

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SOUTH PELAW INFANT SCHOOL**

Chester-le-Street

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114015

Headteacher: Mrs I Cochrane

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

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

Inspection number: 263277

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	156
School address:	Hilda Park Chester-le-Street Durham
Postcode:	DH2 2JT
Telephone number:	(01913) 884 280
Fax number:	(01913) 881 483
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Smith
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 156 pupils on roll (75 boys and 81 girls) South Pelaw is a large, two form entry infant school with six single age classes catering for pupils aged four to seven. The number on roll is declining, however, due to the falling birth rate in the area. The school serves a mixed area in relation to the social and economic backgrounds of the pupils and the proportion claiming free school meals is around the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is as expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is above the national average. Most special educational needs are to do with moderate learning difficulties but also include speech and language difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Virtually all pupils are of white British origin and there are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school is involved in a Development Partnership and in the National Primary Strategy. It received the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 and in 2003 it received the Artsmark, a second Schools' Achievement Award and Investors in People review.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs
19426	Mr C Farris	Lay inspector	
32640	Mr M Hilton	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Information and communication technology
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education Foundation stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school with many excellent features. Outstanding leadership and management have resulted in high levels of achievement for all groups of pupils brought about by very effective teaching and a very strong commitment to improving standards in all aspects of the school's work. The school provides very good value for money.

### THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Achievement is very good and standards in Year 2 are well above the national expectation in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards are above the national expectation in science but the overuse of worksheets limits pupils' writing in this subject. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils' achievement is hindered by the limited range of software.
- The overall quality of education, including the quality of teaching, is very good. The very good use of assessment information in planning ensures that all pupils' needs are very well met and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff have resulted in very strong teamwork and a very firm commitment to further improvement.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes. They are very well cared for, guided and supported in their personal and academic lives. However, the procedures for managing and recording health and safety issues are not sufficiently formalised.
- The school's very good partnership with parents contributes in great measure to the pupils' very good achievement.

The school has very significantly improved since its previous inspection in 1998. All key issues have been very successfully addressed and leadership and management and the quality of teaching are much improved. Standards have risen significantly in writing and assessment procedures are of a high order. Outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage is now good and a very well planned, innovative curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

All pupils achieve **very well**. Standards are well above the national expectation in reading, writing and mathematics and above the national expectation for science. Standards are satisfactory in ICT, good in religious education and very good in art and design. Children start school with levels of achievement typical for their age. Their good progress means that they exceed the goals expected nationally for the end of their reception year, except in physical development, where they meet the goals. The school has maintained its very good standards since the last inspection. The trend in its results is above the national trend. Year 2 children did exceptionally well in the national tests in 2003, placing the school in the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools. The results can be seen in the following table:

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

Key: A\* - very high; 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.*

There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Throughout the school, pupils have challenging targets that are very securely based on the teachers' very good knowledge of the stage of learning of each individual pupil. The pupils' progress towards their targets is very well monitored and swift action is taken to tackle any weaknesses. The practice of setting pupils for English and mathematics in Year 2 has proved very beneficial to the pupils in terms of maintaining the very good achievement seen in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education, including the quality of teaching, is **very good**. Reading, writing and mathematics are very well taught and teachers generally promote literacy and mathematical skills very effectively in other subjects. The exception is science, where the use of worksheets prevents pupils using their thinking and writing skills as well as they might. Assessment systems are very good and the information gained from them is used very well in planning. As a result, the needs of all pupils are very effectively met, lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils work very hard, making very good gains in their learning. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge in very perceptive questioning that builds on and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding, forcing them to think for themselves and apply what they already know, in their new work. A very rich, well planned curriculum successfully ensures that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, personally as well as academically. Pupils are very well cared for, supported and guided. This and the very good partnership the school has with their parents, considerably enhances their learning. The school is a warm, friendly and safe place to be, although all health and safety procedures are not always recorded as formally as they might be.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Outstanding** leadership and management that are reflective, evaluative and pragmatic are at the heart of the school's success. Staff and governors share the same very strong commitment to further improvement. The school has excellent capacity to continue to do very well even in the changing circumstances in which it finds itself because the headteacher and key staff very successfully adapt learning to meet the needs of all pupils. Their commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils in all that the school has to offer is without question. All statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils are **very highly satisfied** with the school. They know that their views are highly valued and taken into account in all decision making and that the school does its very best for them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**ALTHOUGH OVERALL A VERY EFFECTIVE SCHOOL, THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT POINTS, ON WHICH THE SCHOOL IS ALREADY WORKING, ARE:**

- Complete the plans to update and increase the resources for ICT.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their very good literacy skills in science.
- Formalise the procedures for managing health and safety.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Achievement is **very good** overall. All children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and all pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national expectation in Year 2.

#### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children start school with levels of attainment typical for their age and leave school having reached standards that are well above the national expectation for their age. They achieve very well in Years 1 and 2.
- The reading, writing and mathematics results place the school in the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools.
- Pupils reach good standards in science and religious education and very good standards in art and design. They achieve well in science and very well in the other two subjects.
- In science, the overuse of worksheets stops pupils using their very good literacy skills to record their very good investigative work.
- Standards are as expected for pupils' ages in ICT but, although their achievement is satisfactory, it is hindered by the limited range of software available to them.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

#### COMMENTARY

1. Children start school with levels of attainment that are typical for their age. They achieve well in their reception year. Almost all have already met the goals expected for the end of the reception year in all six areas of learning and a significant proportion of children have exceeded them. This is a direct result of the early identification of pupils' needs and the teachers' very effective planning and support that meet them. The only area of learning in which expectations are not exceeded is physical education. Here, the goals are met.
2. The national test results for reading, writing and mathematics were very high in 2003, placing the school in the top five per cent of all schools and schools with similar proportions of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.9 (18.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.7 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.6 (19.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The trend in the school's results is above the national trend and results have been consistently very high over many years. There has been little difference between the attainment of boys and girls over time and none was noted during the inspection. The school exceeded the targets

it set for reading, writing and mathematics in 2003. Parents are very pleased with the high standards their children reach at this school.

