

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MONKTON INFANT SCHOOL**

South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108684

Headteacher: Mrs J Finlay

Lead inspector: Paula Allison

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 262959

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	188
School address:	St Simon Street South Shields Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE34 9SD
Telephone number:	0191 4561917
Fax number:	0191 4240000
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Hansen

Date of previous inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 188 pupils on roll, Monkton Infant School is about the same size as other primary schools. There are six classes in school, and 75 children attend a separate nursery class on a part-time basis. The school is on two sites, with the nursery housed in an old school building over half a mile away from the main school. Numbers in school were falling, but there is now a rising roll. The school is situated on the edge of the coastal town of South Shields in Tyne and Wear. It serves an area where very high levels of social deprivation have been identified. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 40 per cent, which is well above average. Overall, the school's socio-economic circumstances are below average. Children enter the nursery with a very broad range of skills, but generally attainment on entry is well below what might be expected for children of this age. Many children have weak skills, such as those in speech and language and personal and social development.

Almost all pupils are of white British ethnic background, but there are usually a few from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Currently there is a very small minority of pupils whose first language is not English. About 20 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is about average. These needs are mainly speech and communication or general learning difficulties.

There has been quite an upheaval in staffing since the last inspection. There have been a number of staff changes and some long-term absences. A new headteacher started at the school in January 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21420	P Allison	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education English as an additional language
13762	N Shelley	Lay inspector	
16761	M Hemmings	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Physical education Music Special educational needs
17756	H Monaghan	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school, which has improved significantly in recent years. Pupils achieve very well and are reaching standards that are above average and well above those in similar schools. The school is very well led and managed, and parents and pupils have very positive views of it. The school provides very good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher has very capably led the school in making far-reaching improvements that have resulted in the very good achievement of pupils
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school; they develop very confident personal skills
- Pupils are very well cared for and supported in school
- Parents support the school very well
- Teaching is good and pupils learn effectively, but in a few lessons there are weaknesses in class management
- The curriculum is very well enriched by extra-curricular activities
- Pupils do not always have sufficient access to information and communication technology (ICT) to be able to use it to support their learning in other subjects
- Attendance is below average

The school was last inspected in June 1998 and improvement since then has been very good. All issues have been fully addressed. There is much more consistency in the way in which policies are implemented, assessment systems are working very effectively and the efficiency of the school has been improved. However, the new headteacher has also successfully led improvement on a much wider scale, taking in teaching and learning, curriculum and leadership and other aspects of the school's work. Standards are now higher and achievement is much better.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Achievement is very good.** Children enter the nursery with a broad range of skills, but overall they are well below what might be expected for children of this age. Children make good and often very good progress through nursery and reception; their achievement in personal and social development is outstanding. However, at the end of reception they are not all reaching the goals expected in all the areas of learning.



In 2003, standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were below average, although there had been substantial improvement from the previous year and the standards were better than those in similar schools. Improvement during the past year has been remarkable, and currently Year 2 pupils are reaching standards that are above average. This is significant achievement from their starting point. Boys were achieving less well than girls, but this has been successfully addressed by the school. Achievement in other subjects is at least in line with what is expected. There are particular strengths in religious education. Pupils reach expected levels in ICT, but do not always use their skills sufficiently to support their learning across the curriculum.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy school and work hard. Their behaviour is good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development and the maturity and responsible attitudes of the older pupils are recognised and valued by parents. Attendance is below average, despite good attempts by the school to improve it.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good.** There are particular strengths in the quality of teaching in the nursery and in Year 2, where it has a significant impact on pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is almost always good; it is often very good or excellent. However, in a few lessons the teacher does not have the high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attention that is apparent in other classes, which affects the quality of learning. Teachers encourage pupils, and pupils respond by applying themselves well and gaining skills, knowledge and understanding in lessons. The curriculum is good and is very well enriched by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities and effective use of the local environment. Pupils are very well cared for and supported. The partnership with parents is very good and the school works very effectively with other schools, including the local junior school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and has been the prime mover in bringing about stability and improvement to the school. She is well regarded by everyone involved with the school. She is well supported by key staff, who have between them been instrumental in improving standards in Year 2 and provision in the reception classes. The school is very well managed. The work of the governing body is good and all statutory requirements are met. Governors, and in particular the chair and vice chair, are loyal to the school and support the headteacher well.

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

Parents' views of the school are very positive. In particular, they are very happy with the way the school is led and managed, the care that is taken of their children, the values that are promoted and the progress their children make. Pupils are very happy with their school. They are particularly confident that they are well cared for and supported.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that pupils have sufficient access to ICT, so that they can use it to support their learning across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching where it is satisfactory, rather than good.
- Improve attendance.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are above average. Achievement in nursery and reception and in Years 1 and 2 is very good.

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

- Standards have risen substantially in the last two years
- Standards are better than those achieved in similar schools
- Children achieve particularly well in personal and social development in the nursery
- Pupils gain literacy and numeracy skills at a rapid rate

#### **Commentary**

1. Last year, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in end of Year 2 tests were below average. However, they were above those achieved in similar schools and well above them in reading. They were also much improved from the previous year, as can be seen in the table below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.7 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.6 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Currently, standards are above average, with most, if not all, pupils reaching the levels expected and a high percentage reaching higher than this. This is a substantial improvement on previous years, where very few had been reaching the higher levels. This was also the position at the time of the last inspection, when it was identified that some pupils had the potential of achieving more than they did. A determination on the part of the headteacher and teachers, particularly those in Year 2, and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and assessment processes have brought about the improved standards last year and this. This is a significant achievement, especially as some of the pupils involved in both years had suffered gaps in their learning, brought about by some quite serious instability in staffing in previous years.
3. Standards have tended to fluctuate over the years, but indications are that there is much more stability now and certainly the improvement rate is much higher than it has been. The school had identified a weakness in boys' achievement and in standards in writing. Many strategies were put in place and these have been successful. Currently boys

achieve very well, and standards in writing are very high. The school sets itself challenging targets based on accurate data and is well able to reach them.

