

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BIDDICK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Washington

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108816

Headteacher: Mrs S Stothard

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 November 2003

Inspection number: 262500

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	221
School address:	Kirkham Biddick Village Washington
Postcode:	NE38 7HQ
Telephone number:	0191 2193675
Fax number:	0191 2193676
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Townsend
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Biddick Primary is an average sized school, with 221 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. The proportion of pupils that join after the reception class is lower than the national average in general but last year a high number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 had started the school part way through their education. When they start in the reception year children's attainments vary considerably but most do not have the skills and knowledge expected for their age, particularly in language and in their personal and social development. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is well below average though 37 pupils are on the school's register because they have special educational needs linked to learning, physical or emotional difficulties. This proportion is lower than the national average. A small number of pupils has been identified as gifted or talented. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Most are from British families and no pupils from other ethnic backgrounds speak English as an additional language.

The school has awards for sports, teaching and achievement, and is involved in an initiative aimed at helping teachers develop the skills needed to be effective leaders and managers. It also provides training and practice opportunities for students who are studying to be teachers.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language Physical education
9511	A Longfield	Lay inspector	
21993	D Atkins	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Music Religious education
25352	G Taujanskas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Geography History
2759	D Sleightholme	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school** where teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Most pupils achieve the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum and very good links with the community and the local secondary school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are happy in school. Very good leadership and management from the headteacher have helped the school come a long way since its previous inspection. The school achieves all of this at a lower than average cost and provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership and management from the headteacher have helped the school improve at a good rate since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching ensures that, from a lower than average start, pupils achieve well.
- The ethos of the school is such that pupils gain in maturity and independence.
- The innovative approach to teaching physical education is paying dividends and standards are above those expected and rising rapidly.
- The care and guidance provided for pupils are of high quality.
- Pupils are extremely keen to learn and behave very well.
- There have been big improvements to the resources, teaching and standards in information and communication technology, but computers are still not being used often enough in the mornings.
- The school's assessment procedures are not as effective in other subjects as they are in English, mathematics and science.

**The school has improved in many areas since the previous inspection and is now effective. It is more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection.** All of the key issues identified in the previous report in 1998 have been tackled successfully. Pupils who have special educational needs now make good progress, standards in information and communication technology have risen, pupils' work is neater and co-ordinators now lead and manage their subjects well.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The school's results in national tests in 2003 are not a true reflection of standards in general. Last year, almost a fifth of the pupils in Year 6 had special educational needs and a significant number joined the school part-way through their education. In addition to this, a number of pupils had emotional problems that caused them to perform poorly in tests. The reality is that pupils of all abilities achieve well. From a lower than average start, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and, by the end of the reception year, have achieved many of the expected goals in the areas of learning that make up their curriculum. They are already performing gymnastics and games at a level beyond that expected for their age. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and physical education are all beyond those expected for the pupils' age group. Standards in science, information and communication technology and religious education match those expected for the pupils' age group. The picture in Year 6 is already better than it was last year.

In English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education standards match those expected for pupils' of this age group. The innovative teaching of physical education is having a positive impact and pupils in Year 6 have games' and gymnastics' skills that are beyond those expected for their age. This is reflected in the school's many successes in local leagues and tournaments.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils are interested in school life and what it has to offer and put a lot of effort into their work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but the real strength lies in their understanding of what is right and wrong and their willingness to help and respect one another. Attendance is above average and pupils generally arrive at school on time, which has a positive impact on learning.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good.** There is **good teaching and learning** in both key stages and the school's procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall, but good in English, mathematics and science. A very wide range of after-school clubs and educational outings enrich the curriculum and there are good resources and accommodation to help pupils learn. Pupils benefit from very good links with the community and from particularly close links with local secondary schools. When in school, pupils are cared for, guided and supported very well by all staff.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and has been successful in forging a strong team of staff and governors who are helping the school improve all the time. With clear direction from the headteacher, the leadership and management of the school's senior teachers and co-ordinators have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now good. Governors do a good job on behalf of the school.

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

Parents have positive views of the school and are very happy with what it provides. Pupils are proud of their school and talk animatedly about the lessons and activities that they most enjoy.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that the information and communication technology suite is used more often, particularly in the mornings.
- Ensure that procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do are as good in all subjects as they are in English, mathematics and science.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

In general, **pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well** during their time at Biddick Primary. Standards in English and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2 and broadly average by the end of Year 6.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2.
- In writing, standards have risen in each of the last four years.
- Standards in information and communication technology have risen since the previous inspection and now match those expected for pupils' ages.
- Standards in physical education are above average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or who are gifted and talented achieve well.
- The school's results for pupils at the end of Year 6 are rising at a slower rate than the national trend.

### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.0 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.0 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are well on the way to achieving the early skills and knowledge expected in most areas of learning. They have good levels of control and skills in physical development. By the end of Year 2, standards in science, information and communication technology and religious education match those expected for pupils' of this age. By the end of Year 6, standards in science, information and communication technology and religious education match those expected. Throughout the school, girls and boys achieve equally well.
2. Good teaching of reading, writing and mathematics results in many pupils in Year 2 achieving standards that are above average. Last year, almost a third of the pupils in Year 2 achieved a higher level in reading, and more than in most other schools achieved a higher level in writing. In mathematics, well over half of the pupils in this year group achieved a higher level and this brought the school's overall standards up. The proportion of pupils who failed to reach the expected levels was lower than the proportion who had special educational needs. The fact that a number of these pupils did extremely well to overcome their barriers to learning and reach the levels expected for their age is a fair reflection of the school's success.
3. The focus given to writing is paying dividends. This starts in the Foundation Stage when children are given daily opportunities to write and are taught to form their letters correctly. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect so that pupils write for a wide range of purposes by the end of Year 2. In addition, formal teaching of handwriting has raised the quality of pupils' work and helped many achieve a higher level in national tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.1 (27.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.3 (28.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Standards have risen in information and communication technology. As resources and teaching have improved, so has pupils' skill and competence. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had a good grounding and standards match those expected for this age group. Older pupils have done well to catch up and are benefiting from some very good teaching from specialist teachers in a local secondary school.
5. In physical education, the proof of the school's effectiveness in teaching sports' and games' skills is evident in its many successes at local and national level. In this subject, pupils benefit considerably from specialist teaching and coaching in gymnastics, games, dance and swimming. This is having a tremendous effect on standards. Children in the Foundation Stage are already showing skills and control beyond those expected for their age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and standards are beyond those expected. It is a similar picture for pupils in Year 6, but there is real potential for standards to rise even further as pupils move through the school.
6. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. This is largely because of the school's good provision which includes clearly focused targets, plenty of help from teachers and teaching assistants and work that is pitched at the right level to challenge and ensure that these pupils play a full part in all lessons. It is a similar picture for pupils who are gifted and talented. With the consent and co-operation of parents, pupils who are talented academically are given the extra push they need to excel at their subject. Sometimes this takes the form of teaching at a higher level, such as in mathematics. Where pupils are talented in sports they are given extra coaching and helped to join clubs that will promote their talents further.
7. Of concern to the school is the fact that the school's results do not appear to be rising at a fast enough rate. However, this can be explained by the poor results in last year's national tests, which brought the overall results down. The group of pupils last year included a high proportion who had special educational needs and several others who had emotional problems that prevented them from doing well in national tests. It is important to note that the school had predicted this fall in standards. Standards this year are set to be higher.

