

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EDEN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Peterlee

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 133701

Headteacher: Mrs Yvonne Ryle

Lead inspector: Mrs Mary Warburton

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 262859

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	410
School address:	Robson Avenue Peterlee County Durham
Postcode:	SR8 5DN
Telephone number:	0191 586 4186
Fax number:	0191 587 0886
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Freda Maddison
Date of previous inspection:	n/a

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Peterlee in the east of County Durham. It is a new school, opened in September 2002, taking over the pupils, staff and buildings of separate infant and junior schools. The school now comprises two separate main buildings divided by a busy estate road, a newer nursery and 'Sure Start' base, and a collection of demountable classrooms. There are 410 pupils on roll, including 71 pupils who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The school is situated in an area of very high social deprivation and is part of an Education Action Zone. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Fifty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, most of whom have learning, behavioural or language and communication difficulties. This is well above the national average but the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is very low. The school was granted Early Years Excellence status in April 2003 because of the high quality provision for under fives and their families in conjunction with 'Sure Start'. It also participates in a number of pastoral and community programmes, such as Families First, On Track and a policing priority initiative.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22522	Mary Warburton	Lead inspector	Physical education Religious education
13723	Jean Overend	Lay inspector	
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Geography History
32347	Jennifer Brighthouse	Team inspector	English
32501	Eithne Proffitt	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music
33022	Jeffrey McCann	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a rapidly improving school, with some very good and excellent features, that provides very effectively for the needs of its pupils.** The headteacher and senior leadership team provide excellent leadership and governors support the school very well. Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well. The school provides very good care and support for the pupils. Overall it provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding provision for children in the Foundation Stage enables them to get off to a very good start to their time at the school;
- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide excellent direction to the work of the school;
- Pupils have excellent involvement in the life of the school and have access to very good support and guidance;
- Pupils achieve very well overall. They reach above average standards in information and communication technology (ICT);
- There is some lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in a small minority of lessons;
- There is very good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs;
- Some aspects of science are in need of development;
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

The school has not been previously inspected but has made very good progress in developing all aspects of provision since opening in 2002.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	n/a	n/a	D	A
mathematics	n/a	n/a	E	D
science	n/a	n/a	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.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good** and the standards that they attain are improving rapidly. The limited information available from national tests needs to be treated with great caution. It relates to the cohort of pupils who took the tests just one year after the school opened, at a time of instability. When the children start in the nursery their attainment is very low in all areas of learning. Because of the excellent provision, the children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and many attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in social, physical and some areas of mathematical development. Their achievement in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent. However, attainment overall is below the expected levels, and well below in language and communication skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve very well and standards are improving rapidly, but remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In



science standards are in line with the expected levels in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is very good. Inspection evidence is that currently standards are in line with the expected levels in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school and are above expectations in ICT.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Behaviour is very good and pupils have very good attitudes towards each other and their learning. Attendance is unsatisfactory, below the national average, but the school is working very hard to improve this. Punctuality is also unsatisfactory, with too many pupils regularly late for school. This adversely affects the learning of a minority.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is very good.** The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school and is frequently very good or excellent in the Foundation Stage and towards the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, enabling pupils to achieve very well. Throughout the school all adults consistently promote pupils' self-esteem and this enables them to become confident learners. Assessment is good and often used effectively to set targets for pupils.

The curriculum is good overall and excellent curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to an excellent start. There are very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are good overall, although the split site nature of the school presents some difficulties.

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. There is very good support, advice and guidance based on monitoring. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is excellent and they have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Links with parents and the community are very good, and there are good links with other schools and colleges.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** Governance is very good. The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership and direction to the school. They are provided with very good support by the governing body and other staff.

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

Parents hold the school in very high regard. A few parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour and bullying, but the school has good procedures in place to deal with the few instances that occur. Pupils are very positive in their views of the school. They enjoy their learning and feel very safe and cared for.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged in all lessons;
- Ensure consistency in implementing the scheme of work and improve the assessment procedures in science;
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Include information about attendance and national tests in the school brochure.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Standards are in line with the expected levels by Year 6. Throughout the school pupils' achievement is very good.

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

- Pupils achieve very well from their starting points;
- The achievement of children in the Foundation Stage in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent;
- Standards in ICT are above average in Year 6;
- Standards in English were well above those attained in similar schools in the 2003 tests in Year 6;
- Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they could in a small number of lessons.

#### **Commentary**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3	26.8
mathematics	24.5	26.8
science	26.0	28.6

*There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.8	15.7
writing	10.6	14.6
mathematics	13.4	16.3

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. In the 2003 national tests taken by pupils in Year 6, standards were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. When compared to schools where the pupils attained similarly in their Key Stage 1 tests, standards were well above average in English, below average in mathematics and well below in science. However, this comparison must be treated with caution as these pupils took their Key Stage 1 tests before the infant and junior schools amalgamated to become the current primary school. Additionally, the first year of opening was a time of change, which was unsettling for the pupils. In the tests taken by pupils in Year 2, standards were very low (in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools) in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools standards were well below average.

2. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are improving rapidly and are now in line with the expected levels overall by Year 6. When the children start in the nursery their attainment is very low in all areas of learning, significantly so in social and communication skills. Because of the excellent provision in the Foundation Stage the children achieve very well and by the end of the reception year many attain the goals they are expected to reach in social, physical and some areas of mathematical and creative development. Given the very low levels of prior attainment and experiences, achievement is excellent in personal and social development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. However, attainment overall remains below the expected levels and well below in language and communication. In recent years the school has been through a period of instability. In 2002, the former infant and junior schools merged to become the new primary school. Following the merger, there were some staffing difficulties that particularly affected pupils in Years 3 and 4. Given these significant barriers to learning and the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' achievement throughout the school is very good overall, because the school makes very good provision for all pupils that meets their individual needs. Very occasionally, in a small number of lessons, higher attaining pupils could achieve more if they were challenged to do so. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good support they receive.
3. The school has prioritised the development of English and mathematics since opening. Very good assessment and tracking procedures have been put in place and the senior leadership team has monitored, supported and improved the quality of teaching and learning very effectively. Consequently, in English standards are improving and are in line with the expected levels by Year 6, but are below in Year 2, especially in reading. Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening and writing, though handwriting varies in quality. In mathematics standards are also improving rapidly and achievement is very good, with standards below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Science has not yet been a priority in the school, but pupils' achievement is very good and they attain the expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6 from a very low starting point. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in ICT and attain the expected levels by Year 2 and above those expected by Year 6. In all other subjects that were inspected, pupils attain the expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6 and their achievement is very good.

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

Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and relationships with one another and with adults are very good. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils respond very well to the school's very good behaviour support systems;
- Pupils have very good manners and they develop strong, productive relationships with adults and children alike;
- Pupils have high self-esteem because it is supported very well;
- Attendance is well below the national average but strategies are in place to support improvement;
- Punctuality is a cause for concern and adversely affects learning for a small number of pupils.