4. Parents are very happy with the progress their children make in school and they are right to be so confident. Achievement is very good. The fact that pupils reach standards that are higher, if not very much higher, than in similar schools, shows that they are making quite remarkable progress in school and achieve much better than might be expected, given their starting point. There is currently particularly good achievement in the nursery and in Year 2.
5. Attainment as children enter the nursery is well below what might be expected for children of this age. The school's own assessments and other data show that a number of children have underdeveloped skills in speech and communication and weaknesses in personal and social development and in numeracy skills. The skilled teaching and the very good quality of the provision in the nursery enable children to make very good progress in most areas of learning and outstanding progress in the development of personal and social skills. Provision in the reception classes has much improved of late and children continue to make good progress. However, by the end of reception there are still a number of children who do not reach the goals expected in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Most reach the goals expected in other areas of learning. Their achievement overall has been very good.
6. Pupils continue to achieve well through Year 1, despite the fact that the learning in one class is not always as good as it is in the other. Literacy and numeracy skills are carefully taught and pupils gain confidence in all subjects. In Year 2, pupils achieve very well. The skilled teaching and assessment processes in place in these classes ensure that pupils make huge gains in lessons and the high expectations encourage pupils to do really well. Pupils' books show just how much progress they have made during the year. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Higher expectations ensure that higher attaining pupils are now achieving much better than they did. Boys are making much more progress than they have done in the past. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are very well supported by their teachers and their peers. They are involved in all lessons and make visible progress on a daily basis.
7. There was limited opportunity during the inspection to assess achievement in other subjects, but some particularly good standards of work were seen in Year 2 in religious education, art and science. Singing is regarded as a strength of the school. Standards in ICT are better than they were in the last inspection and pupils now reach the levels expected. However, they do not yet use these skills sufficiently to support their learning across the curriculum.

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

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and learning. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Behaviour is good, but attendance is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils value their experiences in school and participate enthusiastically
- Pupils make very good progress in becoming mature and responsible
- Attendance is below average

## Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy school and want to attend. They describe their teachers as kind, caring and helpful. They like all of their lessons and think that reviewing their learning at the end of each lesson is a good thing. They know their targets for improvement and are well aware of their progress in reading. They enjoy trips out of school, rate highly the after-school clubs, which are well over-subscribed, and are proud of their accomplishments as members of the school council.
9. Pupils are very well motivated about learning and are keen to do well in their lessons and the other activities that are available to them. Behaviour is good, or very good, in the very large majority of lessons. On the few occasions when behaviour is less than good, it is usually because a lesson loses focus and pupils get restless. Behaviour, other than in lessons, is mostly good. Any incidents of anti-social behaviour are effectively dealt with. There were no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection, and bullying is not an issue. Relationships between pupils are usually very good and they are co-operative and mutually supportive. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes towards their work and show interest and enjoyment in what they are doing, which makes a positive contribution to the good progress they make.
10. Despite pupils' attitudes towards school, attendance was below average last year and has declined further this year. It is accounted for by higher levels than usual of absence owing to illness, holidays taken during term time and a small number of pupils whose attendance is low. The school keeps accurate records of attendance and promotes it well, for example with weekly class awards. Most pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day. A small number of parents do not ensure that their children attend when they should or arrive punctually, despite the efforts of the school and the education welfare service. Attendance in the last reporting year was 94 per cent.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. This begins with the quite outstanding provision made for children's personal and social development in the nursery and continues through the school. The maturity shown by pupils in Year 2 is remarkable for their age and shows just what their achievement in this area has been. This is an aspect of the school's provision that parents feel very strongly about and value highly.

12. Pupils' spiritual development is very well catered for in assemblies, when pupils consider emotions, sentiments and values, such as kindness and generosity. Pupils reflect, not just through prayer, but through extended writing, for example about how they feel when listening to music and thinking about the colours and smells of flowers in a field. The sensitive and skilled approach to religious education in the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development, as they are given opportunities to consider their own experiences and behaviour.
13. School rules are very well promoted and expectations of pupils' conduct are high. The principles of right and wrong are clearly understood and moral values are explored in personal, social and health education lessons and religious education. The numerous opportunities for social experiences, such as after-school clubs and responsibilities such as being helpers and buddies, contribute very much to the development of pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and growing sense of responsibility.
14. Cultural development is well supported by lessons and out-of-school visits related to history, geography, the arts and religious education. Involvement in civic events adds to pupils' awareness of their local heritage. Pupils' awareness of Christian and other faiths is very good, but they have as yet a limited understanding of the lifestyles of other peoples. Resources have recently been increased to reflect multi-cultural features.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is good. There are particular strengths in the quality of assessment and the enrichment of the curriculum, the care of pupils and the partnership with parents.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good, with particular strengths in the nursery and Year 2. The quality of assessment is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers engage and encourage pupils, which motivates them to do well
- Teachers use a range of teaching methods, which keeps pupils involved in lessons
- In a few lessons, expectations of pupils' behaviour are not as high as they are in other lessons.
- Teachers know their pupils and their achievements very well and match work to individual needs
- Pupils, particularly in Year 2, are involved with their own learning and know how well they are doing

### **Commentary**

15. The quality of teaching in most lessons is at least good. In many lessons it is very good or excellent. Teaching is particularly good in the nursery and in Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning has improved substantially in the last two years. At the time of the last inspection, there were inconsistencies in teaching and some teaching that was

unsatisfactory. Since then, there have been some long-term staff absences and other disruption that have had an impact on learning. The new headteacher soon identified quality of teaching and learning as a key factor in raising standards and has put many strategies in place to ensure a more stable staffing situation and improvements in the way pupils are taught. The success of these measures shows in the considerable achievement of pupils and the rapidly rising standards. Parents are confident in the quality of teaching in the school and pupils themselves feel they have to work hard, but they like their lessons and their teachers and know they get help if they are stuck.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (7%)	5 (17%)	19 (63%)	4 (13%)	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.*

16. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery is of a consistently high standard and contributes very well to children's learning. Staff work together as a team and are very well led by the teacher. They provide a wide range of activities, give children the opportunity to make choices and make particularly good provision for children's personal and social development. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes is much better now than it was and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has taken a leading role in bringing improvements about. There is more consistency now in what is offered and activities are much more carefully matched to children's needs.
17. In Years 1 and 2, teachers continue to encourage pupils and help them to learn. In all classes, relationships are positive and pupils feel confident in the learning environment. This shows in the way pupils respond to questions. They are not afraid to 'have a go' even though they may be wrong. Teachers engage and involve all pupils, for example by targeting questions in class discussions, so that individuals are equally challenged. Expectations are particularly high in Year 2 and this provides the challenge for pupils to do well. The way the teacher in one Year 2 class talks about 'getting out the really hard questions' brings about a noticeable change in gear for many pupils; they try really hard to match her expectations.
18. As part of the school's efforts to raise boys' achievement, staff have been looking at learning styles and they currently use a range of teaching methods, so as to involve all pupils in lessons. They are particularly good at using resources to keep pupils interested. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 1 the teacher used first-hand experiences, such as the learning assistant's meeting with Desmond Tutu and her own email from him to really bring the lesson to life. Pupils were fascinated and were closely attentive during the whole lesson. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been well implemented and are ensuring that pupils gain basic skills in a structured way. But the school has also brought in its own ways of teaching, which have extended pupils' learning, for example a problem-solving approach in mathematics and a focus on creative writing in English.

