

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SOUTH STANLEY INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Stanley, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114030

Headteacher: Mrs P Oughtibridge

Lead inspector: Miss J H Sargent

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 263278

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 157

School address: Tyne Road  
South Stanley  
Stanley  
County Durham

Postcode: DH9 6PZ

Telephone number: (01207) 232 445  
Fax number: (01207) 290 823

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs D Meredith

Date of previous inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

South Stanley Infant and Nursery School is situated north of the city of Durham. All of the pupils live close to the school in an area composed mainly of rented housing. The number of boys and girls in the school is even overall, but uneven in some year groups. Children enter the Nursery with attainment that is well below average. Nearly all of the children entering the Reception classes have attended the school's Nursery. The school is affected by an above-average level of pupils leaving and joining at times other than the usual ones. Forty-three per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils – well above the national average – have special educational needs. The pupils with special needs include those with moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and language difficulties and autism. All the pupils are from a White British background. The school was awarded the Healthy School Standard in 2003 and received a School Achievement Award in 2000.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21113	Miss J H Sargent	Lead inspector	Science History Music Personal, social and health education
13786	Mrs S Walsh	Lay inspector	
18346	Mr R Bristow	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography Physical education Foundation Stage
33265	Mrs L Kingdon	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>8 - 13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16 - 28</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school** which provides a good quality of education. Given their capabilities, all pupils achieve well because of the good teaching that they receive. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average. The school is well led by the headteacher and the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The school gives **good value for money**.

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

- The good leadership of the headteacher.
- The good quality of teaching helps pupils to achieve well.
- Standards in speaking and listening, writing and science are not high enough.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent in quality and does not help to promote better work.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluation require further development.
- Good relationships help pupils to behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in September 1998. Most of the issues raised then have been successfully addressed. There are more opportunities for pupils to be independent learners and classrooms now offer better provision for role-play. Opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual development have improved. There has been an improvement in the rate of attendance, but it remains below the national average. Overall, the quality of teaching is similar to that seen previously. Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils' achievement is **good** across the school. Children enter the Nursery attaining at levels well below those seen nationally. By the end of Year 2, standards in national tests are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The significant number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the above average number of children admitted during the school year have an adverse effect on the test results. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are below average. The school is aware that standards need to be higher in the three core areas and is developing strategies to further promote them. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those seen nationally and those in religious education meet the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus.

**Pupils' personal development is good.** It is effectively promoted by the **good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** and a good personal education programme. Pupils have good attitudes towards school. They behave well, forming good relationships with adults and other pupils. Although nearly all pupils who attend school are punctual, the rate of attendance is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good.** Teaching of children in Nursery and Reception is consistently either good or better and teachers respond well to children's individual needs. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good, but is less consistent in quality. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and therefore these pupils make good progress. The marking of pupils' work does not always encourage and help pupils to improve their work, especially its presentation. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning through their support in classes. The curriculum meets requirements, is broad and balanced and meets the needs of individual children effectively. The school has recently devised a good programme to support the development of the speaking and listening skills of the youngest children. The curriculum for Nursery and Reception children is very good, with interesting and lively teaching resulting from imaginative planning. The care, support and guidance of pupils are satisfactory. The school has worked hard to create satisfactory links with parents and has developed good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher and her staff work hard for the school and its pupils. Standards are beginning to rise because of the school's improvement strategies. Some management procedures require review. School self-evaluation, including the monitoring of teaching and learning, requires further development. The data and information available about the school's standards require more detailed analysis in order to inform improvement planning more effectively. Subject co-ordinators are in the early stages of identifying and acting upon areas that they wish to improve. Governance meets statutory requirements. Though not yet well enough involved in school improvement, the governors have started to challenge the school's leaders about standards.

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

Responses were received from only a small proportion of parents. Parents who attended the meeting with inspectors and responded to the questionnaire indicate that they are happy with the school and its work. They report that their children are well taught and enjoy coming to school. Pupils say that they like coming to school; they like their teachers and find learning fun.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:**

- Raise standards in speaking and listening, writing and science.
- Improve the consistency, quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking.

- Further develop procedures for monitoring and evaluation, including the monitoring of teaching and learning, to help inform school improvement.
- Raise attendance levels.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is **good** across the school. Children enter the Nursery with very low levels of attainment. They make **good** progress over time. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are **satisfactory** but standards are **below average** in speaking and listening, writing and science.

#### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils achieve well across the school because they benefit from good teaching.
- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are improving in reading and mathematics, but need to be higher in writing and science.
- Children make good progress in speaking and listening from a very low starting point in Nursery, but speaking and listening remain barriers to achievement for many pupils despite the school's hard work.

#### COMMENTARY

1. Standards on entry to the Nursery are well below those expected for children of a similar age. Many children have limited basic skills, especially language development. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress towards the early learning goals. Their good achievements are the result of lively and interesting teaching and a well-planned and imaginative curriculum. By the end of the Reception Year, most children attain the expected goals in all six areas of learning but few exceed them. These standards are similar to those seen at the time of the previous inspection.
2. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in writing and science is below that seen nationally, but attainment in reading, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and other subjects is at expected levels. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. These standards are similar to those seen at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' low speaking and listening and writing skills adversely affect their progress across the curriculum because they find it difficult to express their ideas and opinions in detail. Presentation of work is frequently unsatisfactory, in particular for the lower-achieving pupils, and pupils' ability to write using well-constructed sentences is limited.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.6 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.4 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.6 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. Between 1999 and 2003, the school's results for national tests at the end of Year 2 show a falling trend. In 2002, there was an improvement in standards. This was the result of the year group containing fewer pupils with special educational needs. Each year, standards are affected by the high proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the number of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual times for admission. This has an adverse effect on test results. In 2003, the school revised its targets for the end of Year 2, lowering them by up to 15 per cent, to accommodate the attainment of eight pupils joining the year group during the autumn term. Nevertheless, provisional results for 2004 are promising and show a small improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, with more pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 than seen in 2003. The full effect of the increased number of higher-attaining pupils is almost negated by an accompanying increase in lower-attaining pupils.
4. In Years 1 and 2, in most lessons, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. This is well illustrated by records kept by the school and by work seen during the inspection. On occasions, Year 2 pupils who are in mixed-age classes do not achieve as well as they might. This is because teachers do not always ensure that their planning takes full account of the different age groups and at times, too little is expected of the Year 2 pupils and they make too little progress.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good** and exclusions are rare. Pupils' social and moral development is **very good**, spiritual development is **good** and provision for cultural development is **satisfactory**. Attendance rates are **unsatisfactory**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their school work, which enhances their achievement.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good and result in pupils gaining in confidence.
- Pupils are encouraged to treat each other respectfully and take responsibility for their actions; this encourages pupils to develop self-discipline.
- The monitoring of attendance is not rigorous enough and contributes to unsatisfactory attendance rates.