## Commentary

4. Pupils confidently state that they are keen to come to school. They feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they will not only 'learn lots of fun new things' but also that 'there is always someone who is prepared to listen'. The children develop very positive attitudes to school because of the very strong, caring relationships they develop with adults and other children. This is evident from the earliest days in school. The positive attitudes, relationships, care and expectations form the basis and firm foundation for future learning.
5. The vast majority of pupils are keen and eager to learn. They settle well, remaining focused on lessons and, in some cases, display disappointment when lessons come to a close. The pupils state that most teachers make lessons fun and interesting. Many are confident in relaying what they have learned in each subject, using appropriate subject language. Routines for the structure of lessons and the school day are consistent, supporting pupils to learn and behave very well. In independent activities, pupils work purposefully as individuals and also collaboratively in pairs or small groups. The pupils feel secure in the knowledge that their contributions are valid and valued and are developing the confidence to know that mistakes can be made and built upon. Pupils with special educational needs respond very well to the support they receive and grow in confidence to tackle new things.
6. The school fosters self-esteem as a priority. Individual gifts and talents are celebrated in a confidence-building manner. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the rewards they receive on a regular basis. Certificates, stickers, dips in the 'Golden Box' and prizes in the form of reading and writing materials provide valued targets and rewards for which to aim. All underline the importance not only of good work and achievement, but also of behaving well and being polite. However, the many little gestures have the most profound impact. A quiet word or gesture, or receiving a 'compliment stick', for example, a considered compliment from one child to another, provide the key to pupils' increased self-esteem and acceptance of their worth. Pupils show as much pride in receiving acknowledgement and praise from other pupils as from adults in the school. Older children adopt roles as 'friends' to the younger children with responsibility, maturity and enthusiasm. Pupils' manners are very good. They are constantly heard saying 'please' and 'thank you', greeting people enthusiastically and holding doors open for others to pass. This is a mirror of the high expectations staff hold and model to the children.
7. Most pupils behave very well and are fully aware of what is expected of them. Firm, secure systems and routines regarding sanctions are in place. A small number of pupils find it difficult conforming to standards set but these are effectively managed and supported by staff and pupils alike, through systems such as the 'Chatty' council. Pupils talk with pleasure about opportunities to share thoughts in 'Circle Time', 'R time' and 'A Place to be'. They speak openly about these as times to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule.
8. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, encouraging them to become mature and responsible, respecting the consequences of their choices and actions. Their understanding and appreciation of celebration are well established through the emphasis that the school places on celebrating success. Pupils participate very well in assemblies that are collective, relevant, reflective and spiritual. The school works very hard to promote cultural awareness and acceptance, viewing this as a

priority. Pupils benefit from a wealth of experiences that support their appreciation and regard for achievement in all cultures and societies.

## Attendance

9. Attendance levels were well below the national average in the last reported year. However, the school has implemented a range of initiatives and strict policies, such as first day response and consistent education welfare officer involvement. The most significant impact, however, has been the attitude of the pupils, who are motivated and eager to earn the rewards for those achieving targeted levels of attendance. Punctuality is a challenge for the school as this impacts upon, and adversely affects, learning for some pupils.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	7.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
405	7	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 very good. Teaching and learning are very good and the school provides a good curriculum, which is enhanced very well by a very good range of additional activities. There is very good care, guidance and support and links with parents and the community are very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall. Assessment is good overall and excellent in the Foundation Stage.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage means that the children get off to an excellent start;
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good;
- All adults work tirelessly to promote pupils' self-esteem and this results in very good levels of pupil confidence in their learning;
- Very good use is made of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills;
- Very good use is made of assessment to set targets in literacy and numeracy but the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (13)	17 (35)	16 (33)	9 (19)	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.

10. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. It is frequently very good or excellent in the Foundation Stage and towards the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, enabling pupils to achieve very well. During the inspection, four fifths of the lessons seen were at least good with almost half very good or excellent.
11. The staff in the Foundation Stage are highly skilled in planning to meet the specific needs of the children. They work hard to develop very positive relationships with them and their families and this has an extremely positive impact on the children's confidence and their learning. They provide an excellent range of planned and incidental opportunities to promote the personal, social, language and communication skills that are so low when the children start in the nursery. An outstanding feature of the teaching is the shared 'feedback time', when all staff and children gather together to share news and celebrate achievement.
12. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan carefully to meet the different learning needs of all pupils. Very occasionally there is insufficient challenge for the highest attaining pupils in the class, but in most lessons there is a brisk pace to the learning that enables all pupils to make very good progress. In almost all lessons, a quiet, calm, purposeful atmosphere prevails which enables the pupils to concentrate and achieve very well. Relationships between all adults and pupils in school are exceptionally good and a real sense of everyone striving to promote the pupils' self-esteem is clearly evident. Teachers adopt a very good range of teaching styles that engage the pupils very well. They offer many practical activities that enable pupils to learn through having first hand experiences, for example visiting the local park to look at 'pushes and pulls' as part of work on forces in science. They are skilled in ensuring that tasks are well timed, so that pupils sustain concentration and have long enough to consolidate their learning.
13. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their individual needs are understood very well and teachers plan suitable work for them that is pitched at the right level. They are provided with good support by teachers and teaching assistants and this enables them to achieve very well.
14. Every opportunity is taken to promote and develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Very good use is made of ICT in almost all lessons, with opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills by using programs that are relevant to different subjects. For example, children in a reception class used a program that supported their learning in counting and recognising numbers.
15. Assessment is good and used well to establish the levels of understanding and skill in many subjects. In English and mathematics, it is used very well to set targets for every pupil and each individual is able to talk about his or her individual targets and the



progress being made towards them. However, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, with some good examples seen in some classes but in other classes limited use being made of the opportunity to provide feedback about what has been done well and how the work could be improved.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is good and is enriched by a very good range of learning experiences. Accommodation is satisfactory and there is a good range of resources.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is excellent;
- Very good curriculum enrichment is provided by a wide range of extra learning opportunities both inside and outside of the school day;
- Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) teaching has a strong impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes and raising their self-esteem;
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- There are good links between subjects and good use is made of ICT and literacy across the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

16. The school provides a wide range of worthwhile learning activities which meet statutory requirements and the requirements of the religious education syllabus from Durham Education Authority. All pupils benefit equally from the curriculum provision and pupils with special educational needs are particularly well catered for. All aspects of PSHCE are very effectively provided for, both as separate lessons and within other subjects. All pupils have equality in their learning experiences. Homework is well planned and relevant to lessons.
17. Children in the Foundation Stage have excellent provision. The additional resources attached to the Early Excellence Centre are used effectively to ensure that the widest possible range of experiences is provided for the pupils, including visits and visitors that do much to bring the learning to life. Practical experiences, such as a visit to the park, followed by a visit to the nursery by 'Percy the Park keeper', do much to engage the pupils very actively in their learning.
18. A significant strength of the school is the wide range of additional learning opportunities provided, which greatly enrich pupils' experiences and impact very strongly upon their learning. Breakfast, lunchtime and teatime clubs provide valuable extra experiences, whilst the homework club ensures all pupils have a good opportunity to complete tasks in an appropriate environment. Gardening, gymnastics, cycling, judo, sewing and sports are all offered to pupils as out of school clubs and on 'Golden Afternoons' they also have the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language. The school has benefited from an 'Artist in Residence' who has helped to extend pupils' creative experiences and some pieces of art of a very high quality have been produced as a result. The promotion of arts and creativity has been a focus of the school and displays reflect the success of several projects, including painting, sculpture and a visit to a local museum. Sports co-ordinators also come in to school to offer an extension of the physical education and outdoor games curriculum.
19. Numerous other visitors are invited to school during the year to support pupils' learning. Community police officers have a base in school, the nurse visits regularly and, together with such people as road safety officers, they make a valuable contribution to

enhancing the provision for PSHCE. Pupils also go out on visits that are relevant to the work they are doing in school and the local area is well used. For example, visits to Castle Eden Dene and the local park provided extra opportunities for learning in science. The very worthwhile summer school offers activities such as fishing, raft racing, rock climbing and canoeing to some pupils. Links with the local secondary school also impact on pupils' learning when they are able to participate in lessons there.