19. Support staff and volunteer helpers are deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning in lessons. The teamwork in the nursery and reception classes is a key factor in pupils' achievement. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are successfully taught to meet the targets on their individual education plans. Teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, so that they are able to make very good progress in their learning. Teachers are complemented by the work of teaching assistants, who work well with these pupils during class sessions and group activities. For example, in Year 1 class sessions, learning support assistants sit with the less confident pupils and help them to work out answers, so they can then make a contribution alongside their peers.
20. The few lessons where teaching is less than good occur in one class, where the teacher does not always insist on the high standards of behaviour that are apparent in other classes and does not remain focused on the key learning objectives. Thus, whilst most of the lesson is effective and pupils work hard at their given tasks, when it comes to class discussions pupils get restless, do not always listen to each other and do not concentrate as well as they could do. The learning becomes satisfactory, rather than good or very good as in other lessons.
21. Assessment systems have improved immeasurably since the last inspection and staff have worked hard at developing them. They have enlisted support from outside agencies and other schools and have now got in place systems that are working, are having an impact on achievement and are becoming more effective all the time. Teachers make careful assessments of what pupils have achieved and they use this information to help them plan the next steps. This is working very well in literacy and numeracy and is being developed to cover all other subjects. Of particular note is the clear focus in every lesson on what pupils are to learn. This helps pupils to be involved in their learning and to take some responsibility for their own progress. Year 2 pupils can confidently talk about what they have learnt and what they need to do next. This is underlined by a target-setting system that is particularly working well in Year 2. The school rightly plans next year to make sure that these systems are fully implemented in Year 1. Parents are involved with some of the assessment and can share in their children's learning, through the reading dialogue that has been successfully established.

## **The curriculum**

The breadth of the curriculum is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff continue to review and improve the curriculum
- Learning opportunities are relevant to all pupils
- The curriculum is very well enriched by visits and out-of-school activities
- Resources for ICT have improved, but pupils as yet do not have sufficient access to ICT on a regular basis

## **Commentary**



22. The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to all its pupils. Since the last inspection, teachers have reviewed their planning and now use nationally recommended schemes of work for most subjects. These support their detailed planning, which is now consistent between classes and ensures that work builds effectively on previous teaching. There is a systematic and comprehensive programme of review and development, which includes each subject in turn and identifies strategies for improvement, which are then employed throughout the whole school. For example, a review of the English curriculum identified that boys were not achieving as well as girls. Staff training enabled teachers to adapt their teaching styles to the ways that different pupils learn. A wider selection of books was bought, the library was re-sited and planning emphasis was changed in order to give reading a greater emphasis. The curriculum was adapted to allow more time for teaching library skills and to allow a longer time for writing. As a result, the standard of all pupils' work has improved and overall boys now achieve as well as girls.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum is planned so that pupils have equality of access to all aspects of school life. Planning arrangements are secure, with the individual educational plans having relevant and manageable targets in them. Pupils are well supported in the classroom. They are included in all lessons, their contribution is sought and valued and consequently they make very good progress.
24. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is made relevant to all pupils. The timetable has recently been reviewed to increase the teaching time and also to divide the day into units better suited to the needs of young children. Curriculum time is used effectively. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' concentration spans and adapt their planning of lessons appropriately, employing a variety of teaching styles and including the pupils in many practical activities. Practical subjects, for example art and design and design and technology, are allocated longer lessons so that the proportion of time used in setting up and clearing away is minimised. Some subjects, for example history and geography, are taught in blocks of time over half a term to allow concepts to be thoroughly developed.
25. The curriculum is well adapted to take account of pupils' interests and experiences, so that it is relevant to their life in and out of school. For example, Year 1 pupils who had visited a Victorian house assisted in the construction of a model black-leaded range and kitchen corner in their classroom. A group demonstrated through role-play their empathy with children of the time who were not allowed to sit down at the table for meals. Pupils, including the less able writers, were subsequently well motivated to record in writing their feelings and experiences. Subjects are planned separately but there are many links between subjects, which give appropriate coherence to the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2, who had enjoyed sharing a book about a scarecrow, were eager to use the colourful illustrations as inspiration for their paintings and to adapt the scarecrow character to design and make a variety of puppets.
26. The curriculum is enriched by the good use made of local facilities. For example, pupils have recently visited the Sea Life centre in Tynemouth, a synagogue in Newcastle and Durham Cathedral and have studied the local area in geography. Links with a local museum as part of a history project have led to the development and trialling of curriculum

materials that will be used by other schools. The curriculum is also enhanced by the very good variety of popular clubs which are run out of school time.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

##### **Years 1 and 2 pupils in an infant school have access to a range of extra-curricular clubs, co-ordinated by a teacher but run by ancillary staff.**

'Globetrotters' and 'Greenfingers' are just two of the popular clubs that are held after school hours at this infant school. The project is co-ordinated by a teacher, but the clubs themselves are run by enthusiasts within the school, including the school secretary, caretaker, lunchtime supervisors and support assistants, using a range of their skills and interests. Each member of the staff puts forward a six-week plan for the approval of the teacher and then resources are gathered and lists are drawn up. All the sessions are carefully organised and include activities pupils find exciting. For example, 'Globetrotters' learn how to pitch a tent and use a compass; 'Greenfingers' tend the garden and plant seeds.

It is rare to find so many activities available to pupils so young and the facility is much appreciated by both parents and pupils. So popular are the clubs, that waiting lists have to be drawn up and pupils can hardly wait for their turn to come round. The staff involved find it also enhances their working relationships with pupils – you have quite a high regard for someone you thought just worked in the office, but who you find can put a tent up and provide you with snacks to eat in the tent!

27. The school makes good use of the space available within the buildings and also the central garden area. For example, the recent relocation of the library makes it attractive and accessible and therefore used more frequently. The provision for reception pupils has also recently been improved. The location of the nursery at such a distance from the school is inconvenient and does not make for easy links between nursery and reception, but this is well managed and does not detract from the good overall curriculum provision for these pupils. There is still insufficient appropriate equipment for outdoor activities for the nursery children. Overall, financial restrictions have meant that the school has had limited funds to spend on resources and there are a few areas where replenishment is needed.
28. Curriculum provision for ICT was found to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Much work has been done in this area, new equipment has been ordered and teachers trained in its use. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress, but their skills are still not secure and at present there is insufficient application of ICT in other areas of the curriculum.

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

Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. The involvement of pupils in the school's work is very good.

