about the teaching staff, and pupils say they 'love' their 'teachers', referring to all adults working in classrooms, because they are kind and help them.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	6	4	11	0	0	0

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

17. Strengths in teaching that help pupils learn well include the high expectations that teachers place on pupils to behave well and try hard. A few younger pupils struggle to remain fully on task because they have limited concentration spans and need constant support, especially with written activities. Older pupils manage themselves far more confidently and are prompt to settle to activities when not directly supervised. The school promotes positive attitudes to learning and most pupils respond well. Where teaching is very good, explanations and instructions are made very clear, work is challenging and lessons run at a lively pace. Teachers ensure that the work set matches pupils' abilities and if additional support is required, this is readily available. Lower-attaining pupils are helped sensitively in order to participate fully. Their peers watch and learn from the way adults work with these pupils and, when necessary, follow their good examples to make sure everyone achieves well. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally very good, especially as pupils progress through the school. Pupils like and trust their teachers and support staff and this helps them to

tackle work with confidence. Good support from the headteacher and support assistants and volunteers means that all pupils, but especially lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, have very good opportunities to work in small groups with adult help.

18. In the best lessons seen, at the upper end of the school, activities were interesting and presented in a lively way that captivated pupils' interest and imagination so that they worked enthusiastically throughout. At the end, they shared their work with others, being appropriately praised and applauded for their efforts. These lessons were particularly well planned and organised with good resources and materials to keep pupils engrossed. Activities also presented pupils with challenges that made them think about what they were learning and share their ideas with others.

Example of outstanding practice

The excellent numeracy lesson observed in the Year 3 /4 class moved at a brisk pace, from a very clear start linking prior work well to the new work.

Pupils of all ability groups participated in the mental activity at the start of the lesson because the teacher asked a wide range of questions, being fully aware of each child's capability. The group work was extremely well structured, allowing pupils adequate time to complete the set tasks but driving them on to try the extension tasks that were tantalisingly more interesting. The lesson ended with a very good opportunity for the teacher to assess pupils' understanding of the numeracy strategies they had been learning. They played a game involving every pupil and adult in the class. In their eagerness to complete the game successfully, pupils were urging each other to get the right answer and, as a consequence, working out far more answers than were expected of them individually.

19. In lessons judged to be generally satisfactory, teachers have secure understanding of the curriculum but teaching sometimes lacks pace or is too difficult for some children to follow. In these lessons, it is not always made clear to pupils what they are to learn, nor is sufficient time given to check if pupils have achieved what they set out to do. In one or two lessons, the teachers' presentations were too long and a few pupils struggled to keep listening and sustain concentration. As a consequence, their behaviour became restless and they did not settle quickly to tasks. Opportunities are also sometimes missed to involve pupils in discussions or explain what they have learnt at the end of the lesson and how this links to what they might learn next. Occasionally, when there are no additional support staff available or they are not put to good use, achievement is not as good as it might be for some younger lower-attaining pupils.
20. The school tries to ensure all pupils receive the help they need to achieve well as soon as any specific needs are identified. The headteacher, who is also the special educational needs' co-ordinator, ensures that support staff are deployed where the need is greatest. Teachers plan tasks that are well matched to prior learning. Very good help is provided by the teachers and, when present, by learning support assistants who are briefed very well on what they have to do to help these pupils, particularly for pupils with the highest level of need. The pupils are fully included in all aspects of the lessons, for example in whole class questioning by the teacher and when checking on learning at the end of a lesson. Teachers and support assistants review the progress of pupils with special educational needs half-termly, particularly in their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers are aware of the individual targets pupils are working at but these targets are not always made known to the pupils. This also applies to other pupils and the school recognises this is an area for improvement.

Assessment

21. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be adequate. Procedures are now very good in Years 1 to 4 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. In the Foundation Stage, staff assess their children in all activities to highlight any areas of difficulty but at present, insufficient attention is given to check what children choose to do

when not working on the supervised/directed activities. This means that some children, for example, may spend considerable periods of time playing in the role-play or construction areas and thus do not participate in all the activities provided. Pupils in the rest of the school are tested frequently in English, mathematics and science. The school has established a consistent approach to recording information on a day-to-day basis and collating this information for subsequent teachers. The National Curriculum Level descriptors are applied so teachers can quickly check where they need to pitch their lessons to ensure pupils build on what they already know and understand. The information gathered from the assessments is then used well to group pupils by ability and plan work that best matches their needs. The statutory test results are very thoroughly analysed so that staff have a clear picture of pupils' attainment and can provide for them appropriately as they progress through the school. Tracking systems are very detailed and quickly identify the progress that pupils make and whether this is good enough. Teachers review the progress of all pupils regularly and in this way, groups of pupils requiring additional help are targeted. Parents are made aware of these targets through consultation evenings. However opportunities are missed to share these targets with pupils in order to help them see how well they are achieving. Generally, staff give pupils good verbal feedback on their work, but the marking of work is not always helpful. It does not give pupils a clear picture of whether they have learnt what was intended, nor how to improve their work.

The curriculum

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a broad range of interesting opportunities and valuable enrichment activities and overall curriculum development is good.
- All pupils are fully included in everything the school offers, and provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school places great emphasis on personal, social, emotional and health education.
- The teachers and teaching assistants are well qualified to meet the needs of pupils.
- There is no outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage and this restricts their physical development.