20. The split site, where older and younger pupils are taught in separate buildings with a busy road between, presents a challenge to the school and safety has to be of paramount concern. Accommodation within both buildings is well utilised and good use is made of every available space. Bright, cheerful and vibrant displays and areas effectively support pupils' learning. The recent focus on the libraries has resulted in much improved provision. Resources are generally good, well maintained and effectively used to support pupils' learning.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff know, support and care for the children and their families very well and there is a very high degree of trust between pupils and adults;
- Child protection procedures are very secure;
- The 'Chatty Council' and other forms of consultation with pupils are excellent;
- Pupils with special needs receive very good, whole school support.

### **Commentary**

21. From induction right through the school the ethos of care and support is a very high priority. Parents appreciate the very good level of support the children receive at induction and through to transition or beyond. All staff are very caring and try to ensure all pupils are happy and safe in school. Parents and pupils are very positive about the friendliness, helpfulness and support they receive from staff. Very good quality relationships within the school have developed into mutual trust and empathy for others.
22. All staff have received child protection training and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Those with more specific child protection roles have appropriate expertise and have received extra training. Very good levels of supervision are maintained at all times, including playtime, which helps to keep children safe. Expert visitors, including the police, help to teach the pupils how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
23. The access to support and guidance is excellent. The problem of the split site and having two buildings has been overcome by having rooms in both buildings where pupils can find the 'Place to be' counsellor. The pastoral support worker and headteacher can be contacted at any time.
24. Pupils' personal development, as well as academic progress, is monitored carefully and this gives staff in-depth knowledge of pupils so their targets are based on their own needs and abilities. Pupils asked about their targets were all quick to name and explain them. Pupils with special needs are very well supported and provided for, using a whole school approach, by bringing in expert advice and through very careful planning between teachers and their team of assistants.

25. The school is very keen to fully involve pupils in the running of their school and has canvassed their opinions through formal questionnaires. However, they can also write their views on the 'Thought Wall' and on the 'Promise Rainbow', knowing these will be respected and considered. They can make their feelings and opinions known in 'Circle Time'. The pupil-run school council, with its own budget, gives each pupil a real taste of responsibility. The 'Chatty Council', as they have named themselves, organise themselves and their own agenda. All pupils can contribute ideas and members can even contribute questions for new staff interviews. This responsibility has enabled them to formulate some very insightful and mature questions for these interviews. Consultation of pupils and its impact on pupils' learning is therefore excellent.

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

Links with parents and the community are very good. The links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very pleased with all that the school provides;
- The school works very hard to support parents, seek their views and engage them in their children's learning;
- Parents of children with special needs are kept actively involved in their children's progress;
- There are some minor omissions in the information for parents that the school has a statutory duty to report;
- Links with 'Sure Start' and the community are very highly valued by the school and impact positively on pupils' learning; strong links with other schools and colleges enhance learning opportunities.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents hold the school in very high regard. They are particularly happy that their children like school, that teaching is good with staff expecting their children to work hard and that arrangements for their children to settle in are good. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of some children and the presence of bullying in the school. However, the school has effective procedures in place to encourage good behaviour and to prevent or eliminate bullying and takes its role in preventing all kinds of harassment very seriously. The policy and procedures for promoting racial harmony are equally effective.
27. The school works very sensitively and effectively to support its parents, whatever their needs. To break down barriers further to parents approaching school staff, the nursery has trialed the use of first names and this has been a big success in helping to build up relationships. The school also runs many courses, both to interest parents and help them get back into work through, for example, costume making and first aid. It also helps parents be more involved in their children's learning. Information is sent home regularly, which includes homework and information about topics their children will be studying. Parents receive good information about their children's progress. The prospectus has some minor omissions, such as attendance and the school's and national assessment results, which are statutory requirements for this document.

28. The school works hard to involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs, keeping them well informed of their children's progress. However, not all parents respond to the opportunity to be involved with reviews and meetings. The very good links that the school has with a wide range of agencies enhances the provision and support for these pupils, ensuring that individual needs are met.

29. Parents' views are valued and regularly sought. Questionnaires have been used but opinions are also gauged at the weekly coffee morning, which is also a very useful informal source of information and support for parents. Amongst other things, parents have had the chance to decide on the new uniform and more recently, on the school logo.
30. The school values very highly the links it has with and through 'Sure Start'. These links have not only produced funding and resources but have also improved links with external expertise to meet the needs of all the children more quickly and effectively. The school has many other community links, which broaden the learning experiences for the children. These include the community nurses, police and a link through a governor with a national company. Very good use is made of visits and visitors. Being part of the Education Action Zone has had a strong impact on the school through provision of resources, staffing and training for staff.
31. The school is outward looking and encourages the children, for example, to support charity initiatives. They are delighted to be able to help others. It is also outward looking in providing placements for students from local colleges. By taking part in shared events with local high schools, the pupils' learning experiences are enhanced and their transition eased to secondary school. The pupils also have the chance to express their fears about this move and can have extra support through this stage if they need it.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and effectiveness of management are excellent. Governance and leadership of other key staff are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is creativity and singularity of purpose in the leadership of the headteacher;
- Support from key staff and governors is highly effective;
- There are excellent systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance;
- The teamwork of teaching and non-teaching staff is outstanding;
- The leadership and management roles of some co-ordinators are still to be developed further.

### **Commentary**

32. The creative and inspirational leadership of the headteacher has raised the aspiration of teachers, pupils and parents. The headteacher's clarity of vision for the school's development and her ability to communicate that vision to the whole school community is outstanding. As a result, the Foundation Stage is justifiably recognised as a centre of excellence and standards in the recently amalgamated school are improving rapidly throughout.
33. Links with groups such as 'Sure Start', 'Families First' and some training agencies have resulted in a growing sense of purpose and achievement among parents, which is helping to break down barriers and generate more support for children's learning. Role models presented by the headteacher and senior leadership team have inspired the

whole workforce. Their remit that 'nothing is beyond us' has nurtured a culture of teamwork intent on raising standards and achievement for all pupils, which is having a strong impact.