4. In the current Year 2 classes, standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national expectation. Pupils listen very attentively to others, they speak very confidently using a good range of vocabulary and read very well with a very good understanding of what they have read. Writing is imaginative, engaging the reader very effectively and handwriting, punctuation, spelling and grammar are mostly of a high order. Pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and their ability to apply their learning as they solve mathematical problems are very good.
5. All staff work extremely hard to raise achievement. They have done so very successfully because the school very rigorously analyses all test and assessment outcomes and together, the staff agree and consistently implement very effective actions to tackle any weaknesses found. This school is not complacent. Despite its very high standards it has clearly identified areas for further development, recognising the changing nature of the different year groups, the needs of individual pupils and the need to give all pupils the best possible start in their infant years.
6. Standards are well above the national expectation in art and design, above the national expectation in science and above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils achieve well in science and very well in the other two subjects. Standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory in ICT. However, pupils' achievement in ICT is hindered by the school's limited range of software, though there are very secure intentions to remedy this in the very near future. There was not enough evidence in other subjects to make secure overall judgements. However, evidence from the pupils' work, discussions with them and the few lessons observed, show that standards at least match the national expectation for pupils' ages and that achievement is at least good.
7. Throughout the school, very good attention is paid to developing pupils' literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects and aspects of the school's work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as a result of the clear, measurable targets in their individual education plans and the very good assistance they receive from teachers and support staff. The school caters very effectively for its higher attainers also, ensuring that they are given suitable challenging work to do and also providing them with additional support when necessary so that they reach the higher standards of which they are capable. The success of the school's work is clearly evident in the pupils' work. By Year 2, most pupils with special educational needs have caught up with their class mates and the higher attaining pupils reach standards that are two levels above those expected nationally for their age in some aspects of their work. The school also works hard and, through its highly effective inclusive practices, very successfully ensures that all pupils do as well as they possibly can. The pupils are extremely well prepared for their work in the junior school.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good** as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is very good and attendance is above the national average and is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils are happy and secure and they thoroughly enjoy their school lives.
- The pupils' very good attitudes to school and the high levels of respect they show for others greatly benefit their learning and overall achievement.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all very good.

- Attendance is good and there is no unauthorised absence.

## COMMENTARY

- The school radiates warmth and friendliness. The very good relationships throughout the school boost pupils' confidence and make it easy for them to talk to staff and confide about any fears they may have. These are dealt with sensitively and effectively, enabling even the most reticent pupils to thrive. The personal development of the pupils is very well promoted through the curriculum, assemblies, individual support and constant encouragement from the teachers. Responsibilities such as the 'mini-buds' help to increase pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem.
- Attendance is above the national average and has improved since the last inspection. There is no unauthorised absence and there have been no exclusions. The unofficial figures for the reporting year just ended show a further small improvement in the upward trend of attendance. The school promotes attendance well and the exciting curriculum encourages pupils to want to come to school. The school has good procedures to promote good attendance although it does not have systems for following up unexplained absence on the first day. Registers are properly maintained and punctuality is satisfactory.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- The pupils' very good behaviour enables them to learn very effectively and has improved since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, the high levels of concentration, productivity and pace are the result of their being able to work and play in an atmosphere that is free from any form of oppressive behaviour. There have been no exclusions. The very good provision for moral and social development means that all pupils have a very good awareness of right and wrong, of the consequences of their actions and of the need to work and play together and become valued members of the school community. They and their parents have a very high regard for the very effective ways in which the school promotes and celebrates good behaviour and deals with any untoward behaviour. Care for others is further promoted through the opportunities pupils have to collect money for their chosen charities. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into the life of the school and very well supported, ensuring that they, too, play a full part in the life of the school. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to participate in everything that the school has to offer.
- The very good provision for spiritual and cultural development means that the school very successfully ensures that all pupils are listened to and valued and that they begin to understand their place in the wider world. Pupils are taught very effectively to have confidence in themselves, value and respect themselves and each other and to have high aspirations. The exceptionally well planned assemblies make a particularly effective contribution to this aspect of personal development. This is because the themes are carried forward into class work and class assemblies and their impact on pupils' personal development is carefully evaluated. The 'worry tin' in the hall, a range of

strategies in different classrooms and the flip chart in the foyer give pupils very good opportunities to say what they think of what is happening in the school, to acknowledge and value the kind deeds of others and to share with their teachers any worries or concerns they may have.

12. Pupils' attention is regularly drawn to the displays and book resources around the school, fostering in them a very good awareness of the range and diversity of culture in Britain and around the world. The school particularly values the different cultures and ways of life of the few pupils from ethnic minorities. These are celebrated through involving the pupils and their parents in sharing their experiences and different ways of life. The religious education programme contributes very effectively to this aspect of personal development as do the many opportunities afforded to the pupils to work with artists, musicians and other visitors to the school and to visit places of interest in the locality and beyond.
13. The school has recently undertaken an extensive audit of spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision. The subsequent evaluation of that provision with identified areas for further development bears testimony to the very great importance the school places on this aspect of its work.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good** as is the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum, the support and guidance offered to the pupils and the school's partnership with parents are all equally **very good** and contribute in very great measure to the pupils' very good achievement. Assessment information is used exceptionally well in planning for reading, writing and mathematics.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching, which is good in the Foundation Stage, is **very good** overall.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage gives pupils a good start in their education although occasionally the organisation of activities in one class is a bit haphazard.
- Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and assessment information is used exceptionally well to respond to individual need in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Very well briefed support staff contribute in great measure to the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- In science, the use of worksheets and writing frames sometimes prevents pupils from extending their knowledge and understanding or using their literacy skills as well as they could.
- While ICT teaching is good overall, pupils' learning is satisfactory. This is because much of the equipment is new and the range of software is still somewhat limited.