Commentary

22. The school provides a good range of opportunities, meeting statutory requirements in all subjects and areas of learning, including religious education and collective worship. An appropriate balance of subjects and areas of learning is achieved. Topic work, where it occurs, is planned well to help pupils make good sense of what they are learning and how it links with what they already know. Where possible, teachers link work across a range of subjects so that learning is more coherent and efficient. The curriculum is enriched with special events such as 'World Book Day', writing weeks, performances from professional musicians and artists and many visits, for example to a lighthouse. Expertise from the local community is effectively used; for example, ministers from local churches come to explain their beliefs and practices and a local blacksmith came to talk about his work and show pupils his creations in order to inspire their creativity. Break and lunchtime activities are enhanced with resources such as playground games and an attractive garden/wildlife area, which pupils tend throughout the year. The Foundation Stage curriculum places an appropriately high emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, especially in the children's first term at school. Children are guided towards developing good school habits such as looking after their personal belongings, responding to signals from teaching adults and clearing up after activities.
23. The school is continually improving the curriculum, for example, through the recent development of the ICT suite and joint sporting activities with the local group of schools. By regular attendance at curriculum development courses, teachers adapt their teaching

strategies where they judge this to be beneficial to pupils; for example, good attention has been paid to developing pupils' enquiry skills through investigations in science in the last year and this is helping to raise standards. Weaknesses in the curriculum are identified as pupils' performance is carefully analysed and co-ordinators monitor their subject and in this way, possible solutions are discussed and agreed upon at staff meetings.

24. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs have access to a full curriculum. The individual education plans have very precise and measurable targets, agreed with the pupils and parents, and these targets inform teachers' planning well. A notable strength of the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is the teaching of literacy and mathematics through the school's very good intervention strategy that includes one-to-one support for the accelerated reading programme. This has a significant effect on pupils' confidence and progress.
25. The very few pupils from ethnic minority groups are included in school life well. The school's current emphasis on raising awareness of the multicultural nature of British society, which is not reflected in the school population, is beneficial to all its pupils and great value is placed on celebrating differences. In discussions, teachers adapt their questioning so that pupils of different ability groups can participate. Activities and tasks are also appropriately adapted to ensure that pupils of all abilities have the chance to succeed. Particularly talented or able pupils are identified and provided with appropriate challenges, sometimes using materials in conjunction with the local middle school. Older pupils have well-thought-through lessons on aspects of personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education, information about alcohol and drugs misuse and what it means to be a good citizen. The current initiative on healthy eating enhances this aspect extremely well. Pupils are effectively prepared for the subsequent stages of their education. Children in the Foundation Stage begin to attend such activities as assembly towards the end of their first term in school and they are well supported in this by a 'buddy' system with pupils from Year 4. This responsibility also enhances the development of consideration for others amongst Year 4 pupils.
26. Extra-curricular activities provide many opportunities for pupils to extend their experiences, for example, by singing in a choir, through gardening and computer clubs. Pupils participate in many local sporting activities, such as team games, dance, gym and swimming. They benefit from various arts' activities, for example, performances put on for parents and the local community and the release of their own CD. Various other activities, such as trips, visits and visitors, add variety, interest and excitement to the curriculum.
27. Overall, the school staff are well qualified and experienced and this contributes to the good quality of the curriculum. Although limited in number, teachers manage to cover every aspect of the curriculum well. The expertise and support of the headteacher make a significant contribution. Non-teaching staff give good support, especially in the Foundation Stage and to pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation is compact, enabling good communications and consistency in practice across the school. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' achievements and give parents and visitors a positive view of the school. The lack of a secure outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage children is unsatisfactory. Material resources are very good in ICT and there is a good supply of appropriate books in good condition, up-to-date and well illustrated. Resources in other subjects and areas of learning are adequate.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported by the school **well**. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. There is satisfactory involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes good care of pupils' health and safety and their well-being.
- Pupils have good trusting relationships with staff and feel confident in approaching them should they have problems or difficulties.
- The school sets targets for pupils and provides good intervention strategies to raise achievement; however, pupils do not always know how well they are doing or how they can improve their work.
- There are effective induction arrangements in place for pupils as they enter the Reception class and as a result, most pupils settle into the class quickly.
- The support and guidance provided for pupils with special needs are very good and enable them to make **good** progress.

Commentary

28. Staff are vigilant about the pupils in their care, who are well supervised during the school day and staff are aware of any medical or welfare needs of pupils. The school is committed to introducing the Healthy Schools initiative and is well aware of any special dietary requirements of pupils. Staff understand the health and safety and child protection procedures very well and show pupils how best to look after themselves. There are few accidents in the school.
29. Comprehensive assessment procedures ensure that all pupils' learning and progress are tracked as they move through the school. These procedures ensure that pupils who may have special educational needs are identified early. The school reviews pupils' progress very carefully and also uses additional tests to pinpoint aspects of learning where help is most needed. For those pupils who have the highest level of need, the school ensures that all requirements in relation to their statement of need are fully met. Pupils' personal well-being is important to the school and specialist outside support is sought when necessary. The school, in partnership with the feeder middle schools, carefully manages the move to the middle school. Teachers in the classroom value pupils' views and they are involved in setting classroom rules. In recent years, pupils have been involved in the design, planning and building of a delightful garden in the playground, which they tend carefully.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** overall partnerships with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes significant efforts to involve and inform parents about life in the school and their children's learning. As a consequence, parents support their children's learning at home and this raises pupils' achievement.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and its efforts on behalf of their children. They raise large amounts of money to buy the school resources and equipment regularly.
- The headteacher is available to parents twice a day in the playground and is therefore able to deal with any worries or problems at an early stage. Consequently, complaints are rare.
- Links with other schools enhance professional development and enrich curriculum provision. Very good links with middle schools ensure pupils are well prepared for the move to Year 5.
- The very constructive links with the community benefit both pupils' and adults' learning.
- Induction material for parents of children new to the Reception class could be better.