34. The governors provide very good support and challenge. They know the school and its particular circumstances and ambitions very well. All are closely involved in the school's work through their liaison with subject leaders, visits and governors' meetings. The chair of governors works tirelessly for the school and, among other things, runs a 'school helpers club' for parents which is involved in fundraising, as well as providing other practical support. Financial management by the governors is prudent. Since amalgamation they have successfully eliminated an inherited deficit and now work within budget. They oversee the headteacher's management of external funding, which is used expertly to maintain the quality of staffing and developments identified in the school's improvement plan. A successful initiative resulting from the very good management of funds is the employment of a pastoral worker to counsel pupils and lead the development of PSHCE. The higher than usual carry forward figure from the last financial year is as a result of the funding for the Early Excellence Centre being received later than was anticipated.
35. Overall, subject leaders make a very good contribution to the management of the curriculum. All are clear about strengths and areas for development. Staff meetings are used to check the quality of pupils' work and agree on standards achieved. Those who have been trained, monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects. The second wave of training for other subject leaders is part of the school's current action plan.
36. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and vision for development. She has established very good identification, assessment and recording systems and developed strong and effective links with outside agencies. She liaises well with teaching and support staff and provides a very good role model for others.
37. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are highly effective. They are both rigorous and supportive and have resulted in improved teaching quality. Performance management is closely linked to the school's development plan. The deputy headteacher has a crucial role in monitoring pupils' academic performance and setting appropriate targets. Her thoroughness of approach and skills in managing assessment systems fully complement the skills of the headteacher and contribute to the exceptional overall leadership and management of the school.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,112,544	Balance from previous year	42,947
Total expenditure	1,014,987	Balance carried forward to the next	97,557
Expenditure per pupil	2,714		



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

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

38. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. The school's recognised status as an Early Years Excellence Centre has made it possible for staff, parents and the wider community to provide an outstanding quality of education for the children. The extra funding which the 'Excellence Centre' has attracted is expertly managed by the headteacher to ensure the continued development of skills for both teaching and support staff. The provision of best quality resources enhances the quality of learning for the children, as well as the many opportunities for parents to further their own skills and become involved in their children's learning. Excellent links have been established with the 'Sure Start' project, which provides nurturing for pre-school children, preparing them for the Foundation Stage. Nursery and 'Sure Start' staff plan together for individual children who benefit from both areas of provision, and assessment systems have been designed to provide a continuum of development. Links with 'Sure Start' also provide nursery staff with opportunities to communicate more effectively with parents, so that potential barriers or concerns about children's learning can be dealt with before they start school. Other initiatives, such as the 'Start Right' project, crèche facilities and 'wrap around' care offered to parents, contribute to the overall outstanding quality of provision.
39. Teaching quality in the Foundation Stage is never less than very good and is frequently excellent. The staff are highly skilled practitioners who are very sensitive to the specific needs of the children and who know how they learn.
40. Children's attainment, and often their confidence and self esteem, are very low when they start the nursery in all areas of learning, but most significantly in social and communication skills. Throughout the Foundation Stage they achieve very well overall. By the end of reception, many attain the goals they are expected to reach in social, physical and some areas of mathematical and creative development. They do well in their general knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Communication skills, especially reading and writing, are still well below expected levels but many children begin to express their thoughts and ideas more clearly in words. Overall, however, attainment remains below expectations for this age, with very few children attaining higher levels.
41. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent. All staff share the vision, commitment and expectations of the team leader. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and evaluated by the whole team. Assessment and planning are shared to ensure there is consistency throughout. Teamwork is highly effective and underpins the continuous drive to extend the boundaries of achievement for each child.

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

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

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

- Children's achievement in their personal and social skills is outstanding;

- Adults in the nursery and reception classes are highly effective in promoting children's personal development.

## Commentary

42. Children's personal and social skills and their emotional development are very low when they begin nursery. Children achieve very well in this area of learning, because of the high quality of teaching and personal support they are given. By the end of their reception class, many have attained the goals they are expected to reach. Nursery children quickly learn the daily routines and gain the confidence they need to explore their surroundings. They understand when it is time to listen and know that they have to take their turns. The excellent support and care given during nursery dinnertime enables children to develop the social skills they need to make choices about menus, use cutlery correctly and engage in social chatter, skilfully guided by staff who share mealtimes with them. Reception children begin to sustain their concentration for longer periods of time, such as during literacy or numeracy sessions, and recognise the importance of working as a group.
43. Teachers and assistants are highly skilled at seizing opportunities to promote personal development. They talk to children continuously about making choices, taking turns, sharing, and looking after one another. Attending school assemblies gives children a sense of community and they learn to appreciate the achievements of others.
44. An outstanding feature of teaching is the 'feedback time' when all children and staff gather to share news, celebrate achievements and listen to 'important messages'. This was seen in an excellent session in the nursery.

Following a visit from 'Percy the Park Keeper' that had motivated the children exceptionally well, a message was received from him about picnic arrangements. The teacher seized the opportunity to develop language skills and to involve the children in planning this exciting visit to the park. Very high expectations and exceptional promotion of personal development was evident, as children's work was compared to their previous efforts to praise the progress they had made. During these sessions, children learn that they are valued individually and that their achievements are recognised. This does much to raise their self-esteem and their sense of security and belonging.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in speaking and listening. They make slower progress in reading and writing but, given their starting points, they achieve well;
- The quality of teaching is always very good and is sometimes outstanding;
- Support for children who have additional learning needs is very good, enabling them to achieve very well.

## Commentary

45. When children first attend nursery their level of language development is a very significant barrier to their learning. Staff in the Foundation Stage work very hard to overcome this. The highly effective strategies planned to encourage children to talk and express ideas result in very good achievement. By the end of their reception year most children confidently talk to others. They plan activities together, listen to stories and ask

questions about what they have heard. Teachers are very skilled at extending children's vocabulary and encouraging them to talk. In the role play area, for example, adults join in to help children remember the names of things they play with at 'the beach' or to act out their experiences of 'the café'.

46. Children enjoy books and stories. Nursery children listen with enjoyment to stories about small rabbits who didn't listen, while reception children enjoy the humour of the traditional stories in 'Once Upon A Time'. Children are encouraged to express their opinions when teachers ask challenging questions, such as 'What might the people be saying?' In this way, they learn that pictures as well as print convey meaning. By the end of reception, many children recognise individual letter sounds and a few begin to read simple words and phrases independently by stringing sounds together. Some know that information can be stored in computers. A significant number, however, do not recognise familiar words and still rely on having stories read to them.
47. Although children are given many opportunities to write in nursery and reception classes, a significant number lack confidence to 'have a go' and still rely on adults to help them set down their ideas. Children in the nursery, for example, wrote lists of minibests they had discovered. Although most writing was not past the 'mark making' stage, a few wrote some recognisable letter shapes and could say what they meant. In reception, children are encouraged to write more independently, for example to send post cards from the 'Jungle Post Office'. Most begin to link-to-link initial letter sounds to words. Children make reasonable attempts at writing their names and sometimes the meaning of their writing is clear. A significant number, however, are just beginning to show an interest in writing. Children who are in need of more specific language intervention are given excellent support during their regular group sessions, leading to very good achievement.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn very well from the very good range of practical activities provided;
- Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve;
- ICT is used very well to support learning.

### **Commentary**

48. When children start in the nursery their attainment is very low in this area of learning. Throughout the Foundation Stage they make very good progress and their achievement is very good. By the end of the reception year, many attain the goals they are expected to reach in number work but attainment overall is below the expected levels.
49. Because of the well planned opportunities for children to count and play number games in the nursery and reception classes, they begin to recognise and order numbers up to ten and, by the end of reception, many are beginning to understand 'one more' as addition. Higher attaining children have a sound knowledge of the pairs of numbers that make ten. The many practical experiences provided enable the children to recognise simple shapes. However, children do not readily use mathematical language and their ability to solve simple problems and explain their understanding is limited.
50. Teaching and learning are very good. Very good planning and well-focused practical activities motivate the pupils very well. Adults are adept at seizing incidental opportunities to develop mathematical language, knowledge and understanding. In a

session focusing on language development in the nursery, for example, the adult made very good use of an opportunity to develop the children's understanding of positional language by introducing terms such as 'on top of' and 'beside' to describe where a butterfly had landed. Teachers have high expectations and the children respond very well to these, trying their best and showing delight with their success. ICT is used very effectively to support learning. In a reception class, for example, a simple counting program motivated the children very well to work independently, practising their skills in ordering numbers up to ten.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent opportunities for children to explore their surroundings. Consequently their achievement is outstanding;
- Teaching is creative and very challenging.