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

Pupils continue to have **very positive attitudes** towards school and have gained through the schools good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They behave extremely well and last year there were no exclusions. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's strategies for promoting very good behaviour are very effective.
- The 'buddy system' makes a positive contribution to the pupils' very good social development.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy lessons and other activities.

### **Commentary**

8. All staff follow the same guidelines and procedures for promoting good behaviour and this works extremely well. In lessons, teachers insist that pupils listen to them and follow instructions and, as a result, there is a calm and orderly air in classrooms. If pupils misbehave, they are spoken to quietly and firmly so that they know what is expected of them. Pupils from Year 1 onwards know and respect the school's rules and try to follow them. When asked, they say that the rules are fair and many are pleased to have had a part in deciding what class rules should be. On a more general level, teachers help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong through the discussions they have in lessons devoted to pupils' personal development as well as through the topics they consider in assemblies.
9. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and with great pride, both in class and around the school. There is a well-established 'buddy system' in place and this is used very well to establish friendship and support between pupils. Pupils described how new classmates, just joining the school, were linked to a buddy who helped them to learn about the daily routines, events and opportunities. Pupils welcome the opportunities to take on responsibility, such as selling fruit at morning break.
10. Spiritual development is promoted well through assemblies and in lessons, where pupils are given the chance to share and discuss issues that are important to them. For example, pupils in Year 5 thought deeply as they reflected on each other's personal achievements and linked this to the importance of collaborating together as a team. While pupils are taught about cultural differences through English, art and design and music, and have a good understanding of the historical culture of the local area, they do not have the same depth of knowledge about other world-wide cultures.
11. The school is very effective in terms of satisfying the educational and social needs of pupils. When asked, pupils of all ages talk enthusiastically about their favourite lessons and subjects and are keen to get into discussions about what they have learned each week. They are particularly eager to attend after-school clubs, which are sometimes so popular that they have to be repeated. One of the strategies that teachers use to keep pupils interested in school is to seek and value their views. So, for example, pupils from the reception year onwards are involved in the school council. The representatives are extremely proud of their involvement and know that staff take their decisions seriously. The fact that they can see their work come to fruition is a great motivator and they are intent on completing the next playground project, which will benefit all pupils.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	216	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0

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

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

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Good teaching and a rich, varied curriculum are the main strengths of the provision but very close links with parents, the community and other schools all play a part. The ethos of the school is one of calm, respect and courtesy where staff take good very care of pupils and have their welfare at the heart of everything they do.

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is **good**. Teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection. There is good teaching in almost every class and pupils learn at a rapid rate as a result of very good teaching by specialists from local secondary schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have a good command of the areas of learning and the subjects of the National Curriculum.
- Good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond by working hard.
- Teachers make very good use of all available resources.
- Although assessment in English, mathematics and science is good, it is not as effective in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

12. One of the main reasons why pupils achieve well is that teachers have a good command of the areas and subjects that they teach. In the Foundation Stage, teachers make good use of their understanding of the development of young children to plan a wide range of challenging activities which interest young children and help them to make good progress in all areas of learning. For example, children learn how materials change, by watching ice melt and by baking food, with the help an adult. Children are fascinated by this type of activity and learn a lot from the practical experiences. Teachers who work in Years 1 to 6 have a detailed knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and are confident enough to change and adapt the National Strategies to good effect to teach English and mathematics. As a result, pupils acquire skills and knowledge at a good rate. In information and communication technology, where their knowledge had previously been weak, substantial training has ensured that teachers are now far more competent and confident. Teachers put this knowledge to good use to create lessons that capture the imagination of pupils, such as when a class in Year 6 was asked to write from a journalist's point of view. This ensures that pupils grasp new concepts and skills in information and communication technology quickly.

13. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. Individual education plans are very specific and are linked to learning needs and, where relevant, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In lessons, teachers are good at matching work to the abilities of these pupils and this is one of the reasons why a number of pupils did well to reach the levels expected for their ages in last year's national tests.
14. One of the reasons why the teaching is effective is that teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and try their best. When faced with unacceptable behaviour, teachers manage it well so that the rest of the class is not disrupted. Any misbehaviour is dealt with quietly and firmly and staff follow the school's procedures for ensuring good behaviour. The procedures work well and ensure that pupils who have special educational needs linked to behavioural problems do not disrupt the learning of others. Teachers also ensure good behaviour and positive attitudes from pupils by planning activities that are interesting and challenging. The best lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils have to concentrate in order to keep up. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 1 worked against the clock in a series of timed tasks. They thoroughly enjoyed this and worked hard to accomplish everything they had been given to do.
15. Teachers make very good use of all available resources to help pupils learn. In lessons, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching. This is largely because they are well briefed and have a thorough understanding of how pupils learn. They are particularly adept at asking questions and making suggestions that help pupils know what they need to do to improve. Parents say that they enjoy having an opportunity to be involved in their children's learning, though in reality they help a wider group of pupils than just their own child. As a result of the extra help that they get, pupils learn at a good rate and concentrate on their work. Teachers also use visits and visitors to good effect on pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy learning from first-hand activities and pay close attention at these times. Whenever possible, teachers encourage pupils to find out by exploring and experimenting for themselves and use any available resources to do this. For example, in a good science lesson in Year 5, the teacher referred to the way that a hairdryer had been used to demonstrate the properties of air and models of the planets that pupils had made earlier in design and technology lessons.
16. The school has good procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are tested in English and mathematics each year, using standardised tests. The information gained from these tests is used to identify which pupils need extra help and to set targets for their continued progress. In science, pupils are tested at the end of topics. In other subjects, teachers have not yet agreed similarly rigorous or systematic procedures. In subjects such as religious education, the syllabus is changing and assessment procedures will need to be changed to reflect this. In some subjects teachers have begun to use systems from approved schemes of work and in others they use a range of class checklists to determine what pupils have been taught. While all of this is satisfactory, teachers do not have the same high quality information about what individual pupils know and can do, as they have in English, mathematics and science. However, several co-ordinators have identified this as a priority, which puts the school in a good position to be able to make the adaptations necessary to improve the situation.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in thirty-nine lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	9 (23%)	15 (38.5%)	15 (38.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

### The curriculum

The curriculum continues to be **good** with some very good features. Good accommodation and a wide range of resources promote good learning and help raise standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The broad curriculum is significantly enhanced by the provision of French for older pupils, and specialist teaching in physical education and in information and communication technology for some classes.
- An extensive range of visits and visitors inspires pupils and enhances chances for pupils to learn.
- Extra-curricular provision is generous and pupils throughout the school have chances to participate in activities at lunchtime and after school, along with some further opportunities at weekends and in holiday periods.
- Regular evaluation and audits of schemes of work are carried out by subject co-ordinators to check the suitability of work for the pupils.

### Commentary

17. The provision of French for older pupils in Year 6 adds an extra dimension to the pupils' learning. This is part of a series of innovations embraced by the school, which allows pupils access to a broad range of experiences. Innovations make good use of national and local initiatives. Teaching for French utilises the skills of the staff in school very successfully and has resulted in the school providing a leading example for other local schools. Pupils in some year groups have specialist teaching for their physical education lessons. This enhances their progress and offers staff chances to extend their skills in teaching this subject. In information and communication technology, older pupils regularly visit the nearby high school where they are taught by specialist teachers and make very good use of the well-resourced computer suite.
18. The school has an extensive programme of visits and visitors arranged for all year groups, which significantly enhances the regular timetabled lessons taught through the schemes of work. These opportunities help bring the curriculum alive for pupils, providing inspiration and reinforcing learning. For example, the youngest pupils in the reception classes visit the local library and learn about being a librarian. They also have the opportunity to observe and handle spiders, snakes and other small creatures through a visitor to school. Older pupils travel further, on activity holidays, to Derwent Hill. They visit Eden Camp and Durham Cathedral for history and religious education topics. These first-hand experiences promote pupils' learning well and have a significant impact on their knowledge.
19. Pupils have opportunities to join a broad range of clubs and groups, encompassing a wide variety of interests. As well as sporting clubs, such as gymnastics and team games including football and hockey, there are chances everyday at lunchtime or after school for pupils to participate in extra activities. The reading club is so popular it has been extended to two nights, while other clubs, such as gymnastics and football, are open to the younger pupils in reception, Year 1 and 2 classes. Pupils can learn to play recorder or speak Spanish. Some

activities take place at weekends and in school holidays, thus significantly extending opportunities for pupils to gain a breadth of experience beyond the timetabled school day.

20. The subject co-ordinators regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their subject through an audit of provision. This helps the school to look at what is provided and ensure that it meets the needs of pupils effectively. With co-ordinators working in teams, the school looks to expand and improve the provision for its pupils. Currently, the arts team is exploring ways in which to incorporate drama into the curriculum successfully, for example, through alternative timetabling systems. This vigorous approach and positive attitude to innovation has resulted in the breadth of experience currently provided for pupils. Planning in some subjects, other than English, mathematics and science does not always provide challenging activities for higher attaining pupils in order for them to make good progress. The school recognises this need in its school improvement plan.

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

The school has **very good** procedures to ensure pupils' care, health, welfare and support. These aspects have been strengthened since the previous inspection. Provision of support, advice and guidance is also very good, as are the systems for involving pupils in the work and development of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The flexible induction arrangements for new children into the reception class help them to settle quickly into school.
- The school council is a strength, giving very good opportunities for pupils to give their points of view about the school.
- Relationships are very good; each pupil has a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- The lack of air conditioning in the information and communication technology suite, whilst not a health and safety issue, makes working conditions uncomfortable for both pupils and staff.

### **Commentary**

21. Induction for reception age children is a particular strength of the school's provision. Staff make visits to the local nurseries in the summer term before the children are due to start at the school, and ensure a flexible beginning to suit the needs of children and their parents. This is a service that is greatly appreciated by parents.
22. The school council, elected by all pupils, is another strength of the school. There is a regular agenda for meetings. The council has its own bank account and is actively involved with the parent teacher association in raising funds to improve the school grounds. It runs a 'healthy' tuck shop. Pupils' views on issues, and their recommendations, are taken seriously by staff. School members are informed about school council views and recommendations as opportunities are given to members of the council to share these in assemblies and in the school newsletter.
23. Older pupils are always willing to help younger ones. Pupils can take advantage of the 'buddy system', approach a mentor, member of the school council or prefect when they have a problem. They know there is always a trusted member of staff who they can approach in total confidence if they are troubled. The pastoral system is one of many strengths of the school.
24. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance. Relationships are very good; teachers know their pupils well and how they are learning. The very detailed individual education plans provide appropriate advice for class teachers to support pupils who have special educational

and other learning needs. Teaching assistants provide unobtrusive but effective support for these pupils.

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

The school has strengthened its links with parents, the community and other schools and they are all now **very good** and a strength of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very much involved in the work of the school.
- Pupils benefit from the school's close links with the local community.
- Pupils gain considerably from the strong links with the local secondary school.