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

- Pupils feel safe and valued, because of the way they are treated
- Procedures for settling in are very well appreciated by parents
- Academic and personal support and guidance are very good

#### **Commentary**

29. Sensitive arrangements are in place to acclimatise children to the nursery environment and parents receive very good guidance and information to help them support their children, for example through meetings and a starter pack. A similar approach recurs when the children move on to the reception class. Teachers and helpers do their best to meet the personal and welfare needs of each pupil and pupils are confident to turn to them for assistance. Pupils are strongly encouraged to take responsibility for their own community. The school has responded positively to the representations of the school council and improvements have occurred as a result, such as a quiet reading area in the playground. An atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and consideration prevails and underpins the very caring ethos of the school.
30. The procedures for child protection and children in care are fully understood and implemented. Safety checks, routines and risk assessments are appropriately carried out and first aid provision is in place. Specialist education and health agencies provide relevant services to the school. The school effectively promotes healthy and safe practices, for example by providing daily a piece of fruit for each pupil, and it has received a healthy school award. A range of personal support arrangements is in place. Pupils act as buddies to help each other, after-school clubs provide experiences in life skills and develop self-esteem and the school council enables pupils to decide how to help themselves.
31. Targeting for improvement is used very effectively to focus pupils' attention on learning priorities and the pupils confirm that they find it motivational. The very well organised support for developing reading, involving teaching assistants and parents, is positively affecting achievement across the curriculum. All pupils receive very good support, something they themselves recognise. The procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are well ordered and enable the school to identify those pupils who need extra support at an early stage. Ongoing assessments by teachers and teaching assistants contribute well to the regular reviews of pupils' progress and successfully inform the setting of new targets. The school liaises well with outside agencies when extra support is required to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils who are gifted and talented are identified and extension work is often provided, but opportunities to more fully exploit their potential are not yet in place.

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

The partnership between school and parents is very good. Links with other schools are very good and with the community are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a high regard for the school
- Parental involvement in the school and pupils' learning is very good
- Transition arrangements with the junior school are very good

## Commentary

32. Parents are right to be very pleased with the quality of education and care that is provided. They have considerable confidence in the school and are justified in judging that their children make good progress. There was a time when long-term staff absence and temporary arrangements were disrupting pupils' learning and there was a loss of confidence amongst some parents. The new headteacher has worked very hard to rectify this situation and parents appreciate the new-found stability.
33. The information provided for parents is very good. Curricular details are circulated every half term. The termly progress reviews are very well attended. Communications are well maintained by the school through reading records and most parents co-operate well with the system. Teachers are accessible daily and notice boards are kept up to date. Annual school reports are very detailed and include targets for improvement, but they do not consistently describe pupils' achievement related to expectations for age.
34. Parents support the school very well, for example by hearing readers, accompanying trips, attendance at assemblies and special events and raising funds for resources. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are well involved in the review process and are kept fully informed of their children's progress. Parents' views are surveyed from time to time and the school is very approachable and responds promptly to parents' representations. Parents express considerable appreciation for the series of 'Keeping up with the children' workshops that have been arranged.
35. The school enjoys very good relationships with its partner junior school. A transition project, involving the close co-operation of staff from both schools, has been very successfully piloted to improve continuity of education for the pupils when they leave at the end of Year 2.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **Year 2 and Year 3 teachers work together to ensure that pupils make an effective transition from infant to junior school.**

In the past there had been some concern about a perceived 'dip' in standards between Years 2 and 3, as pupils moved from the infant school to the nearby junior school. A pilot project was set up, funded initially with Beacon School money and supported by the local education authority.

Towards the end of the summer term, the two Year 3 teachers from the junior school observe lessons in English and mathematics and then the four teachers involved are given the time to get together and assess the pupils' work. Levels are agreed and the junior school teachers can then plan accordingly for the new year, knowing what they can expect of their new intake. The success of the project shows in the continued progress of pupils as they move from one school to the other.

The teachers themselves find the process beneficial, as they gain a more secure understanding of assessment and hone their skills together. Year 3 teachers know exactly what pupils can do – they have seen them do it – and can group and plan more accurately as a result. The process is being constantly reviewed. For example, a return visit during the autumn term by Year 2 teachers to Year 3 classes was found to be interesting but not very useful, so that has been abandoned. However, the display of the pupils' work in the junior school as they started in their new school was found to be very helpful to pupils. This year the teachers intend to take the process one step further and set targets for pupils that will bridge the gap between infant and junior school even more effectively.

36. The good links that are in place with other schools contribute well to staff development, support for pupils with special education needs, student teacher training and work experience for secondary school pupils.
37. Places of interest are visited and they supplement well learning in science, geography, history and religious education. Pupils take part in local and civic events. Pupils and parents support charities very well. However, pupils have limited opportunities to meet visitors from minority ethnic groups.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, as is the management of the school. The leadership of key staff is good and governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has worked in a determined manner to bring about improvements over a wide area of the school's work
- Key staff support the headteacher effectively and have been instrumental in ensuring the high achievement of pupils
- Management is efficient and self-evaluative

### **Commentary**

38. Since her arrival at the school, the headteacher has shown a commitment to creating a clear vision for its work and a focused agenda for improvement. Her quiet determination and care for individuals has brought her high regard from staff, governors, parents and pupils. Parents in particular are very confident in the way in which the school is led and managed. The headteacher has dealt resolutely with some difficult staffing and financial issues in order to bring stability to the school, which has had a significant impact on pupil achievement and parental confidence. She is reflective and self-critical and encourages open and honest evaluation in all aspects of the school's work.
39. She is well supported by key staff. The deputy headteacher has successfully taken on responsibility for the curriculum and effectively supports teachers in their subject reviews. The English co-ordinator has worked particularly hard and enthusiastically to develop areas of the school's provision, for example extra-curricular activities and liaison with the junior school. However, it is the English coordinator's high expectations and significant teaching skills that have most influenced other staff and helped to bring about the rise in standards. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has played a central and very successful role in the development of the provision in the reception classes and the liaison and continuity through the key stage. The role of subject leader has developed well since the last inspection. All development programmes are thoroughly monitored and evaluated by them. They share their expertise by working together with teachers in their classrooms, as well as by checking pupils' work. Pupils' progress is tracked through work samples kept in subject leaders' files.