### Commentary

51. Children have very limited general knowledge and understanding when they first start nursery but, because of the range and quality of experiences provided by teachers, many attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Children develop their curiosity about living things, by for example, exploring the world of minibeasts. They have many opportunities to design and construct models and to discover how things work. Teachers are very good at questioning children to extend their thinking and understanding. For example, when asked how she could improve the vehicle she had constructed, a child thought for a moment then decided 'I could put a ladder on top and make it into a fire engine.' Children understand what is right and wrong and have a developing respect for the views and beliefs of other cultures that stems from early work in religious education.
52. The introduction of the 'Digital Excellence Award' very effectively combines personal development with learning about computers and technology. Children's self-esteem is boosted tremendously when they receive their certificates to show they can use everyday technology, including computers, tapes and programmable toys to help them solve problems.
53. Teachers make every effort to broaden children's experiences. Role play areas, for example, include a campsite with tent and camping equipment, as well as a large 'beach' complete with sand, deck chairs and sunglasses. Play is stimulated by real life visits to the seaside, the local park and shops, and to experience life on a farm.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is extremely well planned and imaginative;
- Outside areas are used very creatively to extend the learning environment for children;
- Resources are excellent and very good use is made of the school hall.

### Commentary

54. Children achieve very well in this area of learning and generally meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. During physical education lessons in the hall, they move safely on and off the apparatus and are aware of others around them.

They are well co-ordinated in their movements. Nursery children move confidently in different ways, such as rolling, sliding and jumping. They are aware of the importance of exercise and the effect it has on their bodies. Teaching in physical education lessons throughout the Foundation Stage is outstanding. The planning and organisation of lessons ensures that all children are fully engaged in challenging work. Equipment is used imaginatively so pupils can climb, balance and jump safely. Expectations are very high, including those of children who have specific learning needs.

55. There are ample opportunities for children to develop physical skills outside of physical education lessons. Nursery children have regular access to an excellent range of equipment. They develop their stamina and control, for example, when riding tricycles around the 'roadway', stopping at the crossing or the 'petrol station' on their journey. In nursery and reception, children crawl, climb or slide safely during imaginative play in the very well equipped areas outside of the classrooms. They show increasing skill when handling and shaping dough or when cutting out shapes with scissors, and hold pencils and brushes correctly.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The range and quality of opportunities is outstanding;
- Teachers and assistants provide excellent support and encouragement for children.

### **Commentary**

56. Given the children's very limited experiences when they start in the nursery, they achieve very well by the end of reception because of the opportunities provided. By the end of reception children attain the goals they are expected to reach when exploring materials and recognising sounds and patterns in music. Many have difficulty with creative language and their ability to express thoughts and emotions or to sustain creative talk independently is still inhibited.
57. Throughout the Foundation Stage teachers work very hard to build children's confidence and self-esteem. Children learn to apply colour in different ways, such as by splashing or squeezing paint. They are encouraged to express ideas through painting and to explore different shapes and textures through model making and collage.
58. There is a very strong emphasis on developing children's creative language. Consequently, role play opportunities are excellent. Teachers provide an excellent range of dressing up clothes and other resources to stimulate play and creative talk. Adults join in role play to help with imaginative ideas and language development. In the nursery, children lose their inhibitions quickly as they become engrossed in their different adventures. Children may be seen navigating the 'longboat' in the play area or performing on the karaoke equipment.
59. Nursery children develop their interest in music by experimenting with the range of instruments displayed. The array of pots and pans in the outside area also encourages children to explore different sounds. They enjoy singing games and steadily build up a repertoire of songs. In reception children name a wide variety of instruments and



describe how they are played. They sing tunefully, maintaining the rhythm and melody of simple songs well.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve very well;
- There is very good provision for language and literacy across the curriculum;
- Assessment is used very well and pupils understand what is expected of them and how they can improve;
- Standards are below average in Year 2, particularly in reading;
- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged as much as they could be.

#### Commentary

60. The school has had a strong focus on English over the past two years and standards have improved. The Year 6 test results in 2003 showed that pupils' attainment was below the national average but well above that attained by similar schools. The expectation for the current Year 6 is similar. Work observed and analysed during the inspection, both in lessons and pupils' books, support the school's view of an improving picture with standards now in line with the expected levels. Information from the stringent analysis of tests and a strong tracking system suggest the current Year 5 will attain even higher standards in English in 2005. In the 2003 tests in Year 2, standards were in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools and well below similar schools. Standards have generally improved since then but in the present Year 2 remain below average, particularly in reading. This is also evident in Year 1 classes. However, given the very low standards as the pupils come in to the school and the very high level of pupils with special educational needs these pupils are still making very good progress. In spite of the many barriers to learning pupils' achievement overall is very good.
61. Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening because teachers place great importance on developing these skills. Many pupils come into school with very poor speaking and listening skills but consistently good teaching and a wide range of planned activities provided in literacy lessons and across the curriculum lead to increased confidence and development of skills. In lessons pupils are also given time to think before they answer which builds their confidence and means they are keen to share thoughts and ideas with adults and their classmates.
62. Pupils achieve well in reading, although standards in Year 2 remain below average. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read accurately, fluently and with a good understanding of the text. However, average and less able pupils rely more on memory, are less fluent and show a superficial understanding of the text. Overall, pupils leave Year 2 with a firm base on which to build. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make very good progress in their reading and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read. They have a good knowledge of different authors, express preferences and opinions and know the workings and systems of the library. Reading time is allocated and planned for every day and the co-ordinator has

implemented a structured programme for guided reading throughout the school. These strategies are having a positive impact and standards are continuing to improve.

63. Pupils achieve very well in writing overall and the school has also given this aspect of literacy a high focus. Writing tasks are relevant, varied and interesting and there are opportunities for pupils to write at length and develop their ideas. For example, they write character sketches, letters, poems and instructions as well as stories. Classrooms offer a literacy rich environment with pupils' writing supported well through prompts and examples. In a particularly good Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils were encouraged by very good teaching to write story openings using their five senses. Most managed to produce work of a high standard, including phrases such as 'The taste of salt raided my mouth.' Presentation and handwriting are varied in quality, as are some teachers' expectations in this area. Marking often offers pupils constructive ways of how to improve their writing, although marking in general is not of a consistent quality.
64. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is very good, particularly at the end of each key stage, enabling the pupils to achieve very well. Lessons are generally well planned and resourced, with clear objectives communicated to pupils. Most teachers use a good range of teaching styles and strategies and all make good use of questions to build on prior learning. The setting of pupils for English means that those of similar ability can be taught together and allows teachers to match activities and work more accurately to the needs of pupils. In most lessons this is successful, although very occasionally higher ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged. For example, in a Year 1 lesson a small number of pupils completed their work with relative ease but were not offered more difficult tasks or encouraged to improve what they had done. Support staff are deployed very effectively and their sensitive input has a significant impact on pupils' achievement, especially those with special educational needs. ICT is used very well to support work in English throughout the school. Very good assessment strategies ensure that appropriate targets are set. Pupils understand their targets and know how they can improve, which impacts strongly on their learning and motivation to learn.
65. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has good expertise and a clear understanding of the subject. She monitors standards closely and has identified areas for improvement. Sound procedures are in place to check planning and the standards of pupils' work. She has been given opportunities to observe lessons and together with the senior leadership team has given appropriate feedback to teachers. This joint approach has contributed well to school improvement in English.