## **COMMENTARY**

5. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic about their lessons and willing to work hard. Although pupils are generally well motivated, they can become a little restless when activities such as story-telling go on for too long. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils, often involving humour, which produce a nice lively atmosphere. Most pupils are confident to both ask and answer questions.

## **EXCLUSIONS**

*Ethnic background of pupils*

*Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	93	1	0

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

6. Pupils generally behave well in class and around school. Exclusions rarely occur. Playtimes are happy and energetic. Prior to the inspection, parents and pupils reported that the school is a friendly place and the few incidents of bullying are promptly and effectively dealt with. There is a pleasant social atmosphere in the dining hall and around school. Pupils behave very well in assemblies. Behaviour is very well managed by teachers. They are very effective at encouraging participation, enforcing rules and encouraging fair play and taking turns. The school gives pupils strong moral guidelines and, as a result, pupils are starting to develop self-discipline and to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils are very keen to take on responsibilities, for example, to act as teachers' helpers or to be 'buddies' and befriend others at playtimes. They are developing a sense of pride both in themselves and their school.
7. Personal and social education, including circle time, is used very well to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to acknowledge their feelings and to develop knowledge about themselves. With good support from teachers, pupils are capable of thoughtful discussion and are able to empathise with others. There is a strong emphasis on honesty and treating others as you would expect to be treated. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They learn to work well with others and are encouraged to be tolerant of differences. Visitors have introduced pupils to different cultures, for example through African dance and drumming. Pupils learn about how Chinese families celebrate their new year and have a chance to experience local culture through regular visits within the locality. Very good social and moral education results in good personal development and a happy school community. The school has placed increased emphasis on providing more opportunities for spiritual development. Teachers share pupils' enjoyment when the "wow" factor is experienced, such as when the teacher turned the page in a shared "big book" and the picture of a whale making a huge splash produced an audible gasp from pupils. Evidence indicates an improvement in provision for spiritual development since the last inspection.

## ATTENDANCE

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	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.*

8. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and are below the national average. Unsatisfactory attendance rates were identified as an issue by the previous inspection. Although attendance rates have improved, they have not improved enough. This is because the school's systems for monitoring attendance are not sufficiently rigorous. The computerised registration system is not used effectively to analyse patterns of attendance. Pupils with very serious attendance problems are identified and appropriately reported to the Education Welfare Service. However, many pupils take

odd days off school. Some parents do not always strive to ensure the regular attendance of their children. Sometimes the school is not able to contact parents by telephone on the first day of their child's absence and this can mean there is a delay before absences are pursued. This does not convey a convincing message to parents about the importance of regular school attendance.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** overall. Teaching, although **good**, overall is more consistent in its high quality in Nursery and Reception than in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is **good**. The school provides **satisfactory** care, guidance and support for its pupils. It has a satisfactory partnership with parents and has developed **good** links with the local community and other schools and colleges.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are consistently either good or better, but in Years 1 and 2 are more variable in quality.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes are generally good and sometimes very good.
- Overall, teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good, with a significant proportion of either good or better teaching in English and mathematics.
- Classroom support assistants contribute effectively to the quality of teaching and learning, enabling most pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers' planning does not always fully reflect the needs of mixed-age classes.
- Marking does not show pupils how to improve their work.

## COMMENTARY

9. The table below gives details of the quality of teaching across the school. The teaching quality is similar to that seen in the previous inspection. The teaching of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is more consistent in its high quality than the teaching in Years 1 and 2. The lack of a proper programme for monitoring teaching means that there is no system for sharing the best practice within the school in order to make the quality more consistent across all classes. Lesson observations for the youngest pupils focused on all six areas of learning. For the older pupils, observations covered a range of subjects, but focused mainly on the teaching of English, mathematics and science. In addition to lessons seen during the inspection, a thorough examination of pupils' work was undertaken.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	7 (24%)	15 (52%)	6 (21%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

10. In the Nursery and the Reception classes, planning has clear learning objectives and children progress in small but effective steps. Classroom support assistants contribute significantly to the quality of learning for all children and, together with teachers, form a most effective team. All teaching is at least good for children in the Foundation Stage, with a significant proportion being very good. In the Nursery, the teacher and Nursery nurse are very well placed to evaluate how well children are doing. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children's achievement is recorded meticulously. Good use is made of a local assessment scheme and the Foundation Stage Profile. Assessments monitor children's achievements and identify how staff might raise these from the very low starting points identified on entry.
11. In Years 1 and 2, planning is satisfactory. Planning for classes with mixed-age groups now uses helpful guidance from the local authority. This is not always sufficiently well adapted to fully reflect the attainment levels and curriculum needs of the different year groups in these classes. As a result, some Year 2 pupils in mixed age classes do not always experience the same learning opportunities as their peers and in some lessons, too little is expected of them.
12. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in Nursery and Reception. The good teaching of early reading skills gives teachers in Years 1 and 2 a firm basis on which to build. In a significant number of lessons in Years 1 and 2, the teaching of English and mathematics is either good or better, contributing to the higher standards seen in mathematics and reading. When writing for literacy lessons, the number of lines a pupil writes on a page is sometimes given too much importance, rather than giving consideration to the quality of the pupils' writing. Writing skills learned in literacy lessons are not always applied effectively in other subjects. In subjects such as history and science, too much recorded work consists of labelled drawings. Pupils are rarely expected to write at length about what they learn and marking does not exhort pupils to apply their learning and write at greater length in these subjects. In mathematics, pupils are effectively taught to calculate in their heads. They learn to apply their mathematical learning in real-life situations and develop a sound knowledge of number because of the good teaching.
13. Teachers are ably assisted by classroom assistants who offer good support and help most pupils to achieve well. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support and guidance they receive. For a minority of these pupils, individual education plans (IEPs) do not offer enough guidance to teachers. They do not break learning down into small enough steps for these pupils to be seen to make progress and they have the same IEPs over an extended period. These IEPs are less effective than they should be. Because teachers know the pupils well and match work carefully to pupils' previous learning, progress does occur, but evidence of progress for these pupils over time has to be identified in other assessment documentation.
14. Relationships are good and the pupils' self-esteem is high, due to the value that staff give to their contributions. Most pupils when asked, said that they enjoy their work and that lessons are interesting and sometimes exciting. Most lessons have good pace and teachers usually use a good range of teaching strategies to motivate pupils and encourage the development of independent learning. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Adults insist on high standards of behaviour, and ensure

that pupils are actively engaged in learning. Where teaching is less successful, pupils spend too much time sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher, teaching and learning objectives are less clear and activities do not always contain the degree of challenge necessary to move pupils on. The final part of lessons is not always used effectively to assess what progress pupils have made during the lesson. On a few occasions, the end of lessons consists of a new and unrelated activity, reducing the impact of the preceding teaching.