## COMMENTARY

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13	7	3	0	0	0

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

14. In most Foundation Stage lessons, well organised activities promote good learning and independence across all six areas of learning and ensure that children achieve well in their reception year. Occasionally, however, weaknesses in that organisation slow the pace of learning in one of the two classes. The headteacher's perceptive monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has already picked this up. Recent initiatives to target the support staff jointly across the year group are addressing the need for a more united approach to learning opportunities and organisation. Overall, time is well managed and very good attention is paid to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional skills alongside all other learning.
15. Parents and pupils commented very positively on the quality of teaching and how teachers make lessons interesting and fun for the pupils and help them to achieve very well. Throughout the school, the teachers know their pupils very well. Day-to-day assessment of their learning is very good. Learning objectives are always clearly explained at the start of a lesson and whole class sessions at the ends of lessons are used very effectively to consolidate learning and assess how well the pupils have done. Marking is mostly very perceptive and particularly in writing, teachers' comments help pupils improve their work. Discussions with pupils indicate that their work is always discussed with them and they know what is expected of them in terms of improvement. A further example of very good marking was seen in pupils' sketchbooks where teachers' comments clearly picked up the areas in which further practice was needed to understand, for example, pattern work in art and design. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour and the pupils respond very well, producing a good amount of high quality work.
16. Reading, writing and mathematics are very well taught. The information gained from the very thorough, constructive assessment procedures in English and mathematics is used exceptionally well in planning. Setting pupils according to their capability in Year 2 has had a tremendously positive impact on their learning. As a result, the work of some higher attaining pupils is around two levels higher than expected for their age and almost all pupils with special educational needs are working at the expected levels for their age. This is because, within the two sets, work is further broken down to meet the needs of groups and individuals. Very well briefed support assistants are then allocated to the groups in most need of help in particular lessons, be they pupils with special educational needs, average attaining pupils who need a boost in their learning or higher attainers who need an extra push to show what they are really capable of achieving. Very occasionally, the needs of higher attainers are not as well met. For example, in science, the use of worksheets and writing frames prevents them from increasing their knowledge and understanding through research and from using their very well developed writing skills to record science investigations in different ways. Overall, the needs of all pupils are very well met and through this, the school demonstrates its very high commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils in all that is on offer.
17. Good assessment systems aid planning in other subjects and teachers constantly assess pupils' learning during lessons, sometimes adapting the work planned, to meet emerging needs. Teachers are particularly skilled at using their very good subject knowledge to build on and extend pupils' learning through very effective questioning that really challenges the pupils' thinking skills. A very good example of this was observed in the one design and technology lesson observed as Year 1 pupils set out to design and make a model of a play park. The plans for a local play park were used as a very effective stimulus and the need to consider the limitations of, for example, the site available and the need for safety were thoroughly explored as a whole class. The teacher's very challenging questioning considerably increased the pupils' understanding of the need for thoroughly researched, accurate designs prior to making a model. Pupils had to think very hard about, for example, the amount and type of equipment they might use, where to put it and why and the best surface to use to avoid injury. This work was very effectively taken forward in each group in high level discussions facilitated by very good questioning by the teacher and support staff. The very perceptive grouping of the pupils

according to their capability resulted in even the most reticent pupils using their speaking and listening skills very effectively to present their initial ideas clearly and confidently to the whole class at the end of the lesson. This lesson also considerably reinforced the pupils' mathematical skills as they measured their sites and angled the equipment to make the best use of the space available. Overall, teachers promote literacy and mathematical skills very well in other subjects.

18. Staff training and an increase in the number of computers in school have resulted in ICT being taught well but pupils' achievement being only satisfactory. This is because the range of software available to make the computer a natural learning tool is as yet limited. However, the school has this in hand and plans are well under way to extend the range of software and improve and update the hardware available.

## THE CURRICULUM

The quality of the curriculum is **very good**. The school meets statutory requirements very well and considerably enhances the basic curriculum with a **very good** range of enrichment opportunities. Accommodation and resources for learning are **good**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school offers pupils a rich, varied and innovative curriculum that is considerably enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors and by a very good range of clubs and activities outside of the normal school day.
- The school rigorously reviews its curriculum and ensures that it meets the needs of all groups of pupils.
- The current lack of resources for ICT hinders pupils' achievement despite the good quality of teaching they receive.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good as is the provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education.

## COMMENTARY

19. The curriculum is very effectively organised. It is broad, very well-balanced and provides a very good range of worthwhile experiences for pupils of all levels of capability. Curricular planning is very detailed. The school uses and very successfully adapts a wide range of national and commercial schemes that ensure the full inclusion of all pupils in everything that it has to offer. The curriculum is very rigorously monitored and evaluated by the headteacher, governors and co-ordinators. Very effective links are made between subjects that make learning very relevant for the pupils. A very rich programme also promotes the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education and prepares them very effectively for life beyond the school. This is greatly enhanced by very good quality assemblies and the many opportunities presented to the pupils to take responsibility for themselves, for some of their learning and for each other. Parents are highly satisfied with the very good range of opportunities offered to their children in and outside of the normal school day.
20. Extra-curricular provision is very good. As well as a sports club, the pupils have the opportunity to attend art, dance and computer clubs. The very close links with two local companies have very successfully promoted the pupils' understanding of environmental issues. Pupils' interest and enjoyment in learning are also stimulated through a range of visits and visiting speakers linked directly to the curriculum. These include visits from storytellers, the police, guide dogs for the blind, different faith communities, different

cultures and visits to theatres, local museums, Durham Cathedral and an aquarium. Further enrichment is gained through the use of the Internet. One very good example was the work on the Angel of the North. This promoted some very good learning in art and design and design and technology, through observational drawings and mini-sculptures, and in mathematics, where work on scale was effectively developed.

21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's firm belief in identifying and tackling any areas of concern at the earliest opportunity has a very beneficial effect on the learning and personal development of these pupils. This is a school that sets great store by the full inclusion of all pupils in all it has to offer. It goes the extra mile to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to achieve to the best of their capability. Pupils with special educational needs have action plans with measurable targets, most of which identify very clearly the small steps in learning needed to achieve well. They are reviewed at least termly and more often if the need arises. Very good provision is made for the one pupil who has a statement of special need and every effort is made to include this pupil fully in everything. The school also recognises the gifts and talents of its more able pupils and ensures that the work they are given to do recognises and uses their prior knowledge and understanding. The evidence of the very good provision for all pupils is seen in their very good achievement by the time they move on to the junior school.
22. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff, all of whom are deployed very well effectively to assist learning. The good range and quality of resources are used very effectively to support learning. However, although the school has very clear plans to increase and update the resources for ICT, the current lack of resources hinders the pupils' progress in lessons despite the good quality teaching they receive. The good range of multicultural resources are used effectively by pupils and staff and promote very good understanding of different cultures around the world and those within the school. The good, attractive, well maintained accommodation is considerably enhanced by good quality informative displays that celebrate pupils' work and very effectively promote their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is used very effectively to promote learning across the curriculum. The very attractive, well-planned outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage is used exceptionally well to promote achievement in all six areas of learning. The well-stocked library is used regularly by the pupils, supported by parents and by volunteers from the community.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Overall, the care, guidance and support offered to pupils are **very good** but health and safety procedures and records are not well enough formalised.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils are very well cared for. The very good support they receive enables them to grow in confidence and become independent youngsters.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Child protection procedures are good and the school provides a healthy and safe environment for the pupils. However, its health and safety procedures are not properly formalised.
- Children are very well supported as they start school and when they prepare to move on to their next school.