40. Governors are supportive of the school and are committed to its work. However, the school does have difficulties recruiting and keeping governors, which has implications in terms of creating a stable group able to take on responsibilities, such as working with subject leaders. As it is, the chair and vice chair take on leading roles and shoulder most of the work between them. They are very supportive of the headteacher and have not been afraid to make difficult decisions with her in the interests of the school. They oversee the budget and the development of the school. The chair of governors in particular is closely involved with the school and is very knowledgeable about its work. She takes the responsibility seriously and keeps a close eye on provision, for example that for English and for pupils with special educational needs.
41. In the last inspection there were weaknesses in the management of the school and in particular a lack of cohesion and inconsistency in the implementation of policies. The headteacher has faced these problems and brought about a new regime of teamwork. Systems are in place to ensure that agreed policies are implemented and monitored. The school improvement plan is central to all that the school does and has been the key instrument in bringing about positive change. Monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work are effective. For example, it is the rigorous tracking and monitoring of boys' progress that has had such an impact on their overall achievement this year. Teaching and learning have been improved by this means and, where aspects are still weak, they are being monitored and supported. Self-evaluation, led by the headteacher, is an important feature of the school's work and success.
42. The school is managed very well. It is organised, efficient and effective. Meticulous records are kept; the headteacher has an eye for detail whilst still keeping to the overall priorities. Issues over office skills identified in the last inspection have been resolved and the general communication in school is welcoming and effective. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The headteacher has a good overview of the way their needs are being met across the curriculum and ensures that pupils who need extra help are identified early and the continuous assessment of their performance is used well to meet their needs.
43. Financial management is very good. The school has had some major financial problems as a result of long-term staff absences, and continues to have shortfalls in the overall budget. However, the school improvement plan is focused and the headteacher and governors have ensured that, despite the difficulties, educational priorities are supported and the school continues to move forward at a rapid rate. For example, some creative solutions to financing ICT development are currently being considered, so as to ensure pupils are given the opportunity to achieve in this area. The school's expenditure is average for the type of school, but in terms of the substantial improvements made, the high standards of pupils' academic and personal achievement, the continuously developing quality of education provided and the significant support of parents, the school gives very good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	541,458	Balance from previous year	15,268

Total expenditure	521,010
Expenditure per pupil	2315

Balance carried forward to the next	35,716
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## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

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

**Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.** It is particularly good in the nursery. When they start school, children's skills in speaking and listening, numeracy and personal and social qualities are well below average. By the time they start Year 1, most of them will not reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematics, but will do so in all other areas of learning. This represents good or very good achievement in most areas and is a result of the consistently good quality teaching that children receive, which is particularly strong in the nursery. All staff work very well as a team and have created a caring environment in which all children and parents feel welcome and valued.

Leadership and management are very good, with the co-ordinator having played a central role in the good improvement made since the previous inspection. This has included redesigning the curriculum in the reception classes, so that children are now given activities that better match their needs. There are good assessment procedures for charting the progress that children make. The nursery being situated well away from the main school causes difficulties, such as in physical liaison between the two buildings. The school works hard to minimise these difficulties and has successfully improved links between the nursery and reception classes, so there is smooth transition when children move to the main building. There is restricted use of the outdoor areas as a means of developing children's learning.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is excellent.

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

- Teaching and learning are of a very high quality
- Much emphasis is placed on encouraging children to become independent learners
- The excellent relationships between children and adults make a significant contribution to learning
- Provision in the nursery enables children to quickly gain confidence and develop a sense of belonging

#### **Commentary**

44. Teaching and learning are outstanding and so most children will exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception year. This represents very good achievement from when they start school. There is a very calm atmosphere in the nursery, with staff working hard to ensure children feel safe and secure. This is especially important as many children have low self-esteem and lack confidence when they start school. Activities are planned well in all classes, so there is a very good balance between children choosing for themselves and teacher direction. There is strong emphasis on children developing as independent learners. For example, in the nursery children use a planning sheet when they arrive to select their own activities for their first working session.



45. Likewise, children in reception are able to decide what they want to do in the afternoon workshop sessions. In all classes, adults work very well together as a team and provide excellent role models. They use every opportunity to praise children in order to build their confidence and self-esteem. Children respond positively to the care they are shown. They are very well behaved and work well together in pairs and small groups. In so doing they show care and concern for other children. They show confidence in getting out the resources needed and then putting them away tidily when finished.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good
- Role-play is used well to develop speaking and listening skills
- Shared and guided reading sessions are used well to develop reading skills
- The introductions to some lessons in reception are sometimes too long and result in children becoming restless

### **Commentary**

46. Many children have poor oral skills when they start in the nursery. A lot of emphasis is placed on giving them opportunities to talk about their experiences at home and to discuss their activities in school. This is continued in the reception classes, in such activities as the 'recall' sessions at the end of the afternoon workshops. This gives children a chance to tell the rest of the class what they have been doing and what they think they have learned. There is good use of the role-play areas, such as the 'seaside café' in reception, to develop their language skills. Staff share stories and picture books with children, who learn to listen to, enjoy and join in with stories and rhymes. Shared and guided reading sessions are used well to develop reading skills. This was evident when children in reception were looking at the Big Book 'Who's in the Shed?' and learning how to track text in the right order. Children have opportunities to write for different purposes, such as when writing sentences about fish after listening to the story of 'Six Fine Fish'. However, there is a lack of opportunity for children in reception to initiate their own independent writing activities. Introductions to some literacy lessons in reception tend to be too long and can lead to children becoming restless and losing concentration. Most children will not reach the expected learning goals by the end of reception, but have made good progress because of the good teaching they receive. This represents very good achievement from their low level skills on entry to school.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good, which helps children to achieve very well

- Activities are interesting and often linked to everyday life
- Children show much enjoyment in their mathematical activities
- There are times when groups working independently require more guidance from adults

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and learning are good and enable children to achieve very well in this area of learning from their poor skills on entry. Though most will not reach the expected goals by the end of reception, they have made good progress. In the nursery, learning is made fun with children enjoying many rhymes and songs that help them sequence and remember numbers. There is very good teamwork between adults so that children receive a high proportion of direct teaching to develop their mathematical skills. In all classes, activities are well planned to help children build up their skills step by step, with close attention paid to developing mathematical vocabulary. Activities are often linked to real life, such as when children in reception were learning how to recognise and use different coins. Role-play was used well to let them purchase items from the class shop. The teacher used magnetic coins well in the introduction as a visual stimulus to capture the children's interest.
48. Relationships are very good and give children the confidence to 'have a go' at answering questions, even when not sure if they are correct or not. There are times, however, when children working independently of the teacher are not given enough guidance as to how to complete their work. Resources are readily available and children are encouraged to select the ones they need for themselves. They are also encouraged to talk about their work and to explain how they have solved problems, which makes a positive contribution to their speaking and listening skills.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

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

- Children are given activities that are practical and interesting
- Teaching and learning are good so that children achieve well
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to extend learning
- There is limited use of outside areas to promote outdoor learning

### **Commentary**

49. Children achieve well to reach the expected standards in this area of learning by the time they leave reception. Many bring limited prior knowledge to school, but the variety of activities provided for them in the nursery successfully broadens their knowledge and understanding of the world. The emphasis is on children being active learners, so the sessions are made practical and interesting. The curriculum is supported well by a varied programme of visits and visitors. For instance, children in the nursery have visited the post office to find out about life in the local area.