15. In Years 1 and 2, there are satisfactory procedures for recording what pupils have attained across the curriculum, especially in English and mathematics where assessments are more thorough than in other subjects. The school's procedures for tracking pupils over time are sound. For pupils with special educational needs, there is detailed information about their achievements in literacy and numeracy. The information is used effectively to respond to their needs in lessons and helps them to make good progress. This level of assessment detail could be used more effectively when writing IEPs so that pupils' targets are clearer.
16. Teachers evaluate their weekly planning, and note how pupils respond to their teaching. Marking of pupils' work is variable in quality; sometimes it is thorough and accurate, but more could be done to promote higher standards. More frequently, marking consists of a tick with little acknowledgement of either grammatical or spelling mistakes and no insistence on good presentation. This neither informs the pupils of the standards they have to aspire to nor tells them how to improve their work. The involvement of pupils in their own learning has improved since the last inspection, but greater consistency is required in marking in order to help pupils recognise and evaluate the quality of their own work and develop strategies to succeed when adult support is focused elsewhere.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

Curricular provision is **good** overall. It meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good and children enjoy learning through play.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and helps them to achieve well.
- There is no identified person with responsibility for maintaining an overview of the curriculum.
- Curriculum planning for mixed-age classes requires further development to ensure all pupils receive the same learning opportunities as their peers.
- There is a good programme in place for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- There are insufficient opportunities identified in planning for developing writing, speaking and listening and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

## **COMMENTARY**

17. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. The Nursery classroom and outside area are attractive and well-organised, promoting all six

areas of learning. Although the two Reception classes are a distance apart, one having access to the Nursery outside area and equipment whilst the other does not, staff are creative in planning appropriate outdoor provision for all children. Children enjoy the carefully planned, interesting learning experiences prepared for them and they achieve well.

18. The school uses national and local guidance to support its teaching of the subjects of the National Curriculum. It has recently devised a two-year cycle of topics for pupils in Years 1 and 2, which gives appropriate coverage of all curriculum subjects. When it is fully implemented it will ensure that pupils do not repeat units previously covered. This is a problem that was noted during the inspection. Some classes contain pupils from more than one year group and this is presenting some difficulties where Years 1 and 2 are together because Year 2 pupils across the school are not always receiving the same learning opportunities as their peers. The lack of a nominated person to oversee curriculum management is reducing the efficiency with which such matters can be dealt.
19. Teachers' planning across the curriculum does not successfully identify where links can be made with literacy, numeracy and ICT, in order to transfer and reinforce pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The good provision made for developing pupils' reading skills is accelerating pupils' progress. Standards of written work in subjects such as science, geography and history do not adequately promote the application of the skills pupils learn in literacy lessons. Not enough use is made of all curriculum areas to plan for extended writing opportunities and, in classrooms, the limited range of books on display does little to foster pupils' interest in books. Provision for mathematics has improved since the last inspection and the improvements in standards at the end of Year 2 illustrate the impact of planned whole-school developments.
20. The school makes good provision for PSHE. Lessons teach pupils about issues ranging from the environment to personal development and provide good opportunities for children to explore and talk about their feelings. The school is part of a pilot trialling the Social, Emotional and Behaviour Skills (SEBS) materials as part of a national programme. Effective whole-school co-ordination ensures that this aspect of the school's work continues to be good.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Where the school identifies special educational needs, positive relationships developed with parents and the carers in the Nursery enable appropriate support to be provided for pupils and families, for example the maths packs developed for families to use at home. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support throughout the Foundation Stage and this enables them to make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are well supported by learning support assistants who provide sensitive guidance and encouragement. Where pupils' needs are more profound, their work requires greater adjustment. Individual education plans for these pupils do not always pursue the areas of concern closely enough. Targets are too general for pupils' progress to be apparent and offer insufficient guidance to teachers for lesson planning.
22. The school rightly identifies the development of pupils' speech and language as a priority for raising achievement and the headteacher is leading the development of a Speech and Language Intervention Programme with another eight local schools as part of a

neighbourhood project. The headteacher welcomes opportunities to become involved in new initiatives and actively encourages links with outside agencies.

23. The school uses visits and visitors well to enhance learning. Opportunities are planned for pupils to visit nearby places of interest such as Beamish Museum. Visitors to the school include storytellers, musicians and dancers, all of whom significantly enrich the curriculum. A regular monthly visit is made by the local dergy and a visit from local Buddhist monks is part of work being covered in religious education. The school is part of a regional Arts Link, giving access to artists who carry out workshops in activities such as silk painting and batik. These visits motivate and enthuse both pupils and staff.
24. The school has sufficient qualified teachers whose skills and experience match the demands of the curriculum. Learning support assistants are proficient and effectively deployed, providing support for different groups and individuals. Accommodation is spacious and well maintained and learning resources are satisfactory overall. Resources are satisfactory. The school has firm plans to purchase extra books and expand its library stock.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory**. The support, advice and guidance provided for pupils are **satisfactory**. Pupils' views are valued.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teachers have very good and trusting relationships with the pupils that make pupils feel both safe and secure.
- Good work is done in lessons to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Although adequate, procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety lack rigour.

## **COMMENTARY**

25. Responses to parent and pupil questionnaires confirm that teachers have very good and trusting relationships with pupils. Teachers know pupils well and this ensures that pupils are confident to approach teachers when they have worries or problems. Staff are very sensitive to pupils' concerns and want the best for them. There is a warm, caring, supportive atmosphere in the school. The school is aware that many children have to deal with difficult home circumstances and these children receive good personal support. Staff work well with a wide range of external agencies. However, the procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are only satisfactory and sometimes lack rigour. Although the school follows local procedures regarding child protection, more should be done to ensure that all members of staff, including temporary staff, students and volunteers, are fully aware of the school's child protection procedures. The school provides a generally safe and secure environment. However, procedures for regular health and safety inspections are informal and the governors have not yet ensured that the monitoring of health and safety is sufficiently detailed and reliable. The school works hard at promoting a healthy lifestyle, for example in teaching about the dangers of the misuse of drugs or promoting healthy eating.



