

INSPECTION REPORT

WEARHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wearhead, Bishop Auckland

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114065

Headteacher: Mr D Farms

Lead inspector: Mrs E Linley

Dates of inspection: 14th – 15th June 2004

Inspection number: 263631

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 35

School address: Bents Lane
Wearhead
Bishop Auckland
County Durham
Postcode: DL13 1BN

Telephone number: 01388 537265
Fax number: N/A

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs P Rowe
governors:

Date of previous November 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wearhead Primary School is situated in the village of Wearhead in the Pennine Dales area of North West Durham. The school serves the rural communities of Weardale and is characterised by predominantly privately-owned properties. The socio economic circumstances of the school are mixed and pupils' attainment on entry to the school is currently below average overall. When pupils enter the reception class during the year in which they are five years of age, most children have received some pre-school experience. However, there is a variance in attainment on entry to school and this reflects the nature of a very small school and the differences between year groups of pupils. There are 35 pupils on roll and no pupils are from minority ethnic and cultural groups or are at an early stage of English language acquisition. No pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is well below the national average. There are 4 pupils on the register of special educational needs, none of whom have a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. Wearhead Primary School was awarded school achievement awards in 2000, 2001 and 2002. It achieved the prestigious Artsmark Gold in 2002 and was awarded the 'Activemark' in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2728 1	Mrs E Linley	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Music
			Physical education
9652	Mr C Herbert	Lay inspector	
2432 6	Mrs Fitzpatrick M	Team inspector	English
			Religious education
			History
			Geography
2918 8	Mrs G Ulyatt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Wearhead Primary School is an effective and inclusive school. As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well. The good curriculum that is provided for pupils is enriched with an excellent range of opportunities. Good leadership is provided by the headteacher and by key staff. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The ethos of the school is very good and is underpinned by very good relationships.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall, however, limited access to stored outdoor play equipment is having a detrimental effect on outdoor provision.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics.
- The development of pupils' skills in writing across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- Strategic planning and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided is not sufficiently rigorous to support school improvement effectively.
- The quality of care, welfare, health and safety is very good.
- Very good links with the community are in place and parents are very supportive of the school.

The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. Many of the good features judged at that time have been maintained. The school has also developed very well in other aspects. It has been very actively involved in the 'Creative Partnerships'. The school has been awarded the prestigious 'Artsmark Gold' and 'Activemark' since that time and have received three school achievement awards. However, progress has been limited in respect to the role of the governors and senior staff in strategic planning and in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Caution must be taken when interpreting national test results. Given the very small cohorts in year groups, a slight variation can have a very significant impact on the overall outcome. The 2003 national tests for 11 year olds showed that the standard achieved in English was well above average. In mathematics it was very low in comparison with the national average and standards were average in science. In comparison with similar schools, and in relation to pupils' prior attainment, standards were the same. The school's trend of improvement for all subjects over the last four years has been broadly in line with the national trend. The relative achievement of boys and girls showed that girls outperformed boys in all subjects. However, inspection evidence shows that no significant difference exists between the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children start school in the reception class with levels of attainment that are very varied. Currently it is below what might be expected, but this is not always the case and so reflects the nature of a very small school. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children to achieve well and standards by the end of reception are at the expected level in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. In personal, social and emotional development they are above what is normally expected. All pupils achieve well over time. Throughout school standards achieved in speaking and listening and reading are above average, in writing they are average. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics; standards in Year 2 are above average and they are well above average in Year 6. Standards in science are average in the infant and junior classes. Standards achieved meet expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) and in religious education throughout the school. Insufficient evidence was available during the time of the inspection to make secure judgements on standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall. The ethos of the school is very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good and very good relationships are promoted through the school. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they work together very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good and is supported very well by very good opportunities that exist for pupils to discuss their learning. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Ongoing assessment is good as it involves effective discussion during lessons about what has been learnt. However, the use of assessment does not consistently meet pupils' needs to develop their writing skills effectively across the curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall, however, access to stored resources for physical activity is limited and opportunities are missed for children to use the wheeled apparatus. The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched with an excellent range of learning opportunities. Many are associated with the creative arts and sport and these contribute very well to pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. A very high level of care is provided by all staff for pupils' emotional and physical needs. Very good information is provided for parents who are equally very supportive of the school. These positive links are extended to the school's very good partnership with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are good and the transfer arrangements in place for pupils transferring to secondary education are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher's leadership is good and he has high aspirations for the future of the school. He is well supported by his staff who provide good leadership for the creative arts and the Foundation Stage. The overall management of the school is satisfactory. The role of senior staff and governors in strategic planning and in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education is not sufficiently rigorous. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors show a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors, staff and all adults who work in the school are committed to inclusion and this underpins the school's very good ethos.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. It is valued as a significant part of their community. They are appreciative of the very good information that they receive about school and about their

children's progress. Pupils very much like attending school. They enjoy the many opportunities that they have to experience different things through the excellent enrichment of the curriculum.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing across the curriculum.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education and subsequent action planning for school improvement.
- Improve access to outdoor resources for physical activity in the Foundation Stage in order to support the development of outdoor provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards achieved are good overall. Children make a good start in reception (the Foundation Stage) and they continue to achieve well as they move through the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception achieve very well in their personal and social development.
- Standards are above average in speaking and listening and reading.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and standards achieved are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Standards in writing are satisfactory overall, but they are not as high as they could be.