### **Commentary**

25. All staff share the belief that the school belongs to the pupils and their parents and, consequently, work hard to develop a good partnership between home and school. This begins when children come to look at the school before they start in the reception class or when they visit the school before starting at a later stage. For example, when one boy came to visit the school with his parents, the headteacher took the time to ask him about his old school and what he liked and did not like, so that he felt at ease and knew that his views mattered. Parents are always welcome in school and a number help out on a regular basis. During the inspection they could be found listening to children read or working with small groups. All were well briefed and competent and said that staff value their contributions and that they help out because they enjoy the work. In general, parents are keen to lend their support to the school. They do so by attending open evenings, information evenings, special events and by accompanying classes on school visits. The active parent association makes a strong contribution to the social life of the school and helps to raise much-needed funds that are used to provide extra resources for their children. For example, it provided funds that were used to buy books for the library and chairs for the suite of computers.
26. Links with the local community are very good. The curriculum is brought to life and pupils gain from many first-hand experiences brought about by visits to local museums, galleries and places of interest. A good example of how pupils have benefited can be seen at the entrance to the school where flowerbeds and garden ornaments are the result of a project between pupils and a local garden centre. Members of the community often visit the school to talk about health and safety, or to bring huge 'creepy crawlies' for pupils to wonder at and examine. When talking about their work, pupils often refer to these visits and visitors as being the highlight or 'best bit' about a topic. Parents are happy with the school's close involvement with the local community and, at the time of the inspection, also spoke of visits, such as to Durham Cathedral or the local law courts that had captured the imagination of their children. The school premises are used for a weekly community club for women who live in the area, as well as by playgroups and holiday clubs during school holidays.
27. There are good links with other schools, particularly the local secondary schools, which pupils join in Year 7. Pupils visit these secondary schools regularly for lessons in subjects such as information and communication technology. These are often the lessons that pupils are most eager to talk about. For example, pupils in Year 6 bubbled with enthusiasm when talking about the multimedia presentations they were making with a teacher in the secondary school. This partnership enriches the school curriculum and helps to take away any worries the pupils have about moving on to a bigger school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school have improved and are now **good overall**. The headteacher is a very good leader. Other key staff lead and manage their subjects and aspects of the school's work well. Governors do a good job on behalf of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is a very good leader who has a clear vision of how the school should develop.
- Co-ordinators now monitor the quality of teaching and learning much more effectively than they did at the time of the previous inspection.
- Governors do a good job on behalf of the school.

### **Commentary**

28. Very good management results from the headteacher's ability to coherently plan improvements through a cycle of self-evaluation and setting of realistic targets aimed at moving the school forward. Very good leadership is the result of her constantly keeping abreast of new initiatives and knowing what needs to be done to achieve the shared goal of continued professional development for staff and a commitment to raising standards for pupils. The headteacher has a clear view of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. This is evident in the way that she has led staff as they tackled each of the key issues from the previous inspection successfully but, in doing so, has never lost sight of the fact that the curriculum needs to be broad and balanced. As a result of her strong leadership, teachers are now far more confident in their roles and work well as a team. The headteacher's strong lead on the use of assessment to track pupils' progress and predict their attainment is a fine example of good leadership at work. Staff recognise the benefits to be had from using this sort of data and this has had a significant affect on pupils' progress because they can spot quickly and easily when pupils fall behind.
29. The previous report stated that co-ordinators were not influential in their duties and said that they were not monitoring their subjects closely enough. The headteacher and staff were quick to address this issue by reviewing their roles and responsibilities. With clear direction from the headteacher, responsibilities were delegated to take account of teachers' expertise and enthusiasm and job descriptions were rewritten to take account of their increased workload. The headteacher made good use of the local education authority to provide training in leadership and management skills, and staff have gained considerably from this. They are now confident in their role and recognise the importance of systematic and rigorous monitoring. All staff have some time to monitor their subjects and they use this productively to keep a close eye on teachers' planning and check that the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is sufficiently broad and balanced. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science analyse the results of national tests very thoroughly and know exactly what needs to be done to raise standards. For example, after an analysis of test results the co-ordinator for mathematics identified and prioritised the need for more investigative work in mathematics, and this is now planned into the programme of work from Year 1 onwards. Co-ordinators now monitor the quality of teaching in a far more systematic way than ever before and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. They watch their colleagues teach and give constructive criticism and praise on agreed focus areas. All of this is having a favourable impact on the quality of teaching and learning and is a factor in why so much of the teaching in this school is good or better.
30. Governors are very supportive of the school and, in turn, have the confidence of parents who feel that the school is successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and have equal opportunities to make progress. They fulfil all of their statutory requirements with regard to the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses because they take the time to compare the school's results with those of other schools, have close professional links with subject co-ordinators, and visit the school to find out for themselves how things are running. In this way they know that the ethos of the school promotes learning and that teaching is effective in helping pupils of all abilities achieve their full potential.

Governors do their best to ensure that the school gets and provides value for money. They have made good use of money saved from the budget and funds provided by parents to pay for a suite of computers, but have not yet identified the need to use the computer suite more frequently during the morning sessions of school.

31. The school has all of the policies required by law for combating racism and ensuring equality of opportunity and educational inclusion.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	462,866
Total expenditure	462,578
Expenditure per pupil	1,800

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5,000
Balance carried forward to the next	287

32. The most significant barrier to raising achievement is the mobility of pupils in Years 5 and 6. This has had the effect of bringing down the school's performance in national tests and is responsible for its results rising at a slower pace than the national trend. Governors and staff are trying to overcome this by providing additional help for pupils who join the school after the reception class.

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

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

It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to make judgements about the school's provision in all areas of learning. Those areas relating to children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development were sampled and information about the ways that staff promote children's personal and social development was derived from observations of all lessons and the day-to-day work of the school.

Staff develop children's knowledge of the world around them through a planned series of sessions based on practical experiences. For example, in a science-based session, children were quite mystified by an 'ice hand' which was uncovered by the teacher. Their sense of wonder was compounded by one finger being blue, the result of a firmly stuck piece of latex glove. Over the session in this good activity, children realised that this was 'cold', 'slippy' 'like ice cubes', and explored the changes as it melted back to water. Further experiences include autumn walks to gain first hand experiences of changes in the environment and work on 'Myself,' including my home, developing early geographical skills, including vocabulary such as 'flat' and 'semi-detached'.