26. The school provides satisfactory support for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievement. Most pupils receive satisfactory support if they are at risk of underachieving and a small group of children with speech and language difficulties receive good support. Marking does not consistently support improvements in achievement. Induction procedures in the Nursery and Reception classes are satisfactory. Parents receive good quality information about the work of the Nursery. A staggered start ensures that children have time to settle in. However, there are no home visits and this is a missed opportunity to develop relationships with parents. Pupils' views are sought through discussions at circle time. Pupils are aware that their views are respected and as a result, they are confident to express themselves.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school's links with parents are **satisfactory**. The school's links with the community and other schools are **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Most parents support their children well but a significant number find it very difficult to give their children specific educational support.
- The school has worked well with other local schools on a range of initiatives designed to improve pupils' learning.
- Good use is made of local resources to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

## **COMMENTARY**

27. The school supplies a satisfactory range of information for parents. The prospectus is written in a straightforward manner and contains useful information about how the school is run. However, parents are not provided with national comparators regarding statutory assessment tests at the end of Year 2. Regular newsletters supplement the prospectus. Parents of pupils starting Nursery receive good information, including hints about how they can help their children. Annual reports clearly tell parents about what their children know, understand and can do in English and mathematics lessons, but information about children's achievements in science and the foundation subjects is often very similar, even for children with different levels of attainment. There are regular parents' nights, although these are not well attended. Parents report that teachers are easy to talk to if they have a problem or questions to ask. Although the Governors' Report to parents fulfils statutory requirements, it is a very brief document that does not adequately reflect the life of the school.
28. Many parents try very hard to support their children well. Parents enjoy attending events in which their children can perform but some are less enthusiastic about attending more formal events such as parents' evenings. There are a significant number of parents who find it very difficult to fully support their children's education. The school has worked in partnership with other agencies to make a range of courses available to parents, but the courses have not been well attended.
29. The school is outward-looking and has worked well with other schools and local groups to enhance and improve educational provision. The school is an active member of the local

neighbourhood partnership and joint initiatives with the partnership and other local schools, such as the Green Corridor Language Project, are helping to improve pupils' standards in speaking and listening. The school also works closely with Sure Start and other groups who are active in the local community. The school makes good use of local facilities for visits and brings in local speakers and groups in order to enrich pupils' experiences.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher and the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The headteacher has a clear vision of high standards of achievement for the school and there are indications that standards are improving, albeit slowly.
- The good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage results in consistently good provision in which the children achieve well.
- The responsibility for leadership of the curriculum is insufficiently clear.
- Systems for assessment, monitoring and evaluation, including the monitoring of teaching and learning, require further development.
- The governing body is very supportive of the school's work, but is not yet sufficiently involved in school improvement planning.

## **COMMENTARY**

30. The headteacher and staff are committed to providing an educational environment in which pupils flourish. They work hard to improve standards and offer work and activities that will help pupils to achieve well. However, some management procedures require attention to ensure that the school's vision becomes reality. The headteacher has been in post for approximately four years and has addressed most issues arising from the previous inspection. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) appropriately identifies the need to raise standards in the core areas of the curriculum and there are indications in the school's provisional assessment results for 2004 that some of the work undertaken so far is having a positive effect.
31. The headteacher and deputy head work together well. The deputy headteacher has a clearly-identified role managing pupils' support, care, guidance and personal development. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Senior teachers know the Foundation Stage curriculum well and share their high expectations with their team. This has created a consistency in provision across the Nursery and Reception classes and children make good progress and achieve well there. Other teaching staff have curriculum responsibilities which they manage soundly and they contribute to the SIP through subject audits. The leadership and management of the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 are not supported by a clear enough identification of personnel to ensure that pupils in different year groups are offered access to the same opportunities, that policies are reviewed regularly and that requirements continue to be met. This shortcoming is holding up some of the developments that are taking place.

32. The management of the school is satisfactory. Day-to-day routines function effectively and the school is an orderly place. Administrative staff follow clear financial procedures when managing the budget. More needs to be done in analysing attendance and identifying and taking action to contact the families of those pupils who are repeatedly absent. The school's prospectus requires a slight alteration so that it includes national comparators for statutory assessment results for the end of Year 2. Procedures for the induction of new staff and provision for initial teacher training are satisfactory.
33. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluation require further development. Data, such as some information which tracks the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs, is not always readily available. The school is beginning to address this issue by drawing all relevant information together. A target-setting system is helpful in identifying which pupils have made good progress between Reception and the end of Year 2, and which pupils have not. Monitoring of targeted pupils, such as those who are predicted to attain at the lower range of Level 2, is completed annually. The frequency of this limits the effectiveness of the school's work because there are no opportunities to adjust teaching or support strategies where they are less effective than they should be.
34. The monitoring of teaching and learning is completed appropriately for the purpose of performance management. Other than this, it is infrequent and is not having sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching, which is inconsistent across the school. Neither is the sharing of good practice occurring as it should, in order to move the teaching forward. Similarly, in the SIP, the school has not established rigorous systems to evaluate the action it has taken to raise standards. There are few identified monitoring procedures in the plan and success criteria are not sharp enough to measure the impact of any work. Priorities are linked to financial planning, although this is not clearly identified in the plan itself. Staff development is satisfactory.
35. The governing body supports the school well and governance meets statutory requirements. Some governors work voluntarily in school on a regular basis. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and has recently started to challenge the school's leadership about standards.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	413,691.65
Total expenditure	432,120.55
Expenditure per pupil	2,298.51

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	36,427.00
Balance carried forward to the next year	17,998.00

36. Financial planning is sound and is linked to the priorities identified in the SIP. The headteacher and governors monitor spending and benefit from the assistance of a finance officer from the local authority. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value to its work.
37. Many children enter the school's Nursery with poor speech and language. This poses a barrier to their learning which is being addressed through the school's programme of

speech and language for children in Nursery and Reception. It is too early to judge the full impact of this work. The school initiates a range of appropriate and positive action to support pupils who have difficult home lives so that they can achieve well at school. Through the judicious use of their own staff and resources and contact with external agencies, good strategies are developed to support these children. The school has worked hard to involve parents in children's learning, but has so far met with only limited success as many parents seem reluctant to actively support the school in its work.

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

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

Provision for the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by an effective team of teachers and support staff.
- Nursery children make good progress from very low starting points and staff are well informed about their learning.
- The children achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Gains in skills and knowledge in the Reception classes are measured regularly and this information is used well to help children to improve.

### **COMMENTARY**

38. Children join the Nursery at the beginning of the year in which they are four. Although the intake varies from year to year, most children enter the Nursery with low mathematical and physical skills and very low communication, social and emotional and creative skills. Their knowledge and understanding of the world varies considerably. Their starting points are assessed and programmes for improvement are identified. This is the start of an ongoing series of assessments for these children during their time in Nursery and Reception.
39. There are sound strategies to help forge a partnership between home and school. Children and their parents or carers visit school prior to children joining the Nursery. Home visits are not made and this limits the knowledge gained about new entrants, most of whom who have limited pre-Nursery experiences.
40. In the lessons observed in both Nursery and Reception, teaching was consistently good and sometimes very good. Teaching was observed in all six areas of learning. All teaching links learning experiences effectively, such as when Reception children study whales. They share opinions about caring when listen to a recording of whales communicating; they measure and compare sizes; make moving puppets; and write down their findings. Children progress well through the measured stages of development (Stepping Stones). The good quality of teaching and learning helps children to achieve well. By the time children progress to Year 1, at least half the children have reached the expected levels but few exceed them. Information about attainment on entry to the Reception classes is used to identify the next steps in teaching and learning. This is then supplemented by an exhaustive examination of children's work which is analysed to record gains identified in skills and understanding to plan for the next stages of learning. The children's progress is recorded meticulously.
41. The quality of well-qualified and trained support is impressive and there is a shared determination for excellence. Staff are managed well and have become valuable members of an effective team whose enthusiasm is reflected in the attitudes of the

children. Children thrive on the very good relationships and the value which is given to their contributions. Learning is exciting and challenging.

42. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage encourages two classes to share experiences and resources and this is to be promoted actively next year. The third class is separate but manages well to promote equal opportunities. The outdoor play area is very good but is often only used by whole classes, rather than as an extension of the good range of group activities, thus reducing its overall potential to promote learning.

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

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- There is a very supportive environment to encourage learning.
- Relationships are exceptionally good.
- Children are confident and feel secure.
- From a very low starting point, independence and decision-making are promoted effectively.

### **COMMENTARY**

43. Relationships are very good and children flourish in a safe and secure environment in which their contributions are encouraged and valued. They enjoy each other's company and enjoy their activities. The teacher and Nursery nurse skilfully encourage children to do things for themselves and pupils are enthusiastic when making choices about the order in which they experience the planned activities. Children have fewer opportunities to choose in the Reception classes but they have a strong sense of belonging and express their feelings freely.
44. Children achieve very well in this area of learning because of the high quality of the teaching and curriculum. From very low starting points, half the children will attain the expected levels by the time they move to Year 1, and many others are nearly there.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children experience and use a wide range of speaking and listening skills throughout the Foundation Stage.
- An effective speech and language intervention programme developed by the school is helping children to overcome communication difficulties.
- Children know most letter sounds and recognise common words.

### **COMMENTARY**

45. On entry to school, most children have very poor speaking and listening skills. The promotion of spoken language is a priority throughout the Foundation Stage. Staff effectively provide many opportunities for children to use spoken language. For example, when participating in role play, whether in the 'home area' or 'travel agency', or when sharing their successes with each other, children are encouraged to speak to one another.
46. The Green Corridor Language Intervention Programme, involving nine local schools working together to share their practice and knowledge, is managed by the headteacher. A speech and language teacher employed through the substantial level of funding accessed through a Neighbourhood Grant is accommodated at the school. Having this expertise available provides the school with an excellent resource and opportunity to develop a whole school understanding of pupils' difficulties in speech and language development and how to overcome the potential barrier to learning these create. Plans for the training of three learning support assistants in the school will enable the thoroughly researched programme of activities to be used with an increased number of targeted groups of children in Nursery and Reception classes from September. Staff in the Foundation Stage are already making effective use of the whole-class materials that have been developed by the enthusiastic and highly committed speech and language teacher.
47. Basic skills in literacy are purposefully taught from the start and most children know initial letter sounds and letter names by the time they leave the Reception classes. High expectations of staff introduce children in the Reception classes to challenging terms such as 'breeching', 'blowholes' and 'dorsal fins' in their topic about whales. Writing skills for many are at an early stage; all children realise that they can communicate through words. A scrutiny of children's current and previous work indicates that half of them will achieve the early learning goals in writing prior to joining Year 1, but few will exceed them. A home/school diary records the good development of reading skills. Many children recognise familiar words when reading and some use their knowledge of letter sounds to read words they do not recognise.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children have made very good progress by the time they transfer to Year 1.
- Most are interested in numbers and confident when counting on 'one more'.
- The good start in children's mathematical learning is directly related to the good achievement in mathematics seen in Years 1 and 2.

## **COMMENTARY**

48. On entry to the Nursery most children have limited mathematical experiences. They are provided with rich learning experiences to help them to recognise and sequence numbers to five. By the time they leave the Nursery class, many know numbers up to ten and some know numbers well above. Number games and rhymes make an important contribution to the enjoyment which children show.

49. Achievement becomes more rapid as children progress through the Reception Year. The development of number and knowing 'one more' and 'one less' continues and most children will have achieved the expected levels by the end of this school year. This gives children a very good basis for their future learning. Good links with parents and carers are created by sharing weekly mathematics games which have clear instructions about how both parties might benefit.
50. Children understand concepts such as 'heavier and lighter', and use simple positional skills such as 'above', 'below', 'behind'. They understand the order of number, with teachers skilfully linking their learning to everyday experiences such as when queuing at a bus stop or competing at sports' day. The development of 'shapes and measures' is less secure although with assistance, most children recognise two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Children measured the length of a whale on the playground using chalk and a metre rule; one child insisted correctly that they needed to measure using the length of the playground because the width would not be enough.

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

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

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Most children enter school with a varied but often limited range of experiences.
- The wide range of opportunities for learning promotes good progress and achievement.

## **Commentary**

51. Many children enter the Nursery with a poor understanding of the world around them. The teacher and Nursery nurse work hard to develop children's natural curiosity by providing a wide range of experiences and seek every opportunity to promote their understanding. Well-planned visits and visitors introduce the youngest children to people who help us, such as the 'lollipop lady', the fire service, and police and their dogs. 'Home areas' and a 'travel agency' allow children to share their experiences and develop their language skills. Nursery children's knowledge of mini-beasts is very good and their experiences are linked to other areas as when painting spiders' webs, counting ladybirds, building using a range of kits and materials and baking 'cheesy caterpillars'.
52. Reception children have explored 'whales' in literature, and show well-developed emotional skills when sharing their opinions about care for others. Children develop satisfactory skills using the computers and know that their actions can control some machines and toys, whether by using a mouse or controlling radio-controlled cars. Many children develop a wide range of skills as a result of the wealth of experiences offered. Most children will achieve the expected levels by the end of the year, but few will exceed them.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The provision for creative development is **good**.



## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children experience a range of media for picture making and exploring their creative abilities.

## COMMENTARY

53. Children use a range of media such as paint, pastels and crayons when illustrating their experiences. Nursery children choose a mixture of media when creating colourful spiders' webs and they are encouraged to express their feelings when mixing ingredients for 'cheesy caterpillars'. All children sing simple songs from memory but have limited regular experiences in making music. About one in three children showed expressive movement in a dance lesson.
54. In Reception classes, displays show a good range of creative work, including the use of paint and other media. Children's imaginations and spoken language are stimulated through a range of fun activities. For example, packing a suitcase with the right items for a whale-watching trip. Adults demonstrate great skill in encouraging children to participate fully. By the end of the Reception Year, a significant number of children will achieve the expected levels.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Opportunities for outdoor play and the practice of physical skills are satisfactory for Nursery children.
- Opportunities for actions requiring fine muscular control are effectively planned.

## COMMENTARY

55. The provision for Nursery children is satisfactory. They have a well resourced and managed area for outside play which combines a developing awareness of nature, control of wheeled toys and a good development of skills using sand and small equipment. Children use the space enthusiastically but safely, with a growing awareness of others. However, this area is usually accessed as a whole-class activity and does not become part of independently-chosen group activities. All children have a sense of keeping healthy and benefit from the availability of daily fruit and milk.
56. Provision is less accessible for one of the Reception classes. The accommodation does not facilitate ease of use but classes have resources which they use at nominated times. Most of the children will reach the expected level before moving to Year 1. In a dance lesson, they were aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies and showed increased control as the lesson progressed. Most children can use scissors safely, and have good 'motor control' when using pencils or the computer keyboard and mouse. They join in enthusiastically when singing action songs.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Although standards are below average, most pupils achieve well in their listening and reading skills by the end of Year 2.
- There are insufficient opportunities for continuous and extended writing across the curriculum.
- The school's focus on reading is bringing about an improvement in standards.
- The speech and language intervention programme offers well-planned opportunities to improve children's language development.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to answer questions in full sentences or to explain their ideas and opinions fully.