Commentary

1 Children make a good start to school in the reception class and achieve well as a result of good teaching and the good quality provision that is in place for their needs. Children achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because children are given good opportunities to work together and to work independently. They develop confidence and so achieve standards in this area of learning that are higher than might be expected.

2 The school places great emphasis on the importance of discussion and listening to each other and this was a feature of most lessons. As a result, in English pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils also attain above average standards in reading and average standards in writing. Standards in writing are not as high as they might be and there are insufficient opportunities available for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Standards achieved in English overall, however, are similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection.

3 In mathematics, pupils achieve very well owing to the high quality teaching throughout school. As a result, pupils in Year 2 achieve above average standards and in the current Year 6, they are well above average. Again, this achievement represents an improvement since the last inspection. Inspection evidence also shows an improvement on the standards achieved in the 2003 national test results, which were very low. However, inconsistency in the teaching of mathematics owing to circumstances beyond the school's control, had a significant impact on teaching and learning at that time and as a result, on pupils' achievement.

4 In science and ICT average standards overall have been maintained since the last inspection. Similarly, in religious education, pupils achieve in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Insufficient evidence was available during the time of the inspection to make secure judgements on standards in history, geography, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. However, the school places great importance on the creative arts and this was demonstrated in the high quality of pupils' art and creative work that was displayed in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are very good overall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attendance is very good and well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem.
- Relationships throughout school are very good.
- The creative arts contribute well to pupils' cultural awareness.

Commentary

5 Pupils positive attitudes to school life helps contribute well to their personal development. From a young age children are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to their work, to value everyone's contribution and to be aware of their actions on others. Pupils are willing to take responsibility for tasks when asked to do so. They are given responsibility in the classroom and at playtimes that help them develop mature and caring attitudes. Paired reading activities are another way in which older pupils have the opportunity to look after younger pupils. Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem and this is further supported by the excellent opportunities that all pupils have to express themselves through the creative arts.

6 Pupils who have special educational needs are encouraged to contribute in all lessons and as a result they, like all pupils, are motivated and their self-esteem is increased. As a result, pupils respond positively, their concentration is improved and they achieve well.

7 The school expects high standards of behaviour and pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. This is valued by parents who agree that behaviour is very good and that the school deals quickly and effectively with any behaviour that is inappropriate.

8 Pupils of different ages work and play together very well. This very good collaborative working is enhanced by the very good relationships that exist throughout school. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop their social skills through an excellent range of extra curricular activities. At all times pupils are encouraged to collaborate and listen to each other and this was seen on many occasions in lessons when pupils worked to support each other very well.

9 The school develops pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development very well overall. Strengths are evident in the pupils' understanding of right from wrong and how they show care and consideration for others. They also develop a very good cultural awareness that is particularly enhanced through opportunities to develop their creative skills, for example in the study of African masks.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.8%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	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.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

No of pupils on roll
35

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good overall. Strengths include teaching and learning, partnerships with parents and the community, the curriculum provided and its enrichment which is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall, assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations for pupils to concentrate and behave very well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Teachers have effective and regular dialogue with pupils in lessons about how to improve their work; however, marking is minimal and does not extend this positive support.
- Assessment is not consistently used to inform planning of lessons so that tasks challenge all pupils, particularly in the development of writing skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	1	13	1	0	0	0

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

10 Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, it is rare for pupils to misbehave in lessons. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, pupils respond very well and as a result, the school provides a positive environment for learning. Parents are appreciative of the good quality of teaching that supports their children's learning.

11 Pupils' self esteem and confidence are high because teachers always praise pupils for their efforts. Similarly the school's involvement in the creative arts extends pupils' confidence and enhances their learning across the curriculum. For example, in an excellent drama and dance lesson, junior pupils explored the language used in prose from 'The Lady of Shalott'. Through the teacher's very effective planning for the lesson, pupils explored the sounds and actions of the prose through dance accompanied by their own music. The lesson had very good pace and as a result, pupils had time to explore, plan and perform their devised pieces, working very well in co-operation with each other. Their learning and achievement was very good and pupils' high self-esteem and confidence was evident throughout the lesson.