50. The quality of teaching is good and children are encouraged to develop their powers of observation by looking closely at natural and man-made objects. This was evident in a workshop session for children in reception in which one of the activities was to use magnifying lenses to study a selection of fresh fish. In all classes, children enjoy using computers. Most children control the mouse well, and can follow basic on-screen prompts. There are times when the sand and water activities in reception lack sufficient structure and so do not challenge children in a suitable manner. The use of outdoor areas to develop children's learning is limited. There are good opportunities for children to learn about the way of life of people from different cultures.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children show a lot of enjoyment in their physical activities
- Activities are well structured and interesting
- Children have limited access to outdoor play facilities

### **Commentary**

51. Satisfactory teaching and learning help children to make suitable achievement to attain the expected standards in this area of learning by the time they leave reception. Physical development is promoted well in physical education lessons, and is successfully increasing children's skills in control and co-ordination. Most children are developing a sense of space and awareness of how to share the hall floor area sensibly and safely with others in the class. This was seen in a lesson for reception children in which they were playing a variety of parachute games. They obviously enjoyed the activity and co-operated well throughout the session. Children have many opportunities to develop their skills in manipulating scissors, writing and painting tools, along with handling a range of equipment when making models. There is insufficient use of the outside areas to encourage children's physical development on a regular basis.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good
- In the nursery, well-planned role-play activities encourage imaginative activities and language development
- The reception classrooms are not as stimulating as the nursery

### **Commentary**

52. Most children are on course to reach the expected goal by the time they leave reception. They achieve well in this area of learning, because of the good quality of teaching and learning. In the nursery, there is very effective interaction between adults and children. Adults join in role-play activities and so encourage children's creative play and language development. In all classes, teachers ensure that children are able to make daily use of paint, crayons, pencils and glue. Children have good quality opportunities when experimenting with colour mixing to make a variety of colours. Consequently, they develop a broad range of skills, using creative materials and tools. In reception, they have used these skills well to use charcoal to draw good quality pictures of animals. They show confidence in using computer programs to create a variety of pictures. The reception classrooms, particularly the role-play areas, are not as stimulating as those in nursery for developing children's imaginations.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Curriculum development has led to high standards being reached
- Teachers employ a good range of teaching strategies
- Assessment systems for tracking progress are well developed
- Subject leadership is very effective

#### **Commentary**

53. Pupils make very good progress throughout school and, by Year 2, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average. With many children entering the nursery with weak language and literacy skills, this adds up to very good achievement. This represents substantial improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards were found to be in line with those nationally and progress was satisfactory. There has also been an improvement in the standards attained by boys which were found to be below those of girls at the last inspection. This improvement is due to a most effective whole-school focus on raising standards. The English subject leader has analysed the reasons for earlier poor performance and made appropriate changes. With increased curriculum time, improved resources and a range of effective teaching strategies, standards in all aspects of English have consistently improved over the past two years.
54. There are now many planned opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills throughout the curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are skilled in asking the kind of questions that encourage pupils to express themselves clearly and with increasing confidence. Most pupils in Year 2 can now contribute thoughtfully to other pupils' responses, as they develop ideas and discuss books objects and experiences. This represents a significant improvement, as speaking and listening skills are identified as a particular weakness when children enter the nursery.
55. There has also been a determined and very successful effort throughout the school to improve standards in reading. The library has been re-sited and improved, so pupils now have access to a wider range of books that appeals to both boys and girls. Extra curriculum time has been allocated to teaching library skills in Year 2 and pupils have been encouraged to read a range of fiction and non-fiction books. In a lesson seen during inspection pairs of pupils confidently discussed fiction and non-fiction books they had selected. Teachers also make good use of Big Books which allow them to demonstrate a love of reading by sharing their own enthusiasm with the whole class. The strong focus on reading throughout the school has effectively generated a real love of books so that now, for example, a special treat for golden time in Year 2 was to be sharing together a new book by a favourite author.

56. A regular home-school reading system has been established. This has also contributed to the improved standards, as most parents support teachers by reading with their children at home, maintaining a regular reading diary. Several pupils are taken to the local library at weekends and the increased enthusiasm for reading has generated a request for the school to set up its own book lending facility. Through the school council pupils also requested a quiet playground area where they could choose to read at playtime and pupils were observed to be using this facility during the inspection.
57. The whole school has also made children's writing an area for development. Teachers choose contexts which appeal to both boys and girls. Teaching is systematic and builds effectively on pupils developing skills using familiar books to generate ideas. Pupils in Year 1 begin by recounting repetitive events in familiar stories, such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. Later they use ideas from their reading to support the structure of extended stories and to model ideas. For example, pupils in Year 1 were excited when writing about characters in 'George and the Dragon' and Year 2 pupils were able to empathise with the little robin collecting materials from the animals to build its nest. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 feel confident to express themselves in writing. The improvement in their writing skills is evident and supports their work in other subjects.
58. The teaching of English is good and can be very good or excellent. Teachers plan what pupils are going to learn in each lesson and share these learning objectives with all pupils. They also explain what pupils have to do to succeed and by the time they are in Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of how well they have achieved and what they need to do to next in order to improve. Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies in English lessons, with a good balance between oral and written work. Activities are well planned to match pupils' span of concentration so no time is wasted. Teaching is made relevant to pupils' interests and experience so that all make good progress.
59. Teachers set individual targets for pupils' writing which relate to the composition of their writing as well as sentence structure and punctuation. This is particularly effective in improving standards in Year 2, because it is regularly referenced to pupils' work and they strive to receive recognition for achieving their personal targets.
60. The subject leadership for English is very good. The subject leader has considerable expertise in the teaching of English and is a leading teacher within the LEA. She has a clear vision for the development of the subject in school, with a commitment to improving standards, and has led and monitored the very successful development of the subject over the past two years. She is aware of the rate of progress of pupils throughout the school and recognises that, although there has been considerable improvement throughout the school, the rate of progress is slower in Year 1 and has plans to monitor teaching and learning in this year group in order to raise standards still further. She has introduced effective strategies including the improvement of systems for the accurate assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, which was identified as an issue for improvement at the last inspection. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

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

61. Pupils are now gaining confident literacy skills and are beginning to use them to support their learning across the curriculum. This is a current focus for the school and teachers are effectively making the most of opportunities. For example, in religious education lessons, teachers encourage pupils to discuss their views and to listen to what others think. Year 2 pupils now have no problem with recording their work in writing in a range of subjects. The quality of presentation is very good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well and high standards are reached
- Mathematical skills are well taught
- A problem-solving approach develops pupils' thinking skills