### **COMMENTARY**

57. In the 2003 national tests, standards in all areas of English (reading, writing and speaking and listening) were well below average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Since the last inspection, when the majority of pupils attained average standards in speaking and listening and reading, and below average standards in writing, there has been an overall decline in standards in national tests, although an improvement was seen in 2002. However, standards attained by different year groups of children are affected by the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and by the numbers of pupils joining year groups during the school year. Approximately 33 per cent of the current Year 2 cohort have been identified as having special educational needs and closer to 40 per cent of the previous Year 2 cohort were on the school's special educational needs register.
58. Standards in provisional teacher assessments for 2004 for the current Year 2, show a small improvement compared with those attained in 2003. In reading, where the school has focused some of its whole-school improvement work, a greater number of Year 2 pupils attain average and above average levels compared with 2003. A similar but less apparent improvement can be seen in writing. At the same time, however, there is an increase in the number of pupils working at lower levels in reading and writing than was the case in the previous year and this affects the average score achieved, making it only marginally higher than 2003. Whilst standards remain at below average levels, the school's data shows that the majority of pupils who have been in the school since Reception are at levels either in line with, or better than, those given in long-term predictions made in their Reception Year. Although the school's pupil progress tracking systems are limited by their frequency and do not show ongoing regular teacher assessments, they do show that the majority of pupils are achieving well over time and that some individual pupils make very good progress.
59. The school's effective use of the national guidance for literacy as the basis for teachers' planning and the school's renewed focus on developing pupils' phonics skills have had a positive effect on achievement in reading, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. By the

age of seven, most pupils can read with the teacher during shared text sessions using “big books”. Higher-attaining pupils use expression very well when reading aloud and others are aware of where to place emphasis to improve their expression. There is limited use of literacy in displays around the school and more could be done to promote a literate environment in classrooms. In writing, higher-and average-achieving pupils accurately use basic punctuation such as full stops and capital letters, although few pupils regularly make use of speech marks in their writing.

60. Standards in Years 1 and 2 in speaking and listening are improving. Higher-achieving pupils are able to express their opinions clearly and with confidence. By Year 2, pupils listen well to adults and to each other. Although they respond appropriately to questions, pupils do not get enough encouragement to answer in more than single word answers. The school has maintained the improvements noted in the last inspection and rightly continues to place an emphasis on the development of speech and language and literacy skills.
61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers use the national guidance effectively and pupils are supported well by teachers and support assistants, promoting good achievement for the majority of pupils. The most effective teaching occurs when teachers describe a task clearly, informing pupils of the purpose of the work. For example, in one lesson pupils were asked to write down descriptive words about food which were to be used in another lesson. Activities build effectively on existing knowledge and skills, such as when consolidating pupils’ phonic skills. Pupils who are easily distracted are kept busy through firm but fair discipline as they work on tasks appropriate to their stage of learning. In such lessons, expectations of behaviour and achievements are high and learning proceeds at a brisk pace. Timely reminders are given about persevering during the remaining available time for independent activities and good work is shared as a way of both praising one pupil and inspiring others. Where teaching is less effective, introductions to lessons are too long and pupils’ attention has started to wane before they begin their practical tasks, making learning less effective. In some lessons, the final part of the lesson does not revisit the learning objective but engages pupils in a different language activity which consolidates learning from a different literacy lesson. Whilst consolidation is a valuable learning experience, teachers are missing important opportunities to assess how secure learning has been during their lesson and ascertain how much progress pupils have made.
62. Teachers’ expectations of pupils when writing are insufficiently high. The type of writing book used in different classes and year groups often determines how much teachers expect pupils to write. The number of lines a pupil writes on a page is frequently given too much importance, rather than the quality of the pupils’ writing, whatever the length. Such expectations limit opportunities for the development of children’s imaginative, continuous and extended writing. Marking of work is not always effective in promoting higher standards. The standard of pupils’ presentation of work is too readily accepted when work is marked and there is no insistence on improvement. Greater attention needs to be paid to developing the quality and consistency of children’s handwriting across the whole school in all subjects. This was also noted at the time of the previous inspection.
63. The two subject leaders are enthusiastic about their roles and are pleased with the work done in the school to develop children’s reading. They recognise that a whole-school

focus on interventions and strategies to further develop children's speaking and listening skills is essential. They have identified the need to develop the skills, expertise and repertoire of all teachers across the school in order to further raise standards. In their management roles, they monitor teachers' planning, but have had only limited experience of observing colleagues teaching and therefore are not fully informed about the quality of teaching and its impact on standards and achievement.

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

64. The school recognises that it needs to continue to further explore opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to transfer skills learned during the planned daily literacy lesson to their learning in subjects such as science, history, geography and RE. Across the curriculum, more opportunities are needed for writing for different purposes and audiences. Although the school recognises the need to develop children's vocabulary, there were few lessons where specialised vocabulary was on display and made reference to during a lesson.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Most pupils make good progress because they benefit from good teaching by knowledgeable staff.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- Support assistants are used well to enhance the quality of learning.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics.

## **COMMENTARY**

65. Standards in mathematics for pupils aged seven have improved slightly since the last inspection. Between 1999 and 2003, standards remained below the national average, with a significant rise in test results in 2002. The school attributes this rise to the year group having fewer pupils with special educational needs than is usually the case. In 2003, standards in mathematics were well below those of all schools and of similar schools nationally. However, work seen during this inspection shows that standards of attainment are broadly average for most pupils by the end of Year 2, following the school's focus on mathematics.
66. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards which are just below those expected nationally, with approximately two in three reaching the expected levels. By the end of Year 2, almost four out of five pupils reach the expected level in national testing. Although the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 has improved since the last inspection, this proportion remains below the proportion required to raise standards significantly either when compared with all schools nationally or similar schools. Pupils' records indicate that the good level of teaching and learning has contributed to a good level of achievement over time, with pupils making better progress in numeracy than in literacy.