12 The good teaching judged at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and teachers' subject knowledge is once again identified as a strength. An example of this is the very good subject knowledge of the headteacher in mathematics, and this expertise is greatly appreciated by parents. The headteacher's focussed teaching of mathematics in the junior class helps pupils' learning and enables them to achieve very well.

13 Assessment is satisfactory overall. The school has an appropriate system in place to collate data about pupils' progress. An analysis of statutory and non-statutory tests is also carried out to provide valuable information on how teaching of specific curriculum areas can be improved if required. A good feature of ongoing assessment is the effective dialogue that occurs between teachers and pupils to help them to understand how best to improve their work. However, scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates that overall, teachers' marking is minimal. It does not consistently provide evaluative comments in order to remind pupils of these important conversations about how to improve the quality of their work. Also, the information gathered from assessments is not used consistently to ensure that teachers plan work to challenge all pupils to achieve their best, particularly in writing. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the use of assessment in planning as a priority for development.

The curriculum

14 The school is successful in providing a good curriculum that is enriched by an excellent range of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning both academically and socially. The good accommodation and satisfactory resources are used effectively to meet pupils' needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall, however, storage and access of outdoor play equipment is having a negative effect on outdoor provision.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across the curriculum are limited.
- The creative arts and sporting activities provide excellent opportunities to enrich the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- Resources for ICT are limited and this has an effect on pupils' achievement in the junior class.

Commentary

15 The curriculum is broad and balanced and is successful in providing pupils with rich learning opportunities throughout the school. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides effectively for the teaching of sex education and drugs awareness through a planned programme for personal, social and health education.

16 The curriculum in the reception class (the Foundation Stage) benefits from a good range of learning opportunities overall that develops children's skills across the areas of learning well. However, access to large play equipment is limited because of the location of the store and its proximity to the outdoor area and this has a negative impact on outdoor provision. Children make a good start to their school life in the reception class and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education as they move through the school. Their transfer to secondary education is smooth and very effective; this is because of the very good partnerships that exist between the schools involved.

17 Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory; the good curriculum has been maintained, as has the excellent range of extra curricular activities that are available for pupils. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across the curriculum, however, are limited. This is mainly owing to the heavy reliance on the completion of work sheets to support learning in most subjects, and, as a result, opportunities to develop writing skills are limited or lost.

18 The school recognises that all its pupils need to have interesting and stimulating experiences in order to maintain their motivation and this is achieved through the school's approach to enriching the curriculum. An excellent range of creative arts and sporting activities, many school visits and visitors to school contribute effectively to pupils' learning and their personal development. The school's commitment to the arts and sport is demonstrated by their involvement in the 'creative arts partnerships' and partnership with 'Wear Valley Sports Action'. Both have a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and the school has been successful in being awarded the 'Artsmark Gold' and 'Activemark'.

19 There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities, a factor that parents recognise and greatly appreciate. All pupils are valued and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school actively enhances provision by its very good contacts with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively.

20 There are sufficient qualified teaching and support staff to meet the needs of pupils and the match of teachers to the curriculum is good with specialist knowledge in the creative arts and mathematics being used well. The school accommodation is good and resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, the school does not have sufficient resources to enable the effective delivery of the ICT curriculum, such as sensory and

modelling equipment; as a result, pupils in the junior class do not achieve as well as they might in ICT.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very high level of care for the emotional and physical needs of its pupils. The provision of support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory but is enhanced by the good induction arrangements into school. School seeks and acts on pupils' views effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good procedures to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are in place.
- The very high level of care provided is supported by the very good relationships that exist in school.
- Pupils are confident about approaching adults if they have any concerns.
- Good support is provided for pupils who have special educational needs.

Commentary

21 The very effective procedures that are in place for health, safety and child protection ensure that the school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils can learn happily together. Children are carefully introduced to the school in the reception class and are effectively helped to settle into the daily routines of the school. Similarly there are effective arrangements made as pupils move into the next class. Parents comment positively on the family atmosphere of the school that contributes well to their children feeling safe and secure.

22 Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and this has a positive impact on the attitudes to learning. Pupils feel confident that adults will listen to their concerns and worries. They know that action will be taken to help them and this has a positive impact on their sense of security and well-being in school. The school listens to pupils' ideas during *Circle and Bubble* times and makes use of a suggestion box so that pupils can raise topics for discussion.

23 Pupils' personal development is monitored informally through the staff's knowledge of the pupils in the school and their families. The school values pupils' achievement out of school and pupils are awarded certificates during assemblies for such achievements in, for example, sporting activities.