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

66. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum is very good. Subjects are well integrated and there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in a range of other subjects. Teachers' planning often shows opportunities to develop skills, such as writing and research reading in subjects such as science, history and geography. Very good speaking and listening opportunities are also evident in many lessons, particularly PSHCE.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and is a driving force in moving both teaching and learning forward;
- Teaching and learning are improving and are very strong at the end of both key stages;
- The arrangement of pupils into groups of similar ability is accelerating learning;
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the quality of the support they receive;
- More use could be made of numeracy skills in other subject areas.

### Commentary

67. Standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils throughout the school are achieving very well. As a result of the school's focus on mathematics over the past year, there are pleasing signs that standards are improving throughout the school.
68. In the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2, standards were in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools and well below those attained by similar schools. In Year 6, standards were well below the national average but in line with similar schools. However, when the pupils took these tests the school had only been open as a primary school for one year, a time of change that was unsettling for the pupils. The school has set realistic targets for this year and the current Year 6 pupils are on course for improvement and to attain the expected standards. Targets for 2005 are challenging and the performance of the present Year 5 group reflects the ground that these pupils have made up. Far fewer pupils reach the higher levels in tests than in most schools and those in similar circumstances. The school is beginning to address this through a specific focus on mathematics for this group. The steady improvement in teaching and learning is poised to reap rewards.
69. By Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of number up to 100, including patterns and sequences, and use their knowledge to solve problems. Higher attaining pupils work successfully with larger numbers. They have a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measures and handle simple data, presenting findings in tally charts. By Year 6, pupils apply their mathematical skills to a variety of situations. They work with fractions, decimals and percentages and explore probability and the properties of irregular shapes and angles. They interpret information presented in a variety of forms.
70. The arrangement of pupils into 'sets' of similar ability has resulted in more harmonious teaching groups, allowing teachers the opportunity to provide work at appropriate levels. They are also ensuring that support for the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs can be maximised and effectively targeted. Very occasionally in some classes, although the most able pupils are given more difficult work than others, this does not always stretch them enough.

71. Teaching is good overall and a very good and an excellent lesson were seen. The very best lessons were carried out at a rapid pace, with quick-fire questioning, keeping pupils on their toes. They respond well to this level of challenge. Very occasionally teachers do not use their knowledge of what their pupils know and can do effectively enough to set appropriate tasks for them, resulting in a slower pace to the learning.

72. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 5/6, pupils were engaged in classifying quadrilaterals and reflecting co-ordinates across four quadrants.

On entering the room there was an almost tangible sense of expectation. The children were listening intently as the teacher began a round of positive affirmation of the children's achievements the previous day, setting the tone for what was to come. Full of praise, each child's attention was drawn to the interactive whiteboard, used with expertise to grasp the attention of all learners. The pace and rigour of the proceeding lesson and the pupils' responses to the challenges set were extremely rapid. The children, adept at using the technology, flew through the oral and mental starter, hardly aware of the speed and pace of their learning. At every moment, they were engaged and challenged. The teacher had obviously created a safe space for humour, based on mutual trust and respect, enabling pupils to 'have a go' without fear of failure or ridicule. When individual challenges were set for independent activities, the children's responses of 'wow', 'great' and 'bring it on' reflected the ability of the teacher to engage and inspire. All significant groups worked with focus and vigour, obviously comfortable with the expectations and level of challenge. The plenary was no less inspiring, with pupils 'rearing at the bit' to relate what they had learned, whilst their teacher confronted them with provocative questions that would take their learning to another level. The time to move back to their relevant classes brought groans of disappointment. As a result of an inspired insight and awareness into the needs and capabilities of her pupils, the teacher had succeeded in filling the young learners with an immense sense of achievement and a yearning for more.

73. Support for pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability is particularly good. Effective use is made of teaching assistants who pay close attention to the needs of these pupils. This develops their confidence and ensures good progress. Mathematics throughout the school is very well led and managed. Since taking over the post one year ago, the co-ordinator has put her vision and commitment to the subject into practice. With dedication and the unstinting support of the senior leadership team, she has raised the profile of the subject and has been the driving force in moving teaching, learning, assessment, tracking of progress, target setting and achievement forward. With the continued support of this effective leadership mathematics is developing particularly well.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

74. Whilst some pupils have opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects, these are not systematically thought through nor planned for. Consequently, opportunities are sometimes missed that would develop skills in this way. However, when opportunities are used they are effective in allowing pupils to practise and develop their skills, for example when drawing graphs and charts to record findings in science.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well and reach average standards;
- Teaching is good and provides well for the vast majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs;
- There is a strong emphasis on investigation, which is engaging pupils and underpinning knowledge well;
- Approaches to implementing the scheme of work are not consistent throughout the school;
- The assessment and recording systems are not detailed enough to enable teachers to always set appropriate targets for individuals and groups of pupils.

## Commentary

75. In the 2003 tests for pupils in Year 2, standards were in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools and well below standards attained by similar schools. In the tests taken by pupils in Year 6, standards were well below the national average and below those attained by similar schools. However, the pupils took these tests when the new school had been open for only one year and there had been an unsettled time. Inspection evidence is that standards have improved considerably since then and are now in line with expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. This is because there is good teaching and a greater emphasis on practical and investigative work that motivates the pupils to learn. Given the very low standards when pupils start at the school, this represents very good achievement overall.
76. In Key Stage 1, pupils have learned about topics such as healthy eating, sources of light and plants and animals. They develop investigation skills well; for example, a Year 1 class was observed building model cars and prams to explore 'pushing and pulling'. Great enthusiasm was generated and all pupils could discuss their work, developing scientific language and understanding about forces. Year 2 children could discuss knowledge about 'minibeasts' and knew 'they don't have bones', and were aware of the requirements for plant growth. However, despite an emphasis on experimentation the children were not sure why, for example, they needed to do a 'fair test'.
77. During Key Stage 2, pupils extend their knowledge. For example, learn about solids, liquids and gases in Year 4 and plant photosynthesis and decay in Year 5. They have made good progress in investigative science; for example, Year 4 pupils have studied the effect of varying weights on elastic extension. There have been good links forged with other subjects. Constructing and reading line graphs has developed mathematical skills. Throughout science, the use of ICT is also well developed by both teachers and children, which enhances the understanding of its use. Some Year 6 pupils, for example, used the Internet to carry out research about famous scientists. However, because there has not been enough emphasis on investigative science in the past, Year 6 pupils do not always understand the need for rigorous procedures in investigation. Some are not sure about what comes last in an experiment, results or conclusion, and they do not use scientific vocabulary with confidence.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Planning is clear about tasks for different pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged because of lack of knowledge of what they already know. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on circuits there was not enough knowledge of prior attainment and some pupils said 'This is easy, we've done this before.' In most lessons, there is a very good emphasis on practical work and resources, including the outdoor environment, are used very effectively to support learning. The very good relationships that teachers have with pupils contribute to the very good progress made, because pupils feel supported and willing to experiment.
79. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Despite the good progress made in improving standards and the quality of teaching, there are still some areas of provision that are in need of further development. This is because the school has concentrated on developing English and mathematics since opening, and science has not yet been a major focus. Assessment and recording systems have not been fully

developed and implementation of the curriculum and approaches to investigative work are not yet consistent across the school. The subject co-ordinator has drawn up clear, comprehensive plans for developing the subject in the near future. There are adequate resources to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and they are well stored, labelled and accessible.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and Weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6 and pupils achieve very well;
- The innovative leadership of the subject ensures that the vision for its development is shared and understood by all;
- The staff are knowledgeable and confident;
- Accommodation and resources are plentiful and of good quality;
- Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported;
- ICT is used very effectively in almost all subjects.