### **Commentary**

62. Standards in Year 2 are above average, which, given the weak skills with which many children enter the school, adds up to very good achievement. Over the last few years, standards in mathematics have tended to fluctuate from year to year, but have usually been close to or above average and better than those in similar schools. In the last inspection, few pupils were reaching higher than the expected levels, but generally they were making good progress. Last year there was a dip and standards were below average. However, even then they were above those achieved in similar schools.
63. The determination of the headteacher to raise achievement and the efforts made by staff have paid off and there has been a very good improvement in standards. Standards are currently very high. Teacher assessments show that all pupils have reached the expected level and a high percentage are higher than this. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils have a good understanding of number and can confidently solve problems and make accurate calculations. They have a good grasp of place value and can order numbers based on this understanding. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very positive. They enjoy the lessons and work very hard at tasks they have been set. They rise to challenges set for them. Standards of presentation of work in Year 2 are excellent.
64. Achievement is very good. Many pupils enter the school with weak number skills, but skilful teaching right from the start in the nursery and through the school helps them to make very good progress. By the end of Year 1, pupils are already counting, ordering, adding and subtracting numbers accurately. They recognise and describe patterns in number sequences. The particularly good teaching in Year 2 helps pupils make very impressive progress, building on these skills and developing a wide range of mathematical understanding. Boys' achievement has been a concern, but teachers' own assessments show that they are now achieving very well.
65. The quality of teaching is good. It is particularly good in Year 2. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and understanding, which shows in the way they question pupils and develop the use of mathematical language. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils

were counting in twos on a number line and the teacher encouraged them to use 'more than' and less than' and to explain their answers when they recognised different patterns emerging. The learning was effective, as they gained more confidence in handling the numbers. A problem-solving approach keeps pupils interested and makes them think. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson, pupils had to work out how many different flowers they could buy for specific amounts of money. This challenged all pupils at various levels and kept them all thinking. So involved were they that they continued to consider a problem they had been given all the way into assembly!

66. Assessment systems have been developed very well and teachers now have a very good knowledge of how well pupils are progressing and what they will need to make the next step in their learning. They plan work very carefully to meet these needs. This has been particularly important this year in Year 2, as the teachers have been making sure that the gaps some pupils had as a result of some teacher absence the previous year were filled. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. Developing numeracy skills across the curriculum is currently a school focus and there is already evidence of teachers planning for this. For example, in a geography lesson in Year 1 when pupils were analysing the results of a traffic survey, the teacher made sure that pupils understood the numbers involved, as they made a block graph from the data. Handling data generally is a strong element of current work across the curriculum and pupils are confident with it. They gather information and convert it into a graph format, often using a computer to help them.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Improved curriculum planning ensures all aspects are taught
- Too little emphasis is placed on scientific investigations, particularly in Year 1

#### **Commentary**

68. Standards in science are in line with national expectations and this mirrors findings at the last inspection; however, specific recommendations have been acted upon since then and are bringing about improvements. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. All teachers now use a nationally recommended scheme of work to support their planning and this ensures that all scientific concepts are taught and that they are introduced in a way that is practical and appropriate for young children. Teachers make appropriate links between science and other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 constructed a variety of sound makers after having examined and listened to a range of instruments in music. Pupils in Year 2 studied variation in species by considering similarities in human facial features after studying and painting self-portraits.



69. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The planning and teaching of science are overseen by the curriculum leader, who is aware of the curriculum developments required and has prepared an action plan to begin next term when the whole school will focus on science development. She has prepared a science file which will support teachers in planning and keeping assessment records and pupils in recording their work.
70. Teaching and learning are good, and they can be very good in some lessons. Teachers plan appropriate activities and there are many opportunities for them to make observations and comparisons and to explore concepts through practical experiences. Pupils respond well to this approach and co-operate effectively with each other when completing practical activities. However, there is at present insufficient emphasis on teaching scientific investigations and too few planned opportunities for pupils to develop these skills, especially in Year 1 where teachers are less confident in teaching this aspect of the curriculum. Teaching is sometimes over directed. For example, when pupils in Year 1 tested waterproof materials they all carried out appropriate observations, but followed the teachers instructions rather than using their own ideas as to how they might set up a test, which in this instance limited achievement for the more able pupils. Teachers of the same year group plan together and pupils in Year 2 have carried out more investigations and sometimes use their own ideas to plan tests, for example when investigating objects rolling down ramps. Here teaching is more confident and pupils are also directed to predict, analyse and explain their results relating shape to rolling.
71. There are some resources for science, but these are insufficient to support the science activities planned. Most of the resources are kept in a central store, with some in classrooms for immediate use. They are not readily accessible to support teaching, because they are not well labelled or linked to teaching topics. This has been recognised by the school through a review of the subject. As part of the planned curriculum development, the subject leader is to carry out an inventory of resources in order to supplement those available and to improve their storage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Improvement since the last inspection has been good
- Pupils now reach the expected standards, but their skills are not fully developed
- Use of ICT to support other subjects is not sufficiently developed

### **Commentary**

72. Standards by Year 2 are average. In the last inspection, provision for ICT was unsatisfactory. Pupils were not making enough progress and were not reaching the levels expected. Since then, and particularly recently, the school has made considerable improvements. There has been an investment in resources and a full scheme of work has been put in place. This means that pupils now experience all aspects of the subject and most reach the levels expected of them. Year 2 pupils are confident with recording their

work in different formats, such as text, graphs and images. They make labels for the classroom, collate information they have gathered in graph form and use a range of tools in a 'paint' program to create pictures and designs. They know how to give instructions to make a programmable toy perform specific movements. They are not as confident with finding information or using simulation programs.

73. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have most of the experiences they need and gain skills, knowledge and understanding. However, they do not yet have sufficient opportunity to practise and use the skills on a regular basis, as they are still largely limited to using the few computers in the classrooms and even these are not used as much as they could be. This affects how secure the skills are and how well they can be used across the curriculum. It also means that those pupils who have access to computers at home are at an advantage over those who do not.
74. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has worked hard to get the school to the stage at which it is now and she has clear plans for future development. Development has been hindered by technical problems; for example trying to use new software and equipment such as digital cameras on ageing computers. A set of laptop computers has recently been purchased and when all the technical problems have been sorted out and teachers are confident with using them, this resource has the potential to substantially improve pupils' access to computers. The same applies to the interactive whiteboards which are due in school soon.

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

75. Some ICT is used in other subjects. For example, pupils are confident with collating information in graph form and this helps with data handling in mathematics. They have carried out some word processing in order to record their English work. Digital cameras and graphics software are used effectively to record visits in geography. However, limited access to computers and technical problems has meant that pupils do not use ICT in lessons on a regular basis and their skills are not always sufficiently developed for them to support their learning across the curriculum.