24 The care and guidance of pupils who have special educational needs is good because of the effective partnership that school has with a range of external agencies. In this way effective provision is in place for pupils with behavioural and speech and language difficulties.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

A good partnership has been established with parents and they are very supportive of the school. Very strong links have been formed with the community and effective links have been established with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information to parents is very good.
- Pupils share their achievements with the community and this is appreciated by parents.
- Very good links are established with the feeder high school to ensure that pupils in Year 6 experience a smooth transition into their secondary education.

Commentary

25 Parents have very positive views of the school. They particularly appreciate the very good information that they receive. Examples parents give of high quality information are school newsletters, homework books and their children's annual reports that are personalised and informative. Information for and liaison with parents of pupils who have special

educational needs is good. There are also good arrangements in place to deal effectively with any concerns that parents may have. Parents feel that the small size of the school helps them to work very well together and to enable them to support their children's learning well.

26 The school has established very strong links with the community and parents particularly appreciate this partnership. Pupils' art work has been displayed in the village hall so that all community members can enjoy the quality of the work that has been produced. In addition pupils are able to share their drama and dance performances with the wider community in North East England and have been invited to celebrate their achievements at educational conferences in both Leeds and London.

27 Links with local school and colleges are good; they are particularly good with the feeder secondary school. For example, pupils have the opportunity to spend up to a week at their next school before they officially transfer. Effective liaison is in place between the staff at the schools and this helps pupils transfer into Year 7. Similarly, to support children's effective induction into the reception class, good links have been established with nursery providers to ensure that children's needs are met as they start school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good and he is supported well by his key staff in their leadership, which is also good. The management of the school is satisfactory and overall the school deals satisfactorily with any identified aids and barriers to achievement. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school that are shared by everyone associated with it.
- School development planning and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous to support the school's action to raise standards.
- The creative arts provide an aid to pupils' overall achievement.
- The Foundation Stage is led and managed well.
- The governors' role in managing the quality of education is under developed.
- Financial management is good.

Commentary

28 The headteacher provides good leadership. In his leadership he is ably supported by the teaching staff who themselves have important leadership roles in school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school. The threat of closure has brought significant pressure on the leadership and management of the school, however, the headteacher's high aspirations for the school and pupils, are shared by staff, governors, parents and the community alike.

29 Management of the school is satisfactory. Pressure of closure plus two recent long term absences by the headteacher owing to unforeseen circumstances, has meant that improvement since the last inspection has not been as rapid as the school would have liked. For example, school development planning does not identify the school's priorities in sufficient detail to support the school in its planned action to systematically raise standards, for example, in writing. Similarly, although procedures for performance management are in place and active, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is still carried out on an informal

basis. The school is aware, however, of the need to motivate and challenge pupils' interest and to extend pupils' experiences beyond their small community. In this, they are very successful and the school's partnership with the 'creative arts', which is managed very well, contributes significantly as an aid to pupils' overall achievement. In addition, management of the Foundation Stage is good and so children make a good start to their school life. Similarly, provision for special educational needs is managed effectively.

30 The governing body works hard to provide the support that the school needs and has identified governors with specific responsibilities, for example, health and safety. In terms of governance, improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Governors can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school satisfactorily. They have considered and agreed the school's Race Relations policy and monitor its implementation through their effective dialogue with the headteacher and staff. In terms of monitoring and evaluating the quality of education that the school provides, however, little progress has been made and the governors are aware that they need training and support in order to improve their expertise in this context.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	149,400.65	Balance from previous year	2549.35
Total expenditure	139,141	Balance carried forward to the next year	12,809
Expenditure per pupil	3975		

31 Financial planning and monitoring are good and are supported well by day to day administration. The constraints of the budget, however, have presented difficulties for the school and have provided potential barriers to achievement, for example, in the provision of resources for ICT. Over time the school has increased the number of computers for use in school and has plans in place to remedy the situation in respect to the additional purchases required. Financial controls are applied rigorously and this has meant that difficult decisions have had to be made, for example, by reducing the number of support staff in the school. The headteacher and governors have a good understanding of the principles of best value. All monies, including money that is received through, for example, the 'Creative arts' partnership, are carefully spent. Taking into consideration the cost of a small school, pupils' good achievement and the quality of education provided, the school is judged to provide satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32 Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Reception children are taught in a class alongside pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and they benefit from working and playing alongside older pupils. Attainment on entry to the reception class is just below what might be expected nationally and a minority of children have limited experiences and immature speaking and listening skills. Children achieve well and standards by the end of reception are at the expected level in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. In personal, social and emotional development they are above what is normally expected. Teaching is good overall and children benefit from close interaction in a small group situation supported by the class assistant. The curriculum is well planned and good links are made between the learning objectives for Foundation Stage children and pupils in Year 1. This ensures that reception children have equal opportunities in the mixed age class. Activities from which children can choose are provided to enhance knowledge and understanding. There are plenty of learning opportunities indoors and there is easy access from the classroom to the secure outdoor area. The outdoor curriculum is less well developed. The school has adequate outdoor resources for physical activity, but these are stored in an inaccessible location which makes transportation difficult. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall. The team work well together and are aware of the need to develop outdoor provision so that children's learning is further enhanced.