## COMMENTARY

23. All groups of pupils have very good access to well-informed personal and academic support, advice and guidance as they progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and supported very effectively; average attainers are helped to achieve as well as they possibly can and higher attainers are provided with very good levels of challenge. The physical well-being of the pupils has a high priority and staff provide a high level of affectionate support for them. Relationships are very good. Class teachers are well aware of pupils' needs and any concerns are quickly recognised and early support is given. All staff care, listen to and value the pupils' ideas and suggestions and very effectively help them to make choices, celebrate success and overcome difficulties. Child protection procedures are good. The headteacher has designated responsibility and has had appropriate training. Staff also receive training and are briefed where there are specific concerns.
24. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety are good overall. The school environment is maintained to a high standard and any day-to-day concerns are quickly dealt with. However, the procedures are largely informal and this leads to some omissions. For example, governors are not routinely involved in health and safety matters and there have been some lapses in the recording of fire drills. Risk assessments are carried out for visits and specific concerns within the school and the testing of portable electrical appliances is up to date. First aid procedures are good. Accidents are properly logged and parents are notified in writing in the event of a bump to the head or more serious accident to their child.
25. The school has very good procedures to support children and pupils as they start each stage of their education. Prior to starting in the reception class, children will have had up to five visits to the school and their start is phased in, in line with their needs. More reticent children, for example, are able to work initially with smaller groups to enable them to gain confidence more quickly. As they progress through the school, pupils are well prepared for the move to a new class and teacher. The school seeks, values and acts on the views of pupils and pupils are very effectively involved in the work of the school.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents and **very good** links with the community and other schools.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Parents have the highest views of the school and very strongly approve of the education provided for their children.
- Parents get good information about the school and about their children's progress.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- The school has very good links with other schools.
- The school's very good links with the local community broadens the pupils' horizons.

## COMMENTARY



26. Parents' views, as expressed at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaire, are extremely supportive of the school and parents are very happy with the education their children get. A significant proportion of parents responded to the questionnaire and there were virtually no dissenting views on any of the questions posed. Particularly highly rated were views on leadership and management, the settling in arrangements for pupils, the teaching and the general approachability and friendliness of all school personnel. The inspection findings fully endorse these views.
27. The school provides good information overall to parents on their children's progress and on general matters. The information given to parents when their children start in the reception class is particularly impressive. It gives parents clear details of what to expect, together with very helpful suggestions on how they might help their children at home. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements and give parents good information on how their children are progressing. Regular workshops are held to inform parents about areas of the curriculum and about the annual national tests and assessments. Teachers are available each day to talk to parents about any concerns they may have. The prospectus and governor's annual report both provide good information in a user-friendly style. Frequent, well constructed and friendly newsletters keep parents up to date on forthcoming events and school news.
28. The majority of parents provide very good support to their children's work at home. They approve of the school's expectations regarding homework and help their children with it. All have signed the home/school agreement and are very supportive in ensuring that they respond promptly to any requests. Only a few parents are able to help in the classroom on a regular basis but there is good support for outside trips. The school does not regularly canvass parents' general views of school. However, their views are sought during discussions and workshops and they are more formally consulted on specific items such as school uniform and improving road safety outside the school. The friendly reception that parents get means that they find it easy to talk about any concerns they may have. The active 'Friends of Pelaw Infant School' raises significant amounts of money that are used to provide resources such as computers and playground equipment, which benefit the pupils' personal and academic development.
29. The school is very active within the community. A wide range of visits and visitors give pupils a taste of life outside school and adds enjoyment to the curriculum. There are close links with the local church and regular visitors include the community police and local fire brigade. Two artists-in-residence have worked with the pupils, one making attractive banners and another constructing the 'Blue Haven' within the school, and a local garden centre has worked with reception children to plant a garden area to support wildlife. There have been visits by a dance company and storytelling theatre. Out and about, pupils have enjoyed an enormous range of visits including to a wildfowl park, a lighthouse and a ship. Such visits are indelibly imprinted in pupils' memories and significantly widen their horizons. The school's links with the community have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
30. The school has very good relationships with other local schools. There are very close links with the junior school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 2. These links particularly ease transition when pupils change schools. The very good links with other local schools enable staff to share experiences and improve their practice. The school provides work experience to students through the Durham Business Education Executive and works with local universities to provide student teacher placements.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **excellent**. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is outstanding, governance is very good and management systems support pupils' achievement extremely well.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Her very clear vision and commitment to the best interests of all pupils inspire and motivate exceptionally good teamwork.
- Governance is very good. The governors know their school very well and provide very good levels of support and challenge for the headteacher and the staff. However, they have not ensured the formal recording of all health and safety requirements.
- The deputy head and key staff play an excellent part in leading and managing the school.
- The management of the school is excellent. The priorities in the school management plan are supported by thorough strategic financial planning and well considered performance objectives for all staff.

## COMMENTARY

31. Leadership and management have improved very significantly since the last inspection. The excellent, visionary leadership of the headteacher has created a very strong, committed team of staff and governors, supported by all parents. The management structure enables the whole team to implement the shared, resolute aim of constant improvement. This in turn ensures that each child reaches their potential academically, socially, spiritually and physically. The pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and high academic standards demonstrate that the school successfully accomplishes its aims and vision. The headteacher has successfully introduced a range of innovations into teaching, learning and the curriculum that have greatly enhanced the quality of education for all pupils since the previous inspection. The attention given to the promotion of equal opportunities and to the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities is excellent. The local education authority has recognised the headteacher's expertise as an exemplar for other schools. Her influence reaches beyond the school as she and members of the senior management team lead training for other schools and share their experiences and expertise with staff who visit their school.
32. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this knowledge effectively to support the senior management team. They are equally committed to raising standards and very supportive of the work of the school and the headteacher, but they also question and challenge decisions. The very effective links with subject co-ordinators and with the special needs co-ordinator give governors a very good understanding of the school's performance. The chair of governors frequently visits the school. Many governors have attended training to increase their knowledge and all governors carry out their duties in an organised way. They have a good range of expertise and experience which they use effectively through a system of committees that meet regularly to plan and review the work of the school. The finance committee gives a firm steer to the school budget to support priorities for improvement. Whilst overall, statutory requirements are met, governors do not ensure the formal recording of all health and safety procedures.