Regular opportunities are provided for children to draw, paint and make models. Children have worked with clay and made colourful plaques. They enjoy hand-printing with white paints and glitter, and make mathematical shapes, including some good tries at cones, with glittery play dough, activities which are linked to the week's theme of 'shiny things.' In music children play percussion instruments enthusiastically, and begin to develop appreciation skills through listening to some classical music. They begin to identify fast and slow along with loud and quiet music.

Children have daily opportunities to develop physical skills through outdoor play, which is enhanced by the new outdoor play areas with roads and marked tracks. Physical education lessons take place in the school hall and the children benefit greatly from the specialist teaching they receive, well supported by the class teacher. For example, they learn correct throwing techniques and, in a brisk lesson full of interesting activities make very good progress. As a result, children are already achieving high standards in this area of learning.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**. Good leadership, management and teaching ensure that children achieve beyond the expected goals for their age.

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

- Teachers provide many opportunities for children to become independent and to undertake responsibilities.
- Praise is used effectively to motivate and raise children's self-esteem.
- Staff provide good role models of courtesy and respect.

#### **Commentary**

33. Teachers have high expectations of children and the manner in which they participate in activities. There are regular opportunities for children to make choices. For example, in the afternoon sessions children choose related activities following the main part of the session. This, they generally do quickly and sensibly, mostly maintaining an interest in the chosen activity for some time. Lists on the wall show who will be the 'helper' for that day, for example, taking the register. Children are clearly proud of being trusted to be responsible. Children are expected to help to tidy up at the end of sessions and put things away. They understand the need to take care of equipment.

34. Staff use praise effectively in the classroom. This helps to motivate children, either to continue to work hard or to carry on participating in activities. Children clearly enjoy receiving praise from adults and this encourages classmates to match the behaviour. For example, in a particularly exciting science lesson about freezing and melting, which involved 'ice hands', the praise the teacher gave for good questions from one child encouraged others to also participate.
35. Staff provide the children with good role models. They are patient and offer clear explanations of class activities and routines. This helps children to think about what they are expected to do. Teachers speak politely to everyone in the class. The children generally follow this model in the way they speak. This results in a calm and pleasant working atmosphere. All staff model respect for each other effectively, for example, where staff ask each other about some part of the sessions. This mutual respect creates a positive environment for children where they feel confident to try things and not worry if they make mistakes.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**. Good leadership, management and teaching ensure that children achieve beyond the expected goals for their age.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers promote speaking and listening skills, especially developing a broad vocabulary, in many activities throughout the day.
- The classrooms are full of print in exciting displays, books and children's own work, encouraging children's early reading and writing skills.
- Good assessment at the start of the year helps teachers to provide well-matched work for different groups of children.

### **Commentary**

36. In every activity, staff make the most of opportunities to develop children's language skills. Regular chances are provided for children to listen to stories in groups as well as a class. These are rich and stimulating experiences. For example, one class listens attentively to the story 'Whatever next'. The teacher reads expressively and uses a bag of props to maintain the children's attention. In another session the teacher refers to the melting 'ice hand' and asks children for words to describe it. She praises children who offer, 'slippery,' and 'freezing.'
37. The classrooms are rich and stimulating environments. Staff work hard to provide a mixture of displays to enhance children's learning. There is a good mix of displays with different labels and descriptions. Instructions are clearly printed, such as '3 can play,' for the sand and water. Trays and boxes are labelled with contents. This encourages children to realise that print means something. There are lots of books around, some linked to specific displays. The role play areas, such as teddy bears clinic, include opportunities to read the appointments book. Children copy their names from a card and a few write their name independently. Some recognise a few letters and match them to words beginning with that sound.
38. Teachers use assessment at the start of the year effectively to organise work for groups of children in language and mathematics. By splitting children into groups for many activities, staff can ensure that they are building on their previous knowledge and improve at a good rate. Work is planned effectively so children benefit from challenging activities.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**. Good leadership, management and teaching ensure that children achieve beyond the expected goals for their age.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Numbers are used in many classroom activities and reinforced well.
- Good use is made of number songs and rhymes to reinforce mathematical concepts.
- Practical activities help children to make links in using mathematical language and ideas.

### **Commentary**

39. The classrooms are rich in numbers, from 'washing lines' of 1 to 5 and 1 to 10, there are lots of illustrations of numbers and these help to reinforce children's learning. Staff use counting in lots of activities, enabling children to practise number counting and allowing them to see numbers used in everyday life. The concept of 'more' and 'less' is introduced effectively through lots of practical activities.
40. Children know lots of number songs and rhymes and staff use these effectively to extend children's learning. Children thoroughly enjoy singing and join in enthusiastically. They particularly enjoy 'Ten little rockets,' which challenges them to count backwards from ten, which a few can manage successfully.
41. Lots of planned activities are employed successfully to help children understand mathematical concepts. In the sand tray, children make sand castles from 'cubes' and 'cones'. They enjoy the activity and the new ideas. Staff are enthusiastic, which helps children to make the connections and reinforce their understanding well. Soft dough is used for making three-dimensional shapes after a class introductory session. This lovely sparkly dough is interesting for children to work with and they thoroughly enjoy trying to roll cones out of it and make cubes with quite successful results. Staff praise children for their efforts while also reinforcing the results using the appropriate mathematical language.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve standards that are above average. The subject is led and managed well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 and 2, the many opportunities that teachers provide for writing helps pupils achieve well and, consequently, standards are above those expected.
- Teachers have succeeded in making boys more interested in reading and writing.
- Considerable emphasis is given to handwriting and, as a result, pupils write with a fluent style by the time they are in Year 6.
- Speaking and listening are part of lessons in many subjects and pupils do both confidently in a wide range of contexts.