33 Insufficient evidence was available to make a judgement on provision in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development and so these areas of learning have been sampled.

34 Topics about the seaside are planned to extend children's **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Children learn about coastal areas and its many features by contributing to large class friezes. They handle shells and driftwood. *Barnaby Bear* goes on many visits and sends postcards to children. In this way they find out about countries far, far away. The school is in a rural setting so many children have first hand experiences of plant and animal worlds. Many see lambs born each year. In school, children watch tadpoles turning into frogs; they measure their seedlings and look at the roots through magnifying glasses. However the outdoor area is not used enough to consolidate children's understanding. Children learn about rough and smooth materials and know how to 'build a house' by placing doors and windows in the correct position. They work with Year 1 pupils learning to cut and join materials to make a simple playground. Children use the computer and manage to *click and drag* the mouse. They learn about people from different cultures when visitors from China show children how to paint onto rice paper. Children are helped to remember past events in their lives by making a personal book with pictures and illustrations. They learn about different religious events as they occur through the year.

35 In **physical development** children have regular opportunities to play outdoors each day with older pupils. Resources are varied and plentiful and pupils throughout the school include reception children in their play. They have lessons with older pupils and are well challenged, for example they learn to jump with both feet together. Fine finger skills are well developed through focused activities which support eye-to-hand co-ordination. Photographs show children learn to climb and balance along beams. However, owing to the constraints of access to storage, there are missed opportunities for children to use the wheeled apparatus on a regular basis.

36 In **creative development** children paint and know how to mix colours. They paint portraits and draw vegetables from direct observation. They choose from a use a variety of media, including pencils, charcoal and pastels. They make sculptures with sand and shells and use clay to make small bowls. They play in role and enjoy singing a range of songs and rhymes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well motivated because staff interaction is good.
- Children play well and learn together because adults are good, caring role models.
- Children are well behaved, confident and relaxed because relationships at all levels are good.

Commentary

37 Staff work closely with children in very small groups encouraging them and praising their efforts. In this positive environment children achieve well and reach standards above the expected level. Staff plan a range of interesting activities so children are motivated to learn. They show good concentration skills when drawing vegetables from direct observation because staff remain close to them and encourage them. They show pride in their drawings and eagerly show them to adults. Children work well together taking turns to answer questions. They play amicably together in the playground and know they have to listen to the opinions of others during group discussions. They care for their seedlings and know they need to be watered. Staff adopt a clear consistent approach in all they do so children feel safe and secure. Staff expect good behaviour and children are clear about boundaries because staff positively praise children who are following the class rules well. They know when they have to sit still and listen and when they can talk and move about the room. Older pupils in the infant class are good role models for reception children and help the youngest children to feel part of the school community. They develop independence and learn to make sensible choices about the resources they want to use. Children know they are valued at school and the 'Special People Book' features each child and explains their qualities. This helps children develop good levels of self-esteem and confidence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff offer very good opportunities for children to express their ideas.
- Children learn well because staff adopt a systematic approach to teaching basic reading and spelling.
- There are not enough opportunities for writing through play.

Commentary

38 Children are taught to be good listeners and this has a significant impact on their learning. Teaching is good and children achieve well especially in their speaking and listening skills. This is because staff give children many opportunities to talk about their learning in small groups. They learn the meanings of many new words, including *texture*, *sketching* and *shading*; they have opportunities to act out in role. The good, focused and systematic teaching has resulted in most children knowing letter sounds and basic words. All enjoy books, handle them correctly and some are already good readers, attempting unknown words with confidence and accuracy. Children achieve well in their handwriting because they are taught to

form letters correctly. Staff use a range of strategies to match children's different learning styles so all achieve well. Some children write well and use the good skills they have acquired in terms of letter formation and knowledge of sounds. However there are too few opportunities for children to write through purposeful play and practise their skills spontaneously.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work closely with children and provide activities that have a clear purpose.
- Children achieve well because staff build systematically on what each child understands and can do.