33. The management of the school is excellent. It is strategic, reflective and pragmatic and very securely focused on continuous improvement. The school evaluates its own performance extremely thoroughly and acts meticulously on the outcomes. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior staff is very perceptive in identifying areas for improvement. This very successfully encourages staff to be self-critical and they constantly seek to develop and broaden their skills. The school improvement plan is a well structured and very valuable management tool. There is a very obvious link between the aim of raising standards and performance management procedures. This was seen in the great improvement in pupils' writing after the previous inspection. The senior management team regularly reviews the work of the school and the progress of the school management plan and co-ordinators have time out of class to monitor and develop their subjects. Very good induction procedures successfully support new members of staff enabling them very quickly to become effective members of the staff team. Excellent financial management at all levels supports initiatives in the school management plan. Spending is targeted towards raising standards and governors have budgeted carefully to maintain a contingency fund against future eventualities such as dealing with the reducing number on roll.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	385,654
Total expenditure	415,904
Expenditure per pupil	2552

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	53,639
Balance carried forward to the next	23,389

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

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

34. The overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, similar to the previous inspection. The new outdoor area has enhanced provision in all areas of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in one class. Children start school with attainment similar to that normally seen at their age. The great majority of children have already exceeded the goals expected for the end of the reception year (the early learning goals) in all areas of learning except physical development where they meet the goal. This represents good achievement and is due to the good provision, good teaching and the very broad range of curriculum experiences imaginatively linked across all areas of learning.
35. Children with special educational needs are identified early and this ensures they achieve well. They are effectively supported in small focused groups and fully included in the wide range of activities. Leadership and management are good. All members of staff contribute to the well-planned learning activities. They have established a warm atmosphere and lively environment in which all children and parents feel welcome and valued. Good links with parents and very good procedures prepare the children well for starting school and make transition smooth and easy when they move to the next stage of education.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- Children enjoy all their learning activities, behave very well and persevere well with their tasks.
- Relationships are very good. Children are helpful and caring, and aware of the feelings of others.
- Children look after themselves well, but are not well organised when changing for physical educational sessions.

### **COMMENTARY**

36. Calm, well ordered routines in a caring, secure atmosphere of mutual respect enable the children to become mature and sensible and they exceed the learning goal in this area by the end of their reception year. They respond particularly well to their teacher's high expectations in this area of learning and their very good attitudes and behaviour significantly aid their progress. They enjoy learning and persevere well with their tasks, even ones they find challenging such as cutting out lots of circles to form a caterpillar. One said *"I'm going to help my friend when I've finished cutting out my caterpillar"*, showing consideration for others. They talked about trust and care in a class discussion and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They willingly share and take turns to use equipment, care for the plants outside and enjoy a 'pick a number

game' to select a group to take responsibility for tidying up. Sometimes they are disorganised when changing for physical development sessions and this limits the time available for physical activities.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Children listen well and speak confidently.
- Reading and writing skills are good and children have good knowledge of letters and sounds.

### **COMMENTARY**

37. Good teaching enables the children to achieve well and the great majority exceed the learning goal by the end of reception. The good opportunities provided for them to report to the class, act out stories and lively discussions, for example outside in the 'willow den', enable them to develop good speaking and listening skills. Many children have a wide vocabulary and use words imaginatively, describing a picture of a cake as '*a coconut with a hat*' and say that caterpillars will become '*cocoons*'. Reading skills are good and children enjoy stories. Most have a very good knowledge of letters and confidently blend sounds to help them read an unknown word, for example '*Eeek*' in a story about an owl. Very few children are still at an early stage of recognising simple words. The great majority write neatly and most children use full stops correctly and work hard to meet the individual writing targets set for them. Spelling shows good knowledge of how to build letter sounds into words and children confidently use the 'word banks' to help them spell correctly. Writing labels for displays encourages the children to do their best and rewards their efforts.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teaching is good and the children achieve well.
- Good resources are used effectively, enabling children to learn through well-planned practical investigations.
- The great majority of children have a good knowledge of mathematical concepts and vocabulary.

## COMMENTARY

38. Good teaching with a strong emphasis on practical activities provides the children with a wide variety of opportunities to investigate mathematical ideas and concepts. The classrooms are well resourced with equipment for counting, matching, sorting and recognising numbers, values and shapes. Children put numbers into the correct order and show a sound knowledge of ordinal numbers up to ten when playing racing games. More able children have progressed to recording addition using digits rather than symbols. They also accurately record subtraction 'sentences' after practical investigations. Almost all children name correctly a range of two and three dimensional shapes. Mathematical vocabulary is used well to compare the height of their models, to say which is taller or tallest. All except the least able children recognise coins up to 20p and extend their knowledge in real situations, buying and selling plants for the outdoor area. The majority exceed the early learning goals for mathematics.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Standards in ICT are good.
- The well planned outdoor area is mostly used effectively to provide interesting and exciting opportunities for learning. However, sometimes it is cluttered with too much equipment and the learning intentions are less clear.

## COMMENTARY

39. Good teaching provides a wide range of interesting and well-linked learning experiences that very successfully broaden children's knowledge of the world around them. Children exceed the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. During the inspection, they were eagerly waiting for their caterpillars to become cocoons and turn into butterflies. Imaginative teaching linked their outdoor observations and activities to the class story *'The Hungry Caterpillar'* and inspired the children to write at length. The children had helped design and stock the outdoor learning area and demonstrated good knowledge of plant growth, gained from cultivating the plants, vegetables and herbs. Local visitors helped the children make wormeries and prepare suitable habitats for different garden visitors such as ladybirds and a hedgehog. Children successfully learn early geographical skills by making plans of the outdoor area. Occasionally, however, the area becomes cluttered with too much equipment and too many activities that result in children just moving from one thing to another rather than learning in a structured way through their play. Acting in role as Victorian children on a visit to Beamish Museum has resulted in children having a good understanding of what life was like in the past. Very good teaching ensures the children acquire good computer skills. They know their way round the keyboard and controls and use different programs, including the Internet, competently. More able pupils send work to the printer.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Children use the space in the school hall well.
- Reception children have direct access to the outdoor facilities.

### **COMMENTARY**

40. The children's good attitudes and behaviour ensure that they use all equipment confidently and safely. There is now direct access from reception class to the outdoor area, which teachers use effectively to promote physical development and more challenging activities are provided through lessons in the school hall. Children use the space well and move with good balance and co-ordination. About half are not yet able to catch or bounce a ball with control despite the good guidance and good demonstrations of the staff. They willingly help move and share equipment. They change their clothes for lessons efficiently but rather slowly, which can limit time for skills development. Children control small equipment well, use scissors and tools safely and handle pencils and brushes competently. They achieve well in this area of learning through good teaching and meet the early learning goals.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Well planned activities encourage imagination and language development.
- They enjoy using the stage in the outdoor area for drama and role-play.
- Children express their imaginative ideas well using a variety of materials.
- The children enjoy singing and they sing well.