Commentary

30. Parents have a very high opinion of the school. They place great trust in the work that goes on there and many parents work hard to support provision. The school is a welcoming environment and parents feel confident in approaching staff when necessary. The headteacher receives and dismisses pupils at the school gate at the beginning and end of the school day, and is readily available to parents. Any complaints are dealt with immediately by the headteacher and parents are kept informed of any action the school takes over issues raised. Parents welcome this open relationship and express great confidence in the head and the staff generally. Parents are shown how to support their children with their homework and the majority are involved to some extent with their child's work at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and are included in discussions as soon as any needs are identified. Parents are also involved in all reviews and have copies of the individual education plans so that they know how they can help their child at home. Information for parents of children starting school in the Reception class is satisfactory but there is scope to improve it so that parents are clearer about how to help their children settle quickly and how to support them at home.
31. There are highly productive links with the community particularly through 'Open Door', which has resulted in the school being used regularly for adult education classes, for example, courses in ICT in the purpose-built suite. Many members of the community visit the school to enrich curriculum provision and give pupils a valuable insight into the wider world. The school has very well-developed links with local partner schools which have resulted in good opportunities for staff training and the development of shared events and initiatives. There are good curricular links with the feeder schools and particular care is given to ensuring pupils with special needs are well supported in the move to their next school. The school makes an effective contribution to the initial training of teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is **very good** and she is supported well by all other staff. The school is governed **effectively**. The school's performance has improved since the previous inspection. The school provides **good** value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strong sense of purpose, drive and vision underpin the school's high aspirations.
- Good leadership by other key staff.
- The very strong commitment to inclusion that permeates everything the school provides.
- Good management, especially in the monitoring of performance data and taking effective action.
- Very good financial management that helps the school achieve its educational priorities.
- Governors carry out their duties well in both challenging and supporting the headteacher.
- Leadership of Foundation Stage is a relative weakness.
- Deployment of support assistants is in need of revision and the school recognises this.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has a calm, steady, systematic approach to school development and leads by example. Through her confident determination to raise standards, she has ensured that teaching and non-teaching staff have the support they need to do a good job. She currently carries a very heavy workload but is always prepared to make time to address promptly issues that arise. This inspires trust and confidence in her from governors, staff, parents and pupils. In turn, all staff set a very good example to pupils, especially in promoting very secure caring relationships throughout the school. The school's ethos is one of genuine concern to provide the best possible for all pupils. The school is well placed to improve further.

33. The co-ordinators play an important part in developing their subjects and most manage their responsibilities well. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects and make very good use of all analysis of assessment data to consider ways to improve provision in order to raise standards. For example, considerable effort has gone into improving ICT provision, where standards are rising to above average, and in developing investigational work in order to raise standards in science. By carrying out these duties, staff are clear about where improvements need to be made and thus contribute to the school's development effectively. In the Foundation Stage, where leadership and management are satisfactory, the co-ordinator has recognised that children's attainment on entry into the Reception class has declined in the last year or two, especially in the areas of social development and communication and literacy skills. The school acknowledges that provision needs to be strengthened here to ensure children make good progress in achieving the early learning goals.
34. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The school places a high emphasis on ensuring the needs of all pupils are met as far as possible. The co-ordinator ensures provision is monitored carefully and teaches small groups of pupils daily to ensure they have the guidance they need to reach their targets. Parents are fully consulted and involved at every stage. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs ensures the governing body is kept fully informed about pupils' achievements and where necessary, additional resources are identified.
35. The school's self-evaluation is very thorough. It is closely linked to the standards attained by pupils. The school analyses the results of national and optional tests meticulously. Also, the school checks on the progress of all pupils regularly to see whether, on the basis of the assessments conducted, they are making the progress predicted. This information enables the school to identify areas for the school development plan very effectively. The decision to focus on the achievement of boys exemplifies this and there is now no longer a significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Another very effective use of the information is the grouping of pupils by prior attainment in literacy and numeracy lessons, including those pupils who need additional support through the school's intervention strategy. This enables teachers to plan more efficiently for specific ability groups in order to have a greater impact on raising standards.
36. The governing body fulfils its role well in the way that it both challenges and supports the school. Governors are as committed as the staff to wanting the best possible provision for all pupils. They are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development through meetings of the sub-committees, the full governing body and through a structured programme of visits to the school. The governing body plays a significant role in setting the budget, placing a heavy emphasis on staffing, in the context of the school development plan and the serious implications of falling rolls. When taking decisions, close attention is paid to 'Best Value' principles. For example, the school now has better grounds maintenance at a lower cost than previously. The governing body also consults parents when significant changes are likely, for example, before taking a decision to have a class taught by two part-time teachers. The outcome of spending, such as the provision of the new ICT suite in partnership with the community, is followed through to monitor whether the opportunities for learning have improved, in order to help pupils achieve as well as possible. The ICT suite is a very good example of the commitment of one governor in particular who dedicated many hours in helping this facility to be established, benefiting both the school and the local community.
37. Falling rolls over the past few years have meant that the school has had to manage its finances very carefully. The school's rigorous self-evaluation leads to identifying the priorities in the very carefully thought-out school development plan. One priority has been to retain staff, as they are seen as a key factor in the provision of a high quality of education. The school has done this successfully, although it now recognises there is a need to consider the deployment of support staff to meet the needs of the youngest children more effectively.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	261,304
Total expenditure	258,244
Expenditure per pupil	2,050

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	3,858
Balance carried forward to the next	3,060

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. Children enter Reception in the September before they are five, they are taught in a single age group and at the time of the inspection, all were attending full-time. Most children have some pre-school experience but because many come from outside the local area, their pre-school experience is variable. They enter school with mixed attainment and this year, taken overall, attainment is below average.

By the time they leave the Reception class, most children generally achieve standards that are in line with those expected in the early learning goals in all the areas of learning. In the last year or two, the school has received a few children, especially boys, who are slow to settle and do not engage fully in lessons initially. A few also have limited ranges of conversation and general literacy skills and require a great deal of support and guidance to keep up with their peers. Teaching in all areas of learning is satisfactory, providing an effectively-planned curriculum with a range of activities that interest the children and promote learning. Adults encourage children to participate and maintain attention. At times, they expect children to sit and listen for too long and this causes deterioration in behaviour, especially of the few who struggle to sustain concentration. Dialogue with children is insufficiently developed, particularly in the 'free' activities that are not directly led or supervised by adults. This sometimes means that a few children interact little with others and often select the same activities and thus do not work through a balanced programme unless directed. Conversely, there are times when over-direction of activities interferes with children's natural urges to explore, respond and express their thoughts and ideas to others confidently.