Commentary

39 Teaching is good and children achieve well. Staff are well focused on what they want each child to learn. In lessons staff work with reception children in a small group so each child is well supported. Resources, such as real coins, are used well when teaching children about money. Staff role model well for children acting out how to buy and sell goods in the *shop*. This secures children's understanding of how to count money and identify coins, so learning is both purposeful and fun. Children are well influenced and challenged when listening to the bigger numbers used by older pupils in the class. Staff know children well and pitch the work to match each level of ability. This means all make good progress. Their workbooks show they are learning to count objects up to ten and record the number accurately. Above average children count and record to 20. Children are learning simple calculation and some count two sets of objects and record the total. They are learning simple subtraction. Children learn the names of different flat shapes and solid shapes. They make regular repeating patterns, they sort coins and clearly understand how to grade pieces of paper by size.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are promoted well and this helps pupils to achieve well and attain above expected levels for their age.
- Pupils achieve standards that are above average in reading.
- Spelling strategies are taught well in Years 1 and 2.
- Insufficient use is made of information gathered from assessments to plan tasks that will develop pupils' skills in writing.
- The teaching of drama is of a high quality.
- The use of writing in other subjects is underdeveloped and so pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Commentary

40 Standards in speaking and listening are above average across the school and pupils' good achievement is as a result of the good emphasis teachers place on discussion in all lessons. In the infant and junior classes, pupils use talk well to answer and pose questions as well as to develop their own and other's ideas. Pupils of all abilities and attainment are confident speakers who can follow the ideas of others and listen closely for good periods of time. Most pupils in all age groups read above the expected level for their age. Reading skills are well taught from the time children join the school. Good partnerships with parents who support their children's learning at home means

that reading skills are well consolidated with regular practice. As they move through the school pupils are given increasing opportunities to use their reading skills independently. For example, in Years 3 to 6, pupils' understanding of what they read is well promoted through discussion. In the lesson seen, pupils showed good recall of what they had read the day before in response to well directed questions from the class teacher.

41 Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2 there is good emphasis on spelling strategies linked with the teaching of reading and on developing handwriting skills. These make a positive contribution to pupils' developing skills by giving them the support they need to work independently and to improve their work. Throughout the school, however, assessment of pupils' writing skills is not used sufficiently well to then plan activities that will develop pupils' writing for a wide range of purposes. Similarly whilst discussion during lessons helps pupils to understand how can they improve, marking does not then support pupils' understanding of what they should do to improve.

42 The use of drama contributes well to the excellent enrichment of the curriculum. In Years 3 to 6, drama is well used to promote pupils' confidence and to give a focus for discussion. Teaching here is of an exceptionally high quality and has a strong impact on the pace of learning for pupils in this context.

43 The subject is managed satisfactorily overall by each of the two teachers and all monitoring and sharing of practice is informal. However, there are currently no planned strategies for raising standards in writing. The position reported at the time of the last inspection in terms of standards has been maintained.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44 Language development is well promoted through speaking and listening in all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to join in discussion and teachers are careful to invite all pupils to contribute. For example, in a religious education lesson, these skills made a good contribution to pupils' ability to recall learning, when older pupils discussed Buddhism. Opportunities for writing in other subjects are not well planned or developed and this provision is currently unsatisfactory. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practice and improve their writing in the course of a week. This is because in most subjects there is a heavy reliance on work sheets and many opportunities for pupils to record their work in a varied range of styles is therefore lost.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and this aids pupils' learning and achievement.
- Standards achieved are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Pupils are supported very well to understand how to improve their work during lessons; marking does not support this effective dialogue to remind pupils of what they need to do.

Commentary

45 Good teaching and learning throughout school helps pupils to achieve very well overall. In the infant class, pupils are engaged in a variety of ways to develop mental agility in working out problems, counting on, subtracting and completing multiplication sums. For example, in a game of bingo, pupils were challenged effectively by the teacher to practice all these skills and the game was one that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 really enjoyed. Pupils' achievement was very good because the teacher made learning fun.

46 In the junior class the headteacher has responsibility for teaching mathematics and his very good subject knowledge is a strength of the lessons observed. The structure of the class has been organised well to split into two distinct age groups and within this structure, pupils who have special educational needs are well catered for. The good lessons observed had pace and challenge and as a result, all pupils, regardless of ability, achieved very well.

47 Standards attained in mathematics vary across the year groups. This reflects the nature of a very small school and the very small numbers in year groups that can be as low as three pupils as was the case in the Year 6 year group of 2003. At this time standards achieved in the national tests were not as high as might have been hoped, but owing to unforeseen circumstances the teaching of mathematics had been disrupted during this year. Currently pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards that are well above average overall and this is because of the quality of teaching they receive. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 achieve standards that are above average because of good quality teaching and learning.