### **COMMENTARY**

41. Children work with a wide range of materials and media and mix and blend colours boldly using paint and collage, pencil and pastel. They practise self-portraits and printing in their sketchbooks. Good quality observational drawings of a snake were used as designs for a clay model. Well planned activities using the stage and the 'Willow Den' in the outdoor area successfully encourage imaginative drama and role-play. When singing a counting song about mini-beasts, the children adapted their voices well to changes in volume and rhythm, showing good listening skills and a secure sense of pitch. Good teaching ensures the children exceed the early learning goals by the end of their reception year.

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

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Achievement is very good and standards in Year 2 are well above the national expectation in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Very good teaching, based on the excellent use of assessment information ensures that the learning needs of all pupils are fully met.
- The leadership and management of English are excellent.
- Literacy skills are very effectively promoted in all areas of the school's work. However, in science and ICT, opportunities are missed to support writing.

### COMMENTARY

42. The pupils' high standards and very good achievement are the result of excellent leadership and management and very good improvement since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has ensured that the National Literacy Strategy has been very effectively adapted to the needs of the school and that all staff are very clear about how to teach literacy. Rigorous analysis of all test and assessment information and very perceptive monitoring of teaching and learning ensure that any weaknesses are quickly picked up and addressed. The very strong emphasis on helping staff to model writing, including grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting, has had an extremely positive effect on the quality of writing throughout the school. Teachers from other schools visit this one to see the very good practice and the co-ordinator provides some training for other schools to assist their development of literacy.
43. Assessment information is used exceptionally well to set pupils according to their capability in Year 2 and to set targets and plan activities that match pupils' learning needs throughout the school. Records of progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening are comprehensive and based on the very perceptive marking of pupils' work, alongside the rigorous analysis of test and assessment outcomes. Within the sets, work is broken down further to tackle individual weaknesses, often addressed by 'mini-targets' set as teachers mark pupils' work. Following this, discussions with pupils and their parents ensure that all parties work together to help the pupils and that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. While the content of the work remains the same for all pupils, the work planned matches the levels at which they are working and support is targeted towards the areas of greatest need. This very often involves assisting pupils with special educational needs but where relevant, it also involves assisting other pupils, including higher attainers. Thus all pupils are fully included in everything and given the best possible chance to succeed at the level of which they are capable.
44. Pupils read very well and demonstrate a very good understanding of what they have read. They benefit greatly from their teachers' very good questioning, which shows them how to gain additional information from the text about the characters, the plot and the style of writing. Some Year 1 pupils struggle to work out how to read new words. However, by Year 2, all pupils very confidently use letter sounds, pictures and the context of what they are reading, to do so. Pupils read widely and the homework programme, well supported by parents, contributes in great measure to their learning and progress at school. All pupils understand very well that different styles of writing suit different purposes and they relate this effectively to their reading. For example, pupils in a lower attaining reading group described the character's step back in time as having been written '*like a diary*' as they explored what happened during the episode in the story.
45. Very effective teaching ensures that pupils have to think very hard and use a wide range of interesting and powerful verbs, adjectives and adverbs in their writing. Therefore pupils' writing



engages the reader well. Pupils in Year 1 successfully sequence sentences that show the beginnings of how to develop a story. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 start sentences in different ways and join sentences together using a wide range of connecting words that make their writing flow and easy to read. These features are evident, too, in the work of average and lower attainers, though here, story endings are sometimes weak. Throughout the school, punctuation is good, developing very effectively from the mostly accurate use of capital letters and full stops in Year 1, to the accurate use of a wide range of punctuation by the end of Year 2. Almost all pupils have a neat, legible and joined handwriting style in Year 2 and all work is very well presented.

46. Speaking and listening are very effectively encouraged throughout the school. All pupils confidently respond to questions, state their ideas and opinions clearly and listen carefully to what others have to say. They are very well supported in this by the teachers' very good questioning which is very effectively targeted towards different groups and individuals thus ensuring that all are fully included in discussion and debate. Teachers are particularly skilled at showing pupils how much their responses are valued and at using them to extend pupils' vocabulary and their overall knowledge and understanding.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

47. Overall, teachers use their very good subject knowledge very effectively to promote language and literacy skills across the curriculum. Pupils rise very well to the challenges presented to them to speak and listen in all subjects. A particularly good example of this was observed in a personal, social and health education session where pupils discussed and explored ways of recognising and valuing the qualities of others. In history, writing is extended beyond recording facts to thinking about what it must have been like to have been in the Great Fire of London, for example, thus developing pupils' ability to write with empathy. Both of these examples demonstrate the very good contribution English makes to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Writing skills are not promoted as effectively in science or ICT, however. In science, the overuse of worksheets to record the outcomes of investigations limits the opportunities pupils have to write scientific reports in different ways. In ICT, although pupils use computer programs to consolidate grammar and spelling, they do not yet use computers as natural tools for learning to draft, edit or improve their writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Very good teaching, supported by a very detailed programme of work that caters for individual needs, ensures the pupils' very good achievement.
- Standards in Year 2 are well above the national expectation.
- The information gained from the school's very detailed tracking system is used very effectively to determine further learning.
- Resources for ICT are relatively limited and do not always link directly to the learning objectives.
- The leadership and the management of the subject are excellent.

## **COMMENTARY**

48. Pupils are highly motivated by the very good teaching they receive as a result of the teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding of how children learn. This is evident in the very detailed planning which ensures that the needs of all pupils are met.

Even within the sets for mathematics, work is further broken down to ensure that individual pupils receive the specific help and challenge they need to achieve as well as they can. All pupils are included very effectively in all mathematical activities. They work hard, concentrate well, co-operate very well and willingly help each other. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are identified early and are very well supported.