Staff assess children's attainment on entry using the Foundation Stage Profile and they record ongoing assessments at least once each term in each area of learning. Day-to-day assessment is under development but it is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all children are given tasks that are matched well to their capabilities. Because the current Reception class has a high number of younger children in it, there is a need to consider further additional support to ensure most attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Encouraging and supportive adults help children to gain independence and adapt to school life.
- Guidance and sensitive management enable children to learn and play and work together successfully.
- Overlong sessions of sitting and listening result in deterioration in behaviour.

Commentary

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this area. Children show interest in activities and are well motivated to learn. Many maintain attention for appropriate periods of time. However, some enter school with underdeveloped skills and find it hard to conform. For these children, overlong periods of sitting and listening to adults result in poor behaviour and negative attitudes to learning. Most children initiate play and talk with adults and other children and the majority form good relationships, playing and working together, taking turns and sharing successfully. Adults help to build children's confidence with appropriate praise and encouragement. Guidance about acceptable behaviour helps children increase their understanding of right and wrong and the need for procedures and rules in school life, such as putting up their hands

when answering a question. Adults helpfully encourage children to take care of their personal needs and gain independence in such tasks as fastening their own shoes and coats. Group and class activities, such as making a fruit salad and serving it to the class, foster important feelings such as being part of a small community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The linking of sounds and letters is taught well and teaching successfully stimulates interest in reading.
- Children are not required sufficiently to explain what they are thinking and doing; consequently their speaking skills are not always extended well.
- More thorough formative assessment of children's individual capabilities is required to improve the match of tasks to children's individual needs more accurately.

Commentary

39. Early indications are that children are on course to meet the early learning goals in reading and writing. This is due to a well-planned sequence of work that is regularly and systematically followed. Stories are read well, with some good questioning about characters and happenings. Children join in with familiar stories, repeating lines with great pleasure, clearly enjoying books and extending their listening skills. In many activities, children have good opportunities to develop hand-eye co-ordination and this enables them to develop their handwriting. Some already write their names with recognisable letters, correctly formed, and a few are beginning to add their version of 'writing' under their drawings. Some opportunities for children to speak are provided, but generally dialogue with children is insufficiently developed, with the result that many children do not extend their speaking skills as much as they should. The role-play area is frequented more by girls than boys at times, and unless adults intervene or initiate conversations, some children say little to each other. Children work in a mixture of class, group and one-to-one situations, but at times teaching is not well matched to children's capabilities, with some tasks that are too easy for some children and others that are too difficult. When this happens, children lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates. The lower attaining children particularly find it difficult to achieve well unless given help.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematics development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from regular and systematic opportunities to practise counting, recognise numerals and undertake simple calculations.
- A wide range of activities to develop children's understanding of space, shape and measures is provided.

Commentary

40. Most children are working at levels expected for their age. They are beginning to count and use such methods as 'touch and count' to improve accuracy. A regular programme of number activities gives children frequent practice and reinforces the knowledge and skills already acquired. This is enhanced with rhymes, games and stories that add interest and enjoyment and develop counting skills and mathematical ideas such as adding to and taking away from. Various other activities are used well to reinforce mathematical ideas of shape, space and

measure. For example, following the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, children made dough and interlocking brick models. They also undertook a cutting and gluing activity in which they sorted the bowls and spoons that they had cut out according to size. Some children's mathematical development was beyond the level at which they were working and more detailed individual assessment is needed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An appropriate range of activities is provided to stimulate children's interest in the world around them.
- Provision for the use of ICT is good and children enjoy working on computers.
- Children are insufficiently questioned about what they already know, understand and can do; consequently they are not always extended by the activities provided.

Commentary

41. The majority of children achieve in line with expectations of children of this age. They look closely at such things as model animals and fruit and identify details of colour, size and texture, and explore similarities and differences. Through their building and construction using various materials, for example, making model houses of interlocking bricks, they learn how things fit together and are shown how to make their models stronger. They cut out and glue together such things as paper, card and textile scraps to make pictures, illustrations and simple models and through these tasks develop a sound understanding of the properties of different materials. Children talk about past events in their lives and take a lively interest in things in their immediate environment such as small creatures in the school garden. This helps them form ideas about growth and development and staff provide resources that engage their interest well. Adults help them use computers to support their learning, and children apply their skills confidently because the programs are selected carefully. Some time is given to asking children questions about what they are doing and learning, but this is often insufficiently challenging and children's thinking and powers of expression are not extended as well as they might be.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no continuous access to a secure outdoor play area, so opportunities are limited.
- The school playground is used everyday to provide some outdoor exercise.
- There are good opportunities for children to use various tools and equipment.
- The whole-school project 'Keeping Healthy' enhances provision in this area.

Commentary

42. No hall sessions were observed during the inspection but children were observed in the playground and indications are that they are in line to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. The playground is spacious and well marked with engaging activities, although none of these were seen in use. Time outdoors is mainly taken as free playtime and children engage in their own invented or improvised games, with little direction from adults. At times, small equipment such as skipping ropes, hoops and balls are provided and a few children were observed practising skipping. But children do not have access to wheeled toys or large

construction materials to develop their skills of control and balance. Inside, children use tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and glue spreaders competently and safely. They successfully undertake such tasks as assembling, threading, interlocking and shaping with their hands, and staff work on 'tricky' projects with children so that they can make things they are pleased with. For example, children made coloured viewers but most struggled to manipulate the elastic bands into place at the same time as holding the paper and tubes. 'Keeping Healthy' is a whole-school project and children develop a good knowledge and understanding of how to keep healthy, and are reminded of these aspects regularly.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some good opportunities to explore media and materials are provided.
- At times, over-direction of activities by adults inhibits children's creative development.