48 The teachers know their pupils very well and relationships are very good. This has a very positive effect on the way that teachers support pupils within lessons and, through effective discussion with them, teachers point out ways that pupils might improve their work. Marking, however, does not support this very good dialogue. It is often just a tick with few evaluative comments to remind pupils of how to improve their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49 Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. In the infant class the teacher directed pupils in the use of tallying as they identified which vegetables and fruits they preferred, during a design and technology lesson. From displays it is evident that in the junior class, for example, pupils have collated data using ICT to present block graphs. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work across the curriculum indicates that a heavy reliance on work sheets does not readily lend itself to cross-curricular links where mathematics could be used to enhance pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Investigative work is supported very well by the emphasis that teachers place on discussion.
- Discussion supports pupils' learning well, however, marking does not support further pupils' understanding of how they should improve.

Commentary

50 Pupils' early experiences in the Foundation Stage are developed well as they move through Years 1 and 2. Evidence of pupils' work, and a photographic portfolio of their achievements, shows that pupils have the opportunity in the infant class to enjoy scientific investigations. For example, they melt substances such as chocolate and ice and observe what happens; they investigate how to keep teddy dry using a range of different materials and make and label electrical circuits.

51 In the junior class, a very good lesson observed, demonstrated the very good effect that discussion had in supporting pupils' investigations. In considering whether snails and slugs had a sense of smell, pupils observed their movements towards, for example, orange juice, biscuits and vinegar. In discussion pupils listened well to other's views before making

their own judgements. The very good relationships that exist between the teacher and pupils helped the success of the lesson and aided pupils' achievement within it.

52 Pupils' work shows that the science curriculum is satisfactory and that standards achieved continue to be appropriate for pupils' ages as judged at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in planned experiments, to predict and investigate and record outcomes. Discussion with pupils helps them to develop a clear understanding as to how they can refine and improve their work. This good practice is not supported, however, by evaluative marking that confirms the key points for improvement as identified in lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils experience a varied range of ICT opportunities in the infant class.
- Older pupils use their ICT skills well to produce the 'Dale Mail'.
- Resources in ICT are limited and do not support the curriculum well enough in the junior class.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is not sufficiently well developed.

Commentary

53 Pupils in the infant class enjoy a varied range of opportunities to develop their ICT skills. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 use programmes such as 'Colour Magic' to draw straight lines and geometric shapes. They can represent information graphically and record the information using a computer and they enjoy having the opportunity to use a digital camera to record their work. In discussion, Year 2 pupils talked with confidence about their use of a programmable toy 'PIP' and demonstrated how they opened a programme on the computer to begin their work. This varied range of opportunities supports pupils' good achievement in the infant class.

54 Older pupils have the opportunity to build on these skills well and the result is seen in the production of The Dale Mail, a high quality newsletter that is compiled and edited by Year 6 pupils. It provides information about pupils' achievements and enables older pupils to utilise their skills in word processing and layout, transporting images, text and so on. The document adds well to information provided for parents and the community about the work of the school, and parents said they enjoyed reading it.

55 Pupils in the junior class have the opportunity to develop appropriate skills in ICT through the ICT curriculum. They research for information on the Internet, send emails, create databases and so on. Resources have improved overall as the school now has new computers and there is a better ratio of number of pupils to each computer than there was at the time of the last inspection. However, resources to support the curriculum, for example, in respect to modelling and sensory equipment are limited and this has an adverse effect on pupils' achievement in this area of the curriculum in the junior class. The infant and junior class teachers lead and manage ICT satisfactorily. They are aware of the need to increase ICT resources still further and to improve staff expertise in relation to the new software that the school has invested in.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56 The use of ICT across the curriculum is not developed well enough to extend pupils' skills still further. Opportunities are available in some subjects, for example, pupils in the junior class have produced a database to record information gathered from the 'bird feeder'. In the infant class, during a design and technology lesson, with the teacher's support, pupils took pictures of their fruit and vegetables with a digital camera which was then be used to collate information in a graph. In the samples of junior pupils' work seen, however, there was little evidence of ICT being used to collate and present data about their learning and only one brief exercise on mapwork had been completed by some pupils.

HUMANITIES

57 Insufficient evidence was available during the time of the inspection to make secure judgements on provision in history and geography and so these subjects have been sampled.

58 No lessons were observed in **history** during the inspection. However, from a scrutiny of pupils' work it is possible to see that pupils cover an appropriate curriculum in history. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the lives of famous people and they know how Samuel Pepys helped us to learn about the Great Fire of London by writing a diary of what happened at the time. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about a range of different eras and topics. In their work on the Romans they look at artefacts and pictures of roman soldiers and have the opportunity to visit local Roman sites.

59 There were no lessons available in **geography** to be observed during the inspection. However, the picture gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work is similar to that in history. Pupils cover an appropriate curriculum that is guided by a commercial scheme of work. Infant pupils link their work about Grace Darling with their work on the seaside in geography and know that she lived on an island, such as the one they learn about in the Katie Morag story in their geography lessons. Pupils learn about different regions of the world and compare them with life and conditions in Wearhead. In physical geography pupils learn how rivers are formed and how the water cycle works.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and so aids achievement.
- The school makes good use of visits and visitors to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the subject.