49. Teaching methods are carefully selected and very effectively used to meet pupils' learning needs. Time is used productively and there is a very good pace to the lessons. The pupils respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of their work rate and behaviour. As a result, they produce a great amount of high quality work. Very effective questioning by the teachers at different stages during the lesson constantly reinforces, consolidates and further develops the pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. The setting of the pupils in Year 2 has had a considerably positive impact on their learning because it has resulted in pupils being very successfully challenged at their level of understanding.
50. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have a very good understanding of place value to 1,000 and accurately calculate whole number problems using multiplication and division. These pupils recognise and use simple fractions in their calculations, understand reflective symmetry and accurately describe and classify a wide range of two and three dimensional shapes. Average and lower attaining produce work at least in line with national expectations and sometimes beyond. They accurately sequence numbers to 100, select appropriate methods to solve addition and subtraction problems and use the correct vocabulary to describe common shapes. In a very good lesson, pupils used their very good knowledge of multiplication tables to sort different sets of numbers. The higher attainers in the set gave very good explanations as to why some multiples of 2, 5, 10 and 50 would overlap and be in the same group on their Venn diagram. The average and less able pupils met the learning objective very well by using fewer multiples. The simple, yet very effective way in which the activities were changed according to the needs of the pupils, ensured that very good learning took place.
51. Assessment procedures are highly effective. They are embedded in the work of all year groups and there is a very clear link between assessment, diagnosis, intervention strategies, planning, setting and target setting. All of the information gained from assessment is used very effectively to develop pupils' learning. Work is planned around the needs of individual pupils and more time is allocated to the areas of greatest need. This is a key feature of the very good teaching that takes place. For example, solving number problems has been a particular focus this year. Pupils' work shows that they are much better able to apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding to solving problems than they were at the start of the year. A good range of resources is used very effectively to support learning but the use of ICT within lessons is limited. Plans are well under way to develop and improve the range of software available so that programs relate more closely to the objectives of the lessons being taught. Handling data is an area of the school's mathematics curriculum in which ICT is not yet used well enough.
52. Leadership and management are outstanding. The very knowledgeable co-ordinator has monitored the subject very effectively and provides excellent support for her colleagues. She has also been very involved with other schools through the introduction of numeracy sacks. Despite the very high standards reached, the co-ordinator continues to have a very strong commitment to further improvement throughout the school, spurred on by her

own drive and enthusiasm and that of the other teachers and support staff. These factors have led to a very good overall improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

53. Mathematical skills are very effectively promoted in other subjects. For example, in art, pupils' pattern work is marked for its artistic content and also for the pupils' understanding of repeated patterns and sequencing of shapes. Time lines promote numerical understanding well in history. In science, pupils very effectively consolidate their understanding of the need to measure accurately as they measure and record the different heights of plants at different stages in their growth.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and achievement is good.
- Teaching is good and teachers have good knowledge of the subject but their marking does not always help pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Very good emphasis is placed on learning through investigation, but the overuse of worksheets inhibits the recording of investigations in different ways.
- Pupils behave well, show good attitudes in lessons and present their work to a high standard.
- Pupils do not have opportunities to use ICT to plan investigations or select ways of recording their results.

## **COMMENTARY**

54. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because they are fully included in all activities and thoroughly enjoy their science lessons. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of important scientific areas, including electricity, plants and living things, materials and forces. Learning activities are firmly based on thorough practical investigations, with many opportunities for pupils to use and extend their considerable scientific knowledge. Scientific vocabulary is effectively taught and pupils use their good speaking and listening skills to discuss and predict what they think might happen during their experiments. They recognise the best materials for different jobs and correctly classify materials according to their properties. A visit to the local wildfowl park broadened the very good curriculum and strengthened the pupils' understanding of how plants and animals adapt to their environment. The presentation of work is very good. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their initiative to plan investigations, select different methods of recording results, or use ICT to research or record information. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well through science lessons. They are excited and highly motivated by their discoveries, behave very well, work together co-operatively, look after the class goldfish and care for the environment.
55. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan a varied range of meaningful activities that capture their pupils' interest. Good quality books, resources and the school

grounds are used well to promote scientific learning. Challenging and open questions stimulate pupils to think hard and use their knowledge. Teachers explain information clearly. They encourage pupils to use their mathematical skills, for example, to measure their beans as they grow. Literacy skills are used well to read for information and to write reports. However, pupils are often given worksheets to complete and this limits opportunities for them to extend their knowledge and skills, or to select methods of recording results. Careful assessments monitor pupils' progress well, but teachers' marking does not show pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

56. Leadership and management are good. The knowledgeable co-ordinator has recently taken on the role. She has great enthusiasm for the subject. She has some time out of class to monitor teaching and learning, scrutinise work, budget for resources and plan future developments. As a result, she has a clear vision for further improvements. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Achievement, while overall satisfactory, is limited by the range of software.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good.

## **COMMENTARY**

57. While overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and standards have been maintained, there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good. As a result, pupils' learning and their overall achievement, though currently satisfactory, are improving rapidly. Nevertheless, the limitations of some of the ICT equipment at times restrict the impact of the good teaching on pupils' learning. For example, in one lesson the use of the control robot was being demonstrated on a computer monitor, but this was too small for all of the pupils to be able to see clearly. Following this demonstration the lack of available computers and control robots meant that the pupils could not have immediate 'hands on' experience of the procedures that they had just been taught. However, those who did showed good understanding of how to control the floor robot. Pupils confidently use draw and paint packages. Keyboard skills are sound and pupils know how to save, retrieve and print their own work. They have a well-developed understanding of how to use a digital camera and scanner, gained through their work in the computer club.
58. The teachers' effective questioning and clear explanations are the key features of the good teaching. Lessons are well planned. Procedures for assessment are good and the information is used effectively to help individual pupils develop their skills. Activities are carefully adjusted to take account of pupils' prior learning, gained at school or at home, thus ensuring all pupils are fully included in all learning at the levels of which they are capable. Pupils discussed and demonstrated most of the good range of skills that were recorded in their skills booklet, although they were unfamiliar with procedures to insert pictures into text. They are well motivated and respond enthusiastically to the good teaching.

59. Good leadership and management are effectively focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. The detailed plan and allocation of funding to improve the range and quality of hardware and software demonstrate the school's clear strategic thinking, which is securely based on its perceptive analysis of what is limiting learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

60. There are some sound examples of pupils using ICT in other subjects, for example, to paint and draw in art and design, to improve their numeracy skills and to research information about different religions using the Internet. However, the impact of this on their learning in lessons is sometimes limited by the range of software available to help meet the stated learning objectives, as in data handling in mathematics.