#### Commentary

42. A fairly recent analysis of national tests revealed gaps in pupils' writing skills. In order to remedy this, teachers in all classes began to plan more opportunities for pupils to write in English and other subjects. For example, pupils draft and publish their writing using computers and write accounts of their work in history, geography and science. Teachers also ensure that pupils write for a wide range of purposes. Pupils retell favourite stories, such as Hansel and Gretel, and in doing so learn to begin their own stories in the traditional manner of 'once upon a time'. As they get older, pupils begin to write about the characters in the stories and use language such as 'nasty', 'selfish' and 'wicked' to describe the troll under the bridge. By the end of Year 2, many pupils achieve standards that are above those expected. They enjoy choosing and using words for effect and, consequently, their writing is often imaginative and interesting to the reader.
43. Teachers recognise that girls have, in the past, performed better than boys at reading and writing. In order to overcome this issue and reduce the gap in learning, teachers work hard to ensure that this is not because boys find these activities less interesting. To this end the school purchased a wider range of books that would appeal more to boys. Boys now have a wider choice of non-fiction books to promote their passion for topics such as space or football and of stories that they find interesting. This is beginning to have an impact, and boys say that there is now a greater number of books that they would be happy to read. Teachers carry this through into lessons and are careful to choose books and activities that appeal to boys. For example, in a guided reading lesson, boys and girls in Year 5 enjoyed reading a story that involved space rangers and monsters. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 thrilled to the language used in a poem about the 'City Jungle' and, copying the style of the poet, wrote their own evocative phrases, such as 'cars creep by, sneering'.
44. As a response to criticisms in the previous report, pupils from Year 1 onwards, are now taught to form their letters correctly and are expected to produce handwriting that is neat and legible. Teachers provide good role models for pupils and use the same style of writing that is taught to pupils. This means that pupils see good writing in displays and written on the board each day and they can copy and emulate their teachers' style. In addition to this, all classes have some time in the week that is devoted to handwriting practise. During these lessons, teachers show pupils how to join letters correctly and give them time to practise their skills. Pupils who are stuck, or who hold their pencils incorrectly, are guided, and teachers and teaching assistants are extremely patient when helping pupils of all ages. The impact of all this is evident from Year 2, where last year, more pupils than ever before achieved a higher level in writing tests. Another substantial effect is that the written work of older pupils is fluent in style and generally neat and tidy, which is a great improvement since the previous inspection.

45. Throughout the school, teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions and to talk about their work. At the start and end of most lessons some time is spent in discussions, which is when pupils have the chance to give their points of view and share what they know with their classmates. As they get older, pupils gain confidence in speaking in these situations and are happy to take part in class discussions or role-play situations where they give the points of view of others. For example, pupils in Year 6 were eager to pretend that they were a farmer or policeman who had seen an enemy parachute into their village and, with some prompting from the teacher, gave a fairly detailed account of these fictional events at a mock press conference. Teachers insist that pupils listen carefully to what others have to say and, consequently, they follow instructions and respond to what is said in an appropriate manner. Pupils say that they enjoy discussions and these opportunities make a useful contribution to their personal and social development at the same time as they widen pupils' vocabulary and help them gain confidence in speaking to adults and others.

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

46. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to use their language and literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils read to research facts, such as in history and geography. They enter into debates in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils' books show that they write for many reasons. Whether it is the recording of a scientific experiment or a detailed plan for design and technology, pupils see the importance of writing to their success in school and beyond.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve standards that are above average and are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. The subject is led and managed well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is very well co-ordinated and managed.
- The school makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Good provision is made for lower attaining pupils and for those having special educational needs.
- Setting by ability in Years 5 and 6 is helpful in ensuring that pupils of different abilities are involved and suitably challenged.
- There is a rigorous programme of analysis, tracking and monitoring.
- The identification of problem-solving has been identified as an area of development for the whole school.

### **Commentary**

47. Many pupils make good progress by the end of Year 2 and achieve standards that are well above the national average. This was reflected in the most recent national tests, where more than a third of pupils achieved the higher level 3. By the end of Year 6, however, standards achieved were well below average in the national tests, the reason being that fewer pupils achieved the higher level 5. The school has carefully analysed the factors affecting this fall in standards. Inspection findings show that pupils in Years 3 to 6 are currently making satisfactory progress and achievement. Presentation of work is good, and marking, in addition to giving praise for work well done, now informs pupils in a clear way about what they need to do to improve. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because teachers make effective use of the information in pupils' individual education plans.
48. Teachers plan lessons well with clear lesson objectives. Appropriate targets for learning are shared at the beginning of lessons and reviewed at the end. Teachers are skilled at asking

subject-specific questions to extend pupils' thinking. Teaching is well paced and work is effectively matched to pupils' ability. Well-briefed teaching assistants support individual pupils appropriately but unobtrusively. Teachers manage behaviour well and offer interesting activities to motivate pupils, who respond well, whether working independently, in pairs or in groups.

49. In a very good Years 5 and 6 upper set lesson observed, pupils were continually challenged. For example, in the introductory part of the lesson, they were encouraged to be speedy but accurate when doing mental calculations. They were challenged to consider when it was appropriate to use calculators. In a "brain versus calculator" competition, pupils were challenged to compete against each other to find out who can more quickly find the answers to a range of problems involving percentages. A particularly gifted Year 3 pupil joined this set for mathematics, showing how the school identifies and makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils. The teacher's subject knowledge is excellent; he is able to explain difficult mathematical concepts in ways that are understandable to pupils. He uses real life situations to pose problems for pupils, who respond positively to his request to think and work like mathematicians. They know that it is important to show their workings. They are encouraged to 'use what you know to find out what you need to know'. The teacher communicates his enthusiasm for mathematics and the pupils respond positively to his very good teaching.
50. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject needs to be developed. He leads by example, by providing training for staff and by teaching alongside colleagues. He uses analysis of data and test results, the detailed tracking system used by the school and the results of monitoring and evaluation, to bring about change and to set challenging but realistic targets for raising standards based on his clear view of how pupils progress. A good example of this is the way the school has now identified a whole-school target to improve the teaching of problem-solving.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

51. Good use is made of mathematics to support learning in other subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils are encouraged to consider lengths and to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary when designing and making structures. In music pupils are taught to consider the lengths of wooden and metallic bars when investigating higher and lower sounds. In science, pupils are encouraged to incorporate graphs, charts and tables to represent the results of the investigations.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. Teaching that is mostly satisfactory, and often good, ensures that most pupils achieve standards that match those expected for their ages. The leadership and management of the subject are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers are secure in their understanding of the science programme and deliver it regularly through well-organised investigations.
- The lively curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 helps to ensure that they achieve well.
- Too often pupils of all levels of attainment are expected to cover the same work.
- The good leadership has identified the actions needed to raise standards.