67. In discussion, pupils say that they enjoy mathematics. They have sound skills in mental mathematics, with pupils in Year 2 choosing from a growing range of strategies to arrive at solutions. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils in Year 2 work with two-and three-digit numbers. Higher-attaining pupils are comfortable working with three-and four digit numbers and have a sound understanding of place value. Other pupils are more tentative about crossing the 100 threshold and use number lines to help them. Most pupils understand simple fractions such as  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$ . They describe the properties of 2D and 3D shapes and create and interpret graphs, for example to illustrate which sweet is the most popular in their class. Younger pupils learn the names and properties of 3D shapes and, with support, they create graphs, for example about hair colour in their class. They reproduce this using a computer. When working with numbers, they identify odd and even numbers, double numbers up to 30 and begin to learn multiples of 3, 4, 5 and 10. They measure with increasing accuracy, using centimetres as the unit of measurement.
68. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. They try their best with the work they are set. Many have targets for improvement with a mathematical focus in their individual education plans. Targets for most pupils are helpful, but for some pupils with more complex needs, these targets require a sharper focus to enable teachers to plan more effectively.
69. Teaching of mathematics is good overall. Classroom assistants are used effectively to improve the quality of learning for pupils who require more support. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have worked hard to improve pupils' mathematical reasoning and understanding; most pupils now try to explain their methods of calculation. Relationships in all classes are strong and teachers value the contributions offered by pupils. Pupils feel secure and confident when explaining how they have reached their answers. There is a shared enthusiasm for mathematics which contributes to pupils good attitudes. There is, however, some variation in the pace of work and marking is inconsistent in quality and detail.
70. Mathematics has been managed soundly, with areas identified for development. The teachers' good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped planning and teaching to enable pupils to move forward in measured steps. There are satisfactory assessment procedures which track progress as pupils progress through the school. Marking, although accurate, does not inform pupils what they have achieved, nor does it indicate what pupils might do next to get better. Computer technology is used satisfactorily to support learning although there was little evidence of the gathering and interpretation of data.

## **MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

71. The use of mathematical skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. Careful measurements are made and charts and tables are used to record investigations in science; co-ordinates are used when looking at maps in geography, and in history, timelines are constructed to illustrate the passage of time.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards in science are not high enough, even though they are affected by the pupils speaking, listening and writing skills.
- Most Year 2 pupils achieve well and make good progress over time, but work for Year 2 pupils in mixed-age classes sometimes lacks challenge.
- More emphasis needs to be placed on the investigative strand of science.
- Pupils sometimes find it difficult to find the words to express what they have learned in science.
- Pupils do not make sufficient use of the full range of their skills in writing to record their work in science.

## COMMENTARY

72. In 2003 assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, standards in science were below the national average, with no pupils attaining at the higher Level 3. When compared with similar schools, standards in science were above average at the expected Level 2, but well below at the higher Level 3. The full range of inspection evidence confirms that standards are below average at the end of Year 2, because there are too few pupils achieving above the expected Level 2.
73. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about their bodies and learn about the lifecycles of frogs and butterflies. They sort materials according to their qualities and consider how this affects their use. They investigate force through pushes and pulls. In a Year 1 and 2 class, this was effectively related to pupils' experiences of playing on roundabouts and slides. Year 2 pupils look closely at living things, identifying similarities and differences. They identify similarities and differences between flowering plants, measuring the height carefully and identifying differences in petals and pollen. Some Year 2 pupils learn how sound travels and use scientific vocabulary such as 'vibration' appropriately.
74. Achievement is good for most pupils in Year 2 and satisfactory for pupils in Year 1. In Year 2, higher-achieving pupils make better progress than other pupils because teachers expect more of them and encourage them to record their work using sentences and identifying learning in investigative science, such as their understanding of fair tests. More could be expected of other pupils in Year 2 and of pupils in Year 1. Recorded work for these pupils shows that too much work consists of labelled drawings of their observations or findings. This limits pupils' opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of their scientific investigations and to apply knowledge and skills from their learning in literacy lessons. A small amount of work was seen which indicated that pupils make satisfactory use of mathematics and ICT to support their scientific learning, such as when taking measurements and recording them as a bar graph.
75. Teaching and learning in the two lessons observed were satisfactory. Teachers make good use of scientific vocabulary, but pupils with less well-developed speaking skills sometimes find it difficult to express their understanding and thoughts about science clearly. Teaching of scientific investigation was observed, but pupils were not sufficiently clear about the purpose of the work that they were doing, therefore progress was only satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the practical work they do in science. They work hard, co-

operating and sharing equipment effectively. Older pupils organise themselves so that they can complete the tasks set within the allotted time.

76. Work seen indicates that the science curriculum receives satisfactory coverage. Pupils show strengths in learning about physical processes, but their learning in investigative and experimental science is less secure. Where there are mixed-age classes, new planning has recently been introduced to assist with provision of a more appropriate science curriculum for different age groups. This has resulted in some pupils repeating certain science topics. It is a situation which the school is working to resolve. Leadership and management of science by the recently-appointed co-ordinator are sound.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils experience an appropriate range of programs.
- The school has an ongoing development plan for the continued improvement of ICT.
- Control technology is well developed.

### **COMMENTARY**

77. Standards in ICT at the end of Year 2 are as expected nationally. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils know that computers only respond when given instructions and that they can control a computer using a keyboard or a mouse, which they demonstrate appropriately. The pupils can save and print work independently. In the one ICT lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. Pupils were taught to use a word bank in order to construct and improve sentences. Work was appropriately matched to pupils' differing levels of achievement and the teacher gave effective support to individuals. A minority of pupils have access to a computer at home.
78. Across the school, computer skills are used satisfactorily to support learning, such as when pupils word-process poems and reports of visits. Pupils learn to use data-handling programs when they collect information and then display it graphically during mathematics lessons. Pupils use an art program competently and use the fill, spray and brush tools effectively. Pupils have good experience of control technology. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 estimated distance confidently before entering instructions into a programmable floor turtle to make it travel and turn, following a specified route. They estimated and predicted with increasing accuracy.
79. The management of the subject is sound, following a period when the subject lacked a co-ordinator. Recently, policies, equipment and the technical aspects of how to teach the subject have all been organised. ICT has become a priority area for development within the school. Developing links to learning in other subjects is a main target for improvement. The school is planning links with the neighbouring technical college to help to broaden the range of experiences available.

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

80. During the inspection, computers were seen being used to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils compose poems using a word processing package; data-handling is used in mathematics to record information such as which pets are the most popular. Pupils in Year 2 recorded the results of a science investigation into how well materials stretched and then analysed the results. In its development plan, the school recognises that there is potential for making more use of ICT across the curriculum.

## **HUMANITIES**

In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography. One geography lesson was seen. It is not possible, therefore, to form an overall judgement about provision in either subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

81. By the end of Year 2, standards in geography are broadly in line with those seen nationally. National guidelines ensure that there is a secure coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils explore the immediate area, with older pupils investigating the facilities of the town centre and considering important buildings, such as a church. Planning indicates that pupils contrast and compare Stanley with a coastal area and investigate physical and human differences. Pupils are required to express likes and dislikes and share ideas as to how the environment might be improved. Younger pupils plan their routes to school and use simple keys on their maps. In the one lesson observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was good. Pupils were preparing for a visit to a lighthouse by identifying physical differences between Stanley and a coastal area. In an effective lesson in which they studied photographs, pupils recognised physical differences between the coastal landscape and the area around their school. In discussions, pupils were able to identify which features were man-made and which were natural. Pupils showed a growing understanding of how people can alter an area's landscape.