Commentary

43. Standards are as expected of children of this age. Some good opportunities to paint, draw, construct, shape and model are provided and children respond well to these. Some of the work seen shows that children explore and express freely, for example, a few paintings show that they push, spread and mix colours randomly. However, during the inspection, much creative work was over-directed; for example, children were told to paint things, like bowls of different sizes, that were beyond their skill level. Similarly, in the play dough, children wanted to squeeze, roll and shape according to their own ideas, but they were told to make particular things. In the long-term, this approach is inappropriate as it will stifle the children's own ideas. Appropriate musical activities are provided and children enjoy accompanying songs with simple percussion instruments. In free play-time, children make up and act out lively and imaginative stories but their ideas are often insufficiently explored or developed because sensitive interventions from adults are limited. One or two children do not interact with others readily and adults miss opportunities to gently guide them into working with others and sharing resources willingly.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**. Overall the quality of teaching and the work planned for the pupils are good and this ensures that they achieve very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 4 are above expectations and pupils achieve very well.
- Assessment is very good overall.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good.
- Good resources are used well.
- Good opportunities to consolidate learning in other subjects.
- Pupils need to be aware of their targets in order to help them make better progress.

Commentary

44. Standards in English vary with the make-up of the different year groups of pupils, but overall standards are rising as a result of the high emphasis placed on developing the provision in this subject. In the national comparative data for the 2003 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, standards in reading were above average and in writing they were average. However, work seen during the inspection shows that standards in both reading and writing in Year 2 and Year 4 are above average. This represents very good progress from entry when many children enter Reception with standards of attainment below that of children aged four.
45. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, making similar progress to their peers, and sometimes they make better progress. For example, one pupil made gains in reading of fourteen months in a five-month period. This level of good progress results from the very good help and encouragement teachers and support staff provide in ensuring the work pupils do is matched very carefully to their needs. The school analyses the results of national and optional tests very effectively to group all pupils and provide them with work that helps them build effectively on their previous learning. There is no significant difference now between the work of girls and boys. This is because the school had identified that girls often perform better than boys do in writing, and took appropriate steps to address any such differences successfully.
46. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4. As pupils move through the school, they become more confident and make themselves understood easily, using an increasing range of vocabulary. This is because teachers give pupils many opportunities in all subjects to speak and listen, especially through careful questioning, where the expectation is for pupils to think about their ideas and explain them to others. In a very good literacy lesson, the teacher challenged pupils in Year 4 to explain what was meant by 'exhibit' and 'pedestal', words unfamiliar to them but important within the context. Because teachers take time to explain things clearly, pupils are encouraged to explore language confidently.
47. Pupils achieve well in reading. Standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 4. In discussion with pupils it was clear they all enjoy reading and are developing a love of literature. Pupils regularly take books home to read to adults. There is a structured reading programme that is extended by good opportunities to read for information in most subjects as they get older. Pupils have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words so that by Year 4, most pupils read confidently and the higher-attaining pupils read very fluently and with good expression. This was clearly shown when a higher-attaining pupil in Year 4 read a passage in connection with work on story settings as the rest of the class listened intently. All classrooms have a good selection of reading books and there are attractive displays of books relating to topics, for example, in history. A further successful strategy for encouraging a love of books was shown in a literature appreciation lesson in Year 3-4. Pupils were captivated by the way the teacher read from non-fiction, poetry and storybooks, so whetting the appetites of all pupils to explore a wider range of different texts.
48. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve very well because of the good teaching and the regular writing weeks that help to inspire them and foster their confidence. Pupils have many opportunities to write in the literacy lessons; for example, rules, instructions, reports for newspapers, retelling familiar stories, plays, poetry and stories with different settings. As a result of the good and sometimes very good teaching that encourages pupils to experiment with interesting words, older pupils often capture the immediate interest of the reader with openings such as '*It was the dead of night. The moon was looking murderous (murderous)*'. Displays such as the one in the hall under the heading '*We love writing*' promote an interest in writing and raise the confidence and self-esteem of the pupils. Marking with encouraging comments also helps pupils gain confidence. In the best marking, by indicating how the work might be improved, teachers help pupils improve further, for example, '*Your conversation is good. You might want to think about some stage directions so that the reader knows what is going on*'. The school is continuing to target writing for further

improvement. More marking that was like the best marking in Year 3-4 would support further improvements, as would giving pupils individual short-term targets for which they could take some responsibility on a day-to-day basis.

49. In lessons seen, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Teaching in the Year 3-4 class, including the teaching of the intervention groups, is consistently very good. A key factor in the good overall teaching is the use made of the very good assessment strategies established across the school. The analysis of national and optional test results, together with regular assessment of reading and writing through set tasks, is very effective. This information enables teachers to plan well for pupils of different prior attainment, providing interesting tasks that motivate pupils. These tasks, combined with the high expectations of work and behaviour and the very good relationships between all staff and pupils, are effective in promoting the positive attitudes and good behaviour of most pupils in lessons. This makes a significant contribution to progress and achievement. In the best teaching lessons are conducted at a lively pace and there is a greater level of challenge. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning and pupil management are less secure and this limits the progress of some pupils who struggle to sustain concentration and good behaviour. All teachers make good use of resources to foster the pupils' learning.
50. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding as to how and where to improve provision and she is a very good role model for teachers and pupils. The annual review of the subject identifies areas for further improvements and these are then considered within the wider context of the whole-school development plan and its key priorities. The subject is led and managed well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The school has focused on providing good opportunities in 'question and answer' sessions to raise standards in speaking and listening. Pupils also read and write in other subjects such as in lessons about the Island of Struay in geography in Year 2 and about the Victorians in history in Years 3 - 4. Opportunities to apply ICT to consolidate literacy skills are increasing. For example, in addition to presenting work using word-processing software, pupils have many opportunities to practise the skills of information retrieval from CD-ROMs. This wide range of activities makes a good contribution to attainment in English.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 have improved.
- The systematic teaching of numeracy benefits all pupils.
- ICT is used well to support learning.
- The current emphasis on problem-solving is improving pupils' understanding.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use mathematical language.
- Pupils are not clear about how good they are at mathematics and what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

52. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In the most recent national tests, over three-quarters of pupils reached the expected level and over a third achieved the higher Level 3. Since the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, there has been a good emphasis on the teaching of number skills and as a result, pupils have made steady and secure improvement in numeracy. Their overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound working knowledge of numbers to 100 and

they use this knowledge to add and subtract accurately. They use mental recall of number facts, for example, addition and subtraction bonds to ten, multiplication tables x2, x5 and x10, often very enthusiastically during the mental sessions at the start of lessons. In other mathematics lessons, teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to explore properties of common regular shapes, solve simple money problems and measure using standard units. Activities are designed well to show pupils the practical application of their skills to everyday situations, and this improves their understanding of mathematics, although sometimes, as in the example of measuring distances their moving vehicles travel, pupils in Year 2 make simple errors in their excitement to 'race' their cars.