## **HUMANITIES**

61. Geography and history were sampled during this inspection. Only one lesson was seen in each subject and therefore no overall judgements are made about provision. Discussions with the pupils, inspection of teachers' planning and records and the analysis of the available work show that by Year 2, standards are at least in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well. In geography, the 'tourist information centre' in the role-play area successfully introduces the pupils to different countries around the world. In the lesson observed, the pupils demonstrated good ability to locate countries in the United Kingdom and Europe. In history, they showed a good understanding of past and present as they discussed what a seaside holiday was like in the past compared with today. They talk enthusiastically about famous people and events in the past. The curriculum is well planned to introduce pupils to famous people from different times, places and cultures, thus enhancing their cultural development. Good enrichment is provided through the very good range of visits to different localities as well as to museums to examine and handle historical artefacts.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils' achievement is very good and they have good attitudes to learning.
- Themes in assembly link very effectively with the curriculum for religious education, strengthening pupils' understanding of the impact of a religion on the daily life of its followers.
- Religious education makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **COMMENTARY**

62. Standards in Year 2 are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, which is enhanced well by visits to local churches and by visitors to school. Before they visited the local church, pupils made good use of their writing skills to

prepare a list of questions about the building, such as *“What is the cross for?”* A representative of the local church conducted a mock baptismal service in school, contributing effectively to the pupils’ understanding of rites of passage. Pupils also learn about the world faiths of Buddhism and Judaism. They know and respect other beliefs and traditions and this contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Year 2 pupils accurately identify artefacts used by members of the Jewish faith and understand that Jewish men wear skull caps to demonstrate their faith. One pupil brought a Buddhist statue of the Rupa from home and the class used an Internet site to learn more about the ‘Sangha’, or community. Pupils named many different groups that they belonged to, although none referred to belonging to a church or faith group.

63. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers’ good understanding of the locally agreed syllabus provides a very good basis for their planning and ensures good coverage of the curriculum for religious education. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 1 imaginatively acted out a story from the Buddhist faith. The teacher made good use of the opportunities to reflect on moral issues for behaviour and pupils responded well, saying *“We should be friends”* and *“We should always give people a second chance”*. Good quality books and artefacts support learning well. All pupils are supported well, particularly those with special needs who are fully included in all activities. The planning framework provides good systems that are used effectively to assess pupils’ learning and progress. The links between religious education and acts of collective worship are very good. Assembly themes are carefully chosen to support current lesson topics and all pupils participate to write a collective prayer for assembly. The programme for personal, social and health education supports religious education very effectively as pupils discuss a wide range of issues and values that affect their everyday lives. However, in some religious education lessons, there is little reference to beliefs as a basis for faith practices.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject is very perceptively monitored and evaluated. The very clear guidance given to staff to plan and develop religious education in an imaginative and reflective manner ensures that pupils achieve very well.

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

65. No lessons were observed in art and design or music and only one full lesson was observed in design and technology and physical education. No overall judgements can be made about provision in these subjects but the available evidence shows that statutory requirements are met, standards are at least in line with national expectations in all of them and leadership and management are at least good.
66. Evidence from the pupils’ sketchbooks, from the work on display and from discussions with pupils, shows that standards in **art and design** are well above the national expectation and achievement is very good. A good scheme of work is now in place that provides pupils with many very worthwhile experiences across the full range of art and design activities involving a good range of media. Skills are practised in pupils’ sketchbooks, which are used very effectively to sketch, record colour mixing, experiment with pattern, line and texture and design three-dimensional sculptures. The pupils’ finished work demonstrates very good observational skills, which are also evident in the very good links between art and design and subjects such as science, history and religious education. Nationally recommended schemes of work are very effectively adapted using topical and local themes that stimulate pupils’ interest and fire their imagination. These include good opportunities to study the work of artists from different times and places. Marking is good. Praise is given for what has been done well and comments state clearly what needs to be followed up and improved.

67. Photographic evidence in **design and technology** shows that pupils have a very good understanding of the design process and this was confirmed in a very good lesson with Year 1 pupils. The photographs showed that designs for mobiles were labelled, materials listed and the models evaluated against the design criteria. Pupils in the Year 1 lesson engaged in high level discussions as to the best design for a playground. Their speaking, listening and thinking skills were pushed to the limit as the staff injected one challenge after another to make them consider fully the implications of the size, safety, amount and type of equipment they could include on a relatively small site. The careful organisation of pupils into ability groups ensured that by the end of the session, all groups contributed very effectively to a whole class discussion on their designs to date. This is another example of the school's very inclusive practices based on the teachers' very good knowledge of the pupils. A well-planned, well-structured curriculum ensures that pupils' learning is continuous throughout the school and that skills are well taught and developed.
68. The sound of **music** permeates the school. Different styles are heard in assembly and in class. In assembly, pupils are given particular things to listen for and their attention is drawn to the purpose of the music, which is usually linked to the assembly theme and to the feelings it evokes. Music is heard playing in the background in class, for example, during handwriting sessions and to accompany 'brain gym' activities to reactivate pupils' minds and refocus their concentration. The quality of singing, again heard in assemblies, is good. Pupils sing with a good sense of pitch and rhythm and clearly enjoy doing so. They respond well to the beat during dance sessions and interpret the music effectively in their movements. Teachers' planning is securely based on a carefully considered commercial scheme of work and through it, all aspects of music are given due attention.
69. In the one **physical education** lesson observed, pupils showed good co-ordination and their movements were well balanced as they developed their imaginative and expressive skills through dance. Standards and achievement were good. Behaviour and attitudes were excellent and pupils co-operated and supported each other very well. This was due to very good teaching that encouraged them to refine their movements, skills and ideas. Teachers' planning shows very good coverage of all aspects of physical education. The well supported 'Top Sport' after-school club extends pupils' activities and provides skills development through fun activities. The school has successfully addressed the issue from the last inspection and now has an appropriate scheme of work for this subject.

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

70. Although only one lesson was observed, this area was extensively sampled through the very good contribution the very well-planned programme makes to the pupils' overall attitudes, values and personal development. In the lesson seen, pupils were very successfully encouraged to listen to each others' views and did so very sensitively, following the teacher's very good example. The atmosphere was one of quiet, calm reflection as they considered what was special about them and why they were important to someone. The teacher used her very good knowledge of the pupils to encourage them gently to contribute so that all were fully included in the session and made to feel very much valued as a person. Pupils' awareness of citizenship, healthy and safe lifestyles and personal growth and relationships is very effectively promoted through activities such as circle time, the promotion of care and concern for each other in lessons and in assemblies and in the overall very warm, caring and friendly atmosphere felt throughout the school. The success of this was seen as early as the reception class when one pupil offered to help another who was slower at cutting out circles to make a caterpillar. The

school's caring culture enables all pupils to feel personally valued and to gain in confidence and self-esteem.

71. Responsibilities such as the 'mini-buddies' and small tasks pupils carry out on a day-to-day basis around the classroom, help the pupils develop into very mature seven-year-olds. The 'worry tin' available in the hall and the flip chart in the foyer give pupils very good opportunities to alert teachers to their likes and dislikes and provide two more avenues for them to raise any concerns they may have. Thus the school actively seeks the views of the pupils, collates them and acts on them through, for example, responding to them in circle time and in assemblies.



## 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	3
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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
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).*