### **HUMANITIES**

76. **Religious education** and **geography** are reported on in full below. It was not possible during the inspection to gather enough evidence for a secure judgement to be made about provision in **history**. However, from the one lesson seen and pupils' work it would seem that standards are at least in line with expectations and achievement is at least satisfactory. Year 2 pupils have learnt about people and events in the past and are developing a sense of chronology. They know about different sources of information and are beginning to use some of them. For example, they are currently obtaining and analysing information from responses to a questionnaire sent out to parents to help them find out about seaside visits in the past. The school's links with a local museum are effectively enhancing the curriculum.

### **Religious education**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lively and relevant teaching interests pupils and helps them learn effectively
- Pupils have a good understanding of aspects of religion and they consider their own experiences
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of experiences

## Commentary

77. Standards in Year 2 are above what is expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of religion, for example celebrations, special books and stories. They have also learnt from religion; for example they relate stories and their messages to their own lives and to how they behave. This aspect is impressive. For example, Year 2 pupils talked very maturely about how they can sometimes think they are better than others, but “really we’re all the same”.
78. Pupils achieve very well. They gain a good knowledge and understanding of religion, made all the more memorable by visits and access to resources. They also have the opportunity to talk about the things they are learning. For example, Year 1 pupils considered what they had learnt from a visiting vicar about what it feels like to be a Christian. There had been substantial gains in understanding as a result of the visit and subsequent discussion.
79. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers engage pupils in lessons, using a range of teaching methods to keep them interested and involved. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the presentation was lively as pupils were told about famous people who are Christians. The learning assistant’s personal account of how she felt when she had the opportunity to meet Desmond Tutu kept every pupil’s attention and added much to the quality of the learning. Of particular note is the way in which teachers link the two aspects of religious education, which are inherent to the locally agreed syllabus – learning *about* religion and learning *from* religion. For example, a Year 2 teacher introduced the story of the camel and the eye of the needle and then helped pupils to relate the ideas to a consideration of their own life and behaviour.
80. The way in which the school very effectively promotes pupils’ personal development contributes significantly to their achievement in religious education. Right from the beginning in nursery, children are encouraged to talk and listen to others so, by the time they get to Year 2, they can discuss quite complex issues, giving their views and listening to the opinions of others. The positive relationships in classes mean that pupils are confident and are willing to discuss quite openly things that matter to them.
81. The headteacher is the religious education co-ordinator and she gives a very good lead to the subject in the sensitive way in which she deals with issues in assemblies and gives pupils things to think about. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Provision is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. There is more variety in the curriculum and the quality of teaching has improved. Visits are used well to enhance pupils’ experiences, for example to a local church and a synagogue. However, visitors are not used enough. For example, the recent visit of a vicar had a considerable impact,

but there are currently no visits from people from other faiths. A good collection of artefacts is being built up, but financial restrictions have limited this development.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is relevant to pupils, interests them and promotes their learning
- Good use is made of the local environment to enhance the curriculum

### Commentary

82. Standards are in line with expectations. Year 2 pupils describe and make observations on physical and human features of places. For example, they comment on things they saw during a visit to the town centre and coast at South Shields. They use resources, such as books, photographs, maps and first-hand experiences in order to find out about places.
83. Achievement is good. On entry to the school children often have limited knowledge and understanding of the world about them. When they are older, pupils confidently talk about the local environment and express their views on different aspects. For example, Year 1 pupils talk about local traffic and how it affects them; Year 2 pupils describe activities available to people in a seaside town.
84. Teaching is good and pupils learn effectively. Good use is made of the local environment to provide first-hand experience and provoke discussion. These are well-organised outings and volunteer helpers are used well to make sure that pupils are safe. During the inspection, the teacher took pupils out to look at traffic patterns in the local area. Although this was curtailed due to the hot weather, pupils gained a lot of understanding about traffic and its impact on human activity. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. For example, there is more consistency now in the curriculum between classes, as the quality of planning has improved.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. There is not enough evidence to make a secure judgement about provision in these subjects. Indications are that a good curriculum for **music** is in place. The school has recently introduced a new scheme of work to better ensure that all aspects of the subject are taught in a progressive manner through the school. This would seem to have increased the confidence of teachers in delivering the subject. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. All pupils are encouraged to take part in the musical performances held at various times of the year for parents and members of the community. Pupils in Year 2 are given the opportunity to take part in the South Tyneside Music Festival. The pupils' singing in assemblies is enthusiastic and this is a part of their school life that they obviously enjoy. Pupils have suitable opportunities to listen to music and then express their opinions about it. This was evident when pupils in Year 2 were talking about their feelings after listening to Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*.

The curriculum is enriched by an after-school music club, 'Sounds Great', which is run by the music co-ordinator.

86. The curriculum for **physical education** is broad and balanced with good opportunities for enrichment, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. There are enough resources to cover all aspects of the subject. The accommodation is satisfactory, with a spacious hall and sufficient outdoor hard surfaces and grassed areas for suitably developing the pupils' physical education skills. In a good lesson seen in Year 2, the expertise of the teacher led to all pupils making good progress in their ability to throw and receive balls accurately. The way that she effectively demonstrated the techniques to use ensured all pupils improved their performance during the course of the lesson.
87. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work for **art and design** and, from discussions with the curriculum leader and from work displayed in classrooms and around the school, it would appear that all aspects of the curriculum are taught, resources are adequate and pupils' standards of work are at least in line with what is expected. The co-ordinator effectively keeps up to date with developments in the subject by attending local meetings and has plans for the development of the subject when it comes up for review. These involve identifying a progression of skills to support teaching and keeping samples of work which will build pupil profiles and enable teachers to check their pupils progress.
88. One **design and technology** lesson was seen during the inspection and from discussion with the subject leader and work displayed in classrooms and around the school it seems that all aspects of the subject are taught and that standards are in line with those nationally. The school uses a recommended scheme of work to support teachers' planning and pupils are taught the design process working with a range of materials including food, fabrics and resistant materials. The management of design and technology is satisfactory. The subject leader is new to the post, but she has plans for the development of the curriculum. In particular, she plans to increase her subject expertise and would like to adapt the timetable to use time more efficiently and to complete projects over a shorter number of weeks.

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

89. The school provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education. It is a significant feature of the nursery and reception classes and has a substantial impact on pupils' personal development. In Years 1 and 2, there are structured plans for dedicated lessons, such as one seen where Year 2 pupils were taught in a very practical way the effect of exercise on the body and the role played by exercise in being healthy. Pupils were very interested in what they were learning and showed a good level of understanding. In religious education lessons and in 'circle times', pupils are given the opportunity to discuss in an informal manner the things that are important to them, their behaviour and social relationships.

## 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	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