### **Commentary**

52. The good science curriculum and teaching in Years 1 and 2 helps pupils to make good progress and most have achieved well by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, satisfactory teaching has securely advanced pupils' understanding of scientific knowledge and concepts.

Most pupils know how to conduct a fair test as they plan experiments and investigate scientific themes.

53. Teachers have a good understanding of the scientific concepts they are teaching. The best lessons include lively discussions and well-organised investigations through which pupils learn to record scientific data and reach conclusions. In a good Year 5 lesson on the theme of air pressure, the pupils worked very well together as they responded very well to the teacher's guidance. At the beginning of this lesson they were told they were going to be "amazed"; many agreed that they had been as they completed four engaging tasks.
54. Scrutiny of pupils' past work over a full year shows, however, that too often pupils of different levels of ability are provided with the same work. Sometimes, pupils who have special educational needs are provided with more elementary tasks within the same scientific theme. However, pupils of average and above average ability usually complete the same work. This is one factor limiting the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in the statutory tests.
55. The good leadership has identified the action required to raise standards in science. The science co-ordinator has regular discussions with other teachers and, together, they have analysed results to identify the barriers to learning and the action to be taken.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**. Substantial improvements have been implemented since the previous inspection in resources, curriculum and leadership, which have led to satisfactory teaching and learning and standards that match those expected for pupils' ages.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has developed excellent links with a nearby high school, which gives older pupils access to inspirational teaching and resources.
- Improved teaching, curriculum and resources means that, throughout the school, pupils now achieve the standards expected for pupils of their age.
- Teachers have significantly developed their own skills in order to teach this subject effectively, but do not always pay sufficient attention to meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- Overall, too little use is made of the computer suite throughout the school day to support teaching and learning in subjects across the curriculum
- Leadership is good.

### **Commentary**

56. The school's partnership with a nearby secondary school, which allows classes to use their extensive facilities, staff and suite of computers, has enabled older pupils to experience a much broader curriculum, particularly in modelling and multimedia presentations. The teaching inspires pupils who are eager to finish their animated films to a high standard, adding special effects, titles and sound. It is a significant factor in raising standards overall.
57. Teachers have attended training and have substantially developed their own skills. This has led to better learning for pupils supported by a well-organised curriculum and much better resources. Pupils benefit from class lessons in the computer suite, generally working together in pairs on set tasks. Teachers monitor progress and provide support and additional teaching points as lessons progress. However, in most classes insufficient attention is paid to setting challenging work for higher attaining pupils, and this means they do not learn as effectively. Where challenges are set, in Year 5 for example, pupils are inspired to meet the teacher's task of creating their own database of three-dimensional shapes.

58. Pupils' records show that the computer is used to support learning in other subjects, but not extensively, and too little regular use is made of the computer suite to help pupils to learn across the curriculum. For example, pupils still copy draft work onto the computer rather than redrafting an original electronic version from their own file. Some research is undertaken using the Internet, but much more use could be made for all subjects. The school recognises this and has planned for this in its current school improvement plan.
59. Improved subject leadership has played a significant role in improvements in information and communication technology since the previous inspection. The subject co-ordinator has managed a range of improvements, which have had a positive effect on standards, although assessment is at an early stage and is not yet used effectively to plan challenging activities for all pupils. A scheme of work has been implemented which gives support to staff in their planning. Resources have been managed more effectively, particularly the maintenance of equipment which is now managed by a technician. More is yet to be done, in line with the school improvement plan, for example, introducing the interactive whiteboards and classroom laptops. Similarly, assessment is at an early stage and is not used effectively as a tool to plan challenging work for all pupils to raise standards further.

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

60. Teachers make sound use information and communication technology to help pupils learn in other subjects. Throughout the school, pupils use computers to publish satisfactory examples of their work and, occasionally, to make first drafts of stories and accounts. Teachers also use computers to promote pupils' learning in art and design, geography and history and alongside learning about these subjects, pupils gain skills in information and communication technology.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and History**

Work in geography and history was sampled by observing a small number of lessons, looking at the work in pupils' books and on display and talking with pupils about both subjects. No judgements were made about standards, the quality of teaching or leadership and management.

In **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied the physical features of an imaginary island and of the River Nile in Egypt. Their map work involved identifying the countries of the United Kingdom and finding Washington. On a larger scale, they have located the continents, seas and oceans and the largest deserts on a world map. Older pupils have studied coastlines and erosion and use appropriate geographical terms, such as 'headland', 'arch' and 'stack' to describe the physical features. They have compared modern and Domesday villages in the north east of England. In their work on rivers they have looked at sources and how water and waves play a part in erosion of the land.

In **history**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk excitedly about major historical events such as the great fire of London. They know many facts about the event, such as when and how it started. Older pupils have gained an understanding of chronology by placing events such as the battle of Waterloo and the 1966 World Cup on a timeline. They have studied ancient Greek civilisations including their myths and legends, which they talk about in some detail, giving names of Gods and other characters and explaining what they did. Pupils' work shows that they understand some of the politics behind World War II and that they know how to research historical facts from a range of sources.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers relate religious education to pupils' experiences and feelings well.
- Improved opportunities are provided for independent and extended writing.
- Older pupils are encouraged to use the Internet for independent research into world faiths.
- Assessment is not used effectively to inform teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