Commentary

60 Pupils' achievement is good overall and this is because of good teaching and learning that occurs in both the infant and junior classes. A strength of the teaching in both classes is in the use that teachers make of artefacts and pictures associated with different religions so that pupils have a better understanding of unfamiliar objects and can connect these to people's beliefs and culture. A weakness in teaching and learning is that recorded work is too often based on completing work sheets and this does not offer pupils the same opportunities to write and show their knowledge and understanding as class discussion does.

61 Pupils achieve standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. For example, in Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about the key events in the new

testament. They visit the local church to learn about Christian ceremonies and rituals such as baptism and marriage. Photographic evidence shows that during the visit, pupils were involved and attentive and clearly enjoying their learning in the subject.

62 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a similar positive response to the subject. They have a good breadth of knowledge about different world faiths, which they are able to recall because of the extended discussions they have in lessons. In the lesson seen, pupils' recall of their recent visit to a local Buddhist monastery was good. Pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, were able to explain the significance of what they had seen. Higher attaining pupils were able to make links between some of the beliefs that Buddhists hold and those held by other major world faiths. All pupils were able to enter into a discussion about the symbols used in the religion and what they signified.

63 The infant and junior class teachers work together well to manage the subject effectively. In this way they identify what resources are needed and plan a series of visits and visitors to enrich the learning of pupils. Standards and provision have been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64 During the time of the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education and so these subjects have been sampled.

65 **Art** was sampled through displays where the pupils' work was seen to be of a high quality. The school has achieved the 'Artsmark Gold' award and is in a creative partnership with 24 other schools. This means that pupils in the school have an extensive range of creative opportunities. For example, pupils in the infant class have regular access to a very good range of materials and media and produce good work in both two and three dimensions. In the one lesson seen, pupils were encouraged to discuss their creative ideas and resources were used very well. Older pupils in the junior class extend their skills and produce very interesting work. Teachers display the work of artists from various cultures and eras to influence pupils. They give pupils the opportunity to work in a variety of styles, including that of Kadirsky. Pupils are fortunate to go on many visits to local art exhibitions, for example, at the Baltic and Laing Galleries to see the work of contemporary artists, including Anthony Gormley. Pupils say they enjoy art and are very proud of the work they produce. It is evident from discussions with pupils and from the displays of their work that the creative arts are a strength of the school and contribute very well to the excellent enrichment of the curriculum.

66 Only two lessons were observed in **design and technology** and this contributed to the sample of the subject along with observation of displays and discussion with pupils. It is clear from the work displayed that all projects have a clear purpose. For example, pupils in the infant class have designed a playground with swings and a roundabout for *Barnaby Bear*. They have made a seaside frieze and worked out ways of making the boats move along the water. Older pupils in the junior class have designed and constructed an interesting selection of homes for worms. They have learnt how to support buildings and how to join materials such as wood and paper. In the lessons seen, learning was made fun; for example, junior pupils were inspired to make masks with the teacher using an extensive range of masks from many countries as stimulus. This had a significant impact on their cultural development because they discussed the uses of each mask in turn and the materials used to make them.

67 During the inspection no lessons were observed in **music** and so there is insufficient evidence to draw any conclusions about specific strengths in the subject. Photographic evidence, however, demonstrates that pupils have many opportunities to extend their skills in learning and performing musical instruments and this is supported through musical tuition that is available at the school. In this context, music contributes well to the excellent enrichment of the curriculum.

68 No lessons were observed during the inspection in **physical education**, however, a drama and dance lesson was observed to be excellent in both the quality of teaching and learning that took place. During the inspection, older pupils also had the opportunity to work with a choreographer as part of the creative partnership and they clearly enjoyed the chance to develop their ideas, working very well in partnership with each other and with the visiting expert. At the same time younger pupils visited the swimming pool for their weekly swimming lesson and the opportunity to develop pupils' swimming skills is provided for all pupils throughout the school. The school has recently been awarded the 'Activemark' and this demonstrates the emphasis that is placed on pupils developing their skills in physical education. To this end an excellent range of extra curricular activities are available to enhance pupils' learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69 No lessons were available to be observed in **personal, social and health education and citizenship** during the inspection and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. However, from discussion with pupils and through other lessons observed it is clear that the school contributes well to pupils' personal development through an excellent range of learning opportunities. A very good example of this is through creative arts. Here pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills and to share their expertise. As a result, they take on responsibilities very well; they are self-confident and have high self-esteem. Similarly pupils relate well to their friends and teachers and have opportunities to share problems through bubble time and circle time and to others within the small community of their school and beyond. They clearly know the importance of being a thoughtful citizen.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
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	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).