### Commentary

80. By the end of Year 2, pupils have reached standards that are broadly as expected and this shows very good achievement. By the time they have reached the end of Year 6 their standards are above expectations. This is due to an acceleration of learning as a result of teachers' knowledge and confidence and the enthusiasm shown by the pupils. As a result, achievement is very good, particularly considering the short time in which the subject has been developed.
81. During Years 1 and 2, pupils are given many opportunities to explore the different aspects of ICT. For example, pupils in Year 2 have been working in groups to control the 'Roamer' robot. This has resulted in good collaboration and independent discovery. In Year 1, pupils had opportunities to develop their skills using word processing and art programs. In doing so, they apply their skills to other subjects, for example English and art and design.
82. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have developed good knowledge and skills and are able to retrieve and discuss their saved work. For example, they are proud of their animated presentations and slide shows about 'Eden Community Primary School' and can explain how they developed the work, who is the intended audience and how they can manipulate the programs to improve their work. Year 4 pupils were enthusiastic about their lesson on 'branching databases' and all children achieved very well because the teacher provided different levels of work. Throughout the school standards are being accelerated by the use of the 'Digital Excellence Scheme' which provides a good assessment of the children's' development and progress. This also includes a version to cater for pupils who have special educational needs, ensuring that their needs are met. The very good range of cross-curricular opportunities provided and the amount of time that pupils spend learning through ICT contribute very effectively to the very good progress made.
83. Teaching and learning are very good. Resources are used well and challenging tasks are provided for different groups of pupils. There is good liaison and planning for support of pupils with special educational needs; for example, in a Year 2 lesson the learning support assistant withdrew a small group to work in a separate room. She was very knowledgeable of the needs of the group and simplified the learning objectives into simple steps, thereby ensuring the children could achieve their objectives.

84. The subject is led and managed very effectively by the senior leadership team. Each member of the team takes responsibility for an aspect, for example software, links with parents or assessment. This is very effective in ensuring that the subject is given a high profile throughout the school and is used very well to support teaching and learning. ICT is now an integral part of every lesson. The use of the smart boards in all classrooms and the hall by both staff and pupils has resulted in a high degree of confidence and understanding of the application of the technology. The clear vision and priorities are well thought through and funded. This means the provision of resources keeps pace with the children's progress. For example, new audio stations have just arrived and 'wireless and broadband' technology is next in line.

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

85. Computer technology is well established as a tool for learning in almost all subjects and this has been an area that the leadership team has put a great deal of effort into. ICT is also used during assemblies when children deliver PowerPoint presentations as an integral part of the assembly. All classes have digital cameras and these are put to good use as a recording tool. For example, there are photographs of tee shirt printing in Year 1 and of art and poetry as part of the 'Rainbow' display in the entrance hall. Year 3 used the Internet to research information on Sikhism, and in geography there was research on India and Kenya. The schools' own web site is being finalised and both parents and children have been involved in this.

### **HUMANITIES**

86. Work was sampled in **geography**. No overall judgement on provision can be made as it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection.
87. Curriculum planning and the samples of work available show that pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6 and that standards are consistent with expectations for that age group. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use the locality around the school effectively to gain a sense of 'place' and to learn about local features. In Years 3 to 6, pupils compare different locations around the world, such as India and Kenya. They study world climates and weather patterns and learn about the geographical features of rivers and mountains. The recently appointed subject leader has satisfactorily adapted national guidelines as a basis for planning and has begun to assemble a portfolio of pupils' work to help assessment. The local park, the town centre, Castle Eden Dene and the coastal areas are used effectively to provide first hand experiences and to develop pupils' geographical enquiry skills.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned and enriched by visits to places of historical interest;
- Teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well;
- The role of the subject leader has not yet been fully developed.

## Commentary

88. Standards in history are broadly as expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Given children's low attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world when they first start school, the standards reached represent good achievement. Evidence shows that pupils' attitudes to learning, especially those in Years 3 to 6, have improved considerably since this became a focus for the school. Much effort has also gone into improving teaching standards and the effect of this is seen in the clarity of teachers' planning and the outcomes in pupils' work. Although standards of recording and presentation of work still present difficulty for a significant number of pupils, there is steady improvement.
89. The quality of teaching overall is good. Strong features of lessons are the teachers' planning and preparation, and their willingness to use ICT to give clear demonstrations and examples. In Year 2, for example, the teacher's use of the interactive whiteboard to provide instantaneous illustrations of seaside holidays held children's interest very well and resulted in good learning. In Year 6, history and literacy skills were linked very effectively as pupils listened to a commentary about John Lennon and jotted down information which they used to place events in chronological order. This also resulted in pupils gaining good background information at the start of their topic. Teachers manage pupils very well because of the very good relationships which are established. Expectations are high in most lessons and pupils respond well because they know their efforts are valued and can be shared. Sometimes children are not so well stimulated by the teaching, because resources used are dull and the expected method for recording work is too challenging, given the pupils' ability in writing.
90. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Good use is made of national subject guidance to plan, assess and record what pupils learn. The co-ordinator monitors the curriculum planning and pupils' work but has yet to evaluate the impact of teaching on how pupils learn throughout the whole school. Visits to such places as the Victorian Museum at Preston Hall and the Anglo Saxon monastery at Bede's World enrich pupils' learning and the co-ordinator is keen to extend the range of such experiences.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity;
- Teachers provide a good range of tasks and stimulating activities;
- The link to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is explored very well;
- The co-ordinator has not yet had an opportunity to monitor provision thoroughly.

## Commentary

91. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Given the very low levels of attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world when children start in the nursery, achievement is very good.

92. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of Christianity and a satisfactory understanding of other faiths. They know some of the stories from The Bible and celebrations of the Christian faith, such as Easter and Harvest. They understand the meaning of some of the parables told by Jesus and some of the local history of the Christian Church, such as the story of St Cuthbert the saint associated with the local parish church and nearby Durham Cathedral. The pupils have some understanding of how Buddhism began and some of the stories associated with this faith. They have a good knowledge of the symbols, artefacts and festivals of the Jewish faith and are beginning to note the similarities and differences between religions.
93. By Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding of Jesus' parables and have explored how they relate to their lives today by writing and dramatising modern day parables. They have more detailed knowledge of The Bible, understanding some of the differences between the four Gospels. They have studied themes such as forgiveness and prayer in different religions. They have a sound understanding of the history of Christianity, through their work on saints such as St Hild and St Bede. They have satisfactory knowledge of religions such as Hinduism and Sikhism.
94. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, with many good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills when they discuss their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide interesting tasks and experiences. For example, pupils in Year 1 were provided with a high quality role play area based on a Buddhist Temple, where they explored Buddhist worship and meditation. The calm, supportive atmosphere in all classes enables pupils to learn well. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well and good use is made of opportunities for pupils to write. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote a letter of thanks to the 'Bede World' museum following a visit. Good use is made of opportunities to visit Christian places of worship to bring the learning to life, but there have not been opportunities for pupils to visit the places of worship of other religions. Assessment is satisfactory with a termly overview of pupils' achievement recorded.
95. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities for pupils to consider morals such as forgiveness and to relate their learning about different religions to their own lives. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the ideas they learn about and to consider the consequences of the moral dilemmas they discuss. They talk about the qualities that a saint might have. The 'Promise Rainbow' linked to the story of Noah give the pupils an opportunity to reflect on how they can improve their own personal qualities.
96. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new in post and has made a good start in identifying the strengths and weaknesses and preparing an action plan to raise the profile of the subject. He has monitored the outcomes of provision by looking at pupils' work and photographic evidence of their achievements. He has not yet had the opportunity to monitor lessons or teachers' planning, so currently his knowledge of provision is incomplete. However, there are firm plans in place to rectify this.