## **HISTORY**

82. By the end of Year 2, standards in history are broadly in line with those seen nationally. Pupils learn about events in history, such as the Great Fire of London and find about famous people such as Samuel Pepys and Florence Nightingale. They investigate different historical sources of evidence, such as the diaries of Samuel Pepys, photographs of the past and historical artefacts. Pupils observe how household objects, such as irons, have changed and order pictures of these objects from the oldest to the most recent. Teachers make sparing use of worksheets as a way of recording pupils' work, but there is an over-reliance on labelled drawings which do not allow pupils to apply their literacy skills effectively. The subject is well led by a well-informed co-ordinator. She has a thorough grasp of standards as a result of monitoring planning and reviewing pupils' work. The subject is well resourced and the curriculum is enriched by visits to locations such as Cragside House.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.



## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teaching and learning are effectively supported by a good scheme of work that closely follows the locally-agreed syllabus.
- The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.

## **COMMENTARY**

83. Only one lesson in religious education was observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. As in the previous inspection, the school continues to have a good scheme of work in place. This has been appropriately reviewed by the subject co-ordinator to incorporate changes made to the locally-agreed syllabus. It enables teachers to plan effectively for religious education and ensures that pupils achieve well and so meet the expected standards in religious education by the end of Year 2. Supported by the co-ordinator, teachers plan to enable pupils to learn about festivals, special people and stories associated with Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism. Year 2 pupils talk about Buddhist Temples and listen well to a teacher telling the story of the Monkey King. They talk about the Jewish festival of Passover and the Seder meal, relating this to special times when they celebrate with their own families.
84. From discussion with the co-ordinator and analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning made available during the inspection, it is evident that the subject is well led and managed. The local vicar visits the school regularly to talk to the children in assembly time and welcomes visits by the children to the church. Practical experiences such as visits to the local church and the opportunity to handle real items associated with religions and worship are recognised as contributing to pupils' growing understanding of the beliefs and values of different faiths.

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

It is not possible to make firm judgements about provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. One lesson was seen in music; in another lesson, pupils' experiences in art and design and design and technology were combined with some work in ICT. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, looked at teachers' planning, looked at samples of pupils' work and had discussions with pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

85. Observations of work on display in the school during the inspection and the useful portfolio of photographic evidence compiled by the enthusiastic and hardworking co-ordinator demonstrate how the school is planning a sound range of opportunities for children to develop their skills. As a result of this, by Year 2, pupils are attaining at standards similar to those found nationally.
86. The school is committed to providing increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently and evidence shows some improvement since the last inspection. The school makes effective use of visiting artists to motivate, enthuse and introduce new creative skills to children and staff. As the school makes further developments to the curriculum in Key Stage 1, the good work done in the Foundation Stage can be built upon

to greater effect. Displays in Year 1 and 2, in which some adult prepared templates are used and where the work of a whole class is sometimes similar, indicates that children are not yet able to fully develop skills learned previously in order to develop their individual creative skills as effectively as possible.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

87. Evidence gained from discussions with current and previous subject co-ordinators, observations of work displayed in the school and discussions with pupils indicates that pupils attain standards which are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Year 2.
88. Work seen shows that teachers are planning an increasing range of opportunities for children to design and evaluate articles. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have designed and made pizzas and cakes, they have developed their weaving skills, made puppets and are learning how to use a range of stitches to make a bookmark. Evidence of 'made' articles indicates that standards in the 'making' aspect are satisfactory. Evaluative work is less well represented than other parts of the design process.
89. The relatively new subject co-ordinator is aware of her own professional development needs in order to be able to drive the subject forward and she recognises that the subject continues to be at an early stage of development. Despite the lack of suitable systems in place in the school for checking on coverage of the curriculum across the school and for retaining and assessing work, the co-ordinator's enthusiasm, combined with the school's commitment to further develop cross-curricular links to develop design and technology skills in a creative and imaginative way, indicates that the subject has good capacity to move forward. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

90. In music, one lesson was seen, together with a whole-school singing session. Pupils enjoy musical activities. They sing rhythmically and with enthusiasm. When older pupils gave a rhythmic performance of a two-part rap, younger pupils listened attentively and gave spontaneous applause. When learning a new song, pupils listen carefully and make a satisfactory attempt at learning a new melody.
91. Teachers plan their music lessons with the support of a recently-introduced commercial scheme, thus ensuring that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. Pupils' recent musical experiences have been supplemented with visits from theatre groups and African drummers. Pupils enjoy performing before an audience at events such as Harvest Festival and Christmas. The music co-ordinator is very new to her post. She has quickly assessed the provision in school and determined what needs to be improved. The quantity and quality of resources are satisfactory, although some percussion instruments will need to be replaced soon.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

92. No physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on provision. Observations of pupils playing in the playground show that they enjoy being active. They play co-operatively, using the good

range of new play equipment. They have satisfactory skills when skipping, catching, throwing and balancing. Teaching guidelines, based on national recommendations, ensure that pupils are involved in a satisfactory range of physical activities. Resources are good and the indoor and outdoor accommodation is suitable for most physical activity. Although there is no suitable grassed area for team games, the school is able to make use of the field belonging to the neighbouring junior school. The subject is soundly led by a co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The subject is strongly led by a well-informed co-ordinator.
- Class discussions are used effectively to explore difficult and sensitive issues.

## **COMMENTARY**

93. Three lessons were seen in personal, social and health education. Displays, teachers' planning, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils' attitudes and behaviour around the school, show that there is good coverage of this area of work. The subject is given a high profile within the school as it is regarded as being important in helping pupils to develop good attitudes towards learning and towards one another.
94. Circle Time is included in class timetables and offers an opportunity for every pupil to express their opinions and feelings. The school is piloting a programme for PSHE which deals with many of the issues which face the pupils. For example, pupils learn about different feelings and learn that it is acceptable to feel angry. They are taught strategies for expressing and dealing with such emotions. They learn to deal with change in their own lives and empathise with others who might be facing change. Links are made with work in religious education and, in this way, pupils' spiritual development is enhanced and pupils achieve well. The school also works hard to promote health education and has recently been awarded the Healthy School Standard in recognition of this. Efforts are made to involve parents. Recent changes to the policy and provision of sex and relationships education included a questionnaire to gauge parents' opinions about the proposed changes.
95. Teaching in the lessons seen was good and promoted good levels of participation by pupils. Practical lessons such as road safety are enjoyed by pupils and staff. The deputy headteacher co-ordinates the work in PSHE as part of her pastoral role. She is well informed about the subject and knows the school and its pupils well. Her subject leadership is strong, because she firmly believes that this subject is vital to the success of the pupils in school and in later life.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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