53. In Year 4, standards are in line with those attained nationally. Regular standardised tests and assessments are conducted and results confirm this standard. Pupils work with larger numbers and their work shows developing understanding of place value to 1,000. Mental challenges include recall of addition and subtraction bonds to 20 and all multiplication tables up to x5. Pupils begin to use decimal notation successfully. Teachers provide some good opportunities for pupils to explore the broader aspects of mathematics, for example, exploring reflective symmetry, undertaking money transactions and comparing personal statistics in order to identify patterns through data handling. Pupils' experiences include the applications of mathematics in other subjects, such as ICT, design and technology, science and geography.
54. Teaching is good overall and particularly in Years 3 and 4, where pupils make rapid gains in their learning. The current whole-school emphasis on problem-solving is having a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Teachers present interesting and thought-provoking problems which effectively extend pupils' reasoning and calculating skills. For example, in determining whether a mathematical statement is true or false, pupils as early as in Year 2 are asked to select the correct mathematical operations they need to use in order to explain their answer. The rapid fire questioning at the start and end of lessons are features pupils to which respond well, enjoying the challenges teachers pose. The headteacher regularly works with small groups of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 and this helps to provide them with very good teaching that is focused on pupils' individual levels of understanding and performance. Pupils with special educational needs are also supported very well and they make good progress. However, teachers do not always remind pupils to use the correct mathematical language or explain what steps they take to reach the answer, and this restricts their confidence in talking about their work. Homework is set regularly, and this offers parents the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning by discussing mathematical ideas and different ways of tackling problems. All pupils' work is marked regularly and some encouraging comments or brief guidance given, for example 'Check this one' and 'Spot your mistake'. However, pupils very rarely write down what skills they are learning when they carry out tasks or activities, and they have no set targets that they are aware of to work to. This results in most pupils not knowing how good they are at mathematics and what they need to do to improve further.
55. Strong leadership in the subject has contributed to its improvement. There is a detailed development plan that is closely followed and monitored. Tests and formal assessments are analysed thoroughly and the information from these is used effectively to group pupils by ability and to identify aspects of the curriculum that need developing. The local mathematics co-ordinators' group is well supported by the local authority and in-service training is making a positive contribution to the development of the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. Teachers encourage pupils to think about why they need to understand number skills and opportunities are exploited wherever possible to reinforce learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed and made moving vehicles and measured distances travelled on different surfaces when exploring friction in science. Similarly, pupils have conducted surveys and recorded their findings using graphs and tables, and are beginning to use ICT to extend their applications.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but evidence was gathered from looking at pupils' work, reviewing the school's planning and assessment information and talking to staff and pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the generally good teaching, particularly of the older pupils.
- There is good emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills through investigations and practical tasks.
- Assessment procedures are rigorous and inform planning effectively.
- Support for lower-attaining pupils is good.
- Sometimes marking is minimal and does not help pupils see how to improve their work.
- The quality of some pupils' written work needs improvement.

Commentary

57. Because of the timing of the inspection, there was little evidence of work done by pupils in the current Year 2, but, from the work pupils completed last year, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are average. This is confirmed by the results of teachers' assessments where all pupils in the 2003 Year 2 cohort achieved at Level 2. The current Year 2 entered school with below average understanding of the world about them and below average social skills. However, the school recognises these aspects need addressing, additional support is provided and pupils are in line to achieve well against their prior attainment. The targets set for the higher-attaining pupils are realistic because good emphasis is placed on challenging the more able pupils well with additional tasks and higher expectations. Pupils in Year 4 are in line to achieve the expected standards by the end of the year as a result of the good teaching and insistence on the correct use of science vocabulary, and accuracy in recording information. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls and they all achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
58. The one lesson seen during the inspection, in Year 1, was very good. There was effective linking together of health and safety awareness in hot weather as well as looking at properties of materials that would keep us warm in cold weather. Teaching, led by health visitors captivated pupils' interest and allowed them many good opportunities to make observations and voice their ideas. Through this very good level of interaction and questioning, it was clear pupils were learning well. From work seen, and from discussions with pupils, overall teaching and learning are good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, as reflected in the very detailed planning seen and assessments made of pupils' achievements. There are good examples of teachers changing their planning in the light of what pupils achieve. From recorded work, it is clear pupils have opportunities to contribute in the design of the investigations, because different groups of pupils chose different materials or methods, and some continue to explore ideas in their own time. For example, one pupil looked for magnetic articles at home. The school's grounds are attractive and provide further good opportunities for pupils to explore the local environment to observe, for example, frogs in the ponds, and mini-beasts in the gardens, and enrich their awareness of the natural world. The school's PSHE programme is carefully interwoven into the science programme so pupils make effective links as to why science is relevant to their lives.
59. Information-based lessons are detailed and pupils are required in many instances to interpret what they learn independently in their writing, especially at the upper end of the school. Higher-attaining pupils produce good quality explanations, using correct terminology and sometimes extend learning by finding out additional information independently. Lower attaining pupils sometimes produce little recorded work confidently without help because their literacy skills

are limited. There are frequent examples of the use of mathematics to support work in science, in the use of charts, graphs and tables to help recording, and pupils use their measuring skills effectively to aid their work on friction. In addition, teachers use relevant ICT programs to enhance pupils' learning and pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 on forces is linked well to pupils designing a moving vehicle using axles and pushing/pulling devices. In some instances, especially in recording investigations, pupils' work is sometimes untidy, incomplete or inaccurate. Most teachers make helpful comments to remind pupils of what is required and how they can improve their work, but good marking is not consistently evident in all books.

60. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Teacher assessments are now much more accurate and the information they generate is being used to set targets and monitor individual pupils' progress very carefully. There has been good attention paid to the development of experimental and investigative science, with teachers having received good support and guidance from the co-ordinator. She has made sure the curriculum is planned in detail with clear guidance as to where and how knowledge and understanding can be extended through practical tasks. Where appropriate, links are made with work in the Foundation Stage curriculum. In mixed-age classes, where a two-year curriculum cycle applies, the co-ordinator ensures skills and information are taught in the correct sequence to help pupils learn effectively. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and additional help is made available, often to support pupils' literacy tasks in lessons. Investigations are planned well and teachers have all the required resources to ensure they deliver the teaching well. Pupils talk excitedly about investigations they have carried out, and older pupils in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to explain their ideas clearly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Only one lesson was seen so there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision.

Commentary

61. Teachers' planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met in full. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Resources - both hardware and software - are now very good. The information and communication technology (ICT) suite, partly funded by a community education project, is very good. Assessment is very good and indicates that whilst the attainment of pupils in Year 2 is about average, standards rise in Year 3 and Year 4 and pupils leave at a level that is above average. However, evidence from the one lesson seen shows that standards in Year 1 are higher than expected for pupils of this age. Teaching in this lesson in the ICT suite was very good and pupils made very good use of the resources available. The expertise and confidence of the teacher infected pupils from the outset. She communicated her enthusiasm and expectations of good behaviour and brisk pace of work to all pupils. The lively presentation made it very clear to the pupils what they should be able to do by the end of the lesson and she checked with them at the end that they understood how well they had done. Tasks based on previous work were very challenging and all pupils applied themselves diligently with high levels of concentration. As a result, all pupils made very good progress and achieved well. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has ensured teachers are given the support and guidance they need to use the ICT suite effectively to teach skills and give pupils good opportunities to practise these skills in their day-to-day work. Assessment procedures are very good, monitoring pupils' successful achievement of new knowledge and skills and identifying those areas that need further development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other subjects, for example, pupils' artwork in the style of Picasso, and data handling in mathematics. The school is in a good position to raise standards further as teachers and pupils gain in confidence.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

Only one lesson of history was seen and there was no geography available to observe. Evidence used to make judgements includes teachers' planning and records, pupils' previous and current work and talking to pupils about history and geography. This evidence indicates that provision is **satisfactory** and standards are broadly in line with expectations in both subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in pupils achieving well.
- Pupils enjoy these subjects.
- Resources are used effectively to support learning.
- In some lessons, opportunities to ask questions and voice ideas and views are limited.
- Assessment is under-used to help pupils know how well they achieve or how to improve further.

Commentary

63. History and geography are taught through topic work and the subjects usually alternate on the timetable, except when local studies take place and then both are included. There is a clear plan that ensures the required work is covered. At the time of the inspection, Year 1 pupils were studying the local area, Year 2 were learning about famous people and Year 3 and 4 pupils were finding out about the Victorian period.
64. In **history**, pupils show an emerging sense of chronology; for example, Year 2 pupils are able to put several periods, such as 'Stone Age', 'Roman' and 'Victorian', into time order. They learn about some famous people and suggest why they acted as they did. Older pupils identify similarities and differences between aspects of their own lives and past times, for example, the day-to-day lives of children in Victorian times and now. Most of the pupils remember some facts about what they have studied because the subject is taught well and captures their interest.
65. In **geography**, pupils investigate features of their surroundings such as types of housing and shopping facilities. Teachers encourage them to voice their views about their immediate environment and suggest how it might be improved. By looking at plans, maps and globes pupils gain a secure understanding of key skills in the subject in order, for example, to make good representations of their routes to school and imaginative treasure maps that identify geographical features such as roads, rivers, hills and important buildings. Older children undertake detailed studies of the locality of the school and contrasting localities, such as a seaside place and a rainforest area and begin to see the relationship between land features and how communities use the environment.
66. Teachers enable pupils to use a good range of sources of information to extend their understanding of other times and places and cultures. Pupils have good access to visits, visitors, books, videos, photographs, illustrations, maps, artefacts and the Internet to find more about what they are learning. For example, visits to the local castle stimulate an interest in their local area and its history and a good collection of Victorian artefacts excites curiosity

about day-to-day life in that period. Pupils are given some opportunities to ask and answer questions and to express their views but in some lessons, such activities are insufficiently developed. Assessments take place at the end of each school year but the information gathered is currently underused to identify weaknesses in teaching and to inform pupils about what they need to do to improve.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of interesting resources and artefacts to support teaching and enhance learning.
- The teaching of different religions promotes pupils' awareness of other faiths and cultures.
- Learning is further enriched through assemblies and the school's good personal education programme.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to give their opinions and explain their thoughts and ideas.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Limited use is made of assessment and marking to help pupils see how they might improve their work.