61. Throughout the school, standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they are given the help they need, based on teachers' improved use of well-produced individual education plans.
62. Teachers plan their work well and have satisfactory subject knowledge. They relate subject matter well to pupils' experiences and feelings. A good example of this was seen in a lesson where Year 5 pupils considered the idea of belonging to the Christian faith community as belonging to a special club. They were then invited to consider what being a member of a club meant to them, for example, having an emblem or symbol, obeying laws or rules, wearing a uniform, being part of a group with shared hopes. In a Year 2 lesson observed, pupils were encouraged to recall their own special days and times, before being introduced to the idea of Sunday being a special day for Christians. There are some good examples of personal writing in pupils' books.
63. The school enriches the curriculum, where possible, by taking pupils on visits to Durham Cathedral and to York Minster, by visiting places of worship in the local area and by having visitors into school. Teachers also make good use of pupils' own experiences of attending places of worship or attendance at baptisms or weddings. Artefacts and other resources are used effectively to help make the subject more relevant for pupils. Pupils are building up satisfactory knowledge of Christianity. They can recall many stories from both the Old and New Testaments. Knowledge of other world religions is more superficial, although older pupils are encouraged to use the Internet to undertake their own independent research on religions.
64. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils, together with good teaching, promote positive attitudes to learning, where pupils feel safe to talk about religious and spiritual matters. Pupils, who listen respectfully to each other, sympathetically share responses. They work sensibly, often in pairs, on interesting written tasks.
65. The religious education curriculum meets the needs of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers allocate sufficient time for the subject. The co-ordinator has a more influential role in managing and developing the subject. She monitors the work of pupils on a regular basis, and there is a planned opportunity to monitor standards through lesson observation. Assessment is based on national guidance, but is currently not informing the process of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has planned for changes that will be needed as a result of the forthcoming review of the agreed syllabus and as a result the school is now well placed to develop the subject further. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

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

During the inspection, art and design, music and design and technology were sampled through observing a small number of lessons, looking at work on display and talking with pupils about what they know.

In **art and design**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 produced paintings and drawings of good quality and their work shows that they have a sound knowledge of how to mix colours and use shading to give the appearance of three dimensions and perspective to their work. Older pupils build on these foundations and their drawings are more detailed and realistic. The sketches of a training shoe produced by pupils in Year 6 were particularly detailed. Older pupils have created models using clay. Throughout the school, pupils create lively and colourful pictures and designs using computers.

In **design and technology**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have incorporated their work into topics in other subjects. For example, they designed and made a moving vehicle for use on an imaginary Scottish island. During Years 3 to 6 pupils go on to broaden their designing, making and evaluating skills. They make joints, use a wide range of tools, explore food technology and have made detailed plans of how they would like the playground to look as part of the school council project to improve the accommodation.

In **music**, the curriculum is enriched by opportunities for pupils to attend a local music centre where they are given opportunities to develop musical and instrumental skills, especially in strings, woodwind and full percussion. In school, there is a wide range of after-school clubs where they can learn to play recorder, keyboards and brass instruments. In an assembly pupils played recorders well and they get other opportunities to perform for an audience when they give musical productions and concerts. Teachers ensure that pupils hear a wide range of music from around the world and this includes performances from visiting professional musicians. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 4 were given enjoyable opportunities to explore the sound potential of metallic and wooden instruments. Connections were effectively made between music and science as pupils considered vibrations in sound. By listening to a piece of music from Indonesia, pupils were able to link their music to location work in geography. In this way the lesson also made an effective contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**. Some very good and good teaching means that standards are well above those expected by the end of Year 2 and above those expected by the end of Year 6. The leadership and management of the subject are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching by specialists from the local sports college is having a tremendous impact on pupils' achievement.
- Very clear demonstrations and explanations help pupils learn skills quickly.
- A wide range of after-school activities and sports enrich the curriculum.

### Commentary

66. One of the most innovative aspects of the teaching is that the school makes extremely good use of the skills and talents offered by teachers from the local sports college. Each week, a number of these teachers lead physical education lessons for the reception class onwards. This is part of a planned programme of work aimed at giving pupils basic skills in sports and gymnastics and vital life-skills, such as communicating and co-operating with others that will stand them in good stead as adults. The impact of this initiative is twofold. Teachers in Biddick Primary benefit from seeing and working alongside experts and their own skills are improving all the time. This has improved the quality of teaching significantly. It has also had a tremendous impact on pupils' achievement. For example, when they start in Year 1, many pupils already have good control and perform a series of complex gymnastics moves safely and gracefully. The programme has not been in place long enough to ensure that the oldest

pupils have a strong foundation of physical skills but it puts the school in a good position to be able to take younger pupils a long way and so raise standards even further.

67. A feature in all of the lessons seen and a particular strength of the teaching is that teachers always explain what pupils have to do or show them how to do it correctly. For example, after a clear demonstration by the teacher, pupils in Year 2 improved the accuracy with which they threw beanbags at a target. Similarly, clear directions about height and speed helped pupils in Year 6 control a ball on a racquet and, subsequently, bounce it while moving their feet. This method of teaching works very well and is one of the key reasons why pupils make rapid progress in acquiring skills in gymnastics and games.
68. The school offers pupils of all ages a wide range of after-school sports and gymnastics activities, which are open to boys and girls. The gymnastics club is very popular and pupils who attend benefit from the extra opportunities they get to practise their skills. Training sessions for sports run throughout the year and are well attended by boys and girls. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn new techniques and consolidate their skills and to make friends with pupils from other classes. Pupils say that they enjoy these clubs and are proud to represent their school in tournaments and league matches. They put a lot of effort into their sports and are keen to excel and do their best, but also have a sense of team spirit and fairness. This is reflected in the school's success with many teams finishing first or second in local events and some of the most able pupils going on to represent the area in national events.

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

The school's provision for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education was sampled. In the small number of lessons seen, pupils were given the chance to think about and discuss issues such as justice, tolerance of others and sympathy through listening to stories and sharing their views. Teachers' planning shows that the programme also includes opportunities for pupils to learn about the effects of smoking and drug abuse on their bodies and to find out how to stay healthy; for example by choosing fruit at lunchtime. Pupils' personal development is also promoted through the close relationships that teachers forge with pupils. They are firm but fair and expect pupils to behave sensibly and respect others. Pupils respond to these high expectations by acting in a mature fashion and making friends with other boys and girls. A measure of the success of the **good provision** is that pupils and parents are in agreement that bullying rarely happens in this school and that children help and care for one another.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