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

97. No lessons were seen in **art and design** or **music** during the inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgement about provision in these subjects.

98. Discussion with the music co-ordinator, singing in assembly and observation of instrumental music practice indicate that pupils are provided with a good range of interesting musical experiences. Good singing was heard as pupils were rehearsing for a concert in conjunction with the police brass band and this experience made a very good contribution to community links. In art and design, the wealth of artistic and creative displays in the school, as well as samples of pupils' work, indicate that pupils of all ages explore a range of experiences and imagination as starting points for their work. This takes place in both two and three dimensions and on different scales. The skills that pupils are developing in their use of materials, tools and techniques reflect a growing creativity and imagination and indicate that work in this subject is a source of pride for pupils.

## **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and Weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well;
- There is a good curriculum in place;
- The pupils are enthusiastic learners who are proud of their achievements;
- Assessment of progress needs to highlight areas for improvement.

## **Commentary**

99. Standards are broadly as expected in Year 2 and Year 6. Given the pupils' very low standards when they start the school, achievement is very good.
100. By the end of Year 6, children have studied a good variety of topics. For example, in Year 3 they have been learning about weaving techniques and understand the importance of materials and design when making purses. In Year 6, they study the design and manufacture of footwear and are beginning to evaluate and refine their products. This is a result of the use of a scheme of work that provides good coverage of the National Curriculum. However, in discussion with Year 6 pupils it is evident that there still needs to be more emphasis on the design process, as some pupils were not secure of their understanding of this.
101. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers provide a good range of resources to stimulate the pupils. The teachers' planning uses their knowledge of the pupils well to focus on new work. For example, Year 1 pupils were shown digital photos on the smart board to remind them of a visit to the children's playground in preparation for their own design. This also showed good use of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning. However, in some lessons teachers talk for too long about what is going to happen in the design process, at the expense of independent, 'hands-on' making and designing. The digital cameras in each class are put to good effect as a tool for recording finished work and to enhance the display of the work. For example, there were good displays of puppets in Year 2 as part of the 'Blue Fish' project and in Year 3 to 4 there was evidence of good 'pop up' book designs. Such displays show pupils that their efforts are valued and result in raising their self-esteem.

102. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has recently taken over the post but already has an understanding of the strengths and areas for development. There are adequate resources to meet the needs of the national curriculum.

## Physical education

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school;
- Very good use is made of expertise available from within the school and the wider community;
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and spiritual development.

### Commentary

103. Standards are in line with the expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6. Given the very low standards in physical development on entry to the nursery, pupils' achievement is very good.
104. Pupils in Year 2 know the importance of warming up and the effect of exercise on their bodies. They have satisfactory control as they run and jump and demonstrate a good awareness of the space around them. They have some understanding of what they need to do to improve their technique. They throw with increasing accuracy and strength when aiming a 'javelin' towards a specified area.
105. By Year 6, pupils warm up thoroughly before physical activity and know that both aerobic and muscular warm-up is important to prevent injury. In gymnastics, they join together a sequence of jumps, leaps, rolls and turns to perform a sequence and evaluate their own performance and that of others, accurately identifying what has been done well and what could be improved. They have satisfactory throwing and catching skills and participate well in small games activities, observing the rules. Most pupils learn to swim the expected 25 metres but few excel at swimming because of the inconsistency in provision, which is outside the school's control.
106. Teaching and learning are very good. Very good use is made of expertise in the subject, both from within the school and beyond. In a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 6, for example, the pupils made very good progress because the teacher had excellent subject knowledge and could explain and demonstrate to the pupils exactly what they needed to do to improve their movement. Similarly, in an excellent athletics lesson in Year 2 the expertise of a visiting voluntary helper was used very effectively and inspired the pupils to join in with great enthusiasm.

In this lesson, an excellent warm up activity captivated the pupils' interest and they instantly obeyed every instruction, joining in with great enthusiasm. Activities were explained briskly and the pupils were delighted with the wide range of exciting resources available for them to practise their skills. Each activity was carefully timed and the pupils were challenged to see how many jumps, passes, throws or runs they could do in the time allowed. This really motivated them to try hard to improve their score and the brisk change to a different activity every two minutes maintained very high levels of enthusiasm and engagement. Relationships were excellent, with the class teacher and teaching assistant joining in at every opportunity, so providing excellent role models for the pupils in terms of skills and commitment to improve. Pupils with special educational needs were given the support they needed to join in and were thrilled as they completed some tasks completely independently. The lesson provided an excellent example of links with the community, as the skills of the visitor were used to provide a most enjoyable experience for the pupils that motivated them to make outstanding progress in this lesson.

107. Throughout the school pupils try hard to improve their skills but occasionally, teachers do not give them sufficient time to practise a new skill before applying it in a small game situation.



108. The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has very good subject knowledge and is keen to continue to develop provision by applying for the 'Active Mark' award. She is aware that in order to do this staff would benefit from further training. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and spiritual development, as they learn to work in pairs and small teams, and reflect on their performance, delighting in their successes and achievements.

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

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- 'Circle Time' and discussion times are well established and well led as a means of sharing issues, promoting positive attitudes and raising self-esteem;
- Pupils are effectively taught how to keep safe and well;
- The school council gives pupils a real taste for democracy;
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.

### **Commentary**

109. The school's provision in PSHCE is very good and all staff plan ways to strengthen personal, social and health skills. The Pastoral Support Manager, who also leads the subject, is particularly skilful in leading and managing both 'Circle Time' and 'R Time' sessions, where positive attitudes and behaviour are encouraged, as well as skills such as co-operation and teamwork. Through praise and reward, pupils in these lessons are motivated to extend their thinking, listening and speaking skills in a secure and trusting environment, where every one of them is valued.
110. PSHCE underpins much of the work done in other areas of the curriculum and teachers integrate the subject successfully into their planning. Sex and relationships education and the teaching of health issues are well supported by the school nurse. Road safety teaching is complemented by visits from the police and local education authority officers. The curriculum also covers drug and alcohol education satisfactorily.
111. Pupils are encouraged to express their views in many ways, such as the 'Thought Wall', the 'Promise Rainbow' and the school council. The school council represents all pupils in its decision making role and has been instrumental in making changes and improvements, such as acquiring a playground boat, water bottles and new cutlery for the dining room. Displays around the buildings support learning well and posters displaying slogans, such as 'The only way to have a friend is to be one', promote the positive ethos of the school. Citizenship is further promoted by the raising of awareness of living in a community and looking after the wider environment. Pupils are encouraged to sponsor causes, such as 'Guide dogs for the Blind', and to collect recyclable items such as card, plastics and paper.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	n/a
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
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	1
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	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

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