Commentary

67. The good standards in Years 1 and 2, established at the time of the previous inspection, have been maintained and standards in Years 3 and 4 have improved and are now good. Pupils learn about the religions of the main faith communities in the United Kingdom: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. They find out about what is special to people who follow these faiths, what their main beliefs and practices are, where they worship and what their holy symbols are. This teaching takes place in a context of respect for other people that is a key feature of the school's philosophy, so pupils are able to make the connection between learning about religions and learning from them.
68. Younger pupils are given opportunities to consider such things as what is special to themselves and how the people they love are special. Older pupils make connections between their personal experiences and those of others, they think about what is of value and concern to themselves and others and they consider the consequences of their words and actions. For example, in a lesson on fairness, pupils were encouraged to judge whether characters in a story treat each other fairly and what the consequences are of how they treat others. The teacher then encouraged them to reflect on how they have been treated and how they treat others. Such sensitive themes enable pupils to develop a good understanding of how important it is to respect other people's views and beliefs.
69. Questioning that probes pupils' thinking does take place but at times, teachers tend to express their own opinions too readily. This limits the time and opportunity for more pupils to contribute to discussions. A good collection of books, illustrations and artefacts adds interest and meaning to lessons and visitors such as Anglican, Methodist and Home Church ministers broaden pupils' understanding of what it means to be religious. Visitors from more diverse faiths are limited in the locality but the school makes good use of videos and artefacts to ensure pupils experience some aspects of faiths, including Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Good leadership of the subject ensures that it is closely monitored and developed well. Assessment and marking are under-used to inform pupils about their performance and what they need to do to improve.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in **music**, two in **art and design**, and none in **design and technology**. Pupils' work was sampled, discussions took place with pupils and staff, the school's documentation was scrutinised, and pupils were heard singing in assembly. Therefore it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision in these subjects, although the limited evidence indicates that it is satisfactory in each case.

Commentary

70. The displays of **art and design** around the school are of good quality and reflect the care that pupils take in their activities. Pupils apply a range of media and make very good use of ICT programs to experiment with ideas, working in the style of various artists. For example, pupils have drawn portraits following on from studying work by Picasso, using subtle pastel and bold pastels and then transferred their studies to very effective black and white images using ICT. Clay and fabric work is also of a good quality. The displays of artefacts and pupils' own work enrich their awareness of artwork from other cultures well. Visiting artists and visits to places of artistic interest extend pupils' experiences very effectively. In the two lessons observed, skills of colour mixing and applying brush strokes to explore texture were taught well and pupils took their work seriously, keen to do well.
71. Teachers' planning in **design and technology** indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Displays of work in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes confirmed that the principles of teaching the subject are securely in place because there was clear evidence that pupils not only design and make, but also evaluate, the finished product. For example, one pupil in Year 1 wrote about his 'Push and Pull' toy: 'I think I could make it better if my tube was longer'. In Year 1 also, there was clear evidence that design and technology is linked well to other subjects. The 'Alien in a Spaceship' was linked well with art and literacy whilst the 'Push and Pull' toy linked well with science. In Year 2, pupils sometimes use information and communication technology to present their evaluations using a word processing program.
72. In **music**, pupils have good opportunities to join extra curricular clubs such as the choir, which regularly sings in the local community. The school is active in attending local music festivals to broaden pupils' experiences. Provision is further enriched by pupils having good opportunities to work with visiting musicians in order to develop their enjoyment of music of different styles. Pupils' singing is tuneful and pupils enjoy learning songs and singing together. All pupils are encouraged to take part in the musical performances held at various times of the year for parents and members of the community.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for swimming is very good.
- Standards and teaching in gymnastics in Year 2 are good.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their skills during lunchtimes and break times and through the extra provision activities outside lessons.
- Participation in the Haydon Bridge Sports Partnership has benefited the school considerably.

Commentary

73. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about overall standards in physical education because the two lessons seen were both in gymnastics. Standards in gymnastics

are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 4. The reason standards are higher in Year 2 is that, whilst the teaching of gymnastics is good overall, it is very good in Year 2. This is because a teacher who has benefited significantly from the school's involvement in the sports partnership teaches these lessons. She has had specific training to be a leading teacher of physical education. The lesson seen showed that the teacher has very high expectations of both work and behaviour. The pupils were prepared very well by the introductory session in the classroom that covered the key technical vocabulary to be used during the lesson and the whole lesson was conducted at an energetic pace. Additionally, the activities required pupils to think carefully about what they were doing in order to enable them to develop their skills step by step, learning from the teacher and by watching others. Pupils also had good opportunities to observe and comment constructively on the performance of their peers. As a result, all pupils were aware of how they could improve and thus they made very good progress. In both of the lessons seen, pupils worked hard and enthusiastically.

74. The school highly values the contribution that physical education makes to pupil's confidence and self-esteem. This gain in confidence results in pupils developing positive attitudes to work in other subjects and helps them to achieve well. The school recognises the importance of promoting healthy living as a fundamental principle to developing pupils' overall well-being. There are very good opportunities at lunchtimes and break times for pupils to exercise and practise and extend their co-ordination skills and gain confidence in their ability. This was very clearly demonstrated in a brief lunchtime observation where pupils were practising their catching and skipping skills under the guidance of the headteacher and supervisory assistants. Pupils were concentrating hard and clearly enjoyed the activities.
75. The school takes very good advantage of local facilities to ensure all pupils in Years 3 and 4 have swimming tuition. This is partly because the school is well aware of the dangers posed by the nearby river and partly because of the school's belief in the value of provision for all aspects of physical education. As a result, almost all pupils are able to swim a minimum of 25 metres by the time they leave, as well as having an understanding of basic water safety.
76. The school believes that the staff development for all teachers through the sports partnership is improving teaching and helping to raise high standards for all pupils. The sports partnership also enables pupils to participate in festivals, for example a dance festival, in which they perform in public and this also promotes their confidence to perform in front of others and gain in self-esteem. The school organises a number of after school clubs that provide further opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision, although the subject features strongly in the overall curriculum.

Commentary

77. Pupils' personal development is regarded as an important part of the school's work, from the time children enter the Reception class. There is a good programme of activities including work on healthy eating, where parents contribute to the 'fruit scheme', general health awareness, sex, drugs and personal safety. A very good lesson for pupils in Year 1, on this latter subject, led by visiting health professionals, reinforced vividly some very important learning points. The school has visitors into school regularly and pupils are helped to become aware of their responsibilities within a wider society. They demonstrate their understanding well in the way they care and look out for each other in school. The school enables all pupils to develop a safe and healthy life style, gain confidence and interact with others. The very good emphasis placed on physical education, in the school's 'Active Mark' initiative is popular among pupils who look forward to the lively range of interesting activities organised for